

ALLEY CULTURE

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DETROIT CEREMONY AND ART

FOUNDED 1995

Everything's fine, we hope. At any given moment around the planet, many voices entreat hope together, apart, silently, aloud. It's what we do to enhance the definition we accept; nudge expectations toward the fulfillment of desires. A word that brings with it no direct objects yet a myriad of usages, lists garnered from utterances between maybe to perhaps. How frequently we turn to this describing an emotion that exhorts the need to want enough to include the crapshoot of chance to bring us to a place beyond the deficit of our own physical attainments! From spilling of sheep blood on the altar to a throw of the dice along the felt-top table, from night time rituals against being devoured in the cave to furtive wishes to see the bomb land elsewhere but the backyard, the idea of hope hasn't changed much with civilization's demands even if the word's meaning has been flung in more than a few directions. Some moments in antiquity seemed the kindest. An early symbol of hope was the anchor, elegant sign used by stonemasons and then Christians. Where found in Old English (hopian) to Middle High German (hoffen) languages the base meaning was trust. Too bad it didn't stick around longer. When is the last time you heard the pleasantry, "I trust you're alright?" It has that slightly rhetorical air of confidence to put inquirer and inquired upon in a place of mutual comfort and agreeable knowledge, unlike the question fraught with a measure of upsetting some hidden balance, "I hope you're alright." And so onward, meanings adding up along with materials over the timelines. Virtue, promise, propitious, children named Hope, hope chests, Hope Diamond, Health Opportunity for People Everywhere. And along the way not all hope was hopeful or hoped for. Consider the *forlorn hope*, that group of persons sent on a perilous course of action, a desperate enterprise waiting. And the racially charged demand for *white hope*, feeding the dark attitudes of hatred and discrimination. The mixed messages abound: hoping for everything from rain to the god's smiling countenances, to being exhorted on by writings from existential decision that "man has no right to hope" to anarchist declaration: "The hopeless don't revolt because Revolution is an act of hope." (Kropotkin) As time's modernization gives our days the appearance of speeding up, words rush past their intended meanings into new language usage snares. It seems this panacea for the desire to change troubles is heading down the pejorative slope toward further reduction into casual "how you doin'" status. Our era is no different from any other. Words adapt with the regularity of event changes. Not for nothing they say, "In war, the first victim is truth." Our past decades have been written inside a war mentality. The changes in language are at times portrayed as truths blurred beyond the sense of positive description; theory is warped into useful justifications, and *hope* becomes just another reason not to. And still, it is in just these moments of questioning such definitions that we can take heart, find promise, realize the next day's task. What then, is hope but the product of work shared over a gathered community, a making good of collected responses to issues that need attending to, large or small? It is what is wanted when we hold our thoughts up to the light, to see if the overlay matches the daily constructions. And what good would all this work be without the ability to extend enough desire to see it to agreement? Passions would be lost, compassions set aside, vision put to work elsewhere. As individuals we desire to change the definition of our lives to echo how we perceive the flora and fauna around us; as a group we set our sights to make real each individuals' striving for this creativity, and make this notion of *hope* the larger link to each other and the cause to flourish as a group.

Dennis Teichman, 2006, author of *V-8*, and founder of *Past Tents Press*

Fall 2006 at Alley Culture

**Hope Through
Darkness** November 3 - 25, 2006
Hours: Friday and Saturday 3-6pm
Opening Night: Friday, November 3 (7-9pm)

Paul Biundo Don Desander
Francis Brazeau Charlie Drabeim
Heather Campbell Greb Holger
Alana Carlson Nikki Palmer
Hong Chong Jonab Rusling
Dave Cole Matt Shultz
Matt Demmon Kirill Slavin

The Dark Future

What is our future? The fact is that things are not looking too good. Relentlessly, our main project seems not to be a better future but a future filled with the death of most species on the planet and a total eco-chemical-genetic transformation of the biosphere. We should not kid ourselves here, the situation is beyond crisis. It should be understood that the climate will change in our lifetime, that entire ecosystems have been destroyed, that the oceans are already oddly empty. We have used a variety of strategies to cope with, and even push back against, this sad process - but where are we now? The hippie project has failed. The punk project has failed. The techno project has failed. Primitivism has failed, techno-utopianism has failed, the class struggle has failed. Even the dream of repurposing the destroyed wastelands of post-industrialism has been reincorporated by the dominant economy. We can take stock of where we are in relation to the promises of our elders and firmly state: transformation has not taken place. Critical problems identified years ago have gone unsolved.

The dark future can be understood as the realization that things have been going very badly for a long, long time and that there is no way to go back in time to a less disastrous circumstance. Humanity's main contribution to the planet has been to eat it, piece by piece, and now much of what has been eaten is gone forever. A critical threshold has been crossed; it has begun to become apparent that the pattern of planetary destruction is now irreversible. The bottom line is that our entire concept of civilization, our way of life - something that you are a part of no matter how greatly radical your stance - is built on terrible ideas.

What has ensued is a double bind: on the one hand leading a life of false understanding is no option for a radical and better future, but on the other hand confronting the death of the planet is so harsh as to both predict its own conclusion and lead to our own emotional destruction. Our instincts don't want to accept the horror as real. We want to believe that our existence is worthwhile and that we have been making some sort of progress. We aren't left with many options. Completely disengage from an unacceptable world and marginalize our ability to actually get anything done? Engage critically and risk simply furthering the aims of those who care little for the species that inhabit this rock? Unable to confront a world that is annihilating itself, we cling to worn out strategies. As classical positions become increasingly compromised our fear turns to panic: a frantic clamoring to find the solution before it's too late. Locked in this escalating freak out, our real power to step outside of the world and find pathways of resistance is disappearing.

(continued over)

Dark Future (continued)

The only way out of this mess is to make the leap: yes, it is too late. No, the world cannot be saved, the polar ice caps will melt, the forests will continue to die. But a difference can still be made.

The dark future enables a kind of hope because it begins, rather than ends, by accepting the current state of affairs. This is where we are. Things are not looking so good, and they are going to get worse. The flipside is that by understanding this we can return to confrontation with basic elements of existence, namely the richness of life and death and urgency of the present moment. Because darkness is a valid response, it grounds itself in reality rather than fantasy; it enables the apprehension of what needs to be done, or what it makes sense to do.

Acknowledging fear and incorporating the burden of a deeply disturbing future is an angry, destroying, and bleak experience. But after the breakdown of structures the fear is gone. What follows is something that seems almost completely lost from the classical perspective: possibility.

From the perspective of politics we might say that capitalism, which sells death, fears the acceptance of death because therein it loses its ability to incite fear and control. Through darkness and confrontation with death a romantic view is able to emerge again, a life lived for emotion, sensation, and connection. Letting go into the void: ironically the dark future which signifies the failure of all utopian ideology is the vantage point enough a part of reality to offer the space for new possibilities. It is in the moment when you know you will not win but choose to act anyway that the structures of control can no longer hold.

Matt Shultz, Heather Campbell, Hope Through Darkness curators

Until recently, it was thought that genes were self-actualizing, that genes could turn themselves on and off. Such behavior is required in order for genes to control biology. Though the power of genes is still emphasized in current biology courses and textbooks, a radically new understanding has emerged at the leading edge of cell science. It is now recognized that the environment, and more specifically, our perception (interpretation) of the environment, directly controls the activity of our genes. Environment controls gene activity through a process known as epigenetic control.

This new perspective of human biology does not view the body as just a mechanical device, but rather incorporates the role of a mind and spirit. This breakthrough in biology is fundamental in all healing for it recognizes that when we change our perception or beliefs we send totally different messages to our cells and reprogram their expression. The new-biology reveals why people can have spontaneous remissions or recover from injuries deemed to be permanent disabilities.

The body really represents the cooperative effort of a community of perhaps fifty trillion single cells. By definition, a community is an organization of individuals committed to supporting a shared vision. Consequently, while every cell is a free-living entity, the body's community accommodates the wishes and intents of its central voice, a character we perceive as the mind and spirit.

Bruce Lipton Ph.D., author of *The Biology of Belief*



Deb King, *Mother of All Harlots - Postcard from Mars*, 2006, net.work (detail)

(Ron Wilkinson, *Monsters and Critics*) 83 min. David Zeigler, 2005. Free. The coffee pot will be on.

Richard Mock 1944 - 2006 Painter and Political Cartoonist

"One of the things that you have to do very early in life if you are going to be an activist, and hopefully everybody realizes that their survival depends on it, is to find what are the malefic forces that are encroaching upon your life and are threatening the planet. . . We are converting a planet from substance to an abstraction. This currency system, globally, is an abstraction. We are destroying a whole planet, the lives for our future generations for an abstraction. That's a disease. And we have to address that." (from *November 2000 interview with Heather Majaury for CJAM radio Winsor, Ontario*)

Local & Independent Shops & Services

meeting CASS CAFE (831.1400 - Cass & Forest) **bed** WOODBRIDGE STAR BED & BREAKFAST (831.9668 - www.woodbridgestar.com) **bread** AVALON BAKERY (832.0008 - Willis & Cass) **transportation** COYOTE BICYCLE (930.8176) **food** STEAK HUT (W Lafayette & 10th - Sunday \$2 breakfast) AK INDIAN GROCERIES & AMERICAN MASALA (Hancock west of Wwd. - 832.5555) FOOD NOT BOMBS (Scripps Park Saturdays 5PM) **water** FULLER LIFE WATER CO. (800.224.6116 - home delivery) **beer** MOTOR CITY BREWING WORKS (832.2700 - 2nd & Canfield) **books** MARWIL BOOKSTORE (832.3078 - Cass & Warren) LIBRARY BOOKSTORE (248.545.4300 - E. Nine Mile) **music** PEOPLE'S RECORDS (831.0864 - 615 W. Forest at Second, Tu - Sat 11 - 7 used & rare vinyl only) **paper, reams** STANDARD PAPER (963.9163 - 14th & Fisher Fwy) **eyes** DR. MURRAY FELDMAN (4851 Michigan Ave. - 894.6333) **glasses** BAGLEY VISION (964.7994 - Bagley west of 12th) **shoes** SHOE FAIR (843-4020 - 5872 W Fort - wood floors & sneakers since 1951) **art framing** FRAMING (930.8176 - archival) **union printing** RED DOOR DIGITAL (875.9026) SAWICKI & SON (W Lafayette & Trumbull - 962.2725 - pickets & lawn signs) **pets** BIRDTOWN (831.6396 - Cass at Peterboro) **pawnshop** LOUIE'S PLACE (Michigan & 8th - 962.8698 - strings, guitars, tools) **garden & landscape** NATIVE GREEN (248.547.0853) **big tree work** FROM THE EARTH SERVICES (319.0583) **recycling** CORKTOWN RECYCLES (3rd Saturday of the month - across Michigan Ave. from the Train Station) **house & tent supplies** BROOKS LUMBER & HARDWARE (962.6448 - Trumbull at Tiger Stadium -106 years old) DETROIT HARDWARE (875.0838 - Woodward north of WSU) 3RD AVE HARDWARE (832.7241 - 3rd Ave below Selden) CENTRAL DETROIT GLASS (833.8870 - Grand Rvr & 12th)

Alley Culture contact and comments ac@coast.eml.cc

Fall Film at Alley Culture

Sir! No Sir!

Saturday, Nov. 11 at 6PM

Resistance to the Vietnam war from within the ranks was, and is, (until this documentary) a very well suppressed story, even to those who were there at the time and involved in anti-war activities. This film is revealing and inspiring as it paves a road for the present. "A film that threatens the war movement with every showing, the Bush administration should outlaw it from all theaters within fifty miles of an armed forces recruiting station."