



STREAM

Chapter 4



VERMONT

Old Cheney Road

near bridge

South Windham

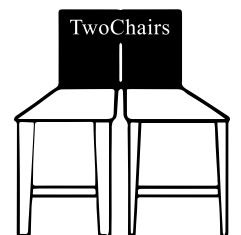
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Chapter 4

Saturday, August 5th
Sunday August 6th
12-5 PM
2017



Frank Chang
Xin Hao Cheng
Wallis Couverte
Allie Dercoli
Harun Farocki
Andrea Fraser
Juneau Projects
Manuela Ribadeneira
Mathew Sawyer
Adele Travisano



Stories

abound concerning
the history of this
site where the stream
crosses Old Cheney
Road continuing down
over a falls along Kibby
Camp Road.

If “the past is
constructed
from a set of
presently
existing
pieces”ⁱ
we are at a
disadvantage
because

**the past we are
addressing in this
exhibition lacks a
material foundation.**

No visible remnants
of this social use
remain though
most of the original
houses of the village
of South Windham
are still standing,
preserving the
outline of the
community’s early
built environment.

Some say that the
adjoining field was at
one time a millpond.
Others have said that
bricks were produced on
this site and that those
bricks were used in the
construction of nearby
houses.

The accounts were
compelling enough
for us to imagine this
stream and its
environs from a
wholly different
perspective, as a
productive site;
yielding water power
for a mill and bricks
for colonial American
homes.

This exhibition

transforms the site once again into a productive site;
producing not bricks or energy but
contemporary art reflecting back on this history.

Ruins embody a set of temporal
and historical paradoxes.
The ruined building is a
remnant of, and portal into,
the past; its decay is a concrete
reminder of the passage of
time. And yet by definition it
survives, after a fashion:
There must be a certain
(and perhaps indeterminate)
amount of a built structure still
standing for us to refer to it as a
ruin and not merely a heap of
rubble. At the same time, the ruin
casts us forward in time;
it predicts a future in which our
present will slump into similar

*disrepair or fall victim
to some unforeseeable calamity.
The ruin, despite its state of decay,
somehow outlives us.
And the cultural gaze that we turn
on ruins is a way of loosening
ourselves from the grip of
punctual chronologies, setting
ourselves adrift in time. Ruins are
part of the long history of the
fragment, but the ruin is a
fragment with a future; it will live
on after us despite the fact that
it reminds us too of a lost
wholeness or perfection.”ⁱⁱ*

**HARUN
FAROCKI**



The bricks dry in the sun
for a few weeks



Großgotttern / Germany



Harun Farocki's 2009 film *In Comparison* is a documentary without commentary comprised of scenes representing varied methods of brick making across cultures. Describing his intentions, Farocki writes:

*I would like to propose a film that contributes to the concept of work. That compares the work of a traditional society, like in Africa, in an early industrial society such as India, and in a highly developed industrial society, in Europe or Japan. The object of comparison is to be the work in building houses.*ⁱⁱⁱ



Farocki chose the production of bricks as the component element to consider the physical concept of work globally. Moving from intimate labor where bricks are formed by hand, nearly one at a time, to mechanized labor where the worker's hands rarely touch the bricks, Farocki's film outlines the organization of labor, that is, the varied means of production resulting in one of the most basic building materials. This focus on brick making emphasizes the essential role of labor that is meant to disappear in subsequent production across cultures and economies. Farocki captures the scenes where work is primary and visible, reconnected to rather than buried in human relations:

Amid this polyphonic array, the image of the hand dominates, positing a wide-ranging idea of labour that is as rich with meaning as a building block.^{iv}

**ANDREA
FRASER**

ACTIONS!
COUNTDOWN

MoMA Director



Glenn D. Lowry

Source of Wealth: Museum of Modern Art

Net Worth **NA**

MoMA compensation 2011 **\$1.8 M** [Bloomberg]

Made \$28,000, the annual grade #1
salary of a PASTA MoMA worker, in:

32 HOURS

Including salary, bonuses and housing allowance, Lowry is the highest-paid
museum director in the US.

MoMA Trustee



John Elkann

Source of Wealth: Inheritance, Fiat, Exor CEO, auto industry

Net Worth **NA**

Fiat compensation 2012 **\$4.7 M** [Bloomberg]

Made \$28,000, the annual grade #1 salary of a PASTA MoMA worker, in:

12 HOURS

Acquired 58.5% stake in Chrysler, mostly from the US Government, for \$2.2 B, while the US lost \$1.8 B of \$12 B in bailout funds. Exor is now negotiating with the UAW medical benefit trust for the remaining stake.

what it means to labor under capitalism whether making bricks or supporting an art institution like MoMA.

Andrea Fraser's *ACTIONS! Countdown* (2013) addresses labor by contrasting the amount of time it would take each member of the Museum of Modern Art board of Trustees to earn the yearly salary of an entry level MoMA staff member and PASTA union member (Professional and Administrative Staff Association). The quantification of production, implicit in Harock's film, is made explicit in Fraser's piece, with value further abstracted from labor and accumulated at an extreme remove to such an outsized degree that it is impossible to justify these numbers as anything but a violation of human rights. Fraser writes:

The disparity in the concentration of wealth in our society has grown so enormous that it almost can't be represented visually any more. If you had a bar graph comparing the chief executive's compensation to that of the lowest paid worker, there wouldn't even be a line to represent the lowest-paid worker. ^v

The works of Fraser and Harocki complement each other and together amplify

**XINHAO
CHENG**







In *The Naming of a River* (2012)

Xin Hao Cheng documents geology, commerce, history and representative daily activities that take place along a river in his hometown Kunming in Yunnan province.

Except for captions Cheng, like Farocki, withholds commentary. Juxtaposing geological time with that of humans, by contrasting photographic images of a sedimentary outcropping along the river with portraits of people working or spending leisure time on the riverside, Cheng haunts the present with the threat that this human activity will inevitably be erased by nature or progress. This threat runs through Cheng's project, as nature overtakes a derelict cement factory in the foreground of a modern bridge and urbanization creeps closer.

JUNEAU PROJECTS





Juneau Projects' sound work entitled *After Berwick* (2017) embodies the threat of near human extinction suggested by the existence of ruins:

A ruin is said to result from some man-made or natural disaster—an earthquake in Lisbon; Reformationist zeal in St. Andrews; a dioxin spill in an abandoned town in Ohio. So much human failure and misery from the recent past is tied up with ruins; postwar Hiroshima, post-meltdown Chernobyl, post-communist Eastern Bloc, Post-Katrina New Orleans. The remains of Berlin in 1945, or Detroit and Beirut today. Which exactly is the calamity that has determined contemporary artists interest in ruins?^{vi}

For Juneau Projects the event is “an imagined technological disaster” called ‘the Infocalypse’ prompting their exploration of “post-apocalyptic worlds and the potential usefulness of artists in these fictitious scenarios.”

**FRANK
CHANG**

STEAM-POWERED SAWMILL
To construct this scene, follow the steps in order.

ACTOR #1
(THE BOILER OPERATOR)







In contrast **Frank Chang's**
Scenic (Re)production (2017)
prompts a re-imagining of the past
and will consist of several stations
installed along the stream where
visitors will be able to improvise and
reenact the dynamics of power
production (water, steam) that
shaped the economic and natural
history of the site. Participants will
be invited to photograph the
landscape during these reenactments
using the vantage points provided at
each station, echoing the obligatory
scenic overlooks dotted along
highways and national parks as well
as historical tableaux fashionable in
the 19th century establishing the ruin
as a romantic concept.

**ALLIE
DERCOLI**





Allie Dercoli's
For I am an engine and
functions as
her Italian
'Handlebar Pete' who
Central
and B&O railroads
Pete lived, as an unwelcomed
boxcars working the rails
of America's empire.
and abstract idea
through correspondence
a brick mason
Dercoli's work
personal histories with
a nation now in
railroads abandoned
in favor of
The capstone of
an etched glass
a vibrational drawing
she hopped on a railway car

installation
I'm rolling on (2017)
a monument to
immigrant ancestor
built parts of the
Vermont
in the 19th century.
outsider in abandoned
to extend the reach
Home remained a distant
primarily experienced
with his father Geo,
in Italy.
interweaves
the fortunes of
decline—once active
over time
the automobile.
Dercoli's installation is
reproduction of
she made when
outside of Portland, Oregon.

**MANUELA
RIBADENEIRA**



Time travel, calamity and anecdote are all bundled together in **Manuela Ribadeneira's** *Breadcrumb or God's Particle* (2012, 2017 version for Vermont). The work consists of a meticulously produced enlargement, in bronze, of the breadcrumb, presumably from a baguette, dropped by a pigeon into an air vent on the surface above the accelerator ring of the Large Hadron Collider. This widely reported incident resulted in the overheating and temporary shut down of the largest machine in the world. In this 2017 version in Vermont the *Breadcrumb* will be accompanied by an interlocutor who will provide a brief account of the 2009 incident.



No device more effectively generates the effect of a doubling or bending of time than the work of art, a strange kind of event whose relation to time is plural. The artwork is made or designed by an individual or a group of individuals at some moment, but it also points away from that moment, backward to a remote ancestral origin, perhaps, or to a prior artifact, or to an origin outside of time, in divinity. At the same time it points forward to all its future recipients who will activate and reactivate it as a meaningful event. The work of art is a message whose sender and destination are constantly shifting.^{vii}

**WALLIS
COUVERTE**





Wallis Couverte's minimal neon

Either/Or=Versus (Brown, Green) (2017)

references energy; specifically water-power vs. carbon-based sources.

A cotton manufacturer of early nineteenth century Lancashire who decided to forgo his old water wheel and invest in a steam engine, erect a chimney and order coal from a nearby pit did not, in all likelihood, entertain the possibility that this act could have any kind of relationship to the extent of Arctic sea ice, the salinity of Nile Delta soil, the altitude of the Maldives, the frequency of droughts on the Horn of Africa, the diversity of amphibian species in Central American rain forests, the availability of water in Asian rivers or, for that matter, the risk of flooding along the Thames and the English coastline.^{viii}

Juxtaposing green neon in a diagram that describes the continuous circular flow of water with a diagram in brownish neon that comes to an abrupt stop signalled by two lines we know to signify pause encapsulates both the past and the future of our energy woes. Powered by solar it endorses renewable energy as the only path forward.

**ADELE
TRAVISANO**





Mathew Sawyer and **Adele Travisano** directly address the notion of ruins in their respective projects. **Adele Travisano's** small contemplative series of paintings entitled *Provincetown Sea Bricks* (2013-2016) foreshadow the inevitable future of the building materials the viewer has witnessed being produced in Farocki's film. The paintings of worn bricks found along the coastline in Provincetown exhibited alongside the bricks themselves document actual remnants of our past and act as reminders that the ocean is a passive depository of this past returning it to us in bits and pieces. The act of painting memorializes this building detail rendering it a memento of civilization and its decay.

**MATHEW
SAWYER**



FUCK
YOU



Finally, **Mathew Sawyer**'s work aptly titled ***FUCK YOU to the future (without me)*** (2014) is intended to end up as an actual ruin. The phrase 'Fuck You' consisting of letters cast in cement is buried with the idea they will return to the surface someday. Its aggressively pessimistic message is not without hope if we think of the suggested alternative—is there a way to work towards a future where our collective actions subvert Sawyer's message. The prospect of our future global ruin is cataclysmic. In light of the current dismal outlook for our planet, the time for collective action has passed and is now.

REFERENCE:

ⁱ Susan Stewart, 'Separation and Restoration' *Ruins: Documents of Contemporary Art* edited by Brian Dillon 36. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011.

ⁱⁱ Brian Dillon, 'Introduction//A Short History of Decay' *Ruins: Documents of Contemporary Art* edited by Brian Dillon 11. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011.

ⁱⁱⁱ Harun Farocki, <http://www.german-documentaries.de/films/28132>

^{iv} <http://www.german-documentaries.de/films/28132>

^v Andrea Fraser, <http://www.palmbeachdailynews.com/entertainment/arts-theater/residents-figure-andrea-fraser-art-world-critiquewhitespace/oqrf3Jv7zrsDCzPDJaDgRP/>

^{vi} Gilda Williams, 'It Was What It Was' 2010, *Ruins: Documents of Contemporary Art* edited by Brian Dillon 97. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011.

^{vii} Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* 9. New York: Zone, 2010.

^{viii} Andreas Malm, *Fossil Capital: The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming* 2. London: Verso, 2016.



Courtesy to the artists

Frank Chang, Xin Hao Cheng, Wallis Couverte
Allie Dercoli, Harun Farocki, Andrea Fraser, Juneau Projects
Manuela Ribadeneira, Mathew Sawyer, Adele Travisano

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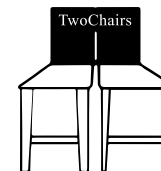
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In Memory of
WOLFGANG BERKOWSKI

1960 - 2017

