

Kodak Moments, Flashbulb Memories

Reflections on 9/11

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At a banquet given by a nobleman of Thessaly named Scopas, the poet Simonides of Ceos chanted a lyric poem in honour of his host but including a passage in praise of Castor and Pollux. Scopas meanly told the poet that he would only pay him half the sum agreed upon for the panegyric and that he must obtain the rest from the twin gods to whom he had devoted half the poem. A little later, a message was brought in to Simonides that two young men were waiting outside who wished to see him. He rose from the banquet and went out but could find no one. During his absence the roof of the banqueting hall fell in, crushing Scopas and all the guests to death beneath the ruins; the corpses were so mangled that the relatives who came to take them away for burial were unable to identify them. But Simonides remembered the places at which they had been sitting at the table and was therefore able to indicate to the relatives which were their dead. [...] This experience suggested to the poet the principles of the art of memory of which he is said to be the inventor. Noting that it was through his memory of the places at which the guests had been sitting that he had been able to identify the bodies, he realized that orderly arrangement is essential for good memory.

— Cicero (in Yates 1996:1–2)¹

The catastrophe has transformed life in New York City. City officials speak of rings. Extending out from Ground Zero are the ever larger rings that define physical and emotional proximity to the disaster. Grassroots responses to the trauma have been spontaneous, improvised, and ubiquitous. Every surface of the city—sidewalks, lampposts, fences, telephone booths, barricades, garbage dumpsters, and walls—was blanketed with candles, flowers, flags, and missing persons' posters. These posters—wedding or graduation photographs from a family album, accompanied by intimate details of identifying marks on the body—hung in suspension between a call for information and a death notice. They quickly became the focal point of shrines memorializing the missing and presumed de-

ceased. The shrines appeared in parks, subway stations, firehouses, police stations, hospitals, and on stoops. Large crowds gathered spontaneously for vigils. We call the event and its aftermath 9/11. Not only is 9/11 a way of saying September 11 American-style, with the month first, but also—ironically—911 is our emergency phone number.²

The city post-9/11 is more like what I remember from the 1970s, when it was facing bankruptcy, than the years right before 9/11, when it was awash with money. Affluent New York of the last decade was under the tight control of the Giuliani administration, which clamped down on street vendors, street performance, community gardens and casitas, and fireworks. Arrests for minor “quality of life” crimes were common. It is not surprising then that the Department of Parks and Recreation halted the creation of memorials in parks three weeks after the disaster and despite continuing protests. They have been collecting memorials and saving them in a warehouse. Susan Sipos, who takes care of Jefferson Market Garden, is composting the flowers from shrines at fire stations in the neighborhood (Magro 2001). This compost will nurture new plants dedicated to the memory of the many firemen who perished while trying to rescue those caught in falling buildings.

The attack on the World Trade Center is said to be the most photographed disaster in history. This is a city designed to look at itself from spectacular vantage points, whether from the tops of Manhattan’s signature skyscrapers, high-rise apartments, and tenements; from the streets; along suspension bridges; on boats along the rivers surrounding the island; or from Queens, Brooklyn, and New Jersey. The attack produced a spectacle that was photographed incessantly and seen instantaneously across the globe. Within a short time, Mayor Rudolf W. Giuliani issued an executive order banning amateur photographs of the World Trade Center ruins because, as his office explained, the site was a crime scene, not a tourist attraction. Flyers were posted in the area: “WARNING! NO cameras or video equipment permitted! VIOLATORS will be prosecuted and equipment seized!” This ban indexes the quarantine that has separated the disaster scene from the rest of the city. We knew it was there, but we could not visit the site. We were told to go back to work, go shopping, go to Broadway shows, and eat in restaurants—spending money was a civic duty—as if the rest of the city was now back to normal. The disaster even issued its own currency in the form of Revenge Promissory Notes in only one denomination: \$2001 (Ross 2001). Was this a valiant effort to rebound or part of a larger problem? “A shattered nation longs to care about stupid bullshit again” was the subject of a satirical article that appeared in the *Onion*, a humor newspaper, in their 3 October 2001 issue.

To have been so close to the disaster and yet so insulated from it means that we too knew it from photographs rather than from direct experience of the ruin. We look and do not see the towers. But, neither can we see where they should have been. The gash on the ground is a negative space, a giant footprint, in the tangled confusion of a disoriented Lower Manhattan. Once the smoke cleared, the wound in the sky left no visible trace. There is simply nothing there. The skyline has become doubly historical. It is at once the skyline before there was a World Trade Center and the skyline after its disappearance. Nothing in the sky indicates that the towers ever existed.

Television producers rushed to digitally remove the Twin Towers from segments shot before 9/11 to be aired later. They feared that viewers would be traumatized and distracted by the sight of the towers. The United States Postal Service modified the skyline that was to appear on its 2002 “Greetings from New York” stamp. But, what will happen to the many images of Manhattan’s iconic skyline on business cards, trucks, maps, stores, tourist guides, postcards, and souvenirs?



The intact skyline is everywhere except where it should be. It is inescapable and irreplaceable. Even an advertising postcard for Chinatown—with its bowl carrying an icon of the World Trade Center—is a chilling reminder of how much we took for granted. What were once souvenirs or logos or useful maps have become mementos. They have acquired a strange aura, a penumbra of sadness. They seem to defy the loss.

Kodak Moments

When President Bush told Tony Blair in November 2001 that the war in Afghanistan was “not one of these Kodak moments,” he meant that there were no pictures, or, more precisely, that there was nothing photogenic about this war (in Bumiller 2001:B3). While trivializing the role of images in this battle, he implicitly acknowledged their importance. Amid all the uncertainties, one thing became clear: We lost the image war. A humorous image of Osama bin Laden holding an Oscar for best director for the film *Apocalypse in New York* has been circulating on the Internet. Neither pastoral photographs of Afghans in desolate landscapes nor patriotic images of flags at home were any match for the spectacle of airplanes ramming into the towers, the buildings exploding in a gigantic fireball, people leaping to their deaths (these images have been off-limits except on web sites that cross the normative threshold of what can be shown), a lingering plume of smoke, the cascading collapse of the towers, and heroic efforts to retrieve bodies from the



1. *Humor was slow to appear after 9/11 but the Onion was one of the first to publish satire related to the disaster: “A Shattered Nation Longs to Care about Stupid Bullshit Again.”* (<http://www.theonion.com/onion3735/a_shattered_nation.html>)

2. *We lost the image war. Osama wins an Oscar for “Best Director for Apocalypse in New York.” Contributed by Manolo Muñiz to the Spanish humor website* (<<http://www.tonterias.com>> (<<http://tonterias.iespana.es/tonterias/especial/torresgemelas/oscarBinLaden.jpg>>)

rubble. There is no match for the sight of self-destruction: our very own planes were turned into missiles aimed straight at us and, should one of our planes be hijacked in the future, our military is now authorized to shoot it down rather than allow it to hit its target. With no “valuable targets” in Afghanistan for American bombs to hit and a tight lid on information from the front, the Kodak moments of this war were restricted to what *New York Times* page-one picture editor Philip Geffer characterized as Biblical images of Afghans in barren desert and mountain landscapes (2001). More like the snapshots a tourist might bring home from a vacation than news photographs from a war zone, these images made it even more difficult to understand why we were bombing such a desolate place.

By implication, the attack on the World Trade Center was the ultimate Kodak moment. The term evokes amateur snapshots, candid images of everyday life or special events, not spectacular pictures of Ground Zero or the theatre of war taken by professional photographers with exclusive access to the action. “Kodak moment” suggests the Brownie camera of years gone by or the instamatic or disposable camera of today. That said, was the attack on the World Trade Center no more than a Kodak moment for the thousands of amateur photographers who shot the disaster and its aftermath? The nervousness about photography as an ethically suspect practice was expressed not only in official signs prohibiting unauthorized photography of Ground Zero, but also by protestors who admonished eager amateurs with posters of their own:

All Of You Taking Photos

I wonder if you really see what is here or if you're so concerned with getting that perfect shot that you've forgotten this is a tragedy site, not a tourist attraction. As I continually had to move “out of someone's way” as they carefully tried to frame this place [of] mourning, I kept wondering what makes us think we can capture the pain, the loss, the pride & the confusion—this complexity—into a 4×5 glossy.

I ♥ my city—Firegirl, NYC, 09-17-01



3. *Americamera at Ground Zero* (3 November 2001).
(Photo © Martha Cooper)

The motives of professional photographers were not questioned. After all, taking pictures is their job. Hopefully, their photographs would convey the full scope of the devastation and rally support for rebuilding New York. The motives of amateurs, however, were suspect. Were they voyeurs gawking at the spectacle? Were they displaying a ghoulish fascination with the macabre? Were they deriving perverse pleasure from the tragedy? Such attitudes would of course be undignified, disrespectful, and unseemly. Or, even worse, were all of us fulfilling a script by doing precisely what was intended by the attackers? Namely, we were spellbound by the catastrophic spectacle, not just at the moment of impact, but, thanks to all the photographs and videotapes we made, forever after. Reruns, according to the script, will deepen the psychic damage that terror is about.

Photography materialized the morally ambiguous activity of watching. As Susan Sontag has noted in *On Photography*, “The camera makes everyone a tourist in other people’s reality, and eventually in one’s own” ([1974] 1977:57). More than one commentator has noted that the events of 9/11 had the singular effect of making all of us tourists in our own lives by making it impossible to take things for granted. The disaster profoundly disrupted even the most banal routines of daily life. We read new subway maps as if we are strangers to the city. Paranoia has become the order of the day. We find the disaster hidden and anticipated in ordinary words and numbers and everyday things. The world is a coded message. The new 20-dollar bill, when folded, becomes an origami alert. With the first fold, “You’ll immediately see the Pentagon ablaze!” With the next fold, “The Twin Towers of the World Trade Center are hit and smoking.” Keep folding and the note will spell Osama (Linky and Dinky 2002). “Coincidence or conspiracy?” Glenn Beck asks, “Was the entire game plan for September 11th printed on our money?” (Glennbeck.com 2002). We think like tourists—or more accurately terrorists—in order to anticipate and protect ourselves from danger. It is our consciousness that was the target of the attack. It has become an indelible part of us. Within weeks, there were tattoos showing a plane crashing into one of the towers.

Indeed, our world has become a museum of itself. In October 2001, the *New York Times* ran a series of articles described as “reporting on workaday objects that resonate in unusual ways in the aftermath of Sept. 11”—for example, an ordinary pair of handcuffs that became a digging tool (Dwyer 2002:B1). Even the most commonplace objects—a child’s fork, vegetable peeler, matches, nail polish remover—have become potential weapons and are confiscated from passengers going through security. But then, in light of 9/11, nothing is ordinary. Even irony, which had been displaced by hyperbolic displays of patriotism, found a way to appear in unlikely places. Random juxtapositions—and their unintended ironies—appeared on phone booths along Canal Street:

A yellow police tape and missing person notice was affixed to an advertisement for Continental Airlines, whose motto is “...dependable service, time after time.”

A posted public service announcement asks, “What’s wrong with this picture?” The picture, which shows a car parked illegally in a spot reserved for the disabled, was partially covered by a missing person poster.

Police tape and a notice telling emergency workers where to find food and water were stuck to an advertisement for Verizon that reads, “Your grip tightens, teeth grind, you knew you should have gone the other way. Call before you go...”

4. *It is our consciousness that was the target of the attack. Contributed by Betzabe Jara Carreto to the Spanish humor website <<http://www.tonterias.com>>. (<http://tonterias.iespana.es/tonterias/especial/torresgemelas/avion_cabeza.jpg>)*



Flashbulb Memories

Ground Zero has become hallowed ground as well as an attraction, but for most of us it was off limits until there was nothing left to see but a gaping hole. The bereaved were brought to the sight to mourn. VIPs were taken on guided tours by foot and helicopter for maximum impact and hopefully financial support. And those of us deprived of our Kodak moments have our flashbulb memories. Flashbulb memories, according to psychologists Roger Brown and James Kulick, have the vividness and detail of a flash photograph (1977:73–99). They occur when the triggering event combines elements of surprise, emotional intensity, and consequentiality. It is not necessary to have been present at the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the assassination of John F. Kennedy or Martin Luther King, Jr., the Challenger disaster, or the events of 9/11. What we remember so vividly, if not accurately over time, are the circumstances in which we first learned of the tragedy. What we value is the powerful sense of having been present for a momentous historical event. One New Zealander reported that when he heard the news at 5:30 A.M., on Wednesday 12 September (New Zealand is 17 hours ahead of New York), he thought it was a hoax: “What is this? Is it Orson Welles’s *War of the Worlds*?” Another told me that she remembered precisely the moment that she heard the news. She was in a café and what she recalls most clearly is the collective feeling of profound emptiness.

While all three attacks on 9/11 are prime candidates for flashbulb memory, the sheer spectacle of the World Trade Center collapse (and magnitude of the casualties) overshadows the attack on the Pentagon and the plane that crashed into a field in Pennsylvania.

Iconographic Unconscious

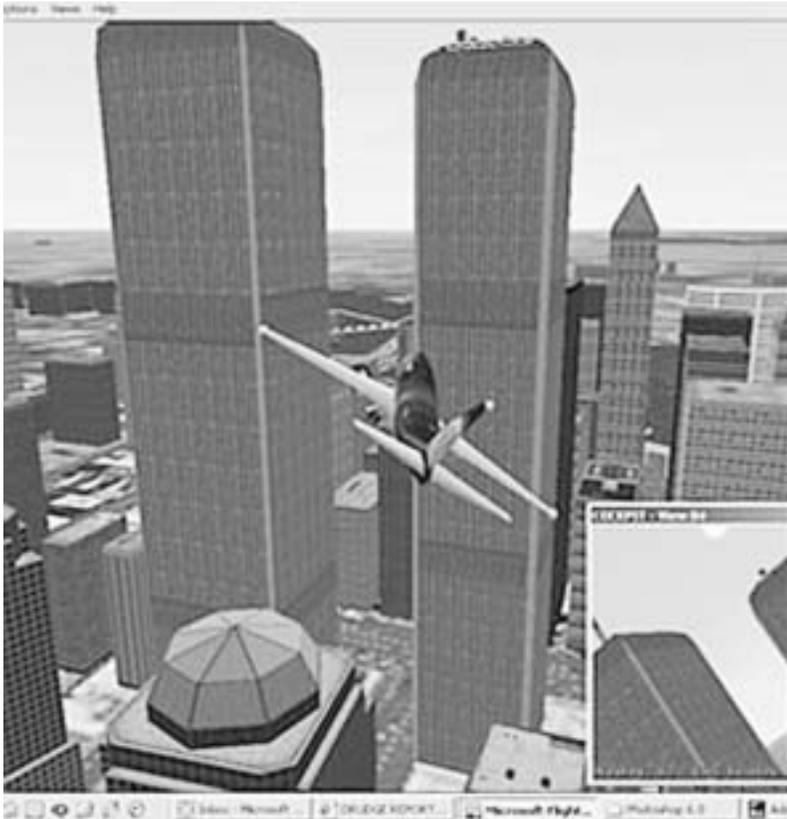
Many witnesses to the collapse of the towers reported a sense of unreality. They felt like they were watching a movie they had seen before. Indeed, one of the more surreal attractions in Manhattan, in the Empire State Building, is the New York Skyride, whose motto is “Feel the Sights.” Created long before 9/11, this flight simulator attraction, which cost millions of dollars, is too expensive to change or discontinue and so it continues. This ride is an enactment of the potential for 9/11 as a series of near misses. You are in a plane piloted by aliens. The plane is out of control. It almost crashes into everything. Was this a rehearsal for what came to pass?

Once the towers fell, not only were plans to use images of the imminent or actual explosion of the World Trade Towers considered bad timing, but also were viewed as the *iconographic unconscious* in full play. The cover for the Coup’s *Party Music*, a hip-hop CD, showed two musicians, one holding a guitar tuner that looks like a detonator and the other conducting with two batons, in front of the exploding twin towers. The photograph for the CD cover was taken on 15 May 2001. The CD was to be released in November 2001. Right after 9/11, they pulled this image, which was intended as “a metaphor for destroying capitalism” (MC Boots Riley quoted in Goedde 2001), and later replaced it with one of a cocktail glass filled with kerosene and set on fire to suggest a Molotov cocktail (Juon 2002). One of the songs is entitled “5 Million Ways to Kill a C.E.O.,” which seemed to anticipate the accounting scandals that sent stocks tumbling several months later. A nationwide advertising campaign for Marchon Eyewear, which was launched on 23 August 2001, highlighted the flexibility of frames made from Flexon by showing the Empire State Building bending out of the way to avoid being hit by a plane. Accompanying the image are the words “If only all metal were FLEXON.” The company pulled the ad within an hour of the attacks (Zehren 2001). During

World War II, on 28 July 1945, an American bomber accidentally crashed into the Empire State Building (*New York Times* 1945:1ff) and an army airplane into the Manhattan Company Building at 40 Wall Street on 20 May 1946 (Long 1946:1ff). These events continue to haunt New Yorkers. New images of King Kong, who defended the Empire State Building in 1933 and the World Trade Center in 1976, started circulating after the attacks, as did accounts of the earlier crashes.

Two days after 9/11, flight simulation enthusiasts wondered: “What if it turns out that the terrorists also honed their skills using *Microsoft Flight Simulator*? [...] We know that one of the thrills of the simulated Manhattan skyline is threading through the twin towers” (Wice 2001). A flight simulator computer program was among the incriminating items found in the possession of Zacarias Moussaoui, thought to be the 20th hijacker, when he was arrested, and, just days before the 2002 anniversary of 9/11, the *New York Times* reported that, “A magazine on flying and a flight simulator computer game were among the items found at a suspected Al Qaeda base in Kabul” (Filkins 2002:3).

Microsoft Flight Simulator 2000, an \$80.00 civilian flight simulator program that runs on a PC, features extremely realistic 3-D scenery and various Boeing jets. Shortly after the attack, Microsoft decided to delay release of the 2002 version and to edit the game introduction, in which two people using the software say, “John, you just about crashed into the Empire State Building! Hey, that would be cool” (CNN 2001). “Out of respect for the victims, our customers, partners and employees,” Microsoft also created a flight simulator patch “that will remove the World Trade Center towers from *Flight Simulator 2000*” (Microsoft 2001). This



5. “What if it turns out that the terrorists also honed their skills using *Microsoft Flight Simulator*? [...] We know that one of the thrills of the simulated Manhattan skyline is threading through the twin towers.” A screenshot of *Microsoft Flight Simulator 2000* from “Did Terrorists Train with Common PC Flight Simulator?” by Nathaniel Wice, in *On Magazine*, 13 September 2001 (<<http://www.onmagazine.com/on-mag/reviews/article/0,9985,174835,00.html>>; screenshot by Geoff Keighley)

program is also marketed to actual pilots who want to increase their proficiency, while other programs, which are based on actual military training exercises, “a few disguised as games,” go “right to the bleeding edge of a security breach” (Advanced Simulation Systems 2002). On the Saturday following the attacks, many planes were still on the ground, but “in a show of solidarity, more than 2,000 flight-sim enthusiasts spent the day online, flying through a virtual U.S. airspace on the Net” (Snider 2001).

If the New York Skyride is a preplay of near misses and *Microsoft Flight Simulator* a practice flight, *New York Defender* (Albino Blacksheep 2002), a game on the Internet that was up and running by March 2002, if not earlier, is a replay, with the possibility of averting the disaster if your aim is good enough. The first plane approaches the tower and your task is to shoot it down. You miss? The building goes up in flames as you try to shoot down the second plane. You miss again? Both towers collapse. Keep trying until disaster is finally averted.

Other games let you fight the war in Afghanistan. While counterterrorism has long been popular with computer gamers, there was a short lull right after 9/11, followed by a resurgence of games whose theme is the war in Afghanistan. Ethan McKinnon and Drew Baye of Orlando, Florida, reflecting on the range of responses to 9/11, from patriotic displays and charitable work to dark humor, “decided to express their anger by developing a game based on the popular first-person, team-oriented genre in which the search for and death of Osama bin Laden would be the central theme.” After gaming companies refused to consider the idea, in part because they did not wish “to be seen as cashing in on the September 11 tragedy,” McKinnon and Baye founded their own company, Dead Tree Entertainment, and created *Operation Cat’s Lair: The Hunt for Osama bin Laden* as part of the War on Terrorism Series. This game allows “the gamer full immersion into a realistic environment of dangerous missions” (McKinnon and Baye 2002).

As a reviewer of another game, *Operation Just Reward*, concluded, “Killing Osama bin Laden, even [if] it is in the virtual gaming world, is a great feeling” (Pie4Foo 2002). An example of “tactical gaming,” *Operation Just Reward*, which was created by Akira, carried the following message on its opening page: “In memory of those killed in acts of terrorism”; the warning that, “This mod may contain material deemed offensive to some people such as sympathisers of terrorist groups, peace lobbyists and certain organisations. Others may find it insensitive. If so, please do not play this mod”; and the disclaimer that:

Although this mod is a [*sic*] based on real life events—many details remain speculative and fictional. Please do not consider the events in this game as bearing any truth. You agree to play this mod at YOUR OWN RISK. The authors do not take responsibility for any behaviour or events stemming from the gameplay contained within this mod. (Akira_AU 2001)

Such games are a consumer version of the computer simulations of war that are used to train the military. Indeed, the Pentagon avoids the news media, whose critical reporting it cannot control, and collaborates with Hollywood on “militainment.” For example, it is advising on the television series *JAG* (Judge Advocate General’s corps), which will feature fictional military tribunals—in lieu of news broadcasts of the actual ones, which are to be held in secret. As Robert Lichter has remarked, “News used to be the first draft of history [...]. Now it’s the first draft of a screenplay. News and entertainment have merged already. The question now is whose version gets to the public first” (in Seelye 2002:A12).

The sky was the ultimate big screen. Life seemed to overtake fiction and imitate art. For some, it was the smell of smoke that broke the cinematic spell. For others,



6. *Flag seller, Wall Street.* The disaster was quickly followed by political and commercial exploitation of an initial surge of spontaneous patriotism. The flag also became protective coloration for those who felt vulnerable in an increasingly xenophobic atmosphere (27 September 2001). (Photo by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett)

discovering the concrete consequences of the attack made the reality of the catastrophe sink in. Those consequences were conveyed not only through the media, but with even greater immediacy by the many shrines and memorials that blanketed the city. At the center of those shrines were Kodak moments in the lives of the missing and presumed dead. In the absence of a body, a photograph became the only tangible address to which mourners could bring their prayers. Indeed, as it became increasingly clear that photographs were virtually useless for identifying missing persons—only DNA evidence from body fragments would do—photographs became “paper monuments in the stone cemetery of the city” (Kuzub 2001). Surrounded by flowers and candles, teddy bears, and items of clothing, they became votive objects. But, unlike a tombstone that marks a singular grave, these paper monuments, photocopied on standard 8.5×11 -inch sheets, multiplied the spectral presence of the missing. They were now literally in more than one place at a time, but nowhere to be found. They were announced, but not laid to rest. Families of the confirmed or presumed dead were given a handful of dust from the site. Reverend James P. Moroney advised bishops “that if dust from the site was reasonably believed to contain human remains—of anyone—it could be buried by a grieving family in place of a body” (Wakin 2001:B9).

A Democracy of Photographs

Thanks to “one of the most powerful selling ideas of all time,” according to Kodak in 1999, more than “77 billion pictures are shot [...] every year worldwide”

(Keegan 1999:12). Not surprising then that so many people should have taken so many photographs of the events of 9/11 and their aftermath. Thanks to digital cameras, there is virtually no time lag between the event and seeing the image. The image is literally part of the event. More than one person has put the towers back into the skyline by holding a photograph of the towers up to the skyline in the precise location where that photograph had been taken—and then proceeding to take a photograph of that gesture—whether from a tenement rooftop or the Brooklyn side of the East River. The same effect has also been achieved digitally.

Recognizing that photography is one of the most powerful responses to the attack, *Here Is New York, Images from the Frontline of History: A Democracy of Photographs*, opened within weeks of 9/11.³ A vacant Soho shop front on Prince Street, previously occupied by Agnès B., the expensive French fashion designer, was quickly converted into a temporary hub for the accumulation and sale of photographs. Looking more like the Soho of the pioneering 1970s than the Soho of the affluent '90s, the small, brightly lit, white space of *Here Is New York* in Manhattan was covered with photographs. Identified only by a tiny number, the images that are part of this traveling exhibit are clipped to wires strung along the walls and across the space, like laundry on a line or wet negatives and prints in a darkroom. There are no frames, no labels, no names, and no uniformed guards. According to its creators, this show “is tailored to the nature of the event, and to the response it has elicited,” notably a plethora of photographs by professionals and amateurs. This project aims “to develop a new way of looking at and thinking about history, as well as a way of making sense of all of the images which continue to haunt us.” In this spirit:

[E]veryone who has taken pictures related to the tragedy is invited to bring or ftp their images to the gallery, where they will be digitally scanned, archivally [*sic*] printed and displayed on the walls alongside the work of top photojournalists and other photographers. [...] All prints will be sold for the same nominal and fixed price, irrespective of their provenance. (*Here Is New York* 2001)

Net proceeds go to the Children's Aid Society.

The overwhelming response to the installation has prompted the organizers to expand the exhibition into an adjoining storefront. The exhibition, which was intended to last no more than two months, was extended to Christmas and then, eventually, until September 2002, when it moved to Washington, DC. So much interest was generated that the exhibition is now traveling around the world and a book has been published (*Here Is New York* 2002a). A second location with a broader mandate, *History Unframed*, opened briefly in April 2002 on 1105 Sixth Avenue at 42nd Street, near the International Center for Photography, which awarded *Here Is New York* the 2002 Cornell Capa Award for distinguished achievement in photography. All those who submitted photographs—amateurs and professionals alike—have been invited to be interviewed on video about the images they contributed; the final interviews were incorporated into the exhibition itself at 116 Prince Street. After the opening of *History Unframed*, contributors to that exhibit were also invited to be part of a group portrait.

Here Is New York takes its name from E.B. White's famous essay, written in a Manhattan hotel room during a hot summer in 1948, and specifically from an ominous passage that anticipated the disaster:

The city, for the first time in its long history, is destructible. A single flight of planes no bigger than a wedge of geese can quickly end this island fan-



7. Responding to a sense that 9/11 was the most photographed disaster in history, the project *Here Is New York, Images from the Frontline of History: A Democracy of Photographs* invited everyone to submit photographs. The images, by professionals and amateurs alike, were installed in a vacant Soho storefront, without frames or attribution, and sold for \$25.00 each, the money going to the Children's Aid Society. The exhibition was intended not only to document but also to memorialize the event (24 October 2001). (Photo by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett)

tasy, burn the towers, crumble the bridges, turn the underground passages into lethal chambers, cremate the millions. The intimation of mortality is part of New York in the sound of jets overhead, in the black headline of the latest edition. (1949:50–51)

Indeed, during World War II, there were two incidents of American warplanes accidentally crashing into Manhattan skyscrapers, as discussed above. This worst-case scenario was Hitler's best-case scenario as recalled by Albert Speer in his secret diaries, published just one year prior to White's book. Speer reports:

[He] never saw him [Hitler] so worked up as toward the end of the war, when in a kind of delirium he pictured for himself and for us the destruction of New York in a hurricane of fire. He described the skyscrapers being turned into gigantic burning torches, collapsing upon one another, the glow of the exploding city illuminating the dark sky. ([1948] 1976:87)

Here Is New York was staffed by volunteers, from the city's most distinguished photographers, curators, and editors to amateur photographers. Professionals selected the images from the submissions and they and others logged and scanned the images, printed them out on demand, and assisted with sales. As the project expanded, much of the printing was done elsewhere.

During the first few months after 9/11, the Prince Street room was more like a laboratory, a lightroom for digital images rather than a darkroom for analog film. Visitors filled the space and spilled out onto the street. At its peak, the space accommodated more than 3,000 visitors a day, and many of them lined up along the sidewalk for hours, waiting to enter. Some 300,000 people saw the exhibition over the 12 months that it occupied the Prince Street venue.

With a collection of 7,000 photographs, which is still growing, and 1.5 million visitors to the exhibition worldwide thus far, "*Here Is New York* is without question the largest archive of its kind in history, and may well become the most looked-at exhibition of our time" (*Here Is New York* 2002b). The sale of images

8. Memorial wall by graffiti artist Chico, on Avenue A at 14th Street, lower Manhattan. Chico, a celebrated graffiti artist who lives on the Lower East Side, immediately painted this memorial wall to honor the victims of the attack. Neighbors spontaneously brought candles, flowers, pictures, toys, and religious icons to the wall and gathered there to pay their respects to the dead (14 September 2001). (Photo by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett)



has already generated more than \$600,000 for the Children's Aid Society. The web site, in the form of an electronic archive, lists all the places to which the exhibition will travel and collects commentaries on the photographs from anyone visiting the site.⁴ The web site, which is a digital archive, has already logged more than one million hits. A video and oral history component of the exhibition, entitled *Here Is New York: Voices of 9.11*, opened at the Staten Island Historical Society in September 2002. All visitors, whether or not they contributed photographs to the exhibition, were invited to record their stories, in any language, in a private video booth within the exhibition itself. The invitation has been issued in English, Spanish, and Arabic.

Public and continuous showings of this exhibition marked the first anniversary of the disaster. Between 8 and 12 September 2002, images of the attacks in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, DC, were projected continuously on large video walls, 13 × 18 feet in size, on the Ellipse near the White House, and installed in the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, DC. Versions of the exhibition will travel to several other cities in the United States, Europe, and Japan. Consistent with the original conception of the project as a "democracy of photographs," the images will appear unframed and without commentary or provenance, in order "to commemorate and memorialize these tragic events, showing what happened from as many different angles as possible, as an aid both to healing and to grasping the human dimension of what took place," in the words of Michael Shulan (*Here Is New York* 2002c).

Within about a week of the attacks, outdoor shrines were discouraged, if not prohibited, and photographs and exhibitions of them became shrines in their own right. Shrines at Union Square were removed on 19 September because of a rain forecast, according to Jane Rudolph, spokesperson for New York City's Depart-

ment of Parks and Recreation. She explained that the memorials that could be salvaged were being saved until such time as museums and other institutions determined what should be done with them (in Jensen 2001). Shrines, candles, and missing posters that appeared after 19 September were also removed after a short time, due in part to safety issues (candle wax is slippery, accumulation of debris) and plans to clean and renovate the area. By June 2002, the Department of Transportation had posted notices at Ground Zero stating that memorabilia would be removed daily.

The many photographs that feature shrines were ultimately all that was left of the memorials (Jensen 2001). At Union Square, people posted photographs of the shrines that were once there, with messages protesting their removal. No longer were the parks the city's "green cathedral," in Parks Commissioner Henry Stern's words. Makeshift public mourning had been supplanted by plans for a permanent memorial (Magro 2001). Projects such as *Here Is New York* retain the spontaneous, makeshift, and intensely personal quality of the many shrines that once covered the city. Like the photo exhibit, the memorial installations are dense, ephemeral, and assembled from inexpensive materials. They are inclusive and raw. They are self-organizing. Above all, by encouraging creativity without artistic ambition, they help to close the gap between art and life.

No wonder then that such exhibitions have become a place to mourn. Some viewers attend to the many photographs taken by thousands of eyewitnesses in order to pay respect to victims and rescuers. Others look at the pictures to impress upon themselves the magnitude of the disaster, even as its meaning remains elusive. Exit Art, which defines itself as a "non-profit interdisciplinary laboratory for contemporary culture," approached these issues by putting out a call for responses to 9/11 (Exit Art 2001). The only requirement was that all submissions be on an 8.5 × 11-inch piece of paper. Contributors submitted writings, drawings, photographs, and collages. The curators decided to accept everything. There was to be no selection. Responses came from professional artists, ordinary people, and even homeless individuals with no return address. The result, some 3,500 submis-



9. Union Square, which starts at 14th Street, the line that demarcated the frozen zone, became the focal point for spontaneous gatherings, vigils, and memorials (14 September 2001). (Photo by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett)

sions, was inclusive, with no hierarchy, and the contributions represented a wide range of perspectives. Entries were mounted on simple magnetic strips, hung from the ceiling, row upon row, in modular symmetry.

While Exit Art's *Reactions* and *Here Is New York* are not the only projects soliciting photographs and other materials, they are among the earliest and most effective. They are remarkable for many reasons, not least of which has been their openness to material from all sources and the steps they have taken to encourage the fullest possible participation. Equivocating between affecting presence and documentation, the kaleidoscopic panorama of images in such installations is at once a patchwork of fragmentary glimpses, an incomplete puzzle of loose pieces, and a stuttering utterance. Such installations offer a capacious space for response.

Museums Respond

Art and historical collections in the World Trade Center itself were destroyed. Lost is the archive of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which documented the history of the city's infrastructure, including the subway system, roads, bridges, and transportation networks. Lost are the records of the 30-year history of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. Lost are materials excavated from the 18th-century African Burial Ground and some 850,000 19th-century objects excavated in the Five Points area, together with the documentation and records associated with them. Lost are the art collections and records of some 500 organizations, firms, and agencies that were located in the World Trade Center. Nearby landmark buildings, among the oldest in continuous use in Manhattan, and their contents were also destroyed. Lost are the archives of the Helen Keller International Foundation and ancient relics in the Church of St. Nicholas (Hargraves 2002). Miraculously, in the months that followed the attack, some materials were recovered from the debris, including about 100,000 negatives from the Port Authority archive and some materials from the African Burial Ground.

Museums below 14th Street found themselves in the frozen zone, which thawed in stages over the course of several weeks. Many of them assisted with the relief effort, including the National Museum of the American Indian, the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, and the Museum of Jewish Heritage, whose grounds were a staging area for the relief effort.⁵ Once they reopened, attendance was down. Many staff members were laid off and hours were reduced. Some museums offered free admission and special programs on designated days. Art museums functioned as serene spaces of beauty, where visitors could experience a moment of peace and hope in the face of trauma. Within three weeks, some of the museums nearest to Ground Zero had reopened, which was an achievement in itself. But, 9/11 now provided an inexorable—and uncontrollable—context for everything they and other museums in the city had been planning before 9/11.

The Museum of the City of New York delayed the opening of its exhibition on Arab Americans by six months and closed it on 11 September 2002. An online gallery, featuring images brought by people to the museum after the exhibition opened on 7 March 2002, includes a photograph of a memorial to Arab Americans who died in the World Trade Center attack (see Museum of the City of New York 2002). The Queens Museum of Art, home of the *Panorama of the City of New York*, the largest architectural scale model in the world, focused a spotlight on the section of the model where the World Trade Center is located and tied a red, white, and blue ribbon around the miniature towers.

New York City museums feel a special responsibility to deal with the disaster and its aftermath now and for the future. Besides delaying or revising exhibitions, some, like the New-York Historical Society, also created new ones such as *Missing: Streetscape of a City in Mourning*, which featured actual memorials, as well as



10. Panorama of the City of New York, updated to 1993, Queens Museum of Art. After 9/11, the twin towers, still standing, were tied with a mourning ribbon and spotlighted. This panorama, the largest architectural scale model in the world, was originally commissioned by Robert Moses for the 1964 New York World's Fair (13 October 2001). (Photo by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett)

documentation of the many shrines that had sprung up all over the city. The exhibition, based on the work of Martha Cooper, who has been photographing vernacular New York for some 30 years, was organized by City Lore: New York Center for Urban Folk Culture at the New-York Historical Society. *Missing* became a memorial in its own right, as did the exhibition, in an adjoining gallery, on the history of the World Trade Center created by the Skyscraper Museum before 9/11.

The National Museum of the American Indian opened *Booming Out: Mohawk Ironworkers Build New York* on 26 April 2002. The exhibition of 67 photographs honors Mohawk “skywalkers” for their legendary skill in working on high steel.⁶ The show focuses on two Mohawk communities, the Akwesasne, whose reservations are in upstate New York, Ontario, and Quebec, and the Kahnawake, whose reservation is in Quebec. Six generations of Mohawk ironworkers have helped to create Manhattan’s skyline, including the World Trade Center and the Empire State Building. According to Doug Cuthand, who belongs to the Little Pine First Nation in Saskatchewan, “There were about 100 Mohawk steel workers from the famous Iron Workers Local 440 from Akwesasne at work in New York and New Jersey at the time of the attack.” The wing of the first plane barely missed the crane of one crew that was “working 50 floors up about 10 blocks from the World Trade Centre [...]” After 9/11 Cuthand wrote in his web site:

Local 440 is now recruiting to send a team of 30 workers with special training in hazardous materials to join the search in New York and relieve the stressed workers. Some of the workers who were in New York at the time have already joined the dangerous search for survivors. (Cuthand n.d.)⁷

Using their construction knowledge and skills, they helped “to dismantle what their elders had helped to build,” an experience captured on a radio documentary that aired on National Public Radio on 1 July 2002 (York, Nelson, and Silva 2002). Right after the attack, Mohawk steelworkers also went to the National Museum

of the American Indian, which is just blocks from the World Trade Center, to talk with the staff and offer assistance.

Three weeks after 9/11, the web site of the Museum of Jewish Heritage: A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, which is located on the edge of Battery Park, announced: “The museum is open.” Not *when* the museum is open, but *that* it is open. I visited this museum in November 2001 to see *Scream the Truth at the World: Emanuel Ringelblum and the Hidden Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto*. This material is overwhelming under the best of circumstances. In the wake of 9/11, it takes on added significance. *Oy neg shabes*, as the Hidden Archive was called, dramatizes the importance of documenting the moment as it is being lived, and with the knowledge that the present is already historic. Ringelblum and his team were determined that the record of what they experienced would survive, even if they did not. While the two situations are by no means comparable, they both reveal the role of history’s ordinary actors in creating the historical record even as they are living it. From that historical record, we get the mundane, everyday aspects of extraordinary times. We learn not only what happened but also how it was experienced and understood. Among the most touching artifacts in the Ringelblum exhibition are a humble and ephemeral theatre ticket, a ration card for potatoes, instructions in Yiddish for how to prepare frozen potatoes, and a label listing the tenants in a shared apartment with the number of rings for each—ring once for Lurie, twice for Rotsztajn, and so on. This one small artifact encapsulated the severe overcrowding in the ghetto, where an average of nine people lived in a single room. So too do the many artifacts associated with the disaster of 9/11. *Newsweek* photographer Bill Biggart died while photographing the attack. Although all his clothing, belongings, three cameras, and seven rolls of exposed film were found, the most vivid indication “that he’d been at the scene of one of the world’s great conflagrations was a burned edge on his press card” (Adler 2001).

Collecting the Present

As the quarantined area of Ground Zero got smaller, the event got bigger. The epicenter may have been off limits, but the event was—and still is—everywhere. It is ambient. The disaster suffuses the life space. Smoke and dust, carried by the wind, coated the surfaces of the city. New York wore the disaster like a garment. We breathed that dust and inhaled particles of the dead that floated in the air. For W. Richard West, Jr., director of the National Museum of the American Indian, whose staff of 50 evacuated their offices as the Towers were collapsing, “Essentially, there was a mass human cremation, and that is part of the two inches of dust that’s on the ground and every surface” (in Harjo 2001).

Documentation has the task of going everywhere to capture everything—an impossible task. Given the sheer volume of images and words, the “map” (in this case, documentation) threatens to become the territory. Digital photographs, viewable on the spot, occupy the same moment and place as the event they record. They become part of the event in the very moment of their creation. The sheer volume of testimony and images in the months that followed make the documentation seem as if it were coterminous with the disaster. Documentation anticipates a future looking back. It attempts to secure an ephemeral experience of a durable site for future recall.

Not only photography, but also archiving, is being undertaken by amateurs and professionals alike. Within six months of the attack, eBay, the world’s largest online auction, was posting a 9/11 multimedia archive on CD-ROM that includes emergency radio calls for help. Declaring that “‘You cannot understand the magnitude of the destruction unless you see it at ground zero,’ that’s what everyone who has seen it has said,” the auction encourages potential buyers to identify with

survivors, witnesses, and rescue workers, as well as with the victims. The CD-ROM archive is billed as follows: “This archive will give you the experience of having been at ground zero. It’s an experience you will not forget” (eBay 2002). The experience in question is that of the archive itself. This CD-ROM is but one of hundreds of objects associated with 9/11 events that continue to be auctioned on eBay. As the anniversary of 9/11 approached, critic Richard Goldstein was not alone in feeling that “Mourning in America never ends until the last commemorative coin is sold. Closure is another word for nothing left to show” (Goldstein 2002).

The present is generally the preserve of the anthropologist, the ethnographer. It has been said that for the present to become history, 50 years must pass. But history’s famous actors, not least of which are our own American presidents, work in the present to control their historical legacy. 9/11 has created the powerful sense that one is a witness to one’s own experience and obligated to record it in some way. This takes historically specific forms tailored to the events themselves, whether *Oyneg shabes*, Ringelblum’s project, or the *Here Is New York* installation. Both were born of the responsibility for ensuring that a historical experience will be remembered. Both raise the question of what should be collected and preserved. From a museological perspective, 9/11 is everywhere. How do you collect a present that is already historical?

Within a matter of days, individuals and groups created web sites to remember the victims, record survivors’ stories, determine whether legends and rumors are true or false, offer messages of consolation, make proposals for memorials or rebuilding at the site of the disaster, gather images, and invite artists to respond creatively. Recognizing the power of the Internet to document this historic moment, the Library of Congress, in collaboration with the Internet Archive and webArchivist.org, began collecting web sites within hours of the attack and launched <<http://september11.archive.org>>, a site that now contains 5 terabytes of data and is still growing.

Not only images, documents, web sites, and artifacts, but also sound is being collected; audio files, some of them radio broadcasts, are online. A day after the attack, the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress immediately organized a project to interview people about their reaction to the trauma, as close to the events as possible. They were inspired by the interviews that Alan Lomax conducted in 1941 just after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Some folklorists felt unprepared to interview people about traumatic events so close to their occurrence. The material they gathered now forms the basis for *Looking Back: 9/11 Across America*, which is described as “an acoustic exhibit presenting American voices in the aftermath of attack.” Based on 300 hours of recordings, this 37-minute audio exhibit is not only available online, but also was distributed on CD-ROM to public radio stations and to groups who were encouraged to play the CD-ROM in a quiet space as a way to remember and reflect on the events of 9/11. The program was played in the Orientation Theatre of the Jefferson Building at the Library of Congress 11–14 September 2002 for the anniversary of 9/11 (Duke University 2002).

Columbia University’s Oral History Research Office is conducting interviews across the country for *Narrative Networks: The World Trade Center Tragedy* at three points in time: immediately, in the wake of the disaster, six months later, and two years after. This project is informed by two ideas: Stories are a way to make sense of our experiences and responses to the catastrophe are extraordinarily diverse. The initiative for oral histories is also coming from groups with particular interests or professions, for example, the Bellevue Alumnae Center for Nursing History is interviewing nurses who were involved in responding to 9/11.

The Uniformed Firefighters Union, however, resisted the efforts of department

officials to create an oral history of the experience of firefighters at the disaster site because they suspected that the interviews were a pretext for a criminal investigation. Fire department officials wanted to identify precisely where each man had died, not only to better understand why so many firefighters perished, but so that mourning families could know what happened to their loved ones. The interviews, which were to be conducted close to the time of the event, while memories were fresh, included such straightforward and open-ended questions as, “Where were you that morning?” and “What did you see?” (Baker 2001:B10). Although such questions are routine in disciplinary investigations and certainly not unusual in oral history interviews, the union did not trust the interviewers. While safety interviews are standard procedure, the union objected to the use of “shoeflies,” slang for interviewers from the Bureau of Investigation and Trials, and video cameras. The union instructed firemen to refuse to be interviewed, except by qualified fire chiefs and without video cameras (see Uniformed Firefighters Association 2001a). The union was also concerned that such interviews could be harmful, given the mental state of traumatized firefighters and their overlooked need for crisis counseling. In addition, the union objected to the use of Safety Operating Battalion chiefs as interviewers because the fire department closed their one Safety Operating Battalion in order to free the chiefs to conduct interviews that were strictly historical and not safety or fatal fire-related interviews (see Uniformed Firefighters Association 2001b). In the context of internal and external investigations into what went wrong with the emergency response, “the Fire Department and the city’s Law Department have taken the position that oral history interviews of firefighters about the events of Sept. 11 are secret documents that can never be disclosed to the public” (Dwyer and Flynn 2002:1). The line between oral history interview and inquiry has been blurred. Nonetheless, many firefighters have agreed to be interviewed, some interviews have been released, and *Firehouse Magazine* has run stories of firefighters who worked at Ground Zero.

Firefighters generally avoid the limelight and some did not want to be celebrated as heroes, particularly when so many of their brothers perished while they survived. If anything, the adulation made the grief harder to bear (Luo 2002). Moreover, internal investigations and aggressive reporting by the *New York Times* reveal that many firefighters died needlessly. They would have escaped if not for failures of communication, command, and control, which raise issues of accountability. Not only did their radio system fail to work properly but also it was not linked to the police radio system, which warned police officers to evacuate. Most of them escaped. Some firefighters wrote their social security numbers on their forearms with marker, a poignant sign of what they anticipated as they entered the burning towers. With as many as 20 services a day, the Uniformed Firefighters Association stressed the importance of participation, given that “we have multiple services every day that make large showings virtually impossible” (2001c).

The *Sonic Memorial Project*, established by the producers of the NPR series *Lost and Found Sound*, started collecting audio artifacts right after the attacks, with the goal of preserving “sound that captures the life and spirit of the World Trade Center’s three-decade history as well as sound related to the events of September 11, 2001.” Keenly aware of the fragile and ephemeral nature of these “accidental documentaries,” which tend to be erased or lost, they continue to solicit “voicemail messages, dictation tapes, corporate videos, tourist videos, oral histories, recorded business transactions, recordings of concerts and events in the Plaza, and video e-mails sent from the WTC Observation Deck” (Corporation for Public Broadcasting 2002). Verizon, the New York area local phone company, suspended its policy of automatically deleting old voice mail greetings and messages, so that those recorded on the morning of 9/11 could be saved to cassette. They were not only of evidentiary value, but also were treasured mementos for the bereaved fam-



11. Writing in dust on a fire truck near Ground Zero (13 September 2001). (Photo © Martha Cooper)

ilies (George 2001). The cockpit recordings from the doomed planes are also sonic artifacts, even if they cannot be made public. Some of the families of those who perished in the plane that crashed into a field in Philadelphia were brought together in a closed room to listen to the cockpit recording, with the understanding that they would not reveal its contents.

The *Sonic Memorial Project* has now amassed:

tapes of weddings atop the World Trade Center, recordings of the buildings' elevators and revolving doors, home videos made by a lawyer in his 42nd floor office, sounds of the Hudson riverfront, recordings of late night Spanish radio drifting through the halls as Latino workers clean the offices, an

interview with the piano player at Windows on the World sharing his recollections, video e-mail greetings that tourists sent from the kiosks on the 110th floor, voicemail messages from people who worked in the World Trade Center. (Sonic Memorial Project 2002)

Materials were collected in a variety of ways, including a voice mailbox that NPR created, as well as from talk radio, for example, “On the Line,” Brian Lehrer’s program on WNYC. Samples from the collection are now online and continue to provide the basis for radio programs, including “The Building Stewardesses,” “Walking High Steel,” “Radio Row: The Neighborhood before the World Trade Center,” “Stories of Love & Marriage atop the World Trade Center,” and many others that were planned for the anniversary of 9/11 (Everhart 2002). Taking a different approach, “On the Edge of Ground Zero,” a Soundprint radio documentary, recorded 24 hours along the perimeter of Ground Zero from 7:00 A.M. on 12 December to 7:00 A.M. on 13 December. The web site is organized as a timeline, with clocked images, journal entries, and audio files (Abumrad 2002).

Just as there is anxiety about taking photographs and flocking to the disaster site—this behavior has been compared to ambulance chasing and rubbernecking at car crashes—there is uneasiness about collecting the remains of a disaster before the body is cold. These issues have been raised with respect to *Missing: Last Seen at the World Trade Center, September 11, 2001*, an exhibition featuring between 175 and 210 fliers of missing persons that has been traveling around the United States (Jones 2002). An estimated 500 to 700 families created and posted about 100,000 fliers. Rumors that victims were lying unconscious and unidentified in hospitals or wandering around in a daze near the disaster site prompted some to post as many as 500 or even 1,000 copies of a single flier. Louis Nevaer collected and saved more than 400 different posters. He was assisted by the National Guardsmen at the Armory, whose outer walls were covered with fliers. The Armory housed the Family Assistance Center. A writer, editor, and activist, Nevaer received some financial support for the exhibition from the Mesoamerica Foundation, a Mexican nonprofit organization for which he worked.

12. Papers from the World Trade Center were carried by gusts of winds as far as Brooklyn. They were collected and incorporated into spontaneous memorials like this one, a memorial wall created by the legendary graffiti artist Chico on Avenue A at 14th Street in Lower Manhattan (14 September 2001). (Photo by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett)



Reporting on the exhibition at the Artists' Museum in Washington, DC, which coincided with the six-month anniversary of 9/11, Garance Franke-Ruta was disturbed by what she characterized as a "jarring, tasteless presentation of some of September 11's most powerful fragments" (Franke-Ruta 2002). While she admired Nevaer's intentions—to provide an opportunity for the people outside New York to know, mourn, and honor those who died—she questioned the way the exhibition was installed. First, she objected to the aestheticization of the fliers: only the colored ones were shown (the black-and-white ones were considered less compelling) and the fliers were framed. Second, such material deserved a more prestigious venue than the "middlebrow" Artists' Museum. Third, "the show's March 8 opening struck an offensively irreverent tone: Gallery-goers wandered amidst the posters drinking glasses of chardonnay while live jazz music thrummed in the background from a band playing in another gallery down the hall" (Franke-Ruta 2002).⁸

Having been in New York when the fliers covered the walls of the city, Franke-Ruta was painfully aware of the inadequacy of the gallery installation, even though it did include photographs of the fliers in situ and condolence books. What this exhibition missed was attention to what Jan Ramirez, director of the New-York Historical Society, called "a threshold experience from a design perspective," which the Society's *Missing: Streetscape of a City in Mourning* sought to address. Some families "weren't ready to have their loved ones historicized so quickly," according to Ramirez (in Franke-Ruta 2002). One way that the New-York Historical Society's *Missing* exhibition addressed this problem was to display photographs of posters and memorials in context, and to bring elements from shrines—and in some cases the shrine itself, with missing fliers still attached—into the gallery. There were refreshments at the opening, but they were served in a hallway, not in the galleries themselves. As was the case with the *Here Is New York* and *Exit Art* installations, the photographs were deliberately not framed. As a result, the installation felt more like the street than an art gallery, in keeping with its character as a memorial in its own right. As Maya Lin noted, any effort to re-create "the magic of the makeshift" would produce "a totally different experience," because the power of these self-organizing memorial efforts lies in the "spontaneity of raw, pure emotion" (Lin 2002).

There is an understandable discomfort about taking historical distance in the heat of the moment: Wait for historical distance, or seize the moment? As cameraman Evan Fairbanks reflected, "this event just became instant history" (in Mandell 2001:1). That is how it was experienced. An arrested moment. How then to deal with that experience in an historically responsible way? The New-York Historical Society and the Municipal Art Society took a nimble approach in their efforts to capture the moment and were already preparing exhibitions within weeks of the event. As Kenneth Jackson, president of the New-York Historical Society, remarked: "My gut instinct was that this is the most important event in New York City history, and that it was right in front of my face" (in Collins 2002:A14).

A Year Later

Some institutions, like the Museum of the City of New York, have taken a slow approach to creating exhibitions that deal with the disaster, preferring more distance from the events and a more selective approach to the collection of iconic artifacts for telling the story. Not surprisingly, the museum commissioned Ralph Appelbaum, who is famous for his storytelling approach to museums, to design the exhibitions in what were to be its new quarters in the Tweed Courthouse downtown. Mayor Bloomberg has nixed that plan. This and other museums have



13. & 14. Recovered briefcase and curator's notes. According to the curator's notes, this briefcase was recovered from the World Trade Center wreckage and returned to Lisa Lefler, an Aon Risk Services employee who escaped. As David Shayt (*September 11 Collecting Curator, Division of Cultural History, National Museum of American History*) explained, it is "not the sort of thing we would collect unless it had some extraordinary, indelible story." (<<http://americanhistory.si.edu/september11/collection/record.asp?ID=41>>)

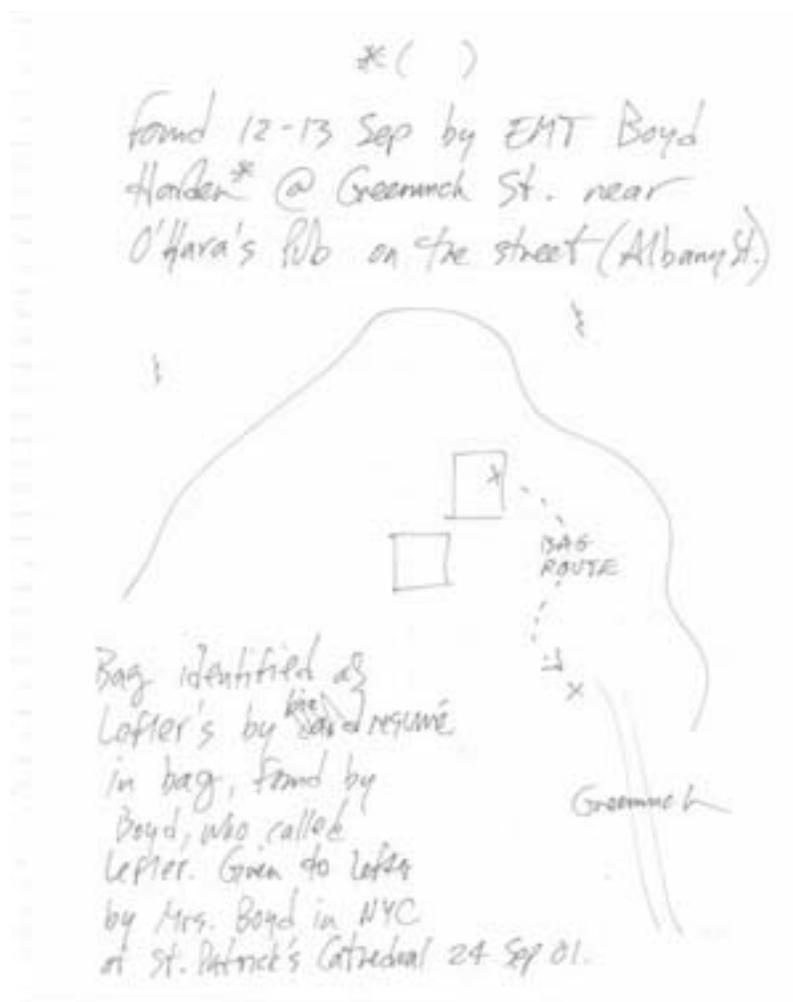
been collecting such iconic objects as a crushed fire truck, "a pair of muddy boots, respirators and masks, dust from the windowsills of Battery Park City, even the clothes worn by Mayor Giuliani," and a twisted venetian blind (Pollock 2001:56). The Museum of the City of New York has even added the "Wall of Prayer" to its collection. This spontaneous assemblage of images and messages on a construction site fence was located at one of the entrances to Bellevue Hospital. This kind of collecting is more like the time capsule—items from the present in anticipation of the future—than an archaeological record, though archeologists were vital to the forensic effort while Ground Zero remained a crime scene; that evidence will become part of the historical record as well.

The New York Fire Museum collected stories and photographs in preparation for an exhibition in September 2002. They focused on stories and photographs that document both the rescue effort and the many memorials to firefighters who perished trying to save others. The Smithsonian Institution has used the time between the attack and its first anniversary to solicit material for *September 11: Bearing Witness to History*, an exhibition that is occupying 5,000 square feet of the National Museum of American History from 11 September 2002 to 11 January 2003. This exhibition features amateur and professional photographs, about 50 artifacts that include everything from fragments of the World Trade Center to Mayor Giuliani's baseball cap and cell phone, a video montage of news coverage, the stories of individual witnesses, and an area for visitors to record their own stories in a variety of formats. The exhibition is like a memorial in character. A special preview of this was organized for the families of those who perished, without any media present.⁹

Leading up to the opening on 11 September 2002, the project posted materials in the online *September 11 Digital Archive*, which solicits responses and makes them available online.¹⁰ Of special interest is the collection of 2,000 weblogs, or blogs, many of them created just after the attack.¹¹

Blogs, which often feature personal narratives of daily life and the expression of individual experience and feeling, have proven to be a powerful medium for dealing with the collective trauma of 9/11 and have attracted witnesses and survivors as well as "war bloggers." Blogs, a self-organizing phenomenon, are a prime form of micromedia, although corporations are starting to create them as well. While different from such projects as Exit Art's *Reactions* and *Here Is New York*, blogs share their participatory and grassroots qualities and some of the immediacy of photography (Blood 2000).¹² As Steven Levy notes, "The blog format lends itself to a new kind of reporting: on-the-spot recording of events, instantly beamed to the Net." Connected to the Internet, bloggers can take notes at conferences and upload them immediately so that others can follow the proceedings "like fans at baseball games listening to play-by-play on transistor radios" (Levy 2002).

With so many people taking their own pictures and creating their own web sites, and in light of highly successful projects like *Here Is New York*, which quickly met the need for a collective response, even the largest museums are making the curatorial process itself more inclusive. Some of them are trying to involve virtually all who are willing to tell their stories, contribute their photographs, or otherwise assist in the effort to record and reflect on what happened. There are, however,



differences in tone, set by the rules of engagement. The request for material generally includes instructions not to send unsolicited material, but rather to contact the museum first, and emphasizes greater curatorial control over what messages will be posted online and what materials will be included in the exhibition. Exit Art, in contrast, accepted and exhibited everything that came in.

The American Association of Museums and the Institute of Museum and Library Services issued a call to action, "Celebrate America's Freedoms: A Day of Remembrance," with suggestions for how museums might commemorate 9/11 (American Association of Museums 2002). Museums were encouraged to work closely with their local communities in planning events. Many museums developed special exhibitions and programs and honored local rescue workers; hosted concerts, ceremonies, and dialogues; and provided opportunities for visitors to reflect upon and express their thoughts and feelings in journals, murals, and albums. Some created collective memorials in such forms as quilts, paper cranes, time capsules, and floral displays. Museums were encouraged to extend their hours and many offered free admission to these commemorative events.

Many museums commemorated the occasion with patriotic displays and affir-

mations of such American values as freedom, tolerance, and the willingness to die for one's country. The Barona Cultural Center and Museum, a tribal museum in Lakeside, California, honored their Native American veterans, five of whom are Purple Heart recipients. The Allentown Art Museum in Pennsylvania presented *Americans by Choice: Photographs of Arab Americans in New York*, derived from the larger exhibition on this subject at the Museum of the City of New York; the public programs that accompanied this exhibition explored Arab American responses to 9/11. Many museums have developed special ceremonies, ranging from a parade of fire trucks to sound their sirens at the close of the ceremonies (Cincinnati Museum Center) to the ringing of the American Freedom Bell every hour (Charlotte Museum of History). Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which displayed handwritten documents, including letters from Thomas Jefferson and a signed copy of the Declaration of Independence, asked visitors to record their responses to 9/11 in longhand on special heavy paper. The responses will be bound into cloth books and enter the museum's collection. Focusing on the themes of freedom and what it means to be an American, several museums, particularly those devoted to American history, have developed programs that include the national anthem, pledge of allegiance, displays of flags, and honoring of war veterans. The Sam Rayburn Museum in Bonham, Texas, sponsored a "Patriotic Window Dressing Contest" (American Association of Museums 2002).

Jewish Resonances and Responses

While the attacks on 9/11 targeted the United States rather than any particular group, those events were experienced differently in various communities. In what ways is 9/11 also a Jewish story and who will tell that story? Certainly, there were Jewish victims, but they were not singled out as Jews. Rather, the diversity of the victims is one of the hallmarks of the event, as was the fusing of "American identity and American Jewish identity," in the words of Alan Dershowitz, which appeared in the 14 September edition of the *Forward* (in Eden 2001). Missing notices and memorials to Jews who died in the attacks can be found alongside those of everyone else. Given their long history of responding to violence that was targeted specifically at Jews, are Jewish museums equipped to respond to an event like this—an event that had its Jewish victims, but did not single them out for being Jewish? Who is documenting Jewish experiences and responses to the events of 9/11? Who is collecting material, conducting interviews, and planning exhibitions that will bring the perspective of Jewish museums to this event?

The *New York Times* reported on students from Stern College for Women who sat shifts guarding the dead outside the New York Medical Examiner's Office, where a morgue, renamed Memorial Park, had been improvised in refrigerated trucks that parked within a large tent. The *Forward* reported on the role of the Hatzolah Orthodox volunteer ambulance corps in speeding injured rescue workers to New York University Hospital; the dilemma of celebrating joyous holidays, like Simchat Torah, in the midst of tragedy; and lessons learned from Holocaust survivors about "survivor guilt," collective mourning, and pervasive sense of vulnerability.

Jewish organizations issued guidelines and curricula to assist Jews in responding to the tragedy. These documents suggested appropriate prayers (Kaddish, El Malei Rakhmim), rituals (lighting a memorial candle), activities (donating blood, visiting the sick, giving charity, reciting and studying sacred texts), and psychological advice (Jewish Education Center of Cleveland 2001).¹³ Jewish communal events became memorial services and the question arose of how to conduct synagogue services under such circumstances. Should the liturgy be left alone or should the congregation argue with it? Those who attended services found themselves "peo-

ple spotting” to determine who was missing. Empty pews were a bad sign (Cooper 2002).¹⁴

There are even Jewish 9/11 artifacts—or, at least, artifacts that have a special resonance after 9/11: The Workmen’s Circle Bookstore is offering T-shirts with the familiar “I Love New York” slogan emblazoned on them in Yiddish. Profits of the sales will go to funds providing relief for the 9/11 disaster. Umbrellas with the Yiddish slogan are also available. The Orthodox community has produced its own video and book.¹⁵

Jews also expressed feelings of vulnerability: not only was America under attack, but also Jews were being blamed. Muslim extremists identified Jews with New York City and with American capitalism.¹⁶ Americans were blaming Jews for the close ties between the United States and Israel. According to a rumor that circulated shortly after the attacks, Jews working in the World Trade Center had received phone calls from Israel warning them not to go to work on 9/11 (Snopes.com 2001). Israelis noted that now Jews in the United States would know what it is like to live with terrorism on their front steps; Americans know terrorism from movies, in contrast with the Israeli reality, according to Doron Rosenblum, commentator for the liberal Israeli newspaper *Ha’aretz* (2001). Jewish communal leaders anticipated that the terrorist attacks would make Americans realize what Israelis face on a daily basis (Eden 2001). Perhaps the United States and its allies would finally realize that terrorism is not just Israel’s problem. Jews, like many other Americans, have expressed grave concerns over the erosion of civil liberties and anti-immigrant sentiment in the name of national security.

The Museum of Jewish History: A Living Memorial of the Holocaust prepared a special exhibition for the anniversary of 9/11, entitled *Yahrzeit: September 11 Observed*, in keeping with the Jewish tradition to observe the anniversary of a death. This museum is not only located a few blocks from Ground Zero, but also on a landfill created from the earth that was dug out to create the foundation for the World Trade Center. In April 2002 curator Jill Vexler put out a call for objects or documents associated with 9/11 and the days immediately following, as well as attempts to memorialize the missing or dead; responses in synagogues, churches, and mosques, schools and businesses; and volunteer efforts (Vexler 2002).

Mirroring Evil

The Jewish Museum in New York delayed the opening of its controversial exhibition *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery, Recent Art* from fall 2001 to 17 March–30 June 2002. Five years in the making and controversial under any circumstances, the exhibition now found itself in a context it could never have anticipated. Shortly after the attacks, President Bush declared in Biblical tones, “We are in a conflict between good and evil, and America will call evil by its name”—with God on the side of good. Putting the world on notice, he declared that you are either with us or against us. He referred to this war as a “Crusade” and to the war in Afghanistan as “Operation Infinite Justice,” to the protest of Muslims, who insisted that only God could mete out infinite justice, after which the name was changed to “Operation Enduring Freedom.” Osama bin Laden became “the evil one.” Provoking protests at home and abroad, Bush identified an “axis of evil,” which included Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, and was later expanded to include Cuba, Libya, and Syria.

Such statements, with allusions to Satan and Armageddon, applied simple dichotomies to complex situations and served to foreclose public debate. When President Bush asked, “Why do they hate us?” he was not calling for the kind of self-scrutiny envisioned by *Mirroring Evil*. The Jewish Museum intended *Mirroring Evil* as a “cautionary tale,” a warning about the potential for evil in all of us and in

our own society (and not as a Holocaust memorial). The exhibition featured the work of 13 contemporary artists under the age of 50 who make conceptual and installation art and work in various media, including photography, digital media, film, and sculpture. Four of them are Jewish. The others are Polish, German, Austrian, English, Scottish, and French. All the works in the exhibition use Nazi imagery, with the exception of Alan Schechner's *Bar Code to Concentration Camp Morph* and *Self-Portrait at Buchenwald: It's the Real Thing*, both of them digital works. In the latter image, the artist has inserted himself into the famous Margaret Bourke-White photograph of prisoners in their barracks after the American liberation of Buchenwald in 1945. The artist, who wears a striped uniform and holds a red can of Diet Coke, is standing amid inmates.

Except for Schechner, the artists in the exhibition do not focus on the Holocaust in their work. The Holocaust is but one of several themes in larger projects dealing with mass culture, fashion, consumption, capitalism, and conformism. These artists create works that actively engage and unsettle the viewer. Zbigniew Libera, who created the *Lego Concentration Camp* set, is interested in the moral provocation of surreal objects. Roe Rosen's *Live and Die as Eva Braun: Hitler's Mistress, in the Berlin Bunker and Beyond—An Illustrated Proposal for a Virtual-Reality Scenario, Not to be Realized*, asks the viewer to identify with Eva Braun as she and Hitler have their last sexual encounter, recounted in sweaty detail, just before Hitler kills her and commits suicide.

One inspiration for the exhibition's interpretive framework was Susan Sontag's famous 1975 essay "Fascinating Facism," which connected the appeal of fascist design in the past, as seen in everything from posters to uniforms, to the sexualizing of fascist trappings today ([1975] 1980).¹⁷ Some of the artists and interpretive text panels in the exhibition highlighted similarities between advertising and propaganda as instruments for the engineering of consent, the dangers of conformism, and the decadence of consumption. *Obsession*, a video by Maciej Toporowicz, took as its point of departure affinities between fascist aesthetics, such as the cult of beauty and idealization of the body, and contemporary preoccupations with brands, fashion, and physical perfection as exemplified in Calvin Klein advertisements. After the 9/11 attack on the symbol of world finance, such critiques of capitalism seemed either trivial or too close to the knuckle, if more germane than ever, given that one answer to the question "Why do they hate us?" is that mass media and consumer society erode Islamic values by promoting alcohol and drugs, promiscuity, materialism, and immorality.

Even before 9/11, there were concerns that equating the evils of the Holocaust with the evils of capitalism trivialized and demeaned the Holocaust, while some of the artists insisted that Holocaust indoctrination and mass media had already done the job. Some argued that the artists and the exhibition glamorized Nazis or that the identificatory exercise would make the Nazis "understandable" and viewers sympathetic. Others expressed concern that the Holocaust was off limits when it comes to fictive liberties and playful speculation, even for art (see Lang 2000; Langer 1998).

Mirroring Evil created a context for these works, which were brought together because they shared an irreverent approach to Holocaust representation, which is thought to indicate a shift in sensibility and iconography associated with a younger generation. This generation is said to know the Holocaust largely through mass media and to have become unresponsive to Holocaust memorials, museums, and curricula created by earlier generations. In contrast with most Holocaust art, which focuses on victims and their experience, this work was selected for its use of Nazi imagery, itself a kind of taboo, and the staging of scenarios that encourage the viewer to identify with the perpetrators as a way of discovering their own capacity for evil or the "little Nazi within us" (Grossman 1999).¹⁸

However, right after 9/11, how could this exhibition ask visitors to speculate about their own potential for evil, when they had just been traumatized by a devastating attack? A speculative exercise had been upstaged by an actual event. Visitors would be coming to the exhibition with a profound sense of their own vulnerability. Their overwhelming sense of victimhood was already being mobilized to strengthen patriotic support for the war on terrorism, understood as a war on evil. It was no more possible to expect Americans to identify with terrorists in order to discover their own potential for evil, than for Holocaust survivors to identify with their victimizers in order to find “the little Nazi within us.” In the wake of 9/11, Holocaust survivors reported flashbacks: “This is a catastrophe with fire, a catastrophe with ash, a catastrophe with missing people, of bodies incinerated without recovery. This is something we went through with six million” (Rabbi Tzvi H. Weinreb quoted in Wakin 2001:B9). As another survivor who objected to the exhibition commented, “If I were a whale, [...] would I want to see a show made of scrimshaw?” (Merken 2002). While this comparison captures a prevalent misapprehension of what the exhibition was about, it does index objections to the instrumentalization of the Holocaust and the limits of the Holocaust as an object lesson.

Within a short time, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict escalated, Ariel Sharon cited America’s war on terrorism as his mandate for Israel’s military responses to the suicide bombings, and President Bush’s “crisp” message about good and evil, which had prevailed in American policy on Afghanistan, failed in what came to be seen as the gray area of Middle East policy. Israelis and Palestinians called each other Nazis, Palestinians compared their situation to Auschwitz and Buchenwald, and favorable American foreign policy on Israel was attributed, at least in part, to the American Jewish electorate (see Hoffman and al-Mansour 2002).¹⁹ This subject was also too volatile as a basis for identificatory exercises that would require each side to see themselves in the mirror of the other in order to envision themselves as potential victimizers or as the evil the other sees.²⁰

The exhibition became a lightning rod for polarized debate even before it



15. *Axe Throw*, a French computer game on the Internet, lets you “Play with them like they play with you!” An “Evil” that cannot be located and captured is fueling a shadow war that uses voodoo violence to do to an elusive enemy what the war on the ground could not. (<<http://www.uzinagaz.com>>)



16. *Imagining a rebuilt lower Manhattan has prompted numerous satiric reactions, from redesigned twin towers through which airplanes can fly to a skyline of mosques, among the many responses to the speculation “If the Taliban wins...”* Contributed by Betzabe Jara Carreto to the Spanish humor website <<http://www.tonterias.com>>. (<<http://tonterias.iespana.es/tonterias/especial/torresgemelas/nuevastorres.jpg>>)

opened. While the exhibition had been delayed by about six months, the catalogue appeared on time and provoked considerable opposition to the project. The museum held firm in the face of demands that the exhibition be canceled and refused to remove the most offensive works. At the same time, the museum took pains to contextualize the works of art and the exhibition itself in a variety of ways, including intensive public programs organized in collaboration with the Animating Democracy Initiative.²¹ The museum placed warning labels in the exhibition, alerting visitors that some Holocaust survivors were offended by the work, moved the most provocative works behind a barrier so that visitors would have to seek them out, and provided a quick exit from the exhibition should visitors wish to leave without walking through the entire show. At the end of the exhibition, a video presented a range of viewpoints on the issues raised by the exhibition and a text panel alluding to the attack on the World Trade Center invited visitors to think about how this disaster would be remembered in the future. Visitors needed no reminder. They had already brought 9/11 with them into the galleries and left their thoughts in the visitors’

book: “If it [is] OK to depict ourselves as a victim of the Holocaust is it also OK to be a victim of the World Trade Center...? (3/31/2002).”

Finding a Moral Compass

The disaster is not limited to Ground Zero—to the “red zone,” or the “trauma zone” as it is also called (Glanz and Lipton 2002:A1; see also Rosenthal 2002)—and the six degrees of separation that link those closest to the catastrophe to everyone else. An open-ended war on terrorism has inspired a surge of patriotism and anti-immigrant sentiment in the name of national security: Note the opposition of Lynn Cheney, former head of the National Endowment of the Humanities and the wife of Vice President Cheney, to the promotion of tolerance and multicultural curricula. What we need, she said, is an America-first curriculum that would ensure children knew more about America. Multicultural curricula implied that Americans were at fault for not knowing more about Islam (WABC 2001). The idea of a nation at war has licensed the erosion of civil liberties, although, as the “war on terrorism” was being launched in Afghanistan, there were protests, and as the anniversary approached and talk of invading Iraq escalated, some commemorations of 9/11 called for peace.

An “Evil” that cannot be located and captured is fueling a shadow war that uses weapons of digital manipulation to paint the world Taliban—from the rebuilding of Manhattan with a skyline of mosques to Toys “R” Us, including Taliban Barbie and Tali-tubby. This is how the world will look “If the Taliban win...,” a phrase that accompanies many such images. Humor arrived belatedly, relative to the speed with which gallows humor has followed other crises, but once it did, voodoo violence on an elusive enemy did what the war on the ground could not.²² *Axe Throw*, a computer game, lets you “Play with them like they play with you!” (uzinagaz.com 2002). Humor uses weapons of degradation. Those weapons draw from the scatological (200 rolls of toilet paper bearing bin Laden’s portrait were sent to the Pentagon in March and can now be purchased at Ground Zero itself), phallic, bestial, and homophobic imagination in order to dehumanize, demonize,

and destroy the enemy. But, so too did our unfortunately named Office of Strategic Influence, which came under attack. By the end of February 2002, the decision was made to disband it. Such images may circulate with a warning label: “NOTE! Occasionally, some Pictures may be Tasteless, Tacky, and definitely NOT Politically Correct! In most cases, that’s what makes them so funny. Do not proceed if you are easily offended” (Strange-Cosmos 2002). They form a digital dime museum of hoax and joke, a tabloid of the really weird and weirdly real.

Equivocations

The catastrophe has produced a series of equivocal situations:

- Kodak moment or surrogate body?
- Crime scene or tourist attraction?
- Missing person notice or obituary?
- Cheap souvenir or involuntary memento?
- “Tragedy profiteering” or “a place to put your memory?”
- “Auction terrorists” or “guardians of memory?”
- Document or memorial?
- Interview or therapeutic encounter?
- Voyeurism or mourning?
- Thanotourism or pilgrimage?

Above all, the problem posed by documentation, whether through photographs or some other medium, is the presumed detachment associated with these activities.²³ When, where, and how should documentation of memorials be exhibited? Will those images exceed their documentary status to become living memorials in their own right? Can the institutional context of the museum or gallery accommodate the spontaneous memorial practices of visitors?

The question of a memorial arose within days of the disaster and, while New York City has many memorials commemorating other tragic events, such a memorial as this is unprecedented and has already been a subject of controversy. There have been temporary memorials, the most visible being the “Tribute in Light.” Originally proposed within two weeks of the disaster as the “Phantom Towers,” these beams of light reached into the sky from 11 March to 13 April 2002, to mark the six-month anniversary of the event. Julian LaVerdiere, one of the artists involved in this collaborative project, commented, “Those towers are like ghost limbs, we can feel them even though they’re not there anymore” (Myoda and LaVerdiere 2001:80). What you see in those beams of light are the pulverized towers—incandescent dust. When I looked up into the night sky, I could see airplanes flying through the columns of light. I tried to imagine what it was like for people in the planes to glide effortlessly through their ghostly presence.

There are no protocols for this situation. Should people have been allowed to see the site? Should they be permitted to take photographs? During the first few months after 9/11, the owner of NYC Tours refused to organize excursions whose sole destination was Ground Zero, but considered it important to stop at the disaster site in the context of a standard city tour (Saulny 2001:B1). While the city’s economy depends on tourism and those figures dropped precipitously after 9/11, there was reluctance to promote tourism that could be seen as profiting



17. *Wipe Out Terrorism*, an example of voodoo violence using weapons of degradation. Two hundred rolls of toilet paper bearing Bin Laden’s portrait were sent to the Pentagon in March 2002 and could be purchased at Ground Zero shortly thereafter. (<http://politicalhumor.about.com/library/graphics/osama_tp.jpg>)

from the tragedy. Besides, many tourists who did come to New York at this time, whether or not they went to the site, were in no mood to spend money and have a good time.

By December 2001, the restrictions were easing. Viewing platforms opened on 30 December. To alleviate the long lines and waiting, there were tickets, and even tickets were eliminated as access to the site was increased. Photographs were allowed. And, perhaps most telling of all, the language changed. Those visiting the site were no longer “tourists.” They had become “pilgrims,” although the *New York Times* estimates that New York’s hottest new attraction will draw 3.6 million visitors in 2002 (Blair 2002). Two weeks before the 2002 anniversary of 9/11, 2000 Harley bikers rode 262 miles, stopping at Somerset, Pennsylvania, where Flight 93 crashed, the Pentagon, and Ground Zero (Rosenstock 2002). Nonetheless, there are complaints that Ground Zero, which is being managed by the city’s Office of Emergency Management, not the New York City Convention and Visitors Bureau, is becoming another stop on the tourist itinerary, complete with tasteless souvenirs and trophy snapshots.³⁴ The World Trade Towers themselves have entered the pantheon of world wonders, posthumously.

Can the memory palace of the museum ever approximate the memory palace, the *musée imaginaire*, that the city itself has become?

Notes

1. Story told by Cicero in *De Oratore* and retold in Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (1966: 1–2).
2. This essay began as a series of over 30 e-mails—inspired by the one that Martha Cooper sent me right after the attack—which I transmitted during the days and months following 9/11. Each one was titled “Our Beautiful Towers, R.I.P. 1973–2001” and contained an image taken at the time (or related to the moment when) the e-mail was transmitted. I began writing during the first weeks after the attack, in the present tense, and published the first iteration of this essay as “Our Beautiful Towers,” in *Santid & Museer* (Museums & the Present), 3–4 (2001), which is published quarterly by Samdok, a network of Swedish cultural history museums that collaborate on documenting contemporary life. Since then, the essay has evolved. I moved it into the past tense and continued to update it as the anniversary of 9/11 approached. I would like to thank Martha Cooper, Lorie Novak, Diana Taylor, Mariana Hirsch, Barbie Zelizer, Jeffrey Shandler, Emily Socolov, Leshu Torchin, the Memory Matters project, and students in “Museum Theatre” and “Tourist Productions,” two courses that I taught in the Department of Performance Studies at the Tisch School of the Arts/NYU, during the fall of 2001. An earlier version of this article appeared on-line in the *Tactical Media Virtual Casebook: 9-11 and After*, edited by Barbara Abrash and Faye Ginsburg (New York University, 2002), <http://www.nyu.edu/fas/projects/vcb/case_911/pdfs/kodak.pdf>. Unless otherwise noted, all web sites mentioned were revisited on 18 October 2002 and were still current.
3. The project was initiated by Gilles Peress, a photographer with Magnum Photos who has documented the massacres in Bosnia and Rwanda, and Michael Shulin, a writer and one of the owners of the building, with the help of Charles Traub, a photographer and chair of the MFA Photography and Related Media program at School of Visual Arts in Manhattan, and Alice Rose George, a distinguished curator and photography editor for such magazines as *Details*, *Granta*, and *Fortune*. See <<http://www.hereisnewyork.org>>.
4. The information in this paragraph is taken from flyers handed out at the exhibition. See also <<http://hereisnewyork.org/about/>>.
5. The experience of the Museum of Jewish Heritage is detailed in Spilka (2002).
6. While the exhibition focuses on the Mohawk, skywalkers come from other Iroquois groups as well.
7. Doug Cuthand, who is a Native American filmmaker, reported on the role of the Akwasasne, about a thousand of whom work on high-rise construction, in Column 363 on his Blue Hills Productions web site (Cuthand n.d.).
8. Photographs of the installation at the Hiddenbrooke Golf Club in Vallejo, California (25 February–3 March 2002) show the fliers (or copies of them) unframed and affixed haphazardly to the walls with tape (City of Vallejo 2002).

9. This announcement appeared on the *Families of September 11* web site, <http://www.familiesofseptember11.org/events/eventdetail.asp?event_id=23>, which offers a comprehensive calendar of memorial events, including walks, masses, concerts, meetings, and receptions. Other activities listed on web sites from around the country include vigils, flag raisings, tree plantings, interfaith services, discussions, tributes, processions and parades, and Native American blessings.
10. The *September 11 Digital Archive* is a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution, the Museum of the City of New York, New-York Historical Society, City Lore: New York Center for Urban Folk Culture, the City University of New York's American Social History Project, and George Mason University's Center for History and New Media (2002a).
11. Their authors are part writer, compiler, editor, curator, and publisher. Weblogs vary widely; they may combine elements of the digital diary or journal, the personal web site, a guide to a subject, a collection of links, digests, essays, opinion, and quirky commentary. What distinguishes them from other kinds of web sites are the frequent, usually short, dated entries. Conciseness is highly valued, as are wittiness and attitude. The first weblogs appeared in 1997. Thanks to the introduction of blogging software in 1999, the blogging phenomenon has grown exponentially. By August 2002, there were an estimated half million weblogs (September 11 Digital Archive 2002b and 2002c). Although the weblog links listed in the references are no longer on the *September 11 Digital Archives* web site, they can still be reached at the URLs provided. Weblogs are not necessarily updated and include broken links and links to files that no longer exist.
12. Blood distinguishes between the earlier type of weblog, which was "a mix of links, commentary, and personal notes" that roamed the web at large, from the more recent type, which is more like a "short-form journal." The latter are updated, often more than once a day, and may engage in conversation with other blogs. Blogs attract their own fans and provide opportunities for digital fame. Perhaps because of the nature of the survey, this kind of activity was not noted in "The Commons of the Tragedy: How the Internet Was Used by Millions after the Terror Attacks to Grieve, Console, Share News, and Debate the Country's Response," by Lee Rainie, Director, and Bente Kalsnes, Research Assistant (2001).
13. The document is undated but was issued quickly and not long after September 11.
14. I would like to thank Adrienne Cooper for sharing these experiences with me on August 24, 2002.
15. Jeffrey Shandler called my attention to the video and CD-ROM, *Video Profiles in Heroism: September 11, 2001*, by Aryeh Gelbard (2002), and the Yiddish book, *Himl signaln* by Y.Y.S. (2002).
16. Consider then the implications of feeding bagels and cream cheese to the Muslim prisoners held in Guantánamo Bay (*New York Times* 2002 4:2).
17. "Fascinating Fascism" first appeared in the *New York Review of Books* (6 February 1975) and was reprinted in 1980. The essay was prompted by the publication of Leni Riefenstahl's *The Last of the Nuba* (1974), the introduction to which whitewashed Riefenstahl's career, and Jack Pia's *SS Regalia* (1974), which fetishized fascist trappings.
18. Quoted in Norman L. Kleeblatt, *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* (2001:97).
19. "Welcome to the World's Only Online Holocaust Museum Documenting the Israeli Holocaust Against the Arab People" was researched and curated by former AP (New York bureau) reporter Michael Hoffman and Assad Said al-Mansour (2002).
20. While not particularly audible, dissenting voices could be heard immediately and from various quarters, including religious communities. Some heard in Bush's declaration "to rid the world of evil" and to "bomb them back to the stone age" a program of extirpation echoing Hitler's "Final Solution." Others questioned the dualism, noting that America's war on evil was the mirror image of Bin Laden's war on evil, and called for Americans to look into the mirror (see Loy 2002).
21. The Animating Democracy Initiative was established in 1999 with the support of the Ford Foundation to strengthen the role of the arts in civic dialogue (1999).
22. See, for example, OnlineVigil.com <<http://www.onlinevigil.org/>>, NYCStories <<http://nycstories.com/>>, which includes links to World Trade Center stories and folklore, *Urban Legends Reference Pages* <<http://www.snopes2.com/index.html>>, *Arts Wire* <<http://www.artswire.org/current.html#news3>>, *The Onion* <<http://www.theonion.com/onion3734/index.html>>, and *Dang Funny* <<http://www.dangfunny.com>>.
23. Taking things a step further, "tragedy profiteering" created havoc on eBay, the auction web

- site. World Trade Center memorabilia, as well as newspapers printed at the time of the attack, went up for auction at inflated prices, “auction terrorists” placed false bids, many eBay users expressed disgust at the unseemly behavior, and eBay first implemented, and then lifted, a ban on selling such items.
24. Indeed, the NYC & Co. web page for Lower Manhattan has hardly been altered, except that the phantom towers have been slipped into the tourist itinerary as follows: “The ghost of the two greatest, the Twin Towers, now has a viewing platform on Liberty Street where visitors can pay their respects” (NYC & Co. 2002a). 9/11 is not included in the link to “Fun Facts About Lower Manhattan” at the bottom of the page (NYC & Co. 2002b).

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