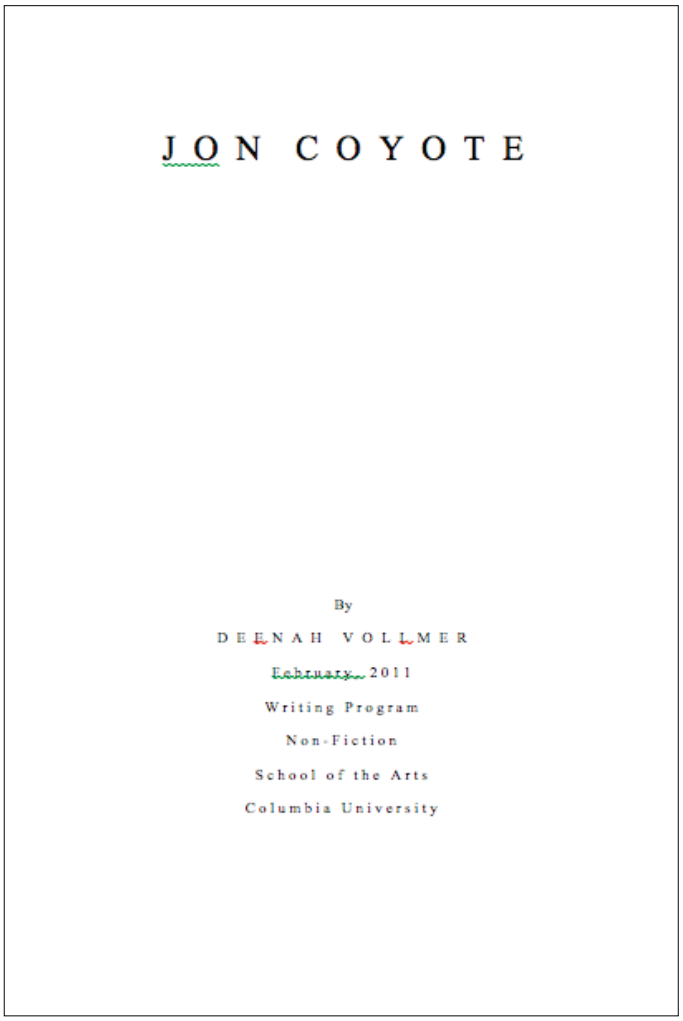
COURTESY &
THE IMPERMANENT COLLECTION
JON BERNAD

Life Art

The medium I’m most interested in is people.
I like to explore intimacy.
I hope to fuse art and life together through dreamlike scenarios.
I call it Life Art.

Jon Bernad

Lifeproject : Deenah (2007 - onward)



I met Deenah who was visiting her family after growing up in LA and moving to New York. I promised her that I would show her LA in a way she had never seen it before, and gave her tours of the city every time she came back. In 2010 she wrote 400 page book about these experiences.

Lifeproject : Isabelle (2007 - onward)

Isabelle was a pure stranger getting onto the bus in front of me. I talked to her and her boyfriend, visiting from Paris, and wanted to see them again. I searched the museums for 2 days before finding them. I made a promise to show them the best of Los Angeles.
We became best friends, sending friends to visit each other often, seeing each other once a year. Eventually we became more than friends. Today Isabelle and I are married.

HubDay (2009 - onward)

Happenings Under Bridges Day takes place March 10th, the day “Under The Bridge” by the Red Hot Chili Peppers was released. It’s a holiday I created, where something happens under bridges.
In 2009, I organized dozens of micro-events under dozens of bridges around Los Angeles. In 2010, I rented a limo with a poster of Jeff Bridges taped to the ceiling and drove around doing events. In 2011, I stayed under the bridge at the Santa Monica Pier. In 2012, I drove to Bridge City Louisiana and Bridge City Texas, then did a performance at the Whole Foods in Austin, Texas. In 2013, for the birthday of an Italian artist I took him on a Dante-esque tour of Paris, with surprises under the bridges along the Seine.

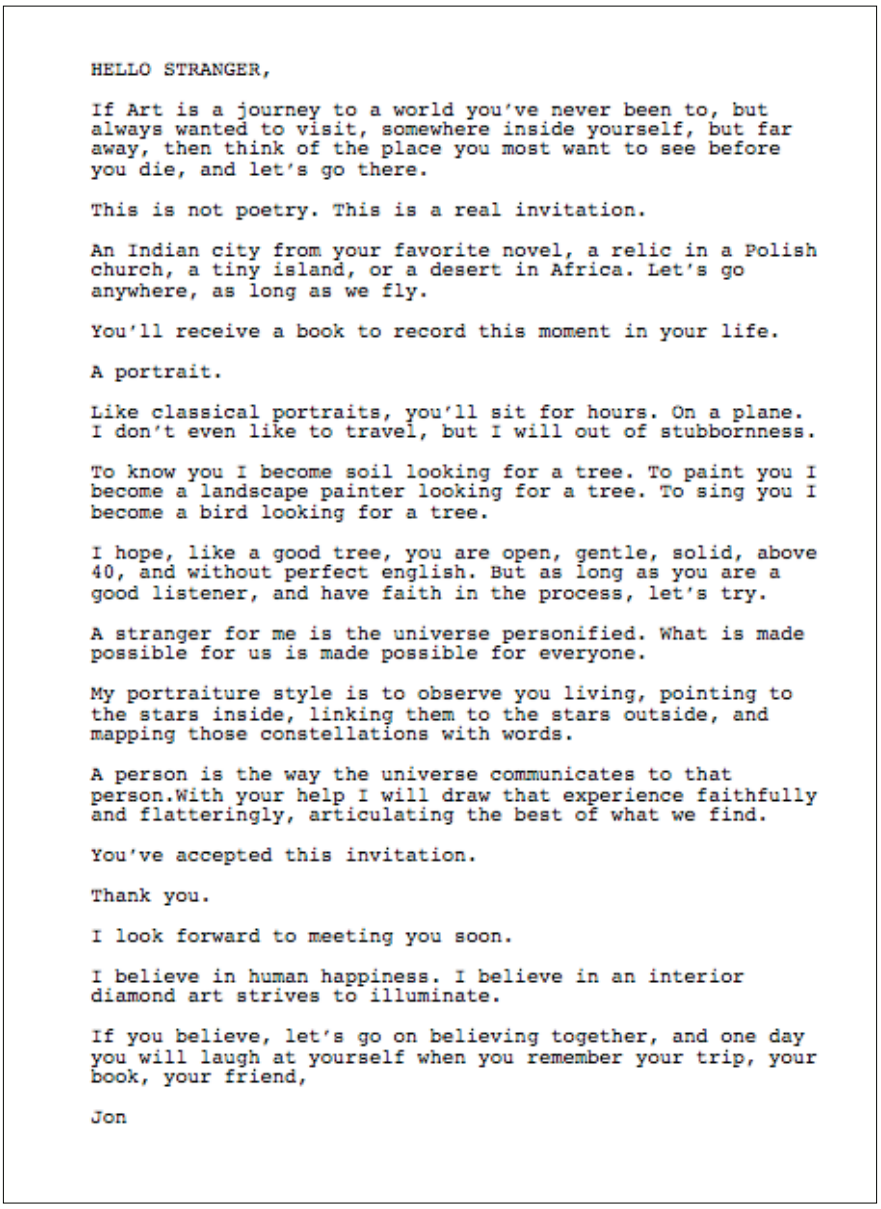
Crash (featuring Laura Cambon), (2011)

After spending a month with Laura, visiting from Paris, we crashed my car and she took pictures. The fire was sparked by the convertible hitting the mountain (near Palm Springs).

Lifeproject : Gloria & Cyril / Jon (book), (2011)

I spent 4 days with Gloria & Cyril, who heard about me through Isabelle. We had a great time , and I gave them some envelopes to open during their drive accross America. Amazingly, they made a book about their visit to LA.

Follow me to where you are going, (2011)



HELLO STRANGER,

If Art is a journey to a world you've never been to, but always wanted to visit, somewhere inside yourself, but far away, then think of the place you most want to see before you die, and let's go there.

This is not poetry. This is a real invitation.

An Indian city from your favorite novel, a relic in a Polish church, a tiny island, or a desert in Africa. Let's go anywhere, as long as we fly.

You'll receive a book to record this moment in your life.

A portrait.

Like classical portraits, you'll sit for hours. On a plane. I don't even like to travel, but I will out of stubbornness.

To know you I become soil looking for a tree. To paint you I become a landscape painter looking for a tree. To sing you I become a bird looking for a tree.

I hope, like a good tree, you are open, gentle, solid, above 40, and without perfect english. But as long as you are a good listener, and have faith in the process, let's try.

A stranger for me is the universe personified. What is made possible for us is made possible for everyone.

My portraiture style is to observe you living, pointing to the stars inside, linking them to the stars outside, and mapping those constellations with words.

A person is the way the universe communicates to that person.With your help I will draw that experience faithfully and flatteringly, articulating the best of what we find.

You've accepted this invitation.

Thank you.

I look forward to meeting you soon.

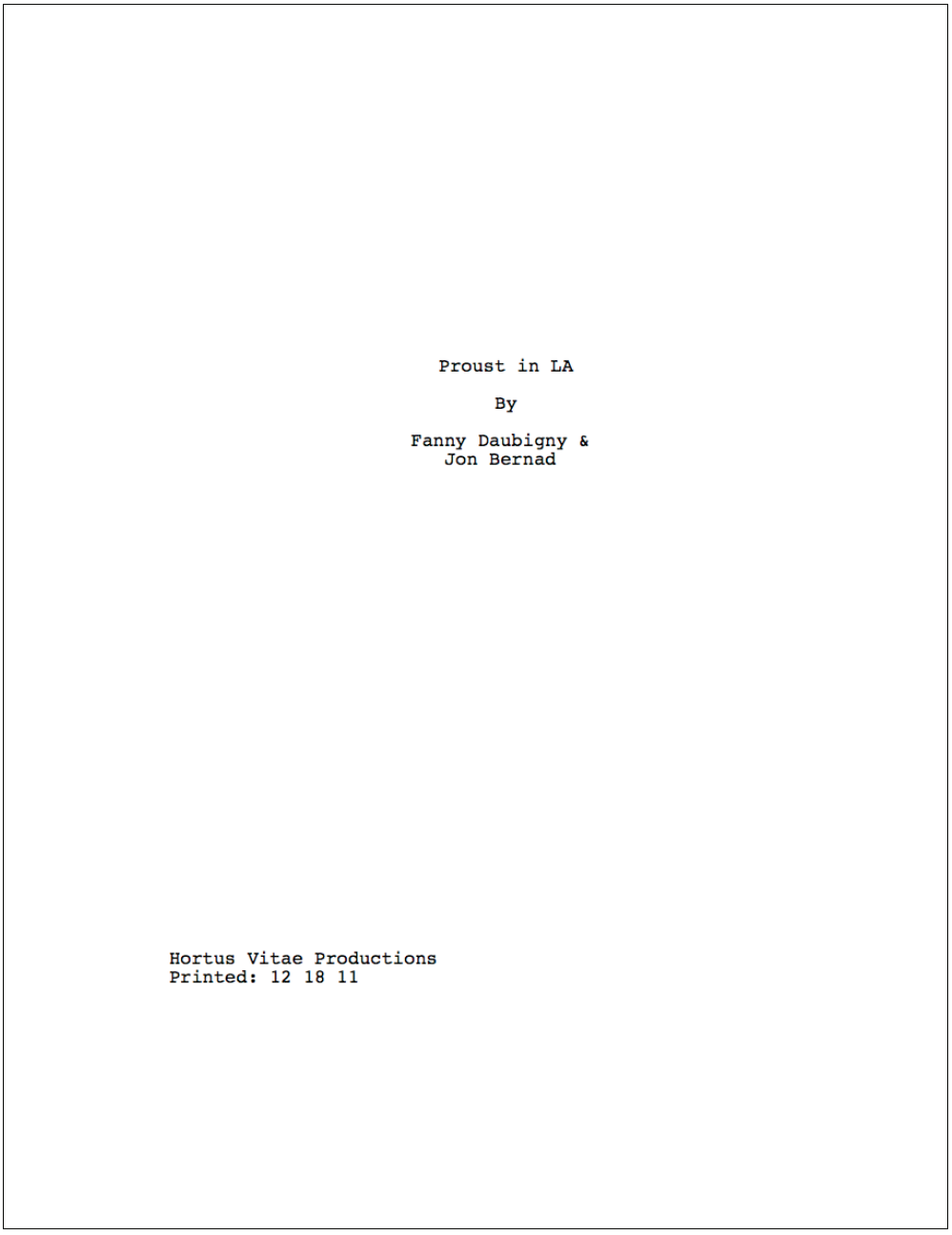
I believe in human happiness. I believe in an interior diamond art strives to illuminate.

If you believe, let's go on believing together, and one day you will laugh at yourself when you remember your trip, your book, your friend,

Jon

Cyril & Gloria bought this at the auction of Main d'Oeuvres organized by Isabelle. It's a framed letter promising to travel with a stranger to a place they had never been but always wanted to go.They are still looking for the right person to give this to.

Lifeproject: Fanny (Proust in LA), (2011-onward)



Proust in LA

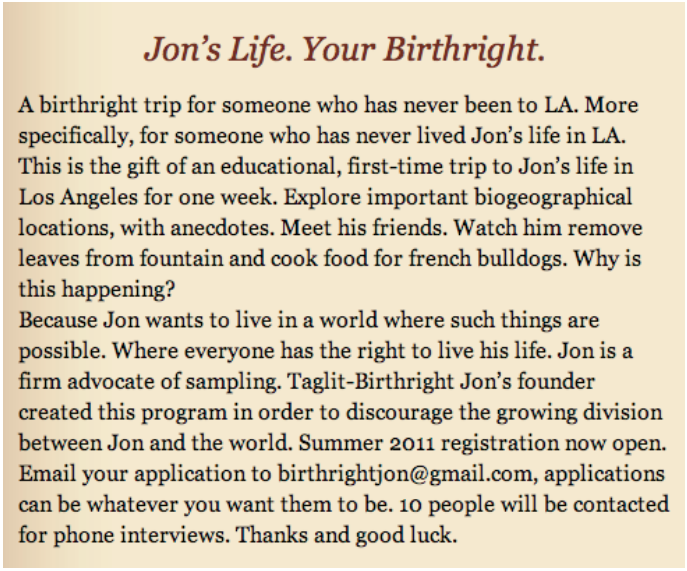
By

Fanny Daubigny &
Jon Bernad

Hortus Vitae Productions
Printed: 12 18 11

I met a Proust scholar and said that “to understand Proust, first you had to understand Los Angeles” even though I never read Proust. I promised to show her LA and she promised to show me Proust, so I started reading.
After many meetings, she would become my spiritual Mother.

Leap Trip (Birthright Los Angeles), (2012).

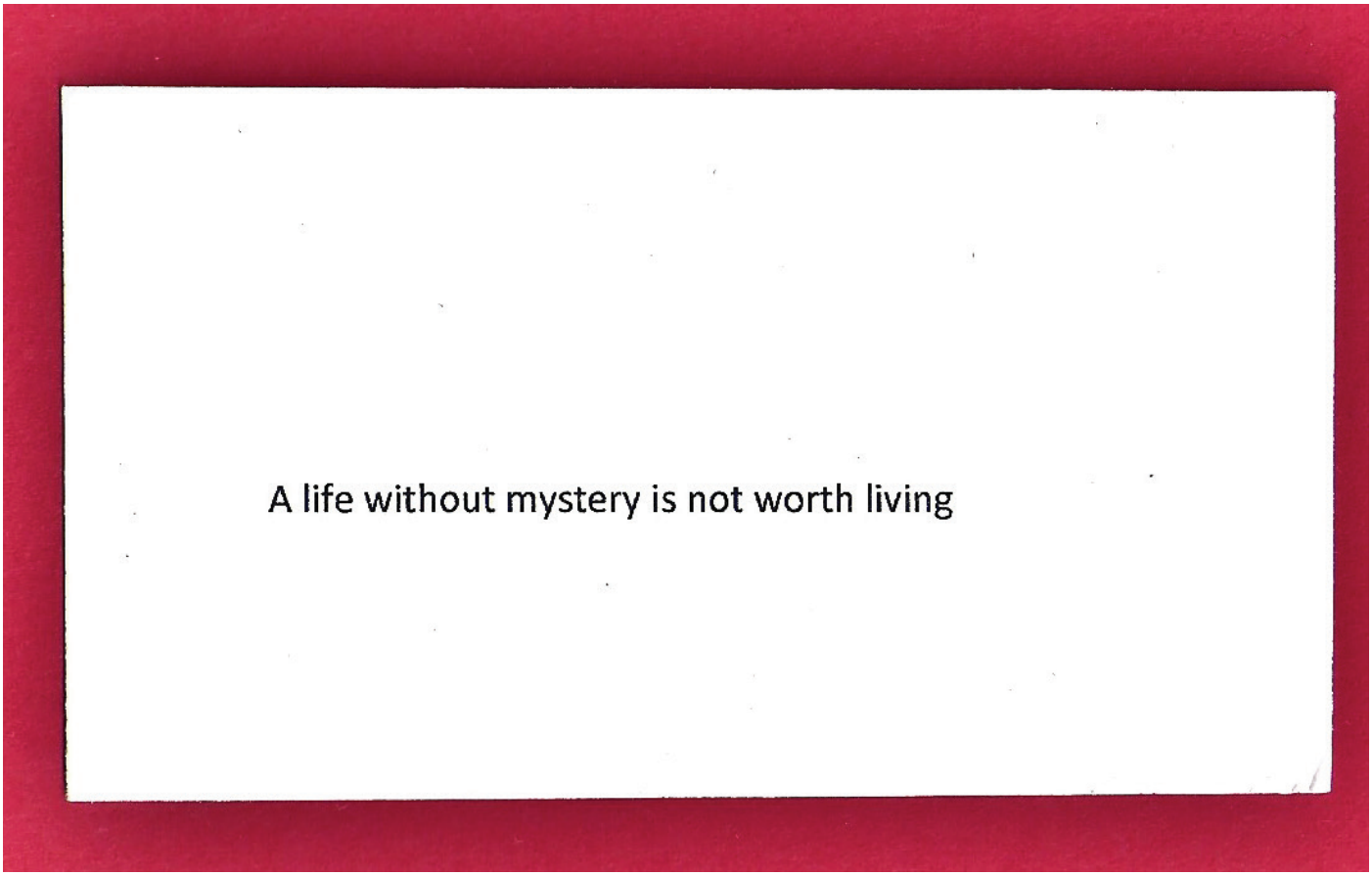


Jon's Life. Your Birthright.

A birthright trip for someone who has never been to LA. More specifically, for someone who has never lived Jon's life in LA. This is the gift of an educational, first-time trip to Jon's life in Los Angeles for one week. Explore important biogeographical locations, with anecdotes. Meet his friends. Watch him remove leaves from fountain and cook food for french bulldogs. Why is this happening?
Because Jon wants to live in a world where such things are possible. Where everyone has the right to live his life. Jon is a firm advocate of sampling. Taglit-Birthright Jon's founder created this program in order to discourage the growing division between Jon and the world. Summer 2011 registration now open. Email your application to birthrightjon@gmail.com, applications can be whatever you want them to be. 10 people will be contacted for phone interviews. Thanks and good luck.

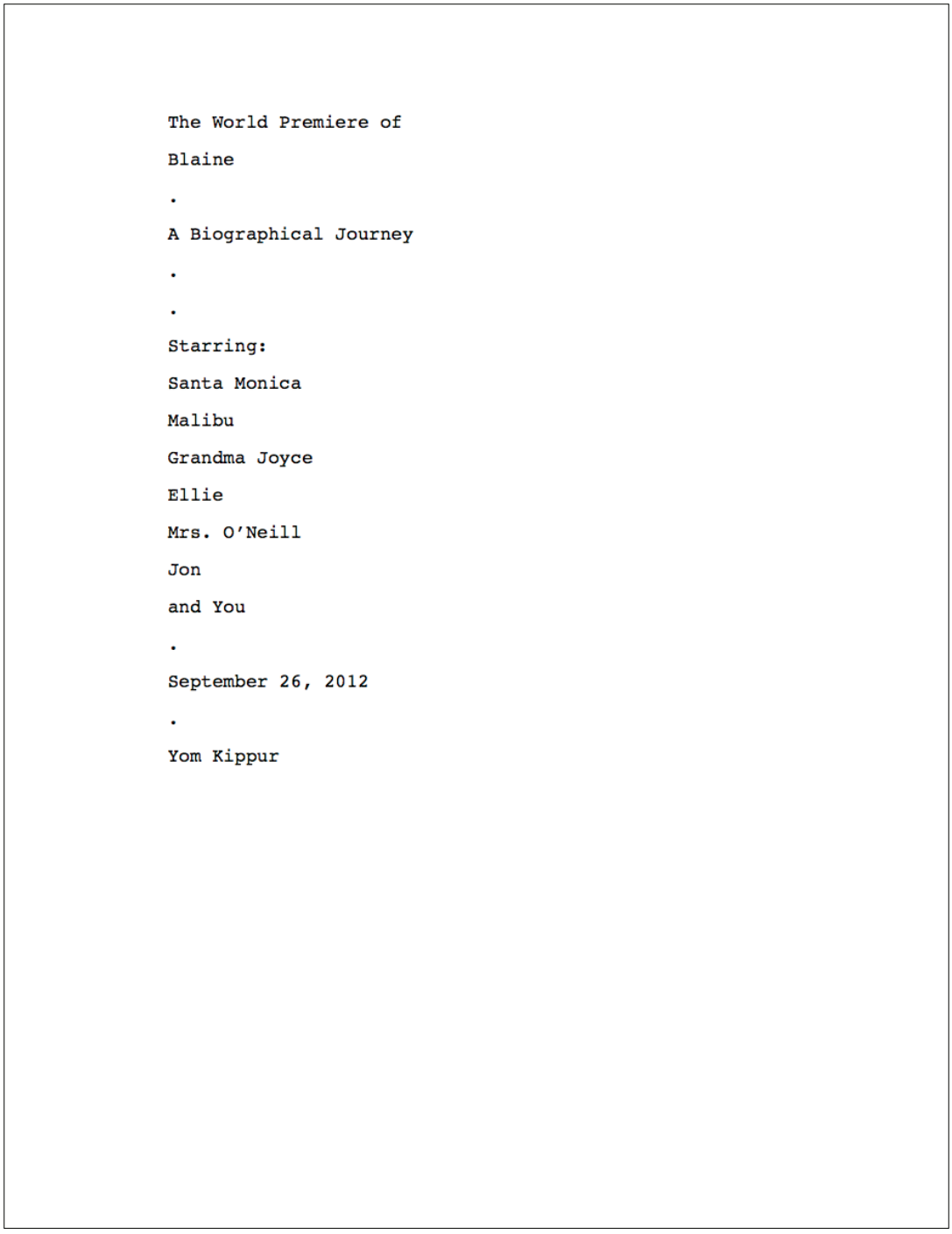
I put up an ad for a free trip to Los Angeles for a stranger who had never been there before. Isabelle told people about it, Lauren applied to Johannesburg. In the end, we met on Leap Day in Washington DC, she met my family, and we drove across America to LA, saying goodbye on April 1st, and promising to travel together again the next Leap Day.
A book is being made about the trip.

Lifeproject: Daniel



After meeting an art critic, I created a performance for him, handing him things each time we met, without saying too much. I eventually would visit him each Friday night for «Artist Shabbat» bringing a different guest each week.

Blaine (2012)


The World Premiere of

Blaine

.

A Biographical Journey

.

.

Starring:

Santa Monica

Malibu

Grandma Joyce

Ellie

Mrs. O'Neill

Jon

and You

.

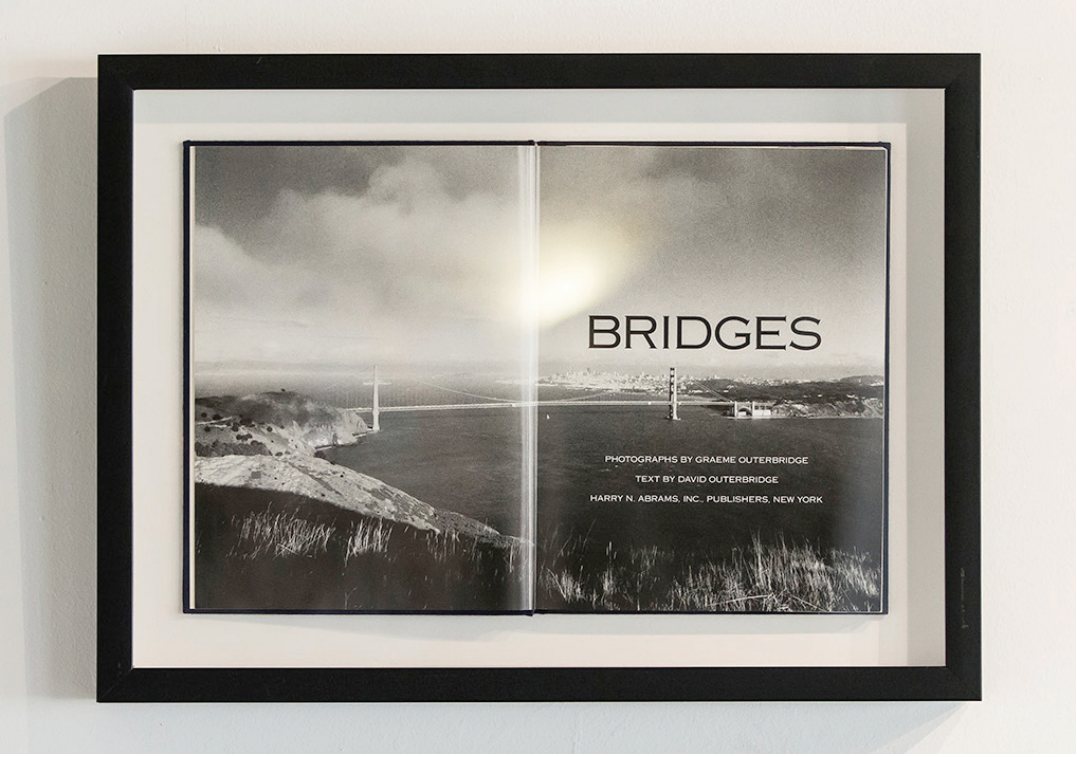
September 26, 2012

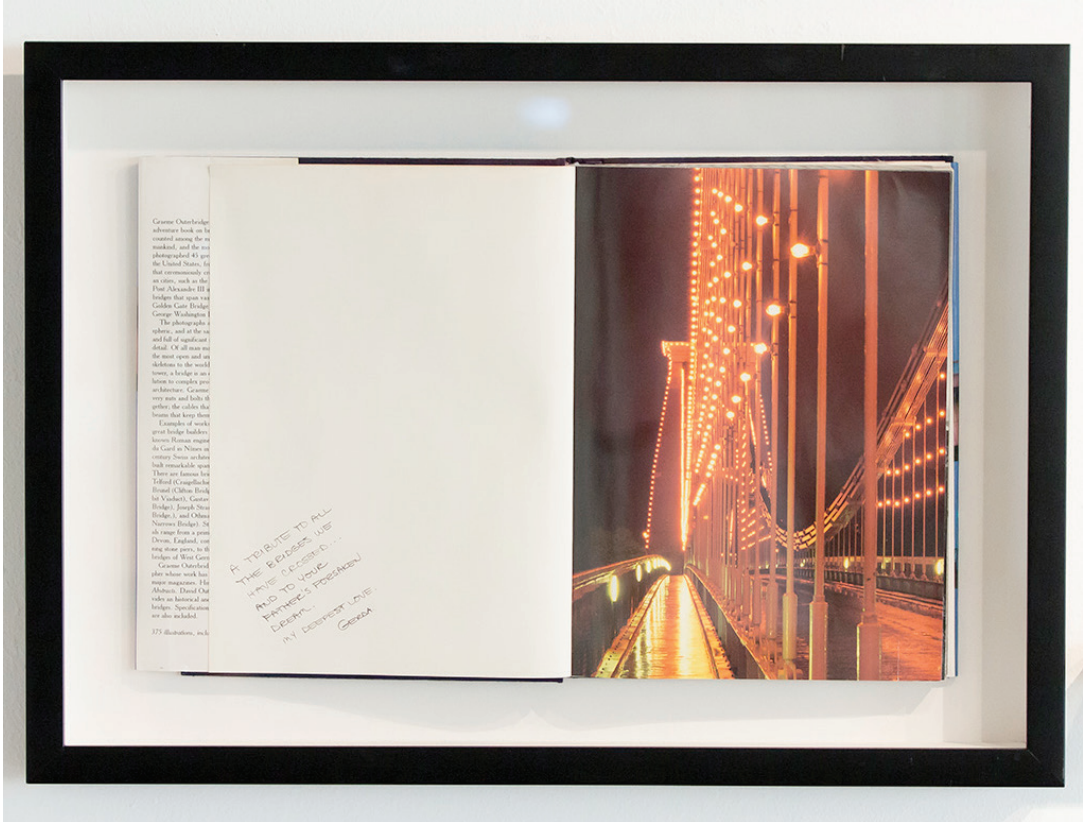
.

Yom Kippur

A biographical journey where I take an audience to meet the various family members of Blaine's family, his Grandma, Uncle, sister, and Mother, without ever seeing Blaine. In the end a portrait is made from the family around him.

Destiny (Bridges)





These are books I found on Amazon, books made by the Outerbridge brothers about bridges. Their relative was involved with the Brooklyn Bridge. A French poet said that the greatest American poem was a bridge. I like that there is something practical about bridges.

Magic (Johannesburg) (2012)

These are sculptures made from connecting magic markers together and leaning them against a hard surface.

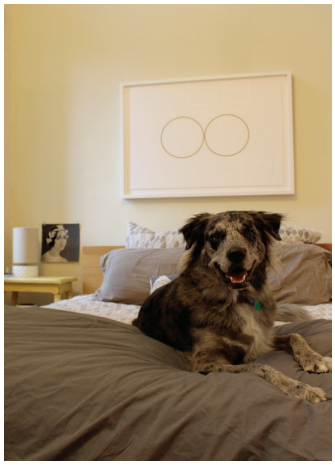
Vegas (2012)

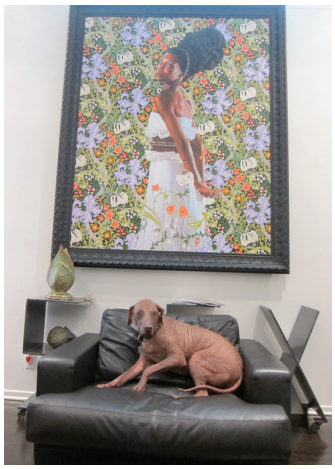
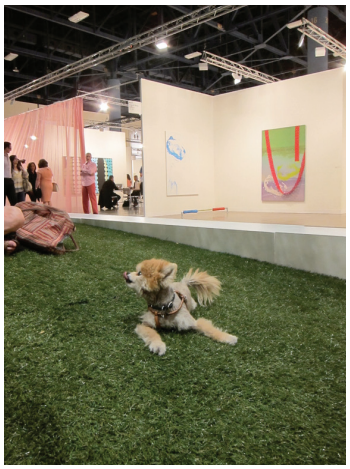
I was invited by Lauren (who had come back to LA for different art programs) to tell the story of our trip at an exhibition. We brought the car we had used to go across the country and put it inside with a sign saying «Leaving for Vegas.» I invited every audience member to come on a free 24-hour trip to hear a story. Eventually Mark and Jeremy agreed.
On the way back Jeremy, who makes wedding books in real life, asked if he could make a book about his experience.

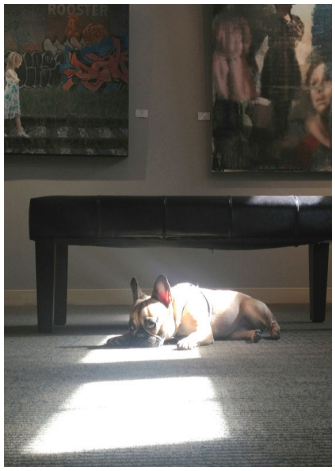
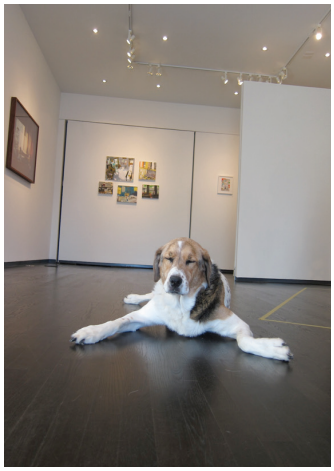
The Tao of Jon (2013)

I sold the car that had been used for Leap Trip, Blaine, and Vegas to a Chinese guy named Tao who has just arrived to study engineering at USC. I asked if he would honor the art spirit of the car, and he said yes. While in Paris, I arranged for Tao to pick up Jeremy and Lauren (who was back in LA again for another art program): it was like a reunion. Jeremy made another book, like a sequel, about their experience getting picked up by Tao.

Art Dogs (2012-2013)

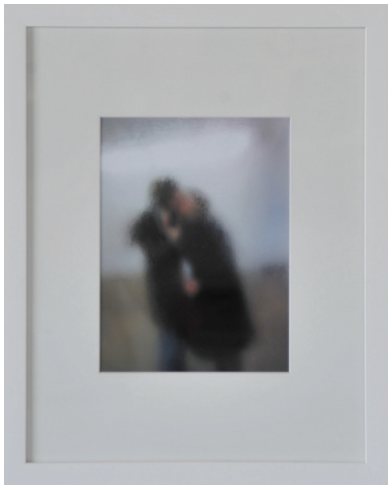


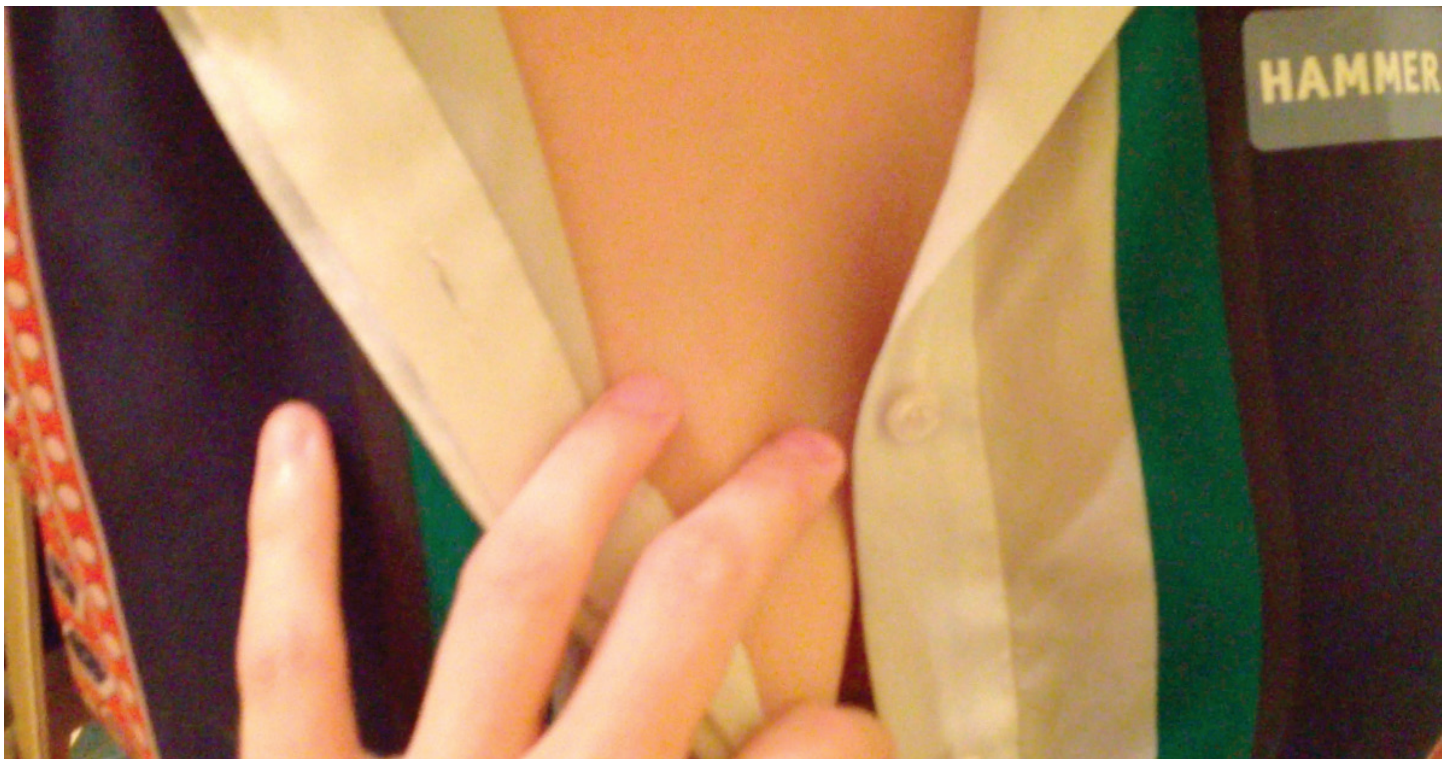
These are pictures of the dogs whose destiny was to hang out with art. The dogs of galleries, museums, collectors, and artists. These dogs did not decide to enter the art world - it just happened.

Art Lovers (2013)



Isabelle and I kissing in the reflections of art. These are pictures taken with eyes closed.

Sex in Museums / Password Paintings (2013)



The video version of Art Lovers, these are handheld iPhone videos of us having sex in different museums. The act of Art Lovers is always serious, like a prayer. Making these videos is more playful and humorous, like a game.
The Password Paintings are blank canvases with the website and password etched into the wood of the stretcher bars to buy and access the videos.

My American (2012-2013)

Pictures Isabelle takes of me with American flags - in the background or on people's clothes.
It started as a joke about my patriotism, my interest in the American Dream, the fantasy of America. Eventually we realized Isabelle herself would become American.
The last picture of the series is of me with Isabelle in an American flag converted into a wedding dress on our wedding night.

Everyday Miracles (2013)

Lidwine sees a lost version of herself.
This picture was taken by me during
A coincidence:
When life creates art.
She can tell you her story,
If you email her at
lidwine.prolonge@gmail.com,
With the subject:
EVERYDAY MIRACLE.

(She'll be happy to hear from you,
if you try).

I followed my instinct,
And it led me to Gulliver.
This picture was taken by me during
A coincidence:
When life creates art.
Gloria can tell you her story,
And maybe bring you to hear
Gulliver play,
If you email her at
maso.gloria@gmail.com,
With the subject:
EVERYDAY MIRACLE.

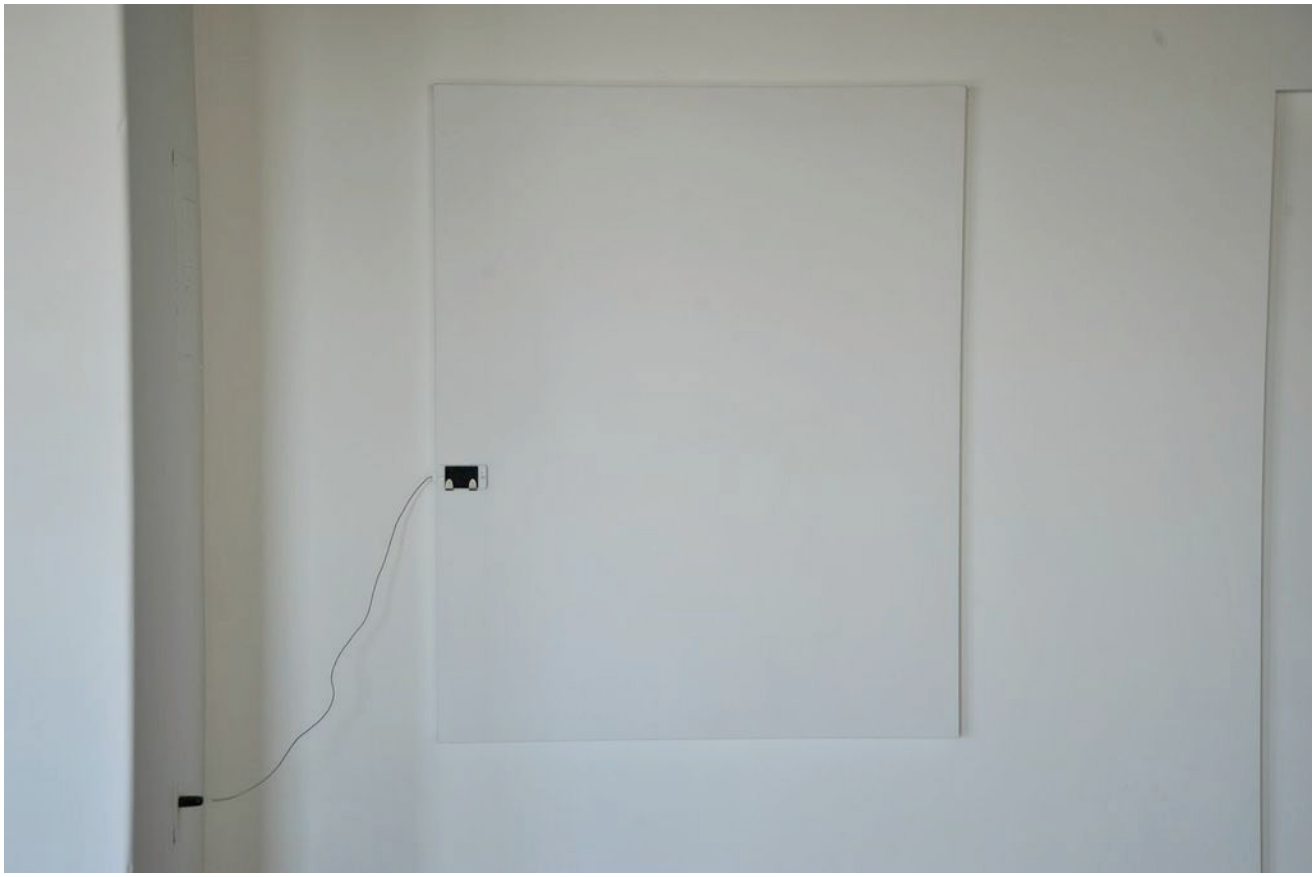
(I could tell you the story here, but I
want you to hear it from her
directly, in real life).

Daniel spoke his desire.
This picture was taken by me during
A coincidence:
When life creates art.
Daniel will tell you his story,
And maybe recreate it for you over
Tea at his studio,
If you email him at
danieldepaula_art@yahoo.com,
With the subject:
EVERYDAY MIRACLE.

(I'm not sure if there is wifi at Torri
-- But maybe you can write down
the email for later).

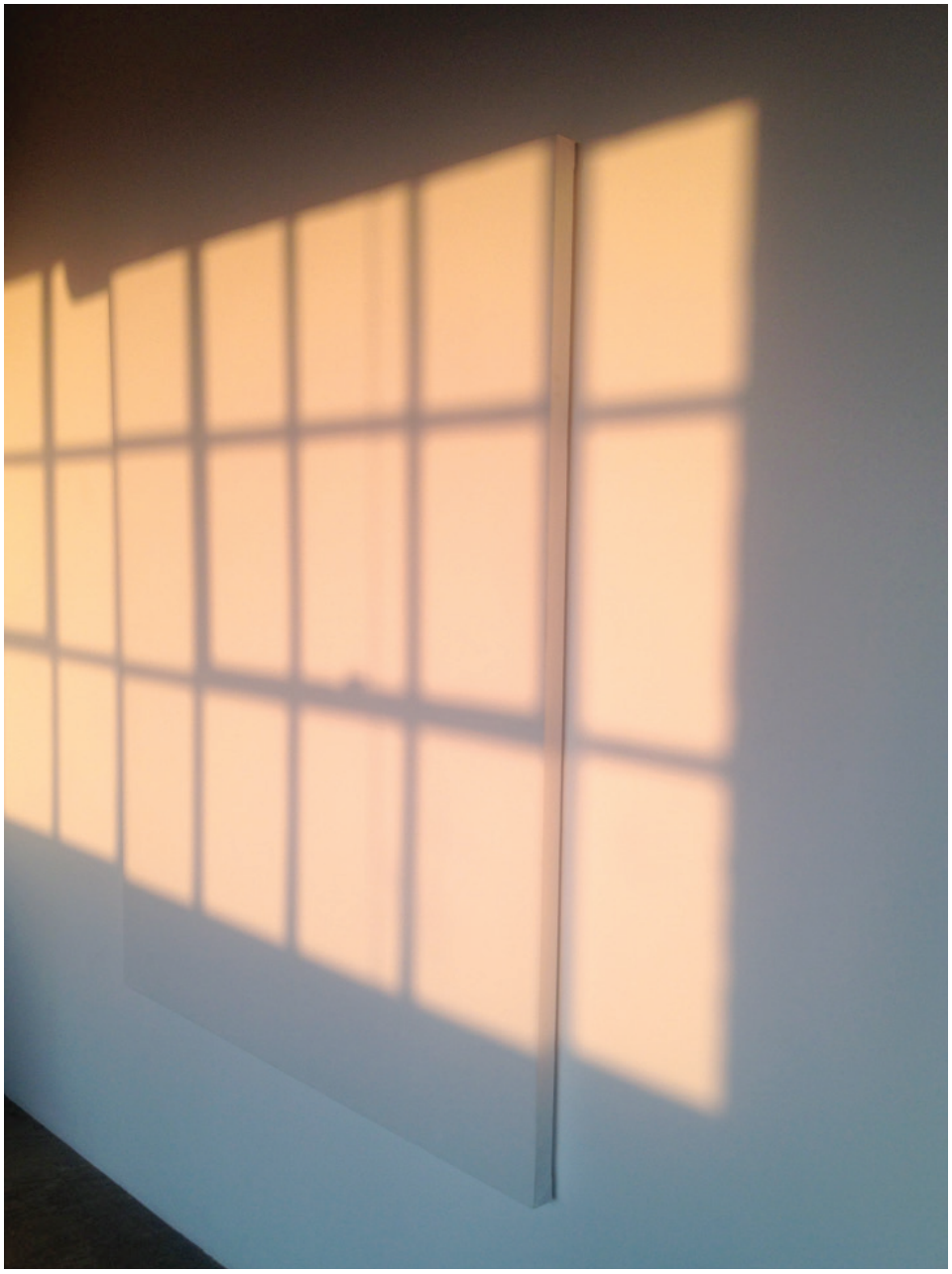
These are pictures of coincidences I take as they are happening, printed with the text telling the coincidence, and the email of the person(s) involved, to hear the story.

Phone Paintings (2013)



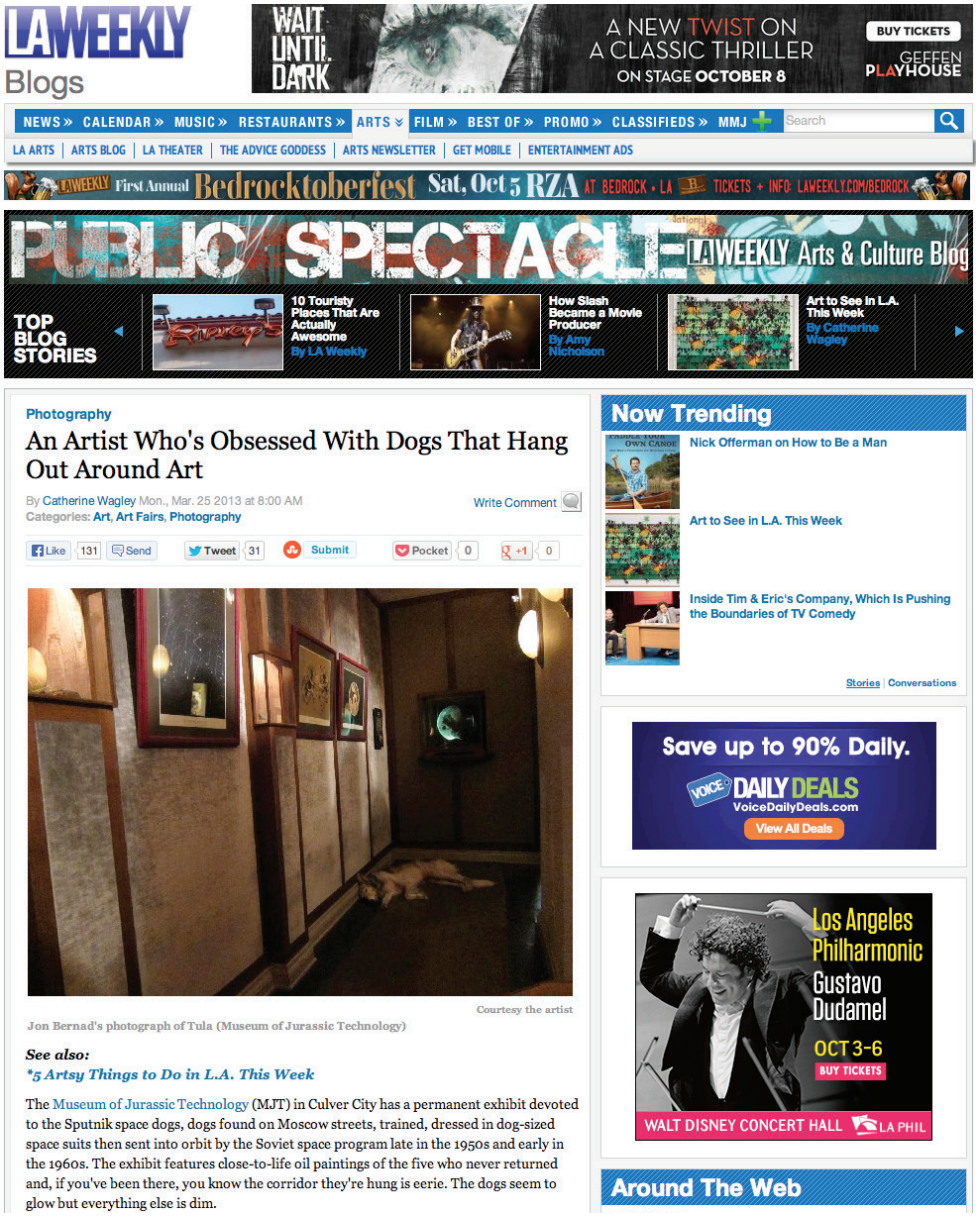
The audience places their own phone onto the canvas to make a specific call on speaker phone. In Phone Painting (Mom) each person calls his or her Mom. In Phone Painting (Ex) the audience is asked to call his or her ex-boyfriend, girlfriend, husband, or wife.

Shadow Paintings (2013)



A performance happening naturally on a canvas.
The painting is created during certain lighting conditions - when the light in a room dramatically sweeps over the canvas, spilling shadows. Everyone who approaches likewise creates a shadow. At certain angles, and moments, the air conditioning creates ocean-like ripples on the canvas. As do candles, etc...

PRESS
by Catherine Wagley for LA Weekly



link to the article : http://blogs.laweekly.com/arts/2013/03/jon_bernad_art_dogs.php

TEXTS
by Yann Perreau

Jon Bernad's "Art Dogs" series.

In his Abécédaire, philosopher Gilles Deleuze begins with letter "A, as in Animal." "People who really like cats and dogs do not have a human relationship with them, explains Deleuze.
For example, children have an
infantile relationship with animals.
I am sensitive to something in animals, but bothered by familial and familiar, domestic animal. What is essential is to have an animal
relationship with animals."
This remark immediately comes to mind when observing Jon Bernad's "Art Dogs." Simple and direct, these colorful photos of four legs in various art places (galleries, artist's studios, collector's houses) ultimately carry an intensity which makes them stunning. His inspiration come from different sources, including one that goes beyond the personal to the
universal. Arriving in LA because a Hollywood writer needed someone to take care of his dogs for six weeks, Jon ended up with this job for six years: "In a sense I became another one of the dogs". Becoming one of the dogs. Deleuze couldn't have put it better.
At the same time in his life, Jon became friends with an art curator from Paris. During her visits they discovered the LA contemporary art scene together. As an outsider in this world, he "came to notice things that people don't usually notice when they are too focused on what to do inside art spaces" (looking at the exhibited works, socializing, etc.). Things such as the dogs of the gallery owners, how they are also outsides, yet part of the environment. How they somehow become the environment. He identified. He began to photograph them.

The results are these impressive, poetical clichés, his "art dogs." In one a dog looks through the window of a gallery, in a nostalgic mood.
In another, the dog is sitting on the ground, turning his face toward the camera as if he owned the space. A third one, Nacho, the great and so-missed Danny First dog, is standing elegantly on a couch, under a Kehinde Wiley portrait. The elegance of the animal is delicately underscored by the position of his legs, as if he was imitating the glaring woman from Wiley's painting. When humans imitate artworks, there is nothing surprising, but when animals do so, we are left to wonder whether art is indeed really something as powerful and primitive as we first imagine.

We know how dogs, somehow, reveal the personality of their owners.
The famous "master and his dog" pictures. However, in these photos, the point is not about humans but about space,Bachelard's "poetry of space." We understand how dogs can reflect the place in which they live,
especially when this place is so charged as an art venue: "They have been together for so long that they come to resemble each other, the way plants can grow in certain directions because of the light that enters a room," explains the artist.

How did Jon accomplish this? It's all a matter of point of view - the ability to see the world through someone else's eyes, even more when this someone else is a dog. "Being with dogs, you begin to see them as reflections of yourself" explains Bernad, "or people you know, or larger ideas, silently giving access to a deeper reality, just like art works. The dog is often the only one really with the art anyway. People might pretend to enjoy it, but dogs don't pretend. And they seem to unconsciously enjoy the art, and actually mimic or inspire it -- they have some deep relationship to the art, perhaps, or it looks that way at least, with the poses. "

Los Angeles also inspired him: "There is a wildness here in LA, we are surrounded by nature, and there is an 'animal' philosophy I love that is more closely linked to feelings, intuition, and sincerity than the 'brain' philosophy you find in New York, or Paris. In this land of 'artificiality,' I find something pure and almost innocent, because people are what they are, and I see the same in dogs. If they have a desire, they try to fulfill it, for better or for worse. But they pretend less. At the same time, the naturalness here does coexist with an element of artificiality in a seamless way, like a convertible, which combines a car and the outside world in a strange combination, or a gym with glass windows, where you can see people work out while walking past them on the street, or like a dog walking alone around an art gallery."

Before the dogs, Bernad was fascinated with museum guards. He says he "developed relationships with them. They spend a lot of time with paintings, and are experts concerning the reactions of common people who see the art." He even tried to organize the permanent collection of a large Museum according to each guards's favorite works... "but this suggestion from an unrecognized art fan was understandably received with little fanfare."

Jon studied literature in college. "I remember reading Tolstoy's description of a dog's mind from Anna Karenina. We enter into the brain of Laska, Levin's dog." He also remembers, as a kid, how his father bought the artist William Wegman's videos featuring Weimaraners, because their dog was a relative of one of William Wegman's dogs, and came from the same farm owned by Virginia Alexander. "Watching these videos of dogs as a child was my first direct exposure to art." Going back to childhood. Time regained. An ultimately proustian approach to art, memory and its power, and Proust is another crucial reference for Bernad. «Proust transformed his life into a work of art. He applies a way of seeing onto any object, person, situation -- he makes something very humble become fascinating because of how we experience reality, surrounded by normal objects, and having them interact incredibly with our spirit, to create art. This made me think that any work of art can be beautiful in the context of the dog who spends time with it, because the art becomes a part of the dog's spirit." In a way that is more surprising but more clear than with any person.

CV

Jonathan Bernad
Born in 1983, Virginia, USA
Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- **Sex in Museums, 2013, SWAB, Barcelona.**
- **The Museum of Destiny, summer 2013, Courtesy, Los Angeles**

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- **The Space Between Us, Courtesy @ Akatre, Paris 2013, curated by Ana Iwataki**
- **Bloody Mary, Romain Torri Gallery, Paris 2013, curated by Jonathan Chauveau**
- **Destiny: The B's, Anne Barrault Gallery, Paris 2013, curated by Isabelle Le Normand**
- **Successful Fiasco, Ensba, Paris, curated by Eva Barto**
- **Incognito (2013) Santa Monica Museum of Art, 2013, Santa Monica, California**
- **An Experiment to Test the Destiny of the World, Ithuba Arts Gallery, 2013, Johannesburg, South Africa, curated by The Sober & Lonely Institute for Contemporary Art**
- **For Karl Krall: A Quantifiable Experiment in Telepathic Thought Transferal, 2013, VANSA, the Visual Arts Network of South Africa, curated by The Sober and Lonely Institute of Contemporary Art**
- **Ma prochaine vie, HerelsElsewhere, ForYourArt, Home of Danny First, 2013, Los Angeles, curated by Isabelle Le Normand**
- **Dig, Concord Space, 2012, Los Angeles, curated by Arjuna Neuman**
- **Interviews, Curio, 2012, Venice, California, curated by Daniel Rolnik**
- **Venice Art Walk 2012, Venice, California, curated by Lisa Gelber**
- **An auction, Mains d'Œuvres, 2011, Saint-Ouen, France curated by Isabelle Le Normand**
- **Sans vous rien ne se fera, Mains d'Œuvres, 2011, Saint-Ouen France curated by Isabelle Le Normand**

BOOKS

- **The Tao of Jon by Jeremy Kennedy (2013)**
- **Jon by Gloria Maso (2012)**
- **Vegas by Jeremy Kennedy (2012)**
- **Jon Coyote by Deenah Vollmer (2011)**

SHORT TEXTS:

- **The Travelling Gallery of Jon Bernad by Daniel Rolnik (2013)**
- **Row 16 by Nicole Calasich (2013)**
- **Jon Bernad by Dominique Gilliot (2011)**

RESIDENCIES

- **(participated) – Bar Project, Barcelona (2013)**
- **(created) -- Car Residency, with Ivan Argote & Pauline Bastard (2013)**

WRITINGS

- **Courtesy-Calls, studio visits, La cité des Arts (2013)**
- **University of Southern California's Philosophy Club lecture: "Practical Demonstrations of Wonder" (2012),**
- **Audrey Cottin in conversation with..., "Menus Without Restaurants" HISK, (2012)**
- **Qui admirez-vous "Jean Rollin," fanzine, La Box, Bourges, January (2011)**

PRESS

- **Artist Obsessed with Dogs Who Hang Out With Art -- LA Weekly, article by Catherine Wagley (2013)**
- **Koiramaisessa taidenäyttelyssä -- Etelä-Suomen Sanomat, article by Pipsa Olli (2013)**
- **Reinvigorating Wonder at the Venice Art Walk -- Beautiful Decay, article by Daniel Rolnik (2012)**