

DRAWINGS BY
Anonymous
Allen Frame
Antoine Vigne
Aram Jibilian
Ashton Anders Correa
Billy Miller
Christopher Hollowell
Christopher Schulz
Cyrus Saint

September 9–25, 2011
FOREVER & TODAY, INC.
141 Division Street New York, NY 10002

PERFORMANCES BY
Cyrus Saint Amand Poliakoff
J. Morrison
Juan Betancurth & Todd Shalom

PETITE MORT

Recollections of a Queer Public

Daniel Arango
Daniel Greenfield
Daniel Handal
Daniel Smith
Dave King
David Deitcher
Doron Langberg
Eric Rhein
Eric Wolf
Ethan Shoshan
Eugenio Percossi
G J Climer
George Towne
Jack Fritscher
Jacques Servin
Jake Yuzna
Jarrod Beck
Jason Wee
Jean de Boysson
Jean-Michel Sivry
John J. Spencer III
John Jurayj
John Monteith
John Paul Detty
Jonathan Crespo
Jonathan VanDyke
Manu Rodriguez
Matthew-Robin Nye
Matthias Vriens Mcgrath
Matthu Placek
Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore
Max Steele
Michael
Michael Lehman
Pablo León de la Barra
Patterson Scarlett
Rafael Perez Evans
Samuel Rokek
Sebastiano Mauri
Sergio Roger
Seth Joseph Weine
Terence Gower
TM & Liam Davy
Trygve Luktvasslimo
Ultra-red
Vincent W. Gagliostro
W. Chase

WRITINGS BY
Aiken Forrett
Ann Pellegrini & Janet R. Jakobsen
Carlos Motta & Joshua Lubin-Levy
Eileen Myles
Gordon Brent Ingram
Ingrid Chu & Savannah Gorton
Jill H. Casid
Joel Czarlinsky
Johan Andersson
John Paul Ricco
José Esteban Muñoz
Kate Bornstein
Katherine Franke
Tim Dean

FOREVER & TODAY, INC.

F&T

Petite Mort: Recollections of a Queer Public assembles drawings from memory of spaces in New York City where a public sexual encounter occurred. A project created in collaboration between Carlos Motta & Joshua Lubin-Levy, it features contributions from an intergenerational group of over 60 gay men.

Conceived as an atlas of queer affection, *Petite Mort: Recollections of a Queer Public* proposes a subjective blueprint of the city, one that values not simply the space “as is,” but how it has been performed and engaged, highlighting the fundamental connection between public space and queer life. The collected drawings, depicting sites extending from a residential rooftop to The Rambles in Central Park, remind us that public sex is not exclusively about a personal pursuit of pleasure—they also contain the seeds of historical social and political action that have brought together communities of gay men.

Petite Mort: Recollections of a Queer Public also asks questions challenging us to expand our vision for queer politics: What if our politics were rebuilt around a broader notion of intimacy rather than individuality? Can we foster, rather than police, the trust and affection inherent to desire and pleasure? Should equality be about difference, rather than assimilation?

This book includes a preface by Forever & Today, Inc. Co-Curators Ingrid Chu & Savannah Gorton, a conversation between Carlos Motta & Joshua Lubin-Levy, and an essay by Joel Czarlinsky. Also assembled here are a series of short responses to the question “Does public sex matter?” by authors Aiken Forrett, Ann Pellegrini & Janet R. Jakobsen, Eileen Myles, Gordon Brent Ingram, Jill H. Casid, Johan Andersson, John Paul Ricco, José Esteban Muñoz, Kate Bornstein, Katherine Franke, and Tim Dean.

Petite Mort: Recollections of a Queer Public is commissioned by Forever & Today, Inc.

PETITE MORT: Recollections of a Queer Public

PETITE MORT

Recollections of a Queer Public

CARLOS MOTTA & JOSHUA LUBIN-LEVY

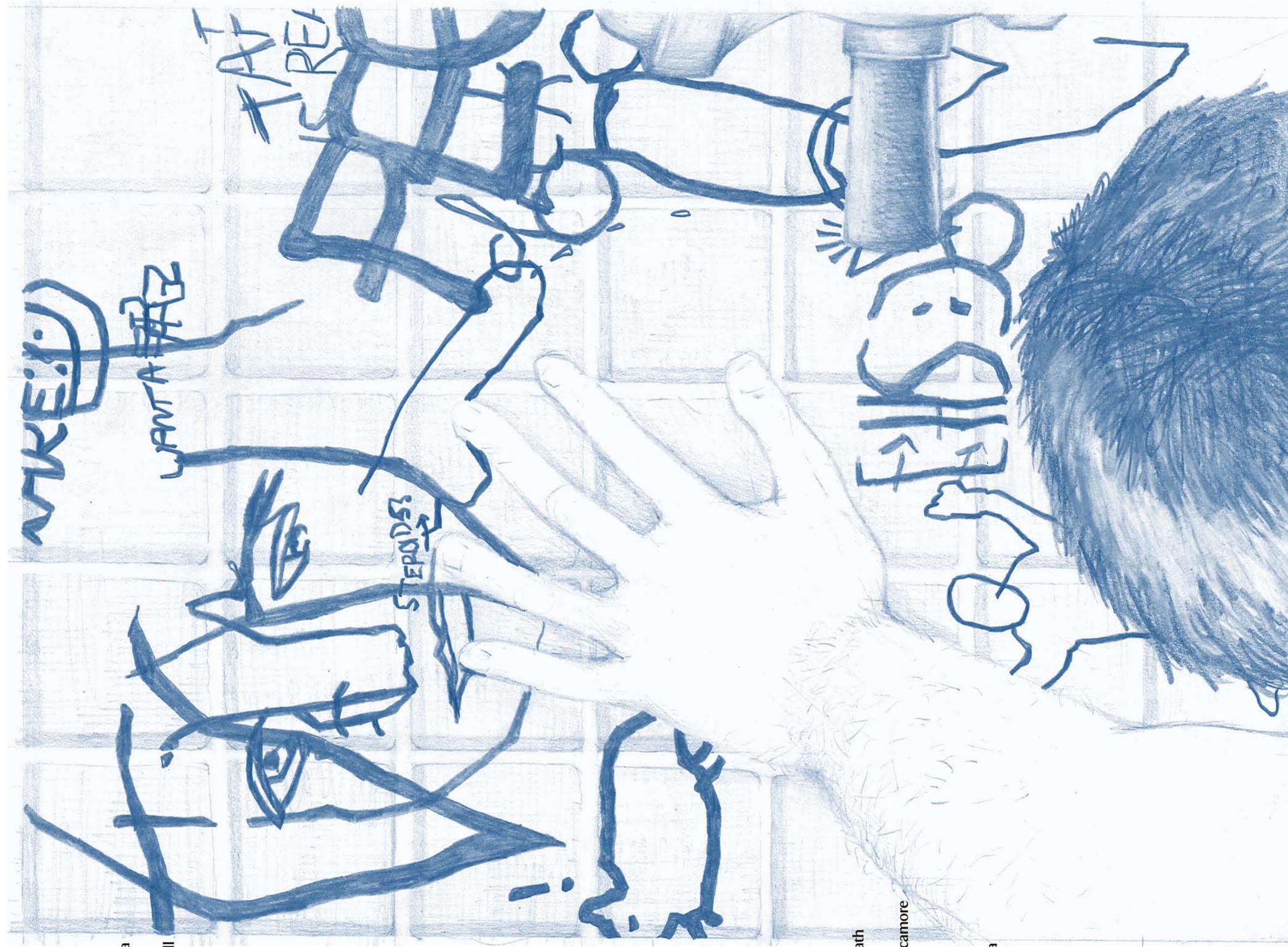
Recollections of a Queer Public

PETITE MORT

Recollections of a Queer Public

DRAWINGS BY

Anonymous
Allen Frame
Antoine Vigne
Aram Jibilian
Ashton Anders Correa
Billy Miller
Christopher Hollowell
Christopher Schulz
Cyrus Saint
Daniel Arango
Daniel Greenfield
Daniel Handal
Daniel Smith
Dave King
David Detcher
Doron Langberg
Eric Rhein
Eric Wolf
Ethan Shoshan
Eugenio Percossi
G J Climer
George Towne
Jack Fritscher
Jacques Servin
Jake Yuzna
Jarrod Beck
Jason Wee
Jean de Boysson
Jean-Michel Sivry
John J. Spencer III
John Juraj
John Monteith
John Paul Detty
Jonathan Crespo
Jonathan VanDyke
Manu Rodriguez
Matthew-Robin Nye
Matthias Vriens Mcgrath
Matthu Placek
Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore
Max Steele
Michael
Michael Lehman
Pablo León de la Barra
Patterson Scarlett
Rafael Perez Evans
Samuel Roek
Sebastiano Mauri
Sergio Roger
Seth Joseph Weine
Terence Gower
TM & Liam Davy
Trygve Luktvasslimo
Ultra-red
Vincent W. Gagliostro
W. Chase



PEITIEMORT

Recollections of a Queer Public

WRITINGS BY

Aiken Forrett
Ann Pellegrini & Janet R. Jakobsen
Carlos Motta & Joshua Lubin-Levy
Eileen Myles
Gordon Brent Ingram
Ingrid Chu & Savannah Gorton
Jill H. Casid
Joel Czarlinsky
Johan Andersson
John Paul Ricco
José Esteban Muñoz
Kate Bornstein
Katherine Franke
Tim Dean

September 9-25, 2011

FOREVER & TODAY, INC.
141 Division Street New York, NY 10002

PERFORMANCES BY

Cyrus Saint
Amand Poliakoff
J. Morrison
Juan Betancurth & Todd Shalom

Image: Michael Lehman, Bathroom (The Hole), 2004, 2011

Petite Mort: Recollections of a Queer Public assembles drawings from memory of spaces in New York City where a public sexual encounter occurred. A project created in collaboration between Carlos Motta & Joshua Lubin-Levy, it features contributions from an intergenerational group of over 60 gay men.

Conceived as an atlas of queer affection, *Petite Mort: Recollections of a Queer Public* proposes a subjective blueprint of the city, one that values not simply the space “as is,” but how it has been performed and engaged, highlighting the fundamental connection between public space and queer life. The collected drawings, depicting sites extending from a residential rooftop to The Rambles in Central Park, remind us that public sex is not exclusively about a personal pursuit of pleasure—they also contain the seeds of historical social and political action that have brought together communities of gay men.

Petite Mort: Recollections of a Queer Public also asks questions challenging us to expand our vision for queer politics: What if our politics were rebuilt around a broader notion of intimacy rather than individuality? Can we foster, rather than police, the trust and affection inherent to desire and pleasure? Should equality be about difference, rather than assimilation?

This book includes a preface by Forever & Today, Inc. Co-Curators Ingrid Chu & Savannah Gorton, a conversation between Carlos Motta & Joshua Lubin-Levy, and an essay by Joel Czarlinsky. Also assembled here are a series of short responses to the question “Does public sex matter?” by authors Aiken Forrett, Ann Pellegrini & Janet R. Jakobsen, Eileen Myles, Gordon Brent Ingram, Jill H. Casid, Johan Andersson, John Paul Ricco, José Esteban Muñoz, Kate Bornstein, Katherine Franke, and Tim Dean.

Petite Mort: Recollections of a Queer Public is commissioned by Forever & Today, Inc.

PETITE MORT: Recollections of a Queer Public

PETITE MORT

Recollections of a Queer Public

CARLOS MOTTA & JOSHUA LUBIN-LEVY

PETITE MORT

Recollections of
a Queer Public

Petite Mort:
Recollections of a Queer Public

ISBN 978-0-615-52391-0

PUBLISHED BY
Forever & Today, Inc.
141 Division Street
New York, NY 10002
www.foreverandtoday.org

Forever & Today, Inc., a non-profit that is a sponsored organization of the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA), a 501(c)(3), curates and commissions projects in collaboration with a single artist, collective, or collaborative entity. The organization extends unique opportunities for artists to create new work and engage diverse audiences through exhibitions, performances, site-specific installations, publications, and educational and public programs.

Copyright © 2011 Forever & Today, Inc. and the artists and authors. All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission from Forever & Today, Inc., New York.

Please note that the views expressed by the artists and authors are not necessarily those of Forever & Today, Inc.

Printed in Iceland by Oddi Printing

Edition of 500

CONTENTS

7 Preface

Ingrid Chu & Savannah Gorton

8-13 *Petite Mort: Recollections
of a Queer Public*

Carlos Motta & Joshua Lubin-Levy

15-19 *Sexual Culture*

Joel Czarlinsky

21 List of Contributors

22-143 Drawings

145-159 *Does Public Sex Matter?*

160 Acknowledgments

NET PUBLIC USE AREA: 1392 sq ft + 12 sq ft/PERSON = 116 PERSONS (CREATED)

TRAVEL DISTANCE AS PER TABLE 8.1

	LEG 1	LEG 2	ACTUAL VS ALLOW
PRIMARY	39'-0"	24'-0"	54'-0" < 85'-0" OK
SECONDARY	30'-0"	64'-0"	94'-0" < 125'-0" OK

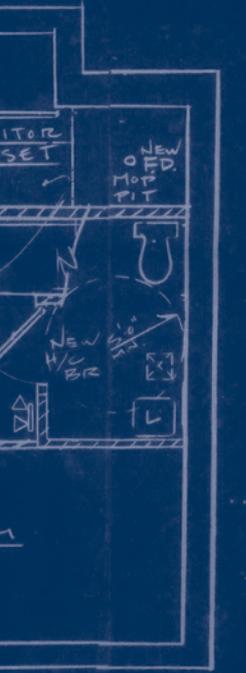
DOOR	SIZE	QTY	UNIT WDT	PER UNIT	ALLOWABLE	ACTUAL
A	36"	1	1.5	50	75	
B	30"	1	1.5	50	75	

150 > 116 PERSONS OK

MIN # OF PLUMBING FIXTURES AS PER TABLE 6.9

116 PERSONS 2 FIXTURES EACH SEX

	W/C REQ'D	W/C PROVIDED	LAV REQ'D	LAV PROVIDED
MENS	2	2 OK	1	1 OK
WOMENS	2	2 OK	1	1 OK



PUBLIC ASSEMBLY NOTES

1. MINIMUM WIDTH OF BASIC AISLES TO BE 3'-0" IN EACH ROOM. AISLE TO BE AN APPROVED MEANS OF EGRESS.
2. CAPACITY SIGNS AT LEAST 12" WIDE AND 16" HIGH TO BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH C26-801.3 B.C.
3. EXIT SIGNS TO BE AT LEAST 8" IN HEIGHT WITH STROKES AS TO COMPLY WITH SUB ARTICLES 606.0, C26-801.10(a), C26-801.10(b).
4. SIGNS TO BE INTERNALLY LIGHTED TYPE IN ALL SPACES WHERE ILLUMINATION IS REDUCED TO LESS THAN 5 FOOT CANDLES DURING SIGNS TO BE LIGHTED AT ALL TIMES DURING OCCUPANCY PER C26-801.10(b).
5. DRAPES, CURTAINS, DECORATIONS AND SCENERY HAVING FLAME EXCEEDING 25 TO BE FLAMEPROOFED TO COMPLY WITH C19-161.1 OR PER C26-802.2 B.C.
6. ALL NECESSARY PERMITS TO BE OBTAINED WHERE REQUIRED.
7. HOODS OVER RANGES AND FLUES SHALL BE THOROUGHLY CLEANED THREE MONTHS. A RECORD INDICATING THE PERSON OR FIRM WHICH CLEANING WERE DONE AND THE DATE WHEN SUCH FLUES WERE CLEANED ON THE PREMISES AND SHALL BE AVAILABLE FOR EXAMINATION PER C26-801.10(b).
8. EMERGENCY LIGHTING FACILITIES TO BE PROVIDED OF AT LEAST ONE (1) FOOT CANDLE AT THE FLOOR LEVEL. PROVIDE SEPARATE CIRCUIT TAKEN OFF AHEAD OF THE MAIN SWITCH OR CONNECTED TO A SEPARATE LIGHTING POWER SOURCE AND BE ARRANGED TO OPERATE AUTOMATICALLY IN THE EVENT OF FAILURE OF THE NORMAL LIGHTING SYSTEM. LIGHTS TO BE 18" AND 9'-0" ABOVE FLOOR AND COMPLY WITH DIRECTIVE 5 OF 801.18 B.C.
9. PROVIDE AT LEAST FIVE (5) FOOT CANDLES OF ILLUMINATION AT EXIT AREAS.
10. THE EXIT AREA TO BE ILLUMINATED WITHIN THE ASSEMBLY SIGN OF THE EXIT SIGN, THE EXIT DOORWAY AND A SQUARE AT THE POINT OF EGRESS WITH A SIDE WHOSE DIMENSION IS DOUBLE THE WIDTH OF THE EGRESS OPENING, OR EQUAL TO THE WIDTH OF THE CORRIDOR (WHICH LIGHT MEASUREMENT SHOULD BE ON THE HORIZONTAL).
11. THIS INTENSITY OF ILLUMINATION SHALL NOT BE DIMINISHED BY TWO (2) FOOT CANDLES AT A LEVEL OF EIGHTEEN (18) INCHES AT CROSS AISLES.
12. THE INTENSITY OF GENERAL ILLUMINATION SHALL NOT BE DIMINISHED BY ONE (1) FOOT CANDLES AT A LEVEL OF EIGHTEEN (18) INCHES ELSEWHERE.
13. THE LIGHTING UNITS SHALL BE SO ARRANGED SO AS NOT TO:
 - A. INTRODUCE DISORIENTING GLARE TO THE PATH OF ESCAPE.
 - B. DRAMATICALLY AFFECT THE CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF ILLUMINATION.
 - C. PRESENT A HAZARD TO THE OCCUPANTS AND BE PROTECTED AGAINST SUCH FAILURE OF ANY UNIT, SUCH AS THE BURNING OUT OF AN ELECTRIC BULB, WILL NOT BE IN DARKNESS.

PREFACE

When we first began meeting with Carlos Motta in the spring of 2010 to discuss a commissioned project for Forever & Today, Inc., we encouraged his interest in collaborating with another artist on a large-scale, socially conscious project that would bring together many viewpoints. This dovetailed with both his own history of realizing ambitious works featuring a diversity of voices, and our mission to offer artists opportunities that expand their practice and engage audiences in new and surprising ways.

Carlos, in turn, invited Joshua Lubin-Levy as a collaborator. After some initial ideas circulated about creating a subjective archive of queer culture within our storefront space in New York's Chinatown/Lower East Side, they proposed an artist book project entitled *Petite Mort: Recollections of a Queer Public*. Forming an "atlas of queer affection" specific to New York

City, this book serves as a forum for sharing memories of the city's public spaces, past and present, as sites of sexual encounters that foster bonds between men.

Petite Mort grew exponentially and in a truly organic manner, with Carlos and Joshua welcoming over sixty men, from all ages and backgrounds, to contribute drawings of these locations. To broaden the discourse, they invited thirteen authors to join the conversation, ruminating on sexual culture, their own experiences, and the question, "Does public sex matter?" As a whole, these collected works underscore how creative and intellectual reflection may engender dialogue beyond the project.

To compliment and further explore some of the timely themes arising from *Petite Mort*, Forever & Today, Inc. has organized a series of public programs in tandem with the publication of this artist book.

Taking place in and around our storefront space—with the notion that it would become both a gathering place and site of activity—these programs include performances with temporary installations and a late-night "cruising" walk.

As the project unfolded, we sought to facilitate a platform faithful to Carlos and Joshua's artistic vision for *Petite Mort*. We offer our deep gratitude to both of them, along with all the artists and authors who have so graciously granted permission for their contributed work to appear as part of the project and public programs. We also thank the many donors who generously gave to USA Projects, an online initiative of United States Artists, without which the publication of this artist book would not have been possible.

Ingrid Chu & Savannah Gorton, Co-Directors & Co-Curators
August 2011

PETITE MORT: RECOLLECTIONS OF A QUEER PUBLIC

Carlos Motta & Joshua Lubin-Levy

JOSHUA LUBIN-LEVY: *Petite Mort: Recollections of a Queer Public* weaves together drawings by gay men of spaces in New York City where they had a memorable sexual encounter, and writing from a wider range of voices responding to the question “Does public sex matter?” So it is only fitting that we introduce this project by expressing our deepest gratitude to everyone who worked to realize it. This project extends far beyond its pages and the drawings you see here are only a lingering imprint of the original stories, works, and spaces that compose this book. But before we talk more about the structure of the book, I wanted to ask: What interests you in this project?

CARLOS MOTTA: The idea for this project came to me in conversation with some gay friends at a dinner party. We were talking about how some older men are

having intense sex lives because of the kind of access that is available to them via the Internet. This led us to speak about where you can physically cruise for sex, and we all agreed that there are so few places left where you could have public sex in New York City without being arrested. Then you and I discussed the idea and started to think about it collaboratively.

LUBIN-LEVY: Yeah, I would say the project emerged to us, in conversation. In other words, rather than *Petite Mort* originating in a fixed idea or single spark, I see the project as developing slowly through the space of interaction and exchange that has finally led us to this book. But in terms of the dinner party you mention, I’m wondering if in your conversation you made a distinction between public sex and cruising? For me, cruising does not equal a public sex life, and

I think *Petite Mort* is about exploring public spaces not for the way queer subjects covertly inhabit(ed) them, but for how they overtly shape(d) them. Even if that means reconsidering the limits of terms like “public” or “sex.” For instance, I hope this project challenges us to think about how Web sites like Manhunt or iPhone applications like Grindr have changed the way bodies form connections and navigate the space around them.

MOTTA: It is hard to imagine how teenagers today, for example, would connect, meet, and create a sense of belonging without the Internet. I think I belong to the last generation of teenagers that had to cruise for sex out on the streets. Thinking about how I experience the lack of that kind of physical contact as a personal and a social loss made me think it was urgent to do a project

about the disappearance of these public sex sites. For me, *Petite Mort* addresses the way that this disappearance has been an active “cleanup campaign” driven by the city government and encouraged by LGBT bureaucrats that are busy scrubbing at the image of the “promiscuous gay” that doesn’t conform to a normative model of identity expression. *Petite Mort* also discusses how these campaigns relate to the privatization of public space in general by the forces of neoliberal economic politics. And lastly, it discusses how cruising grounds, public toilets, dark alleys, etc. have been fundamental to the forming of communities within gay history in New York City, and how these places were sites of emotional and sexual relations, even if they were ephemeral and conditioned by social stigmas.

LUBIN-LEVY: At the same time I think the word “community” can be misleading. I agree with what you’ve said about the cleanup campaigns, but do you also think that the disappearance of these public sites is because they are not really what the current generation of gay men are interested in? That is not to say that there isn’t a profound ideological and moral practice surrounding their disappearance. I guess what I mean to

say is that the struggle to reconcile past and present lives can often be a conflicting and confusing experience. Along those lines, I think what really draws me into this project as a way of attending to both history and the present is that it isn’t a project simply about mourning or celebration, but that it articulates a subjective experience of space. *Petite Mort* is a collection of maps of New York City, not from urban planners, but from the city’s inhabitants. And as much as they may touch on sites of great physical or emotional importance, they also capture spaces of fleeting pleasure and shame, or even barely visible landscapes. Not all these drawings are “important”—which doesn’t mean they have any less to say or that we should attend to them with any less diligence.

MOTTA: A place where we can see the legacy and currency of a public sex history is in the proliferation of public sex parties that exist today that are privately run and advertised online. It is as if gay men had surrendered to the cleanup campaigns that targeted public space, but thankfully they did not stop having public sex.

LUBIN-LEVY: That’s something we disagreed about, because when we talked about including those sex parties as a public site I made

the argument that they are really exclusive organizations, which profit from sexual encounters and fetishize sexual subcultures. To me, those kinds of events are designed to privatize sex.

MOTTA: Yes, but these sex parties have become places where public sex is still a way of forming bonds with others in ways that are not possible in urban public space. For me, going to the NYBondageClub party at Paddles, for example, is a rare opportunity to interact in an overtly sexual space with an older generation of men who I wouldn’t otherwise have access to, or engage with in that kind of sexual culture. It is also the site where specialized knowledge about bondage techniques, for example, which are a truly unique art form, are passed on from generation to generation.

LUBIN-LEVY: I see what you’re saying, but my point is less about denying pleasurable sexual practices that aren’t my own, and more about the dangers of placing too much value in an antiquated notion of community. I have an aversion to thinking of those spaces you mentioned as a utopia that isn’t subject to the same troubles of collectivity as everywhere else. And I think these kinds of sex parties point toward how identity is becoming shaped

by sexual practice, rather than sex being a way of pushing at the boundaries of identity. If challenging those fixed categories was part of the sexual revolution that began over forty years ago, then tactics of that revolution don't seem to have the same efficacy today.

MOTTA: What you say reminds me of a recent interview I conducted with Edmund White, who told me that when he moved to New York there wasn't really a "gay identity" in the way that we think of it today. He liked men and lived with a partner, but the only time he felt a sense of belonging was when he was cruising on the streets. He also told me something really interesting: he said that after leaving a cruising spot in the West Village or Times Square, for example, the building could have burned down behind him and he wouldn't have turned around to see if anyone survived. He would go cruise, have sex in that space, but the minute he left he would no longer belong or feel responsible.

LUBIN-LEVY: The notion that the building could have burned but he wouldn't have turned to see if anyone survived makes me think about how even after the moment of cruising, the building still exists, whether or not it is out of sight or out of mind. In that sense, *Petite*

Mort is not a project about cruising, decoding desire, or walking the line between inside and outside. It is a project about memory.

MOTTA: Gays in the 1970s thought of sex as a symbol of liberation and I would like to think that *Petite Mort* in its own way does the same. After the teachings of the sexual liberation movement, sex has been reduced again to something that has to take place within the confines of a relationship, between two married people and in the privacy of their own home. I would like to see us suggest that sex needs to be taken out of the bedroom, and to re-politicize it within the current conservative climate that believes all queer people want to assimilate to heteronormative society. The forces of the LGBT movement are very strong—they have prioritized a set of issues that fail to address the fallacies of the larger political system. Instead of fighting to modify that system, gay bureaucrats have embraced the "we are just like you" mentality that queer liberationists had so strongly fought against. Why would any queer person want to join the Army, a lethal institution that propagates a patriarchal, imperialist, and destructive logic of exclusion? Why not organize against it and use our resources

to abolish it? Why the need to marry? Why not demand equal access to rights by demanding the transformation of the legal system? I resist the response that these questions are utopian because they are in fact an opportunity to rethink our political goals, to rethink and enact a queer agenda. To me, *Petite Mort* approaches these larger political questions by focusing on the way that city policies have transformed public space and consequently imposed the formation of private models for sexual contact. Because we have witnessed this transformation happen right in front of our eyes, this project is an attempt to document the history that is left behind, not scientifically but subjectively. The collected drawings revisit that lost city that will never be again.

LUBIN-LEVY: Or maybe that never was in the first place. I don't want to idealize some *other* gay life, as a simple escape hatch. Since this project is subjective, it doesn't do the empirical work of uncovering lost History with a capital "h." What it does do is illustrate the very difficulty of holding to memories as artifacts and facts of our collective history, as something relevant to more than just a personal archive. When I look at these drawings, all assembled, I feel a sense of

absence, a kind of void. They are beautiful, but at the same time withholding. They require the viewer to work hard to understand why these works are included in this atlas, why we should take them seriously and what can be found in them. The work might start from a sexual encounter, but it doesn't end there—sex isn't enough. Maybe the revolution is in the actual walls that house queer sex, in the public toilet, no matter how many times you scrub it clean or padlock it shut. Maybe it's in trying to remember what the space around sex is like. And these drawings *do* mostly convey spaces more than bodies, which is interesting since the project started from our desire to interrogate the stereotype of the promiscuous and publicly indecent gay male figure who is defiling public space. Even in that fantasy, space is key.

MOTTA: Yes. The "indecent gay male figure" is a weight most of us carry on our shoulders. When I was a teenager in Colombia, I hung out with a bunch of older guys and a couple of them always told me that being gay only mattered in the bedroom, that out in society one should never discuss one's sexual orientation. Sadly, this model of thinking has returned in disguise: sex and affection

have been largely reduced to individual identity politics and removed from a discourse on politics, collectivity, and resistance.

LUBIN-LEVY: Discourse, I think, is key to both of us. The idea that this project is not definitive but actually debatable was central to its development. It is one of the main reasons we wanted to start with contributions from men living with and through the stereotype I mentioned earlier but then expanding the discussions to writers, scholars, and activists to respond to the question "Does public sex matter?" As a side note, it was interesting how much easier it was to ask people to ruminate on public sex than it was to have them share a personal memory. Their written responses really do both. And the other major challenge we faced was how to bring this project to a larger audience, especially to those who feel quite comfortable in the space of the private bedroom, without making them feel attacked or threatened, because it isn't an either/or situation. We really wanted more than just gay male support for this project, which is of course predominantly who this project focuses on.

MOTTA: How did we go about that?

LUBIN-LEVY: I think a certain kind of history serves well in that regard. I talked to people about public spaces like Central Park or Washington Square Park, about how these spaces were built for and by the city and how they provided this public meeting ground for strangers. And then I talked about how these public outdoor spaces also provided a space outside of the strictures of the private home, which itself was a venue for displaying a public image of the happy family. The parks were where gay men could cross paths and find one another. Finding themselves embraced, finding their meetings embraced by the crossing paths of the park, they also found space for sexual pleasure. I think that's a very understandable notion—looking for a space to belong. So ultimately it's about how these public architectures can house different desire and about not reducing those desires to a blight or pathology.

MOTTA: There is a moral shadow over the idea of public sex because it is associated with the very tired notion of promiscuity. Many of my heterosexual friends just can't understand why anyone would want to have sex or establish any kind of erotic/emotional link with strangers. It is also important to

address the fact that public sex has often been associated with disease. Since the advent of the AIDS crisis, which prompted the closing of all gay bathhouses in New York City, the idea of public sex has been represented as and associated with a “promiscuous” behavior performed by desperate people—think of that very strong scene in Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America* in which, faced by the desperation of dealing with his lover’s death, Louis goes to The Rambles in Central Park and begs to be “infected” by the man who is fucking him. Not only is the public park the site of his “suicide,” but it is a stranger that can potentially facilitate his condemnation. In the face of an epidemic I understand how shutting down venues that facilitated “high risk” behavior may have seemed urgent, but what did we learn from the work of activists like Douglas Crimp or Simon Watney who denounced and resisted the misrepresentation of gay promiscuity during the crisis and provided alternative models to think about this?

LUBIN-LEVY: I think we learned the same thing they did—that the work of fighting representations and stereotypes is an ongoing battle, an untotizable affair. As much as their work has contributed to the discourse, we can’t hold

up a few martyrs or heroes for the cause and consider our work done. We also can’t get bogged down by the past, losing sight of the present and the future. I think Douglas Crimp is an incredible example of this, in that his work continues to take new directions and build on itself. And that sense of attachment to history is something we really worked with in this project. In these drawings, we followed the stereotype mentioned earlier, but we also wanted to expose the process of cataloguing ephemera. All of the drawings were forced to fit in these pages in various ways. All of these disparate elements meet within the structure we have built for them. And though there is so much more to the original drawings and the original contributors themselves, the book is ultimately about asking the viewer to look, even within these standardized pages, for what is deeply political, social, and personal. And in a way, I think our hope is that this book not only produces conversation, but actually becomes the material for reworking the current conversation around these issues. I hope people tear this book apart and reassemble it in new ways.

MOTTA: I would also add that *Petite Mort* is an attempt to construct a document of a particular

history that concerns gay men, apart from any focus on identity politics or the politics of exclusion. I think this is a queer initiative, even though gay men might be privileged in certain sectors, we have also been targets of discrimination and exclusion precisely for enacting our sexuality and desire in public. I am interested in the way we thought of *Petite Mort* as a documentary project but insisted on “documenting” from a very subjective perspective. The decision to ask gay men to submit drawings “from memory” of public sites where they had sex rather than actually requesting photographs from them, is to me a way of thinking about the document in a more fluid way, more along the lines of an oral history. We wanted to resist providing a totalizing narrative, and the drawings from memory really refuse it—it becomes about the experience of space through pleasure/desire, a different temporal space, and not in the accurate way that it exists to be remembered. I think of this approach as a very special form of documentary.

LUBIN-LEVY: I think that’s one of the most special things about this project. I think Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore’s drawing is a great example of that, of remembering the space and the labor to convey

it to an audience, who will never really be able to inhabit that space the way Mattilda did. It reveals the challenges of accessing a history that is ours, and yet is not something we experienced.

MOTTA: The only actual blueprint that we included in this book is the one of El Mirage, which was submitted by its owner Joel Czarlinsky. I used to live across the street from the sex club El Mirage so I went there quite frequently, and looking at the blueprint I could actually visualize the space in my mind—its color, its smells, the way time worked in there, etc. I knew exactly where the different partitions were positioned, where the bathrooms were; I remember the darkness of the backroom, which was sooo dark, but when you passed through it you reached the cells, which were lit by a dim yellow light...

LUBIN-LEVY: I wish people could hear your tone as you talk about that memory, but maybe we should just get on with the book and let them see what emerges for themselves. Before we do, any words on why we chose the title?

MOTTA: I was drawn to the expression “petite mort,” a french phrase which literally translates as “little death,” because it is

used as a metaphor for orgasm. I have always been fond of the wonderful anxiety associated with public sex—risk, trespassing, breaking or resisting the law—in other words, how public sex can be thought of as a little social death. Through the discourse we’ve built around this project, we can see how these public orgasms are productive sites of social and political activation. Do you agree?

LUBIN-LEVY: Absolutely! And I think walking the line between life and little death, *Petite Mort*, this book, reminds that this project is about looking at the personal as political, and realizing that it is always harder to see than we might expect.

August 2011

Joffrey whose energy had excited me but scared me to death when I was eighteen (three years earlier). Of course, he recognized me and got a huge smile on his face. From that night on we became friends until his death.

To enter the Mineshaft, you walked up the stairs from the street to get past the manager/doorman Wally. Then you entered a large room containing a bar, a place to check your coat or clothes, a pool table and other play furniture. Past this room was where the serious play began. It was filled with cages, crosses, hooks, bondage benches, and the like. Downstairs was a corridor with small rooms/vaults to the side. These contained everything from shackles to four-legged bathtubs. At the end of the downstairs was another bar area and a small dark play area behind that. The Mineshaft played an eclectic music list through the night from Berlioz to Pink Floyd. The Mineshaft was the bar that to this day every sex club around the world pays homage to.

The city's disdain for sex was not as vehement as it is today. Outdoor sex was glorious. Especially down on the piers by Christopher Street. The pier off West 10th Street had a dilapidated structure at the end. Other than being filled with

some of the most intense cock sucking and fucking to date, it also cast some of the most beautiful light on male bodies. Probably one of the most unlikely places I encountered sex was on the large staircase running up the end of the American Museum of Natural History. And of course there was Central Park. Everyone has their favorite spot there—mine was up the hill from the pond where two trees grew out of a flat rock.

As strange as trees growing out of rocks sounds, that is the initial response I received to opening a private men's club in 1999. The original concept presented to the investors was to house El Mirage four nights a week and the other three days/nights I could use for artistic endeavors to my liking. Well, El Mirage became bigger than even I had expected. And I was the person selling to the investors how much-needed and appreciated a new play space would be in NYC. To this day, I have people asking me if we are going to re-open another El Mirage. I tell them that the present administration would never allow a legitimate, community involved, proud sex-based business to stay open.

Perhaps I should start at the beginning and not the end of the story of one of the most notori-

ous and beloved gay sex clubs of NYC. There had been a huge hole in gay sex nightlife. Almost all the bathhouses were closed by 1986/1987, and along with that many sexual establishments, including bars with strong sexual overtones. By the mid-'90s the only places left were the jack-off clubs and one sex party that had all the elements of presenting sex as if it were a bad thing. It was completely dark with no showers, one bathroom, and relatively rude staff.

So around 1997, I thought there needed to be a counterpoint to the idea that sex is a bad, dirty activity, which implied that our bodies were the same. Part of the blame could be placed upon the politics of the administrations; part on the pendulum swinging to the right in the country; part on the scare of AIDS; and part on the mainstreaming of the gay community to emulate straight society.

I began scoping out venues while simultaneously talking to investors about opening a private men's club. Along with my legal team, we researched and studied the means the city used to close the bathhouses, particularly the St. Marks Baths. From that research we formed the rules and standards to open El Mirage.

I had decided to base the concept on the Mineshaft, with creative spaces through the club, but no actual rooms. The difference was that we had showers, bathrooms, and a mandatory clothes check. Of course, we could not serve liquor. It did take a few months for the men to be comfortable having sex in a sexual arena, which was not pitch black—where you could enjoy the passions of others as well as see those you are playing with.

El Mirage changed its theme every nine months—from a dungeon look to Central Park. Since there had not been anything like this for over thirteen years it took awhile for the guys to grow accustomed to such a venue. But, after a gestation period of about nine months, El Mirage became a destination for the night. El Mirage catered to every sexual appetite available. There was even a lesbian S&M party once a month.

Over the eight years El Mirage was active, before being closed down by the city, a myriad of friendships and relationships were formed there. It was the most diverse gay club NYC had experienced—diversity in race, age, form, economics, and politics.

El Mirage was a community. A community for those who

enjoyed sex and knew it should be a positive part of their lives. This was true of members and staff. Even today when I have been asked to organize other events I can still call on my staff to come together, and like old friends we seem to pick up our conversation and time together as if it were just yesterday. When past members of El Mirage happen to be in attendance at those parties they enjoy being part of the rekindling of a special time in the past. Still today you can ask former members of El Mirage about guys they met there and you will hear stories of how many of them became friends and still hang together.

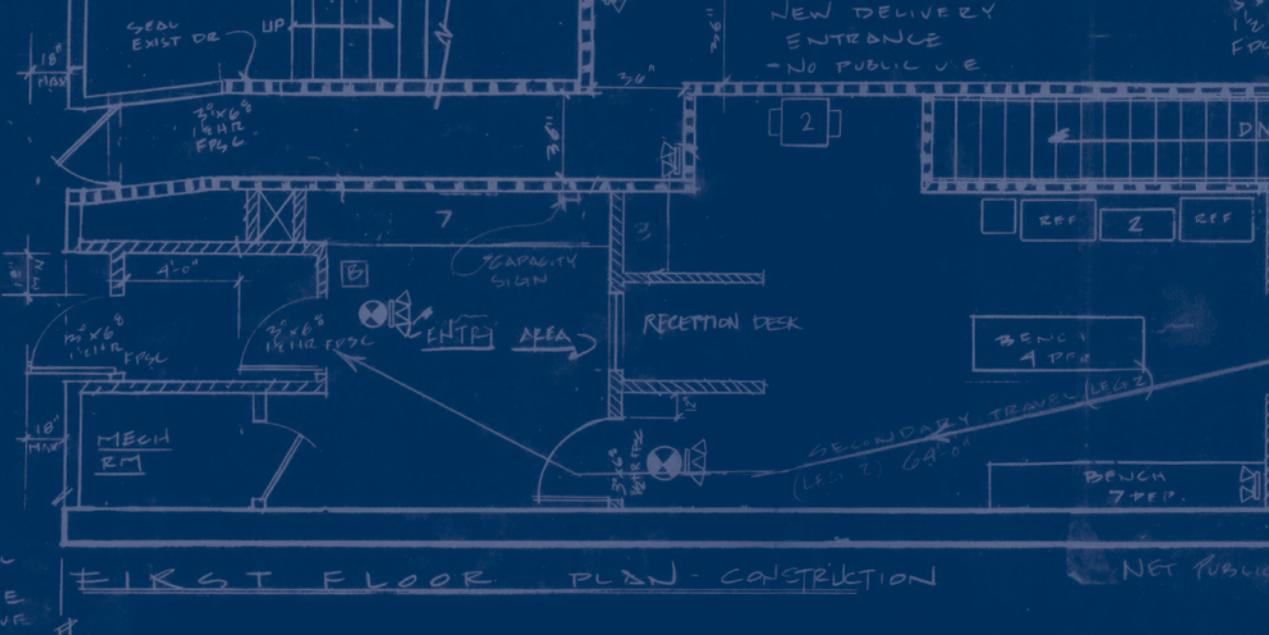
One might ask why such a good "thing" would come to an end? The answer is that disdain for the alternative gay life has grown acceptable. When an administration that dislikes, or is afraid, of nightlife—and especially gay nightlife—is willing to use its power to destroy through lies, threats, and deceit, it becomes impossible to do business. But even if businesses can't survive, people can—and survive we *do*.

This enlightened philosophy towards being a gay man—with its attitude of being sensual, thinking of sex as a positive, powerful characteristic—has been an incredible

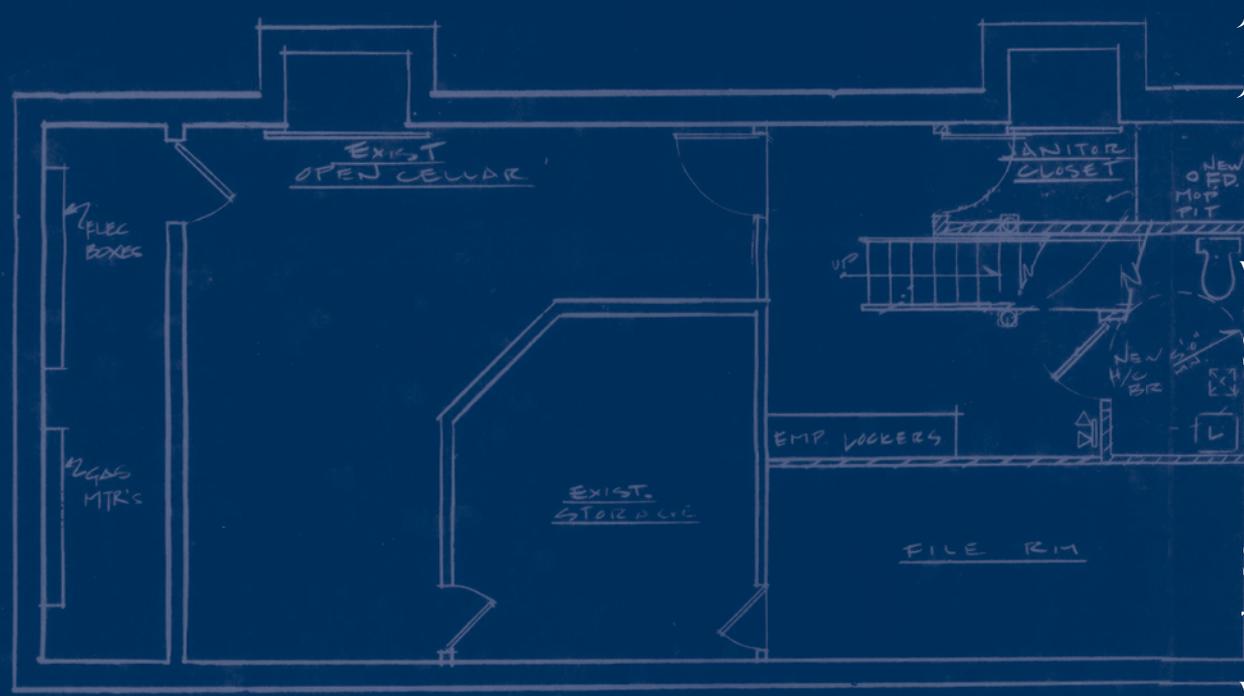
gift in shaping my life of amazing friends, undeniable truths, great joy, and insight. To this day I try to pass that knowledge and experience to others through my art, writings, businesses, and example.

*I sing my songs in the starlight
And play with my flute by the moon
I'm a faun on a long adventure
Never to be forgotten*

—JBC



DRAWINGS BY Anonymous, Allen Frame, Antoine Vigne, Aram Jibilian, Ashton Anders Correa, Billy Miller, Christopher Hollowell, Christopher Schulz, Cyrus Saint, Daniel Arango, Daniel Greenfield, Daniel Handal, Daniel Smith, Dave King, David Deitcher, Doron Langberg, Eric Rhein, Eric Wolf, Ethan Shoshan, Eugenio Percossi, G J Climer, George Towne, Jack Fritscher, Jacques Servin, Jake Yuzna, Jarrod Beck, Jason Wee, Jean de Boysson, Jean-Michel Sivry, John J. Spencer III, John Jurayj, John Monteith, John Paul Detty, Jonathan Crespo, Jonathan VanDyke, Manu Rodriguez, Matthew-Robin Nye, Matthias Vriens Mcgrath, Matthu Placek, Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore, Max Steele, Michael, Michael Lehman, Pablo León de la Barra, Patterson Scarlett, Rafael Perez Evans, Samuel Roeck, Sebastiano Mauri, Sergio Roger, Seth Joseph Weine, Terence Gower, TM & Liam Davy, Trygve Luktvasslimo, Ultra-red, Vincent W. Gagliostro, and W. Chase



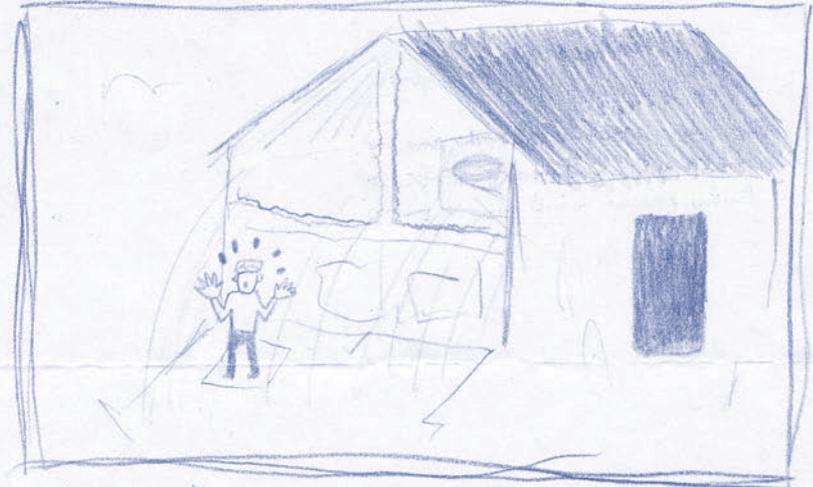
1. MINIMUM WIDTH OF BASIC AISLES TO BE 3'-0" IN EACH ROOM, AND EACH ROOM TO BE AN APPROVED MEANS OF EGRESS.
2. SIGNS TO BE AT LEAST 12" WIDE AND 16" HIGH TO BE POSTED WHERE NECESSARY TO COMPLY WITH C26-801.3 B.C.
3. EXIT SIGNS TO BE AT LEAST 8" IN HEIGHT WITH STROKES AT LEAST 3/16" TO COMPLY WITH SUB-ARTICLES 606.0, C26-801.10(e), C26-801.17 B.C.
4. SIGNS TO BE INTERNALLY LIGHTED TYPE IN ALL SPACES WHERE GENERAL ILLUMINATION IS REDUCED TO LESS THAN 5 FOOT CANDLES DURING OCCUPANCY.
5. DRAPES, CURTAINS, DECORATIONS AND SCENERY HAVING FLAME SPREAD RATING EXCEEDING 25 TO BE FIRE-RATED TO COMPLY WITH C19-161.1 OF THE B.C.

ANONYMOUS

MoMA and Me + 1 = 3!

Screening Room at MOMA

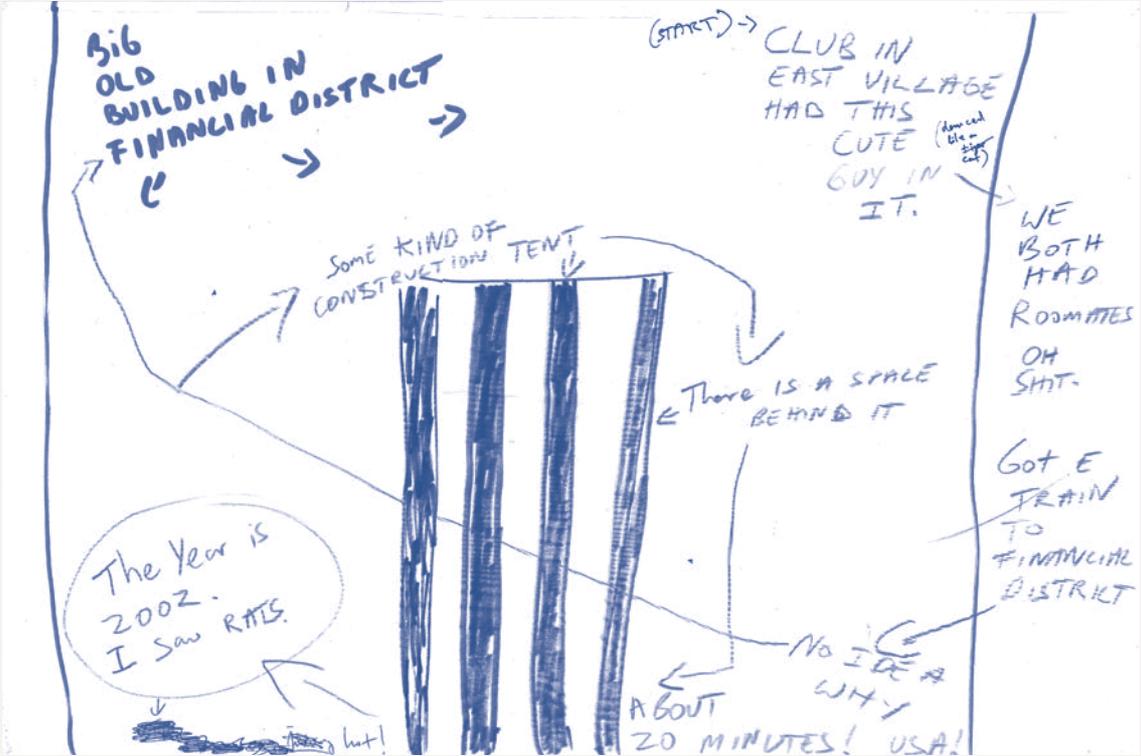
(This was a very long time ago.)



A ten-second loop from a silent film was playing
over and over: The side of a house fell on a man,
but he passed through an open window and was
unharmed.
The theater was very crowded.
We were stealthy.

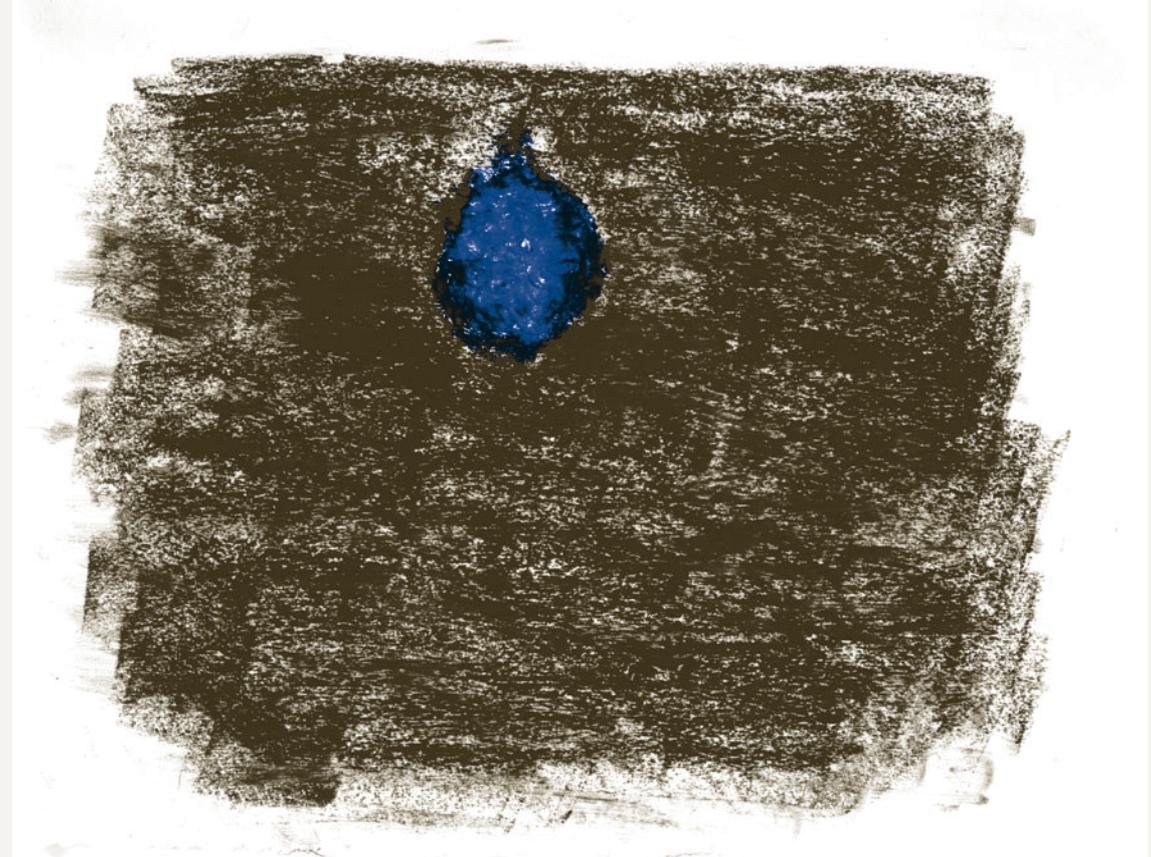
ANONYMOUS

Untitled (Financial District)



ANONYMOUS

Backroom (Crowbar), ca. 1992



ANONYMOUS



ANONYMOUS

Perry Street

Who: me and a Greek-German boy.

What: public sexual encounter.

When: summer 2010.

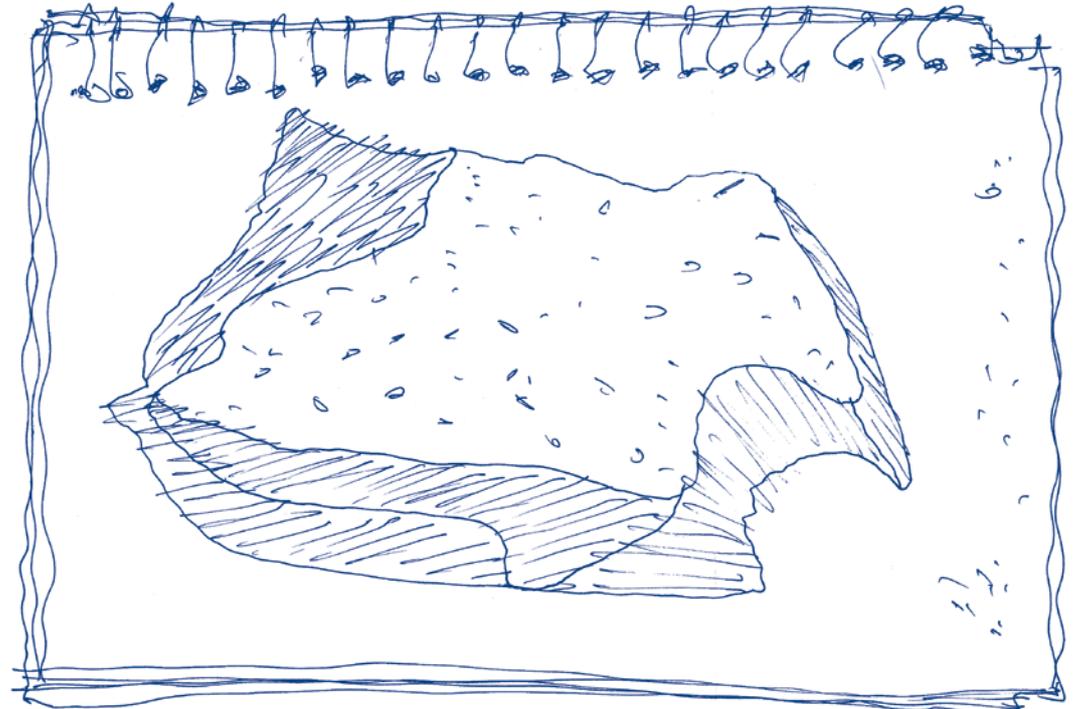
Where: across from Perry Street, on the park overlooking the West Side piers.

How: after wandering aimlessly through the city, a invisible magnetic force led us there.



ANONYMOUS

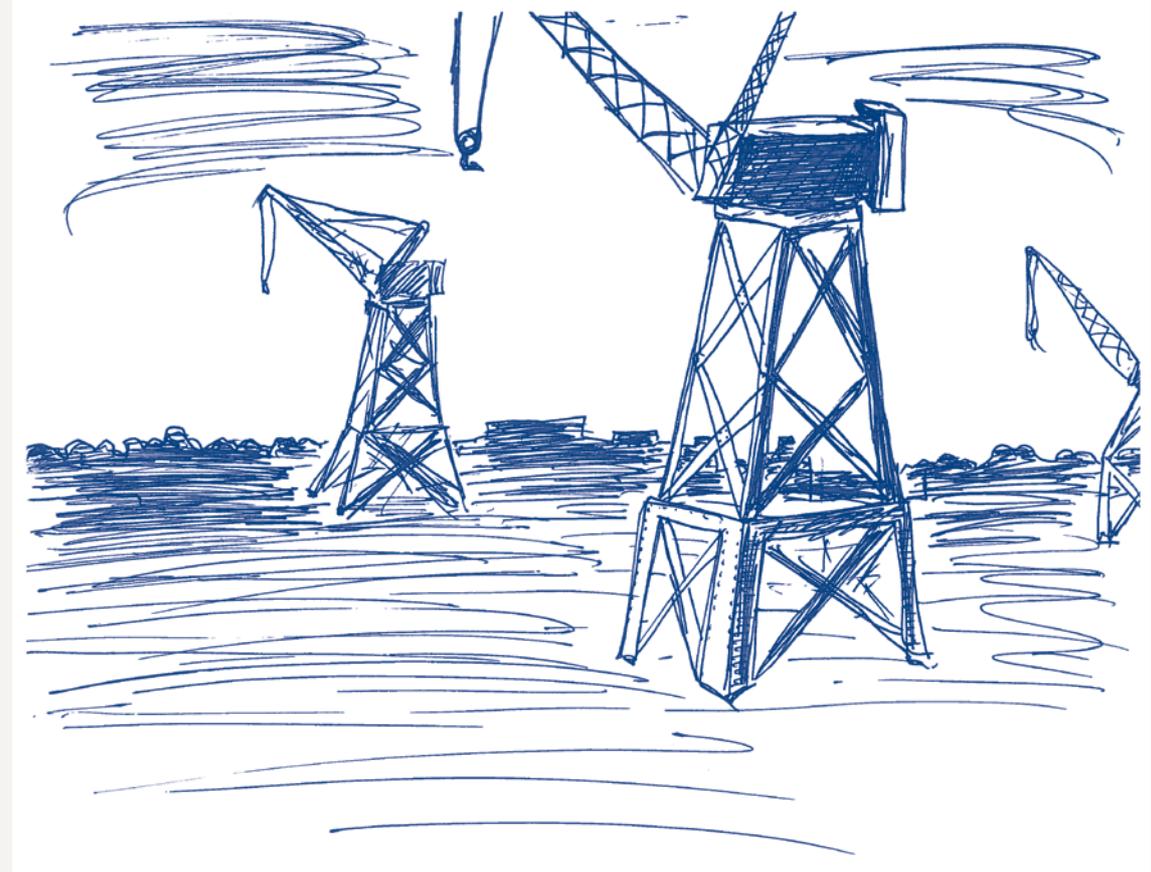
Boulder (110th & X)



large granite boulder, like an island, under the shade of a tree, in the woods. Two of us side by side fit niches along the niches and crevices.

ANONYMOUS

Ikea Terminal



ALLEN FRAME

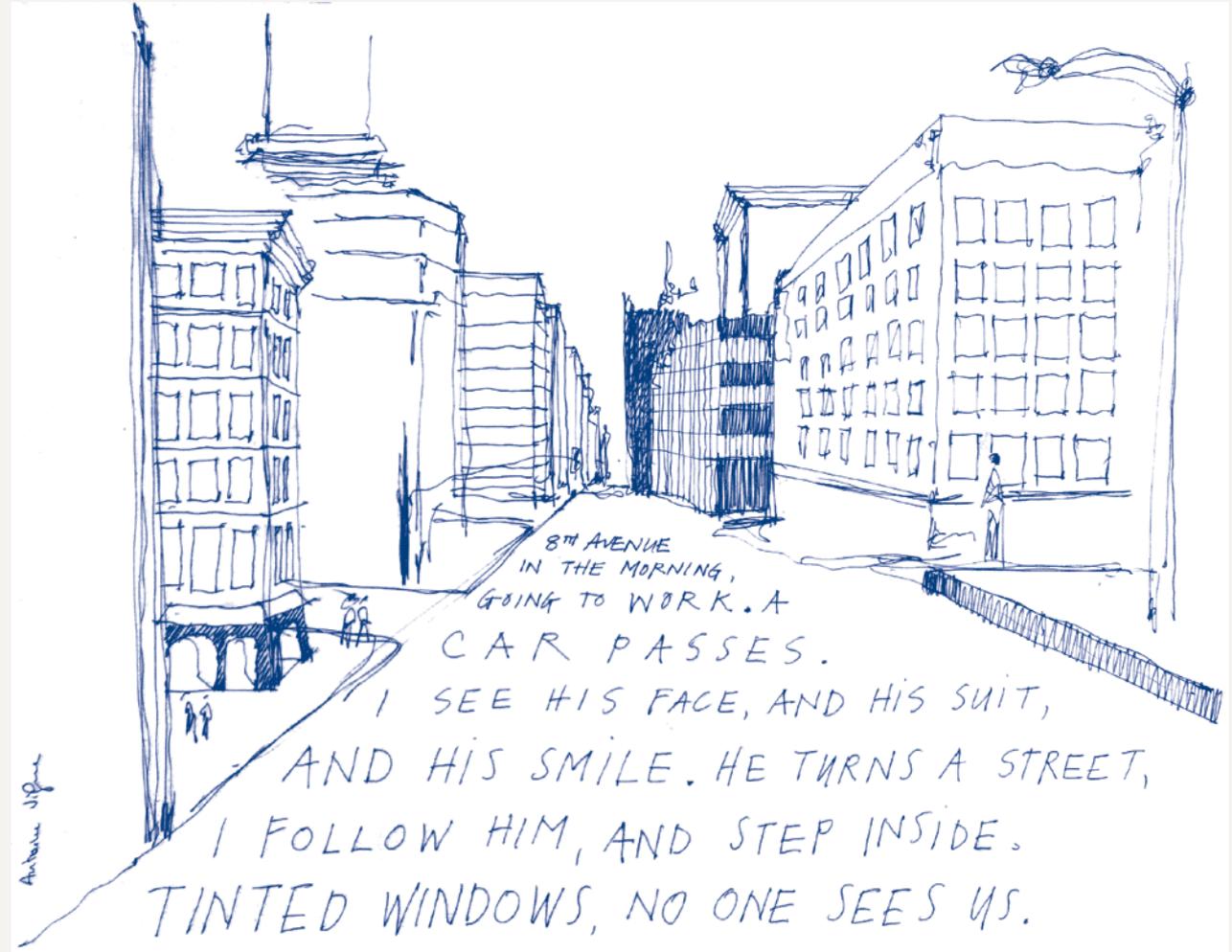
Central Park West

The address of the location mentioned in the drawing, approximately, would be Central Park West and 60th Street.



ANTOINE VIGNE

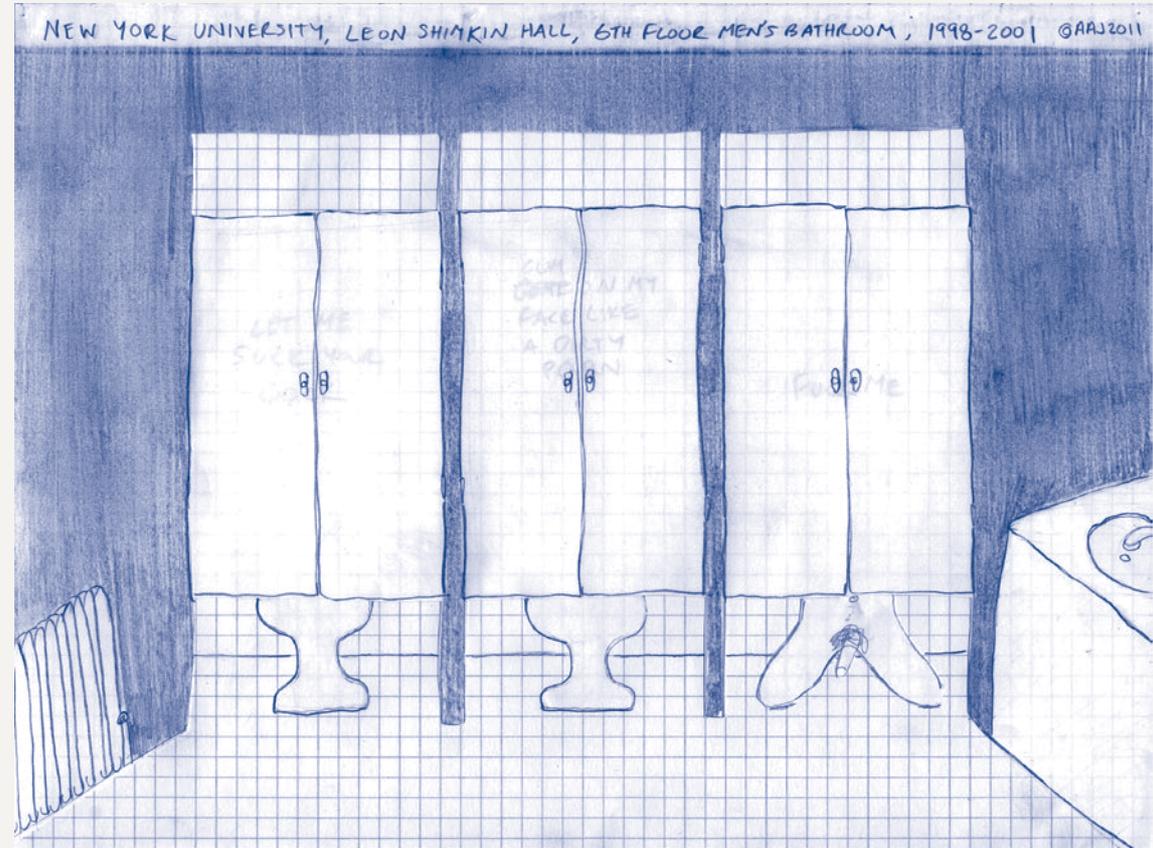
8th Avenue



ARAM JIBILIAN

Untitled

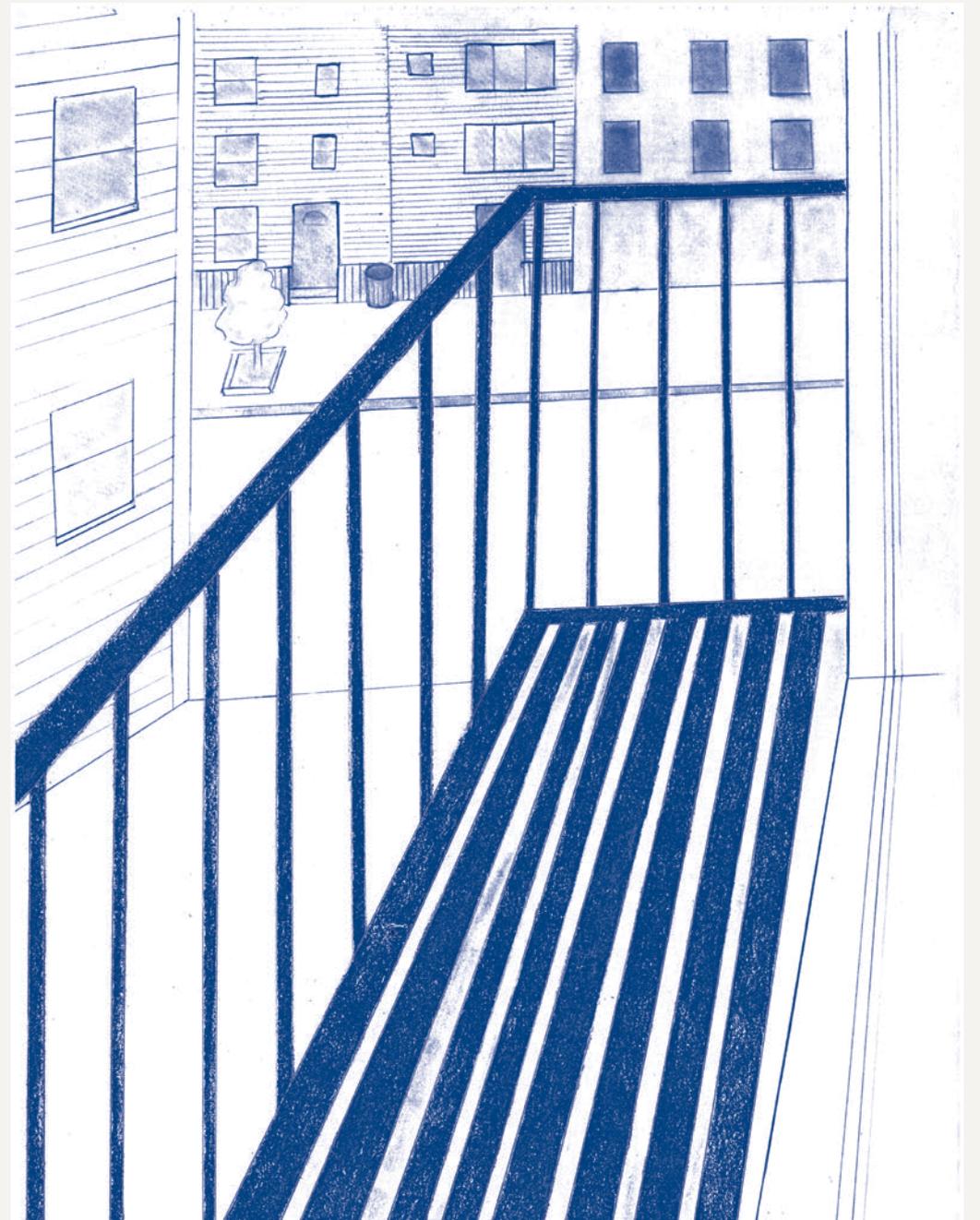
In this warm steamy men's bathroom on the 6th floor of New York University's Leon Shimkin Hall, I found a place to blow off some serious art school steam. There were always at least a couple of other men waiting.

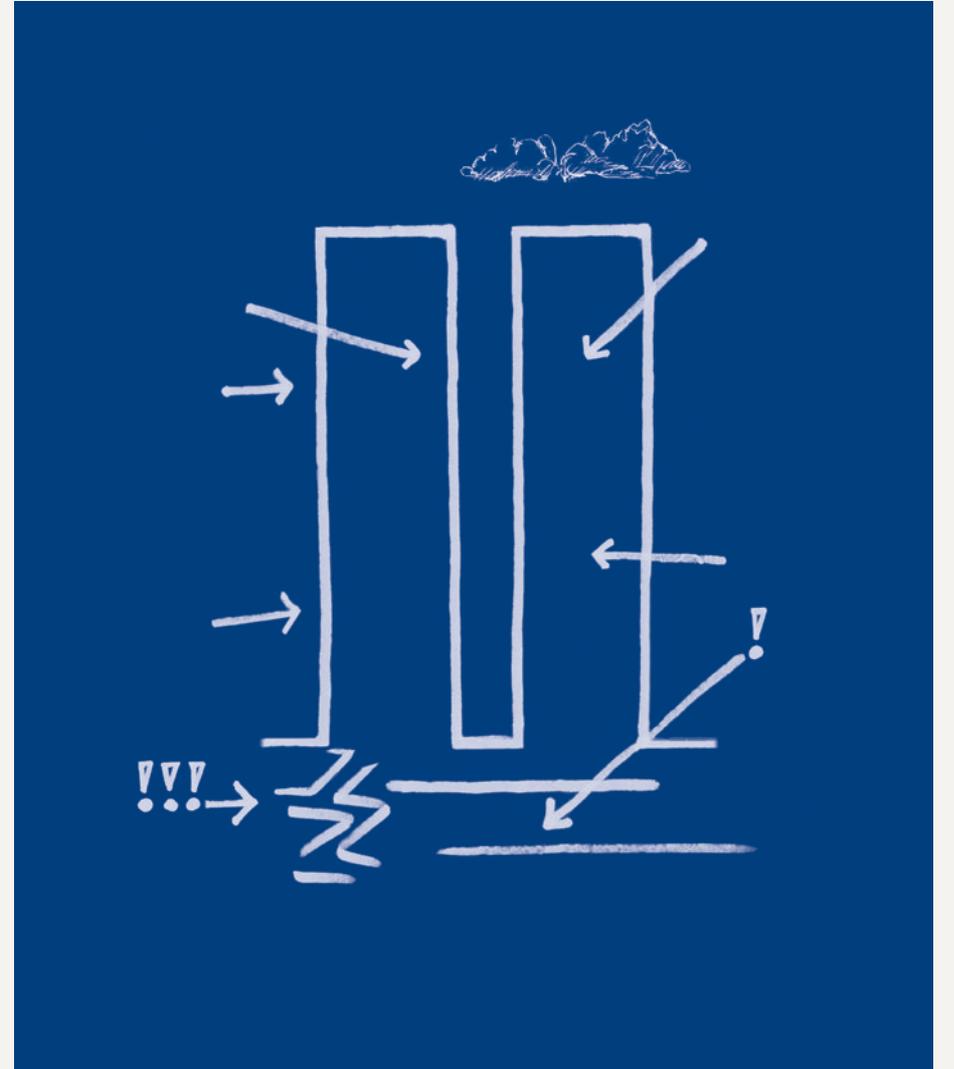
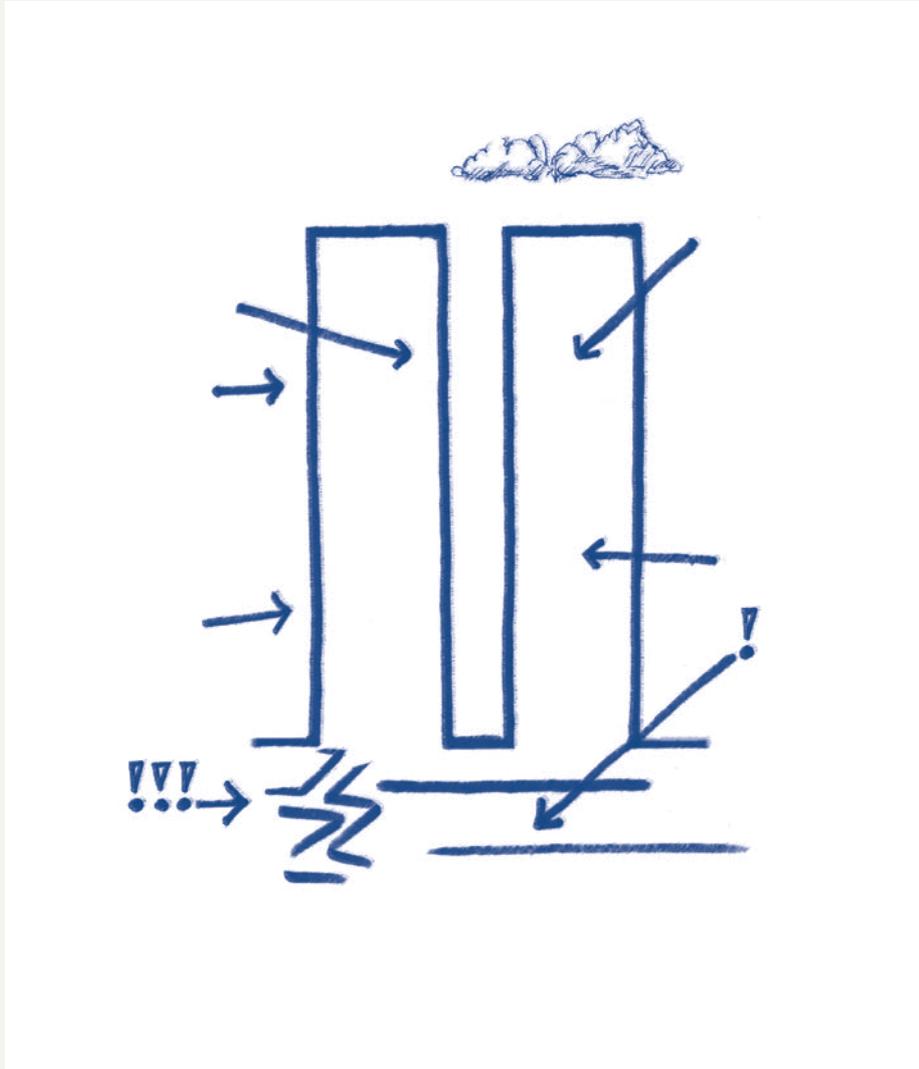


ASHTON ANDERS CORREA

Untitled

This was on a buddy's fire escape in Greenpoint around Nassau and Eckford Street. While in the act, a car blaring dance music drove past, then stopped, reversed, and then three or four Polish dudes got out and started to shout something. We fell back in through the window and laughed all night.

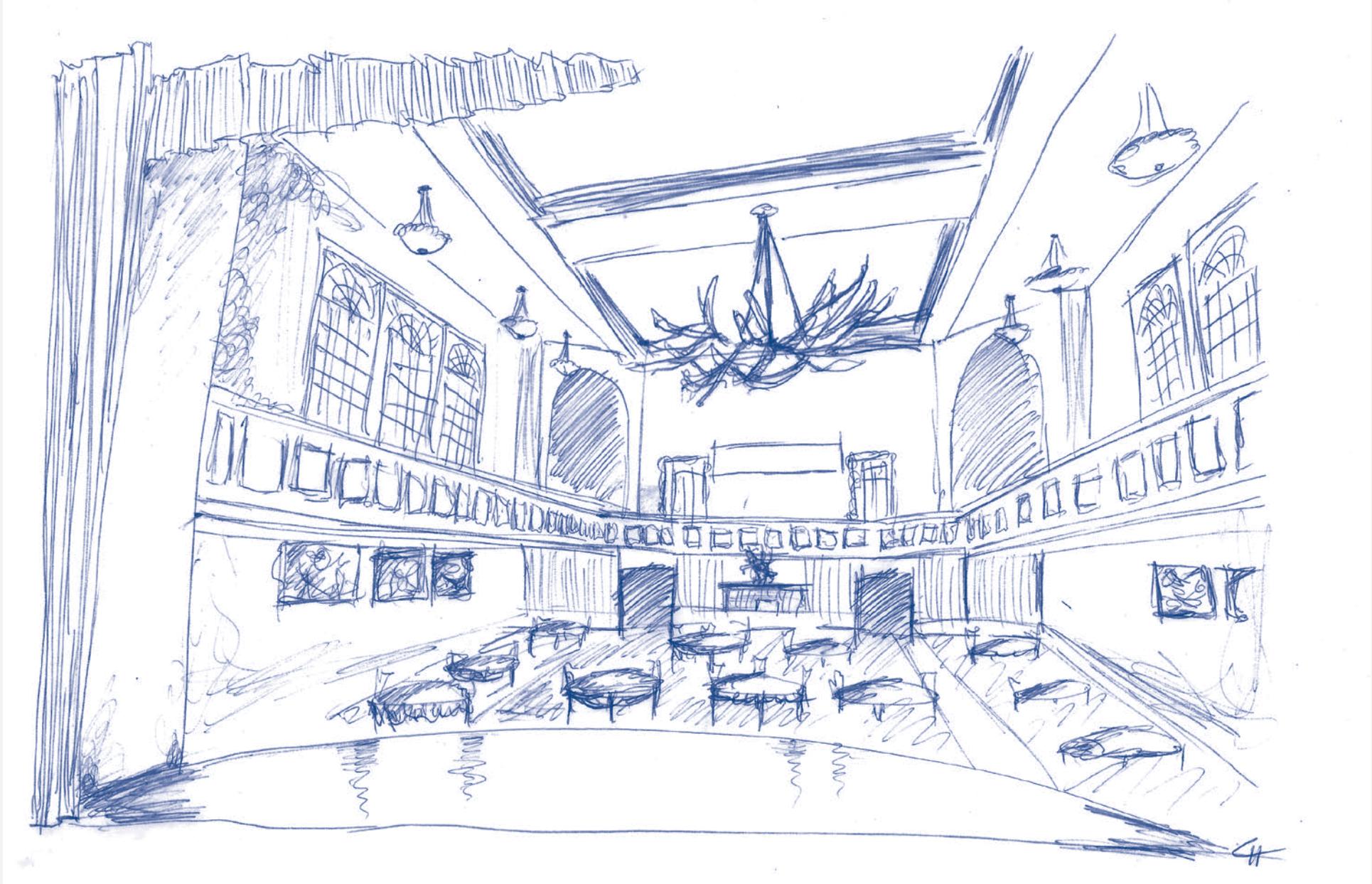




CHRISTOPHER HOLLOWELL

Players Club

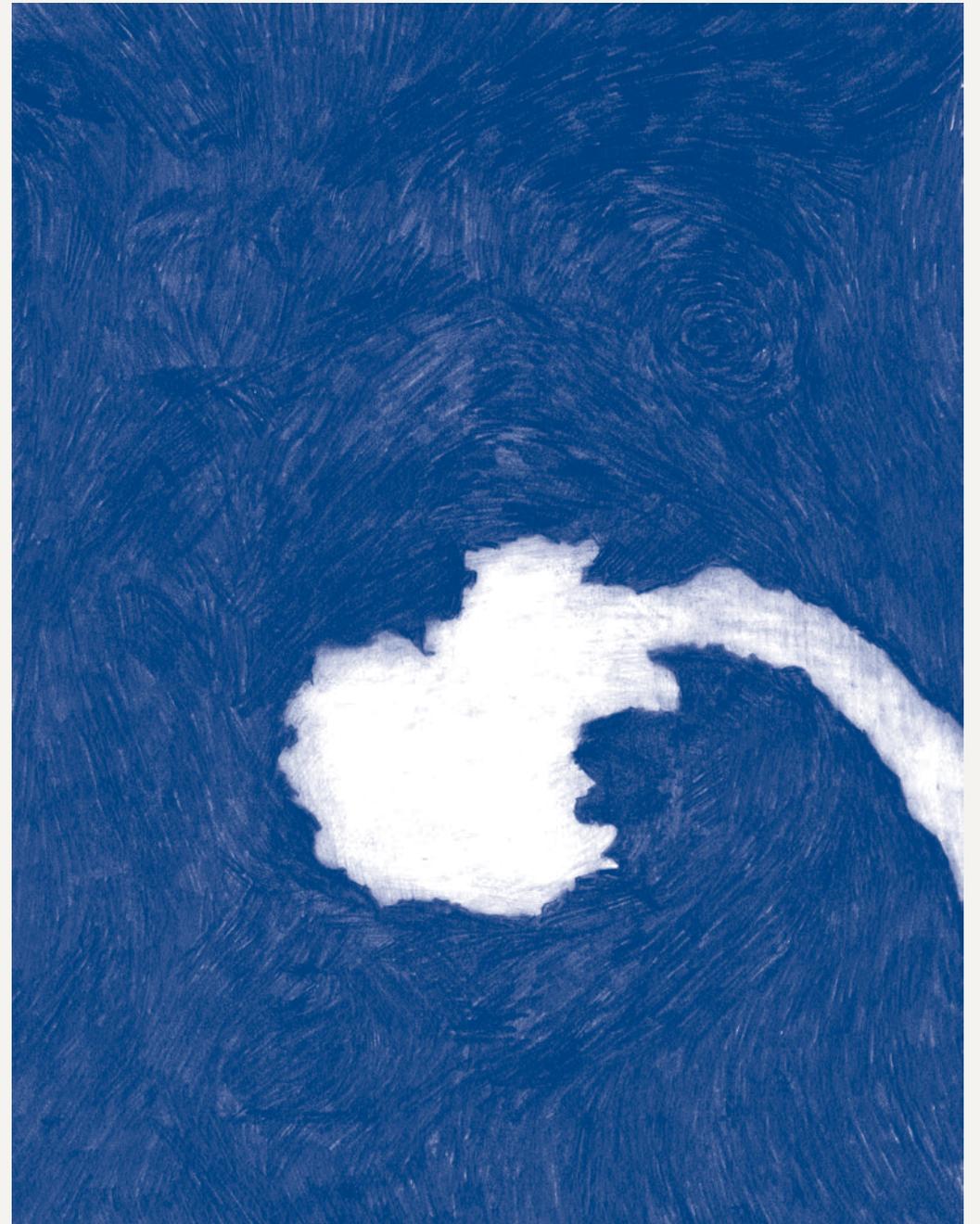
I took him to see the theater I had worked in. I took him to the stage. I took him behind the curtain. And while the people in the bar downstairs roared with laughter as if they were talking with Booth himself he took me. He took me.



CHRISTOPHER SCHULZ

The Meat Rack

During a stay at Fire Island a friend and I were shown the heart of the Meat Rack. There was a long winding narrow path that led to a clearing deep in the middle of the Meat Rack. I can't remember exactly how to get there, which is why my drawing is as vague as the memory of the location. Sex was difficult because strangers kept appearing, wanting to get involved. It was a special place though. I hope to find it again.



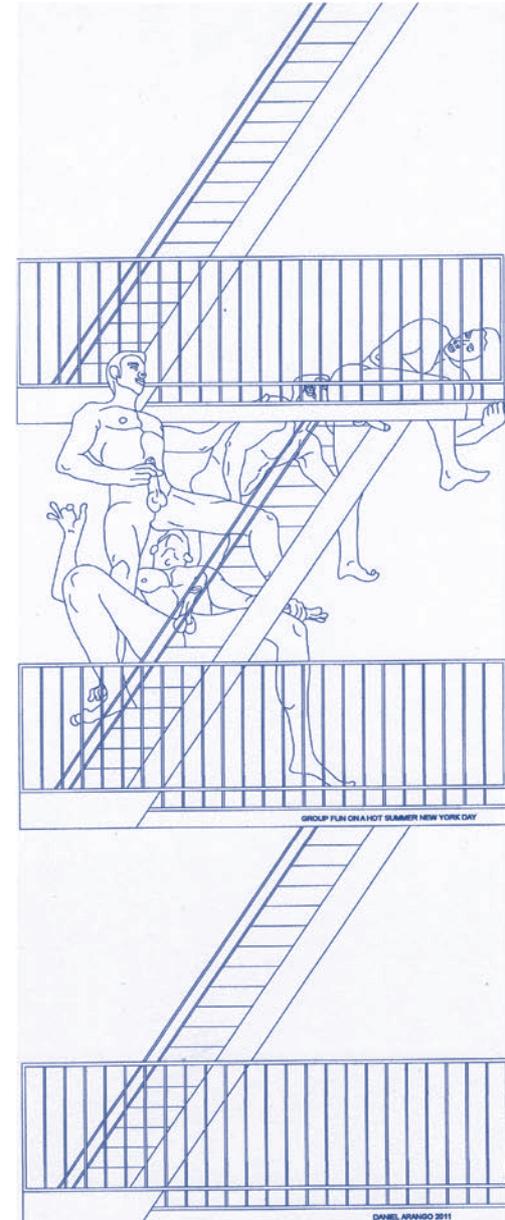
CYRUS SAINT

Drawing for Carlos



DANIEL ARANGO

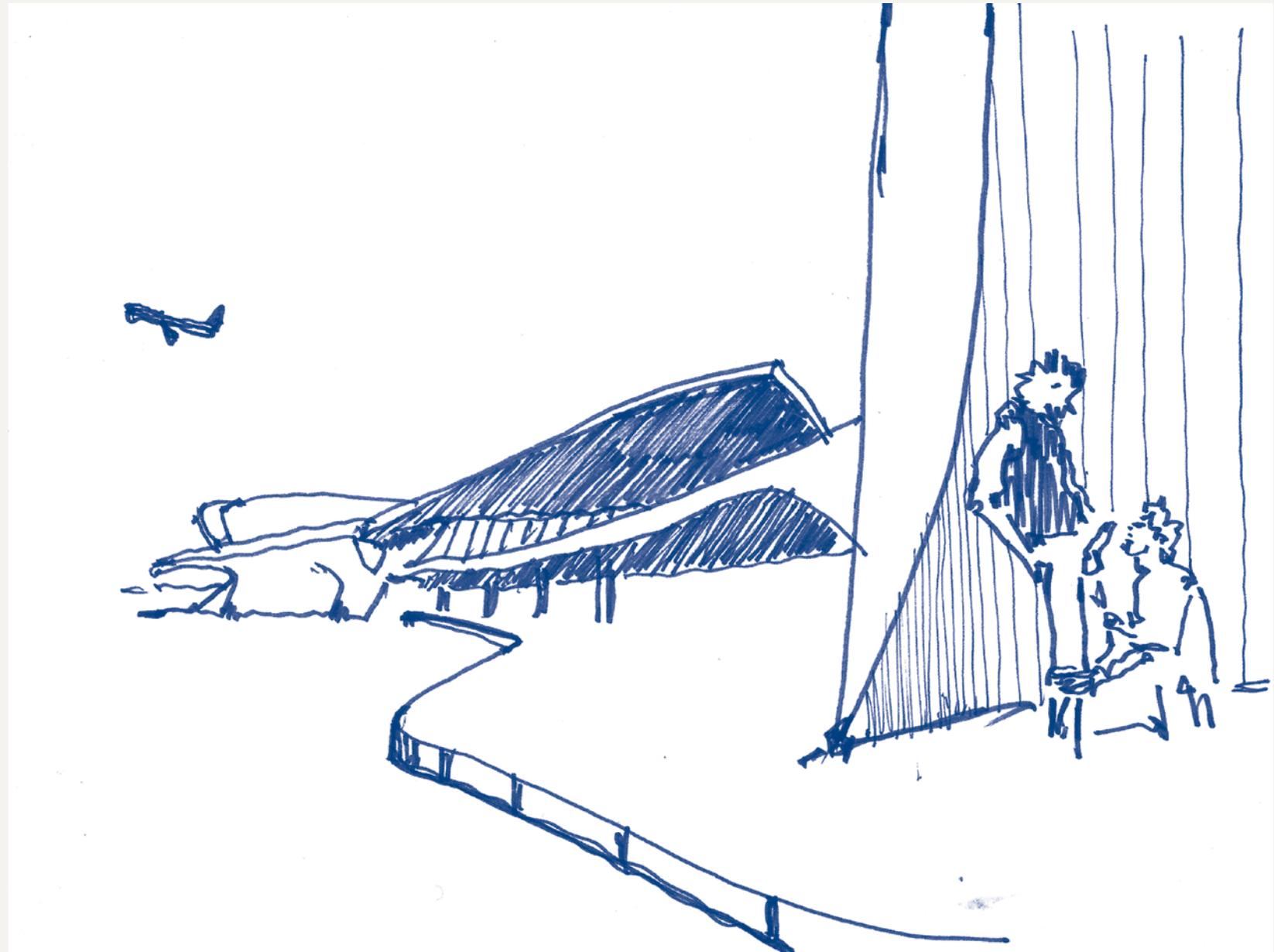
Group Fun



DANIEL GREENFIELD

Blowjob with Saarinen

This image records the development of underground sexual practices in the context of iconic architectural landmarks as spaces of frivolous cruising or fraternal gathering which linger on the excitability of the voyeur and the risky behavior of the exhibitionist.



DANIEL HANDAL

Central Park South

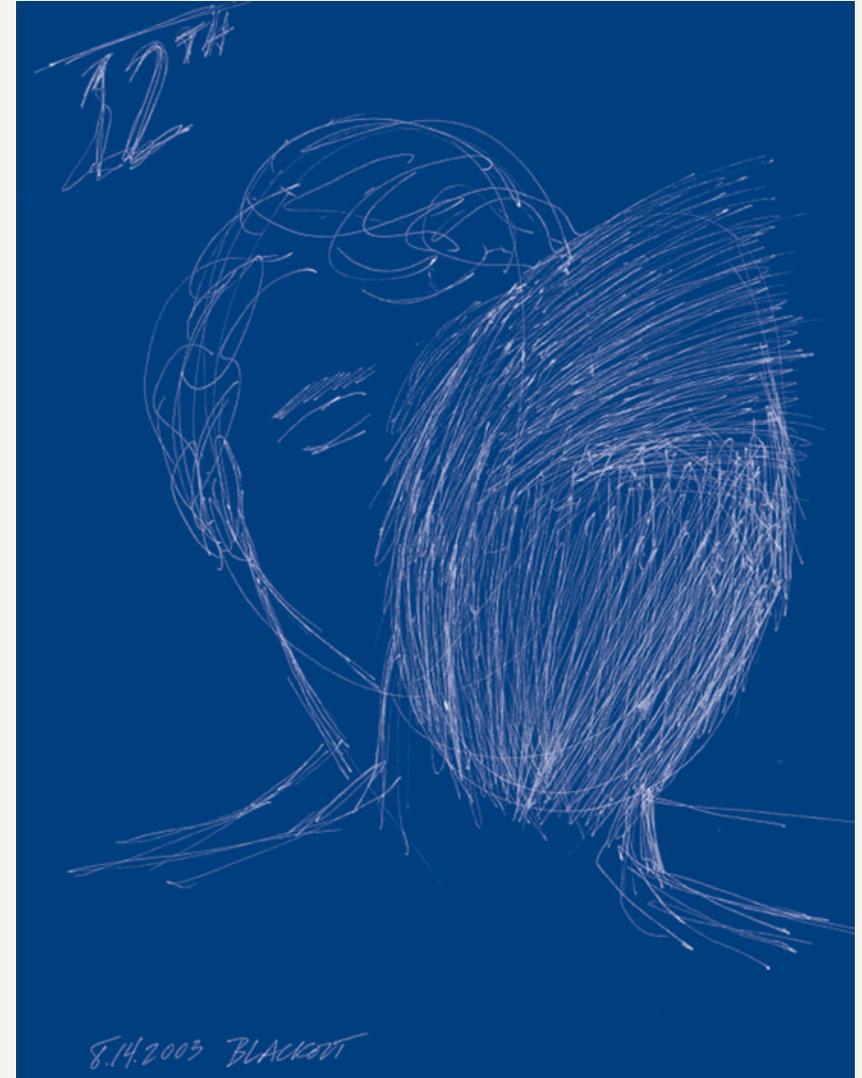
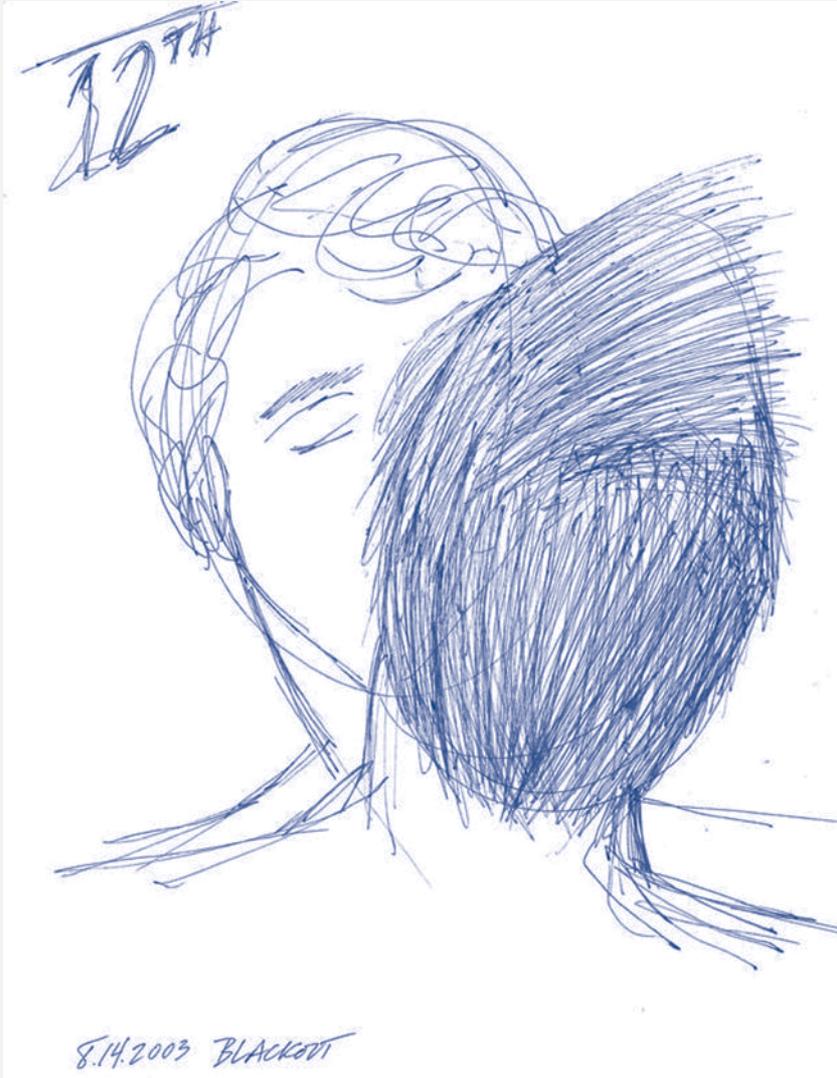
When I moved to New York in my mid-twenties, I ventured into Central Park one summer evening to cruise The Rambles. The sky was clear and crisp and someone gave me a blow job near the the lake as I looked down towards Central Park South. It was a fun and liberating experience. I felt incredibly lucky to have moved to the city, and thought it was a privilege to get a chance to see it from this perspective.



DANIEL SMITH

12th Street, 2003

I actually have no idea who the guy was or what he looked like that night of the blackout in 2003, but we had fun somewhere on 12th Street.



DAVE KING

The West Side piers in the late-'70s

When I was in college, I drove a checkered cab. I used to fuck the fares in the back seat.



DAVID DEITCHER

A Night at the Adonis—at the Adonis

My picture recalls a night during the summer of ca. 1978 when I visited the Adonis Theater (since demolished) on 8th Avenue and 50th Street in Midtown Manhattan, when the Jack Wrangler vehicle, *A Night at the Adonis*, was playing as I was cruising—just like the guys in the film. What a meta-delight.

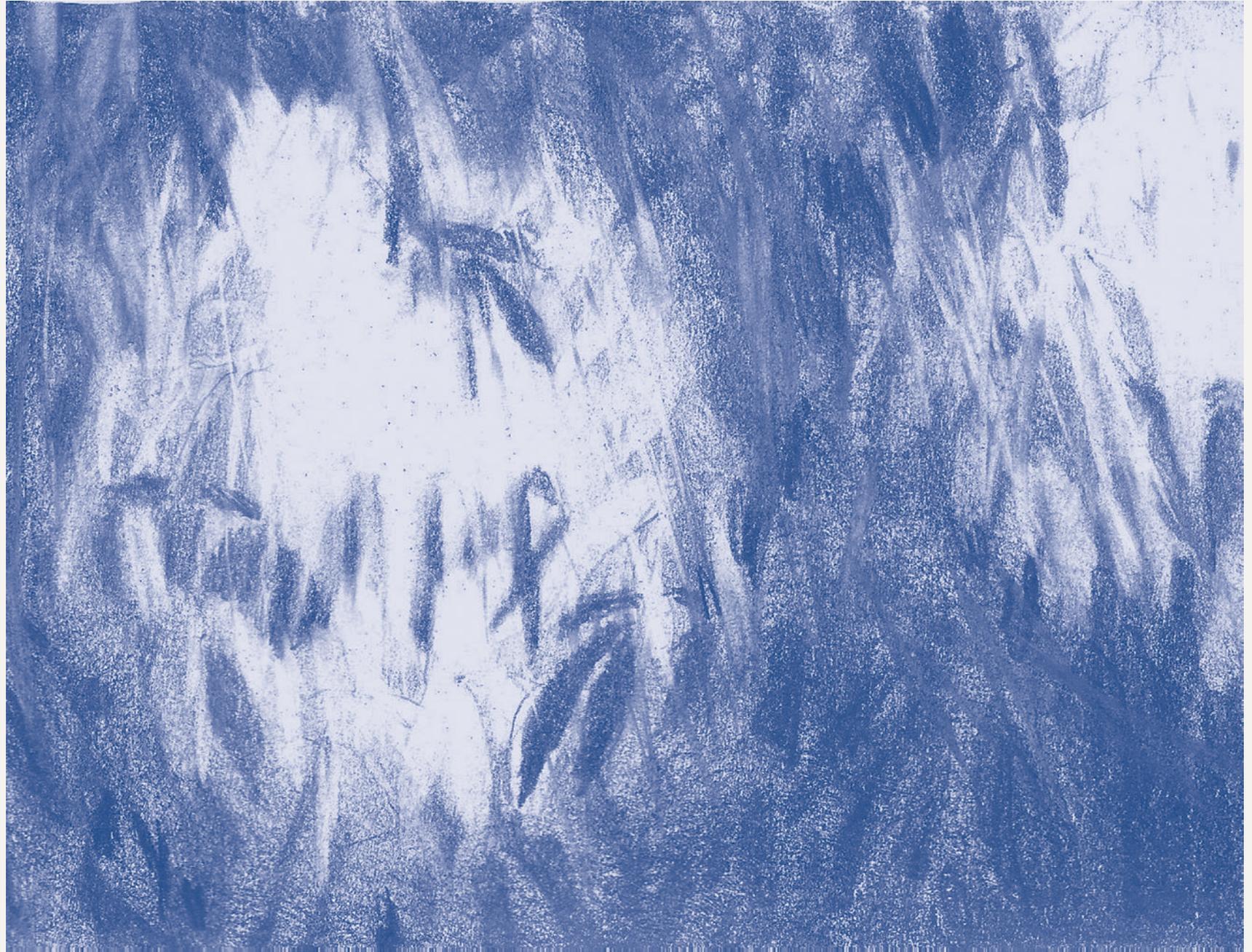


A Night at the Adonis—at the Adonis (ca. 1978)

DORON LANGBERG

Untitled

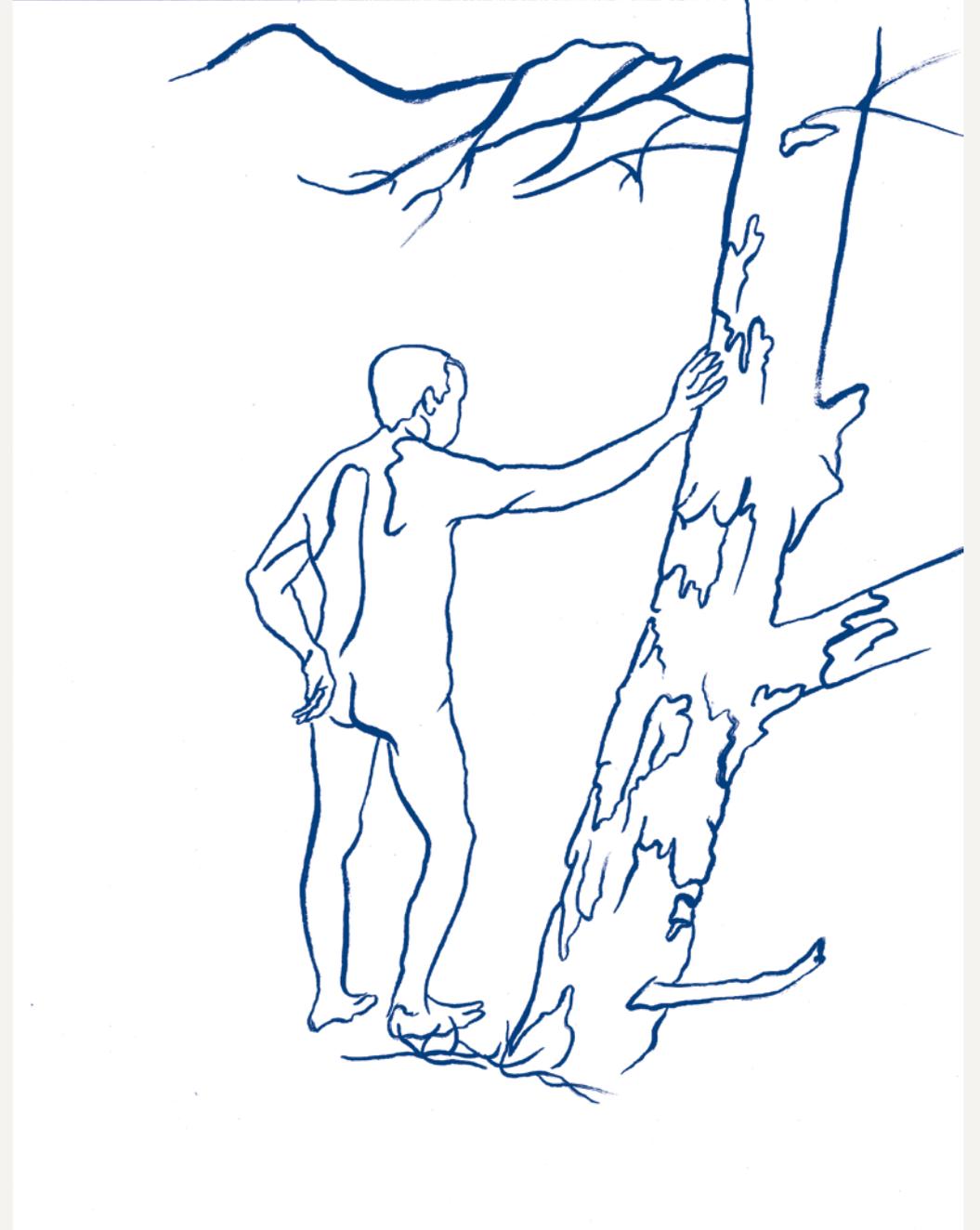
Not sure exactly where we were, it might
have been Tompkins Square Park. With
foggy glasses I looked over Mark's shoulder
and saw two glaring lights.



ERIC RHEIN

Self Portrait - Pine Clearing (“The Meat Rack,” Fire Island)

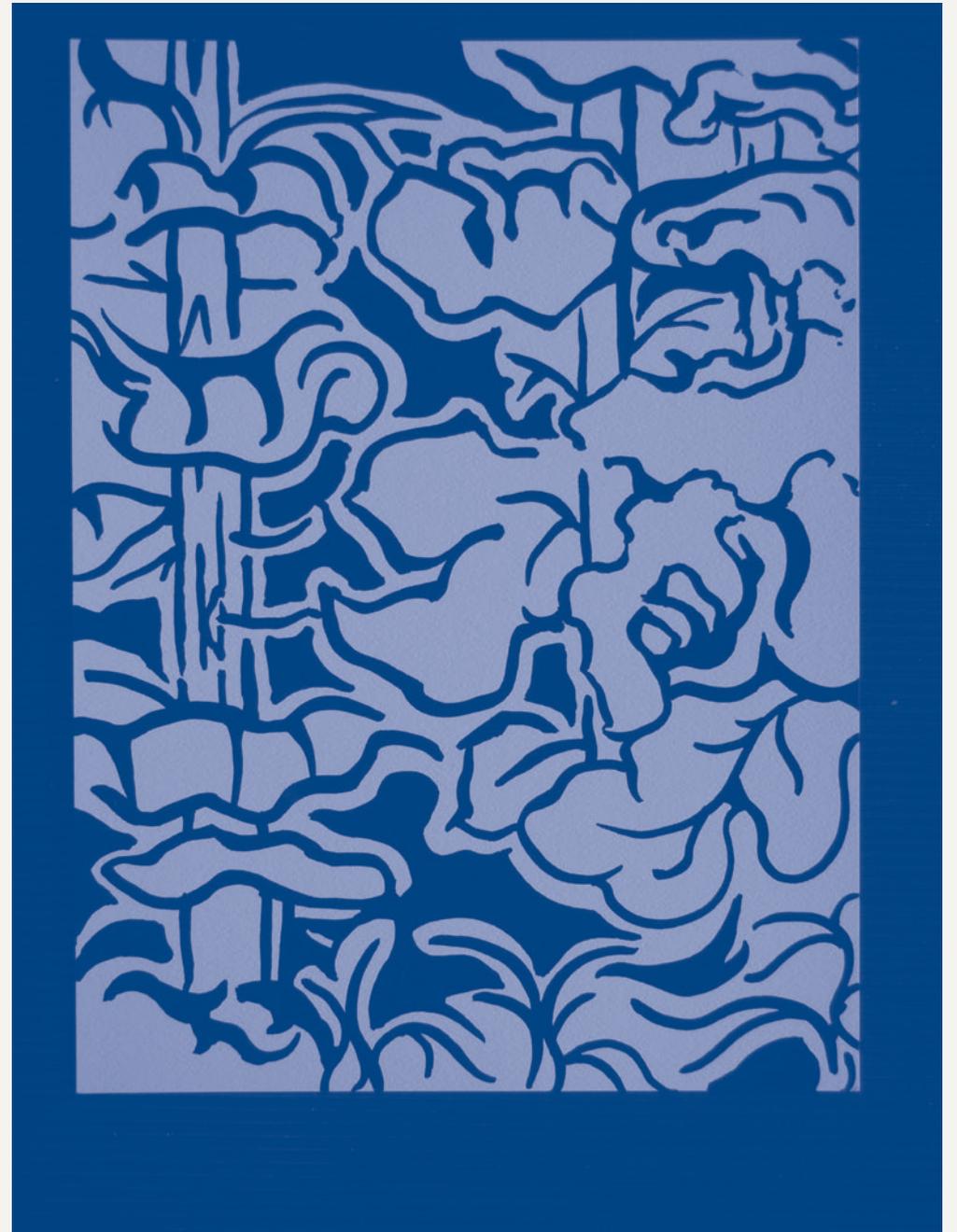
A photograph of my uncle Lige Clarke, a pioneer in the early gay rights movement, graces the cover of the book *Welcome to Fire Island-Visions of Cherry Grove and The Pines*, published in 1976. My uncle was researching to write the book when he was murdered while traveling in Mexico. His partner Jack Nichols authored it into completion. The book with the photograph of my uncle, beaming, and with welcoming outstretched arms has a special meaning to me as I have followed his footsteps to Fire Island for my own experiences as a gay man. Some of them have been quests for erotic adventures in the pine forest between Cherry Grove and The Pines that in my uncles' day was lovingly referred to as the “Judy Garland Memorial Park” and in my generation is known as “The Meat Rack.”



ERIC WOLF

North Woods Central Park

There is a dense forest in the north part of Central Park with some paths running through it. This area feels like a wilderness. Faint distant sound of the city lingers in the background, like a memory.



ETHAN SHOSHAN

I'm always thinking of you even
when I'm kissing another boy



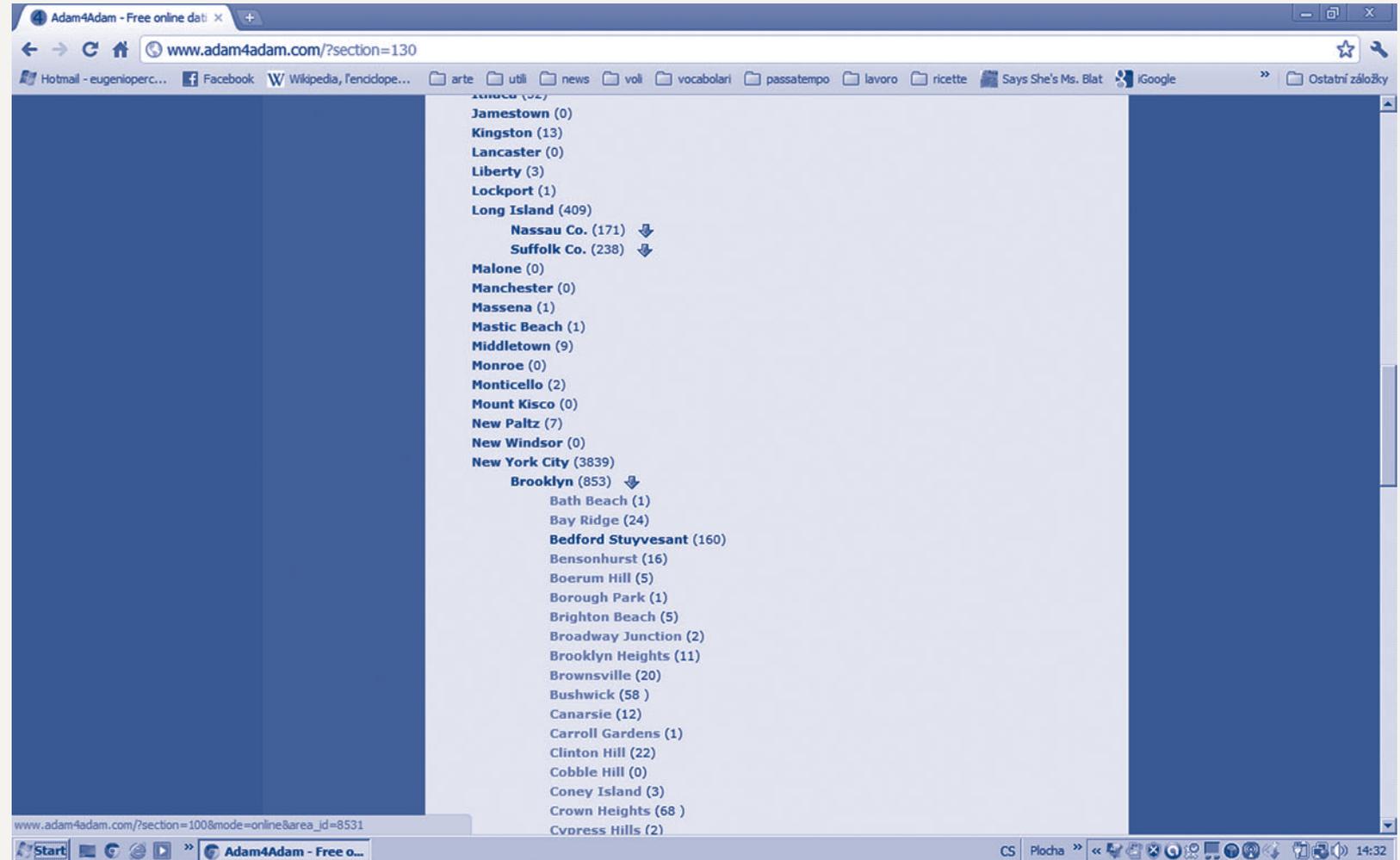
Found Object: Remains from a rubber sole

I went on a date with this really hot guy who was into feet. We ended up going to the MET to see an exhibit there. Walking through the galleries I noticed on the floor, pieced remains of a rubber sole. I thought it was funny and so fitting, being on this date and noticing this, as if something there was connecting us. Later, when we went to Central Park to lay in the sun, he started telling me his public sexual experiences while we were watching people come in and out of the rambles, as a way to say to me how easy it would be...

Story excerpt from
I'm always thinking of you even when I'm kissing another boy, 2010
Ethan Shoshan

EUGENIO PERCOSSI

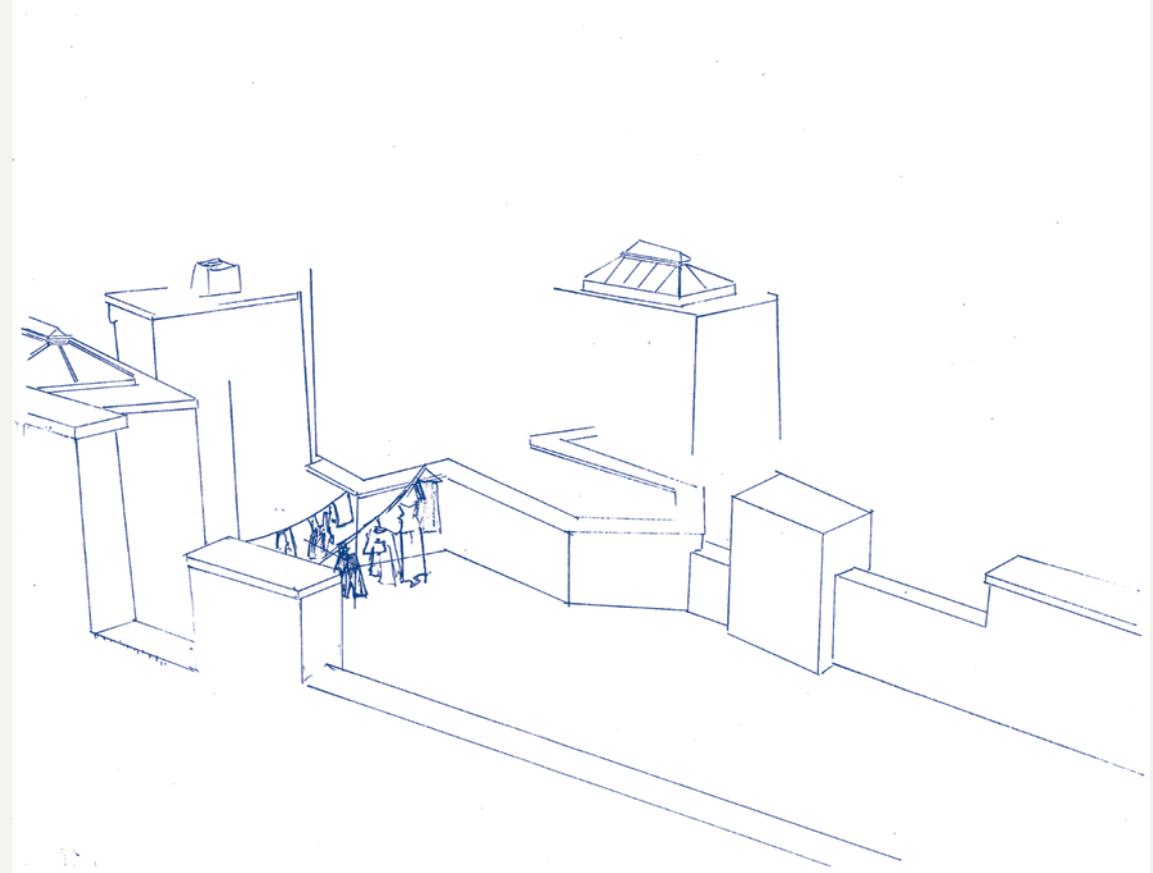
I Love NY and NY Loves Me



G J CLIMER

Chinatown Roof

Easy to see from higher rooftops, the guys who played here were never shy. One of the neighboring buildings rarely locked the front entrance, so guys would walk roof to roof 'til they reached the party.



GEORGE TOWNE

All Male Video

This is my watercolor painting of a place that doesn't exist anymore in New York City's East Village, on 14th Street near 3rd Avenue—now it's a Duane Reade underneath a NYU dorm. Places like this may have been considered a "blight" on the neighborhood because it's porn-related, but when I moved to the city at age 17 in 1986—I used to be so fascinated that a place could exist that pronounced its homosexuality so blatantly. I had come from upstate New York, and it's hard for youngsters today to understand... but nothing and nobody was "openly gay" back then—even Boy George was in the closet! This may sound ridiculous today, but back then, just walking past this place made me feel good, as it validated my existence.

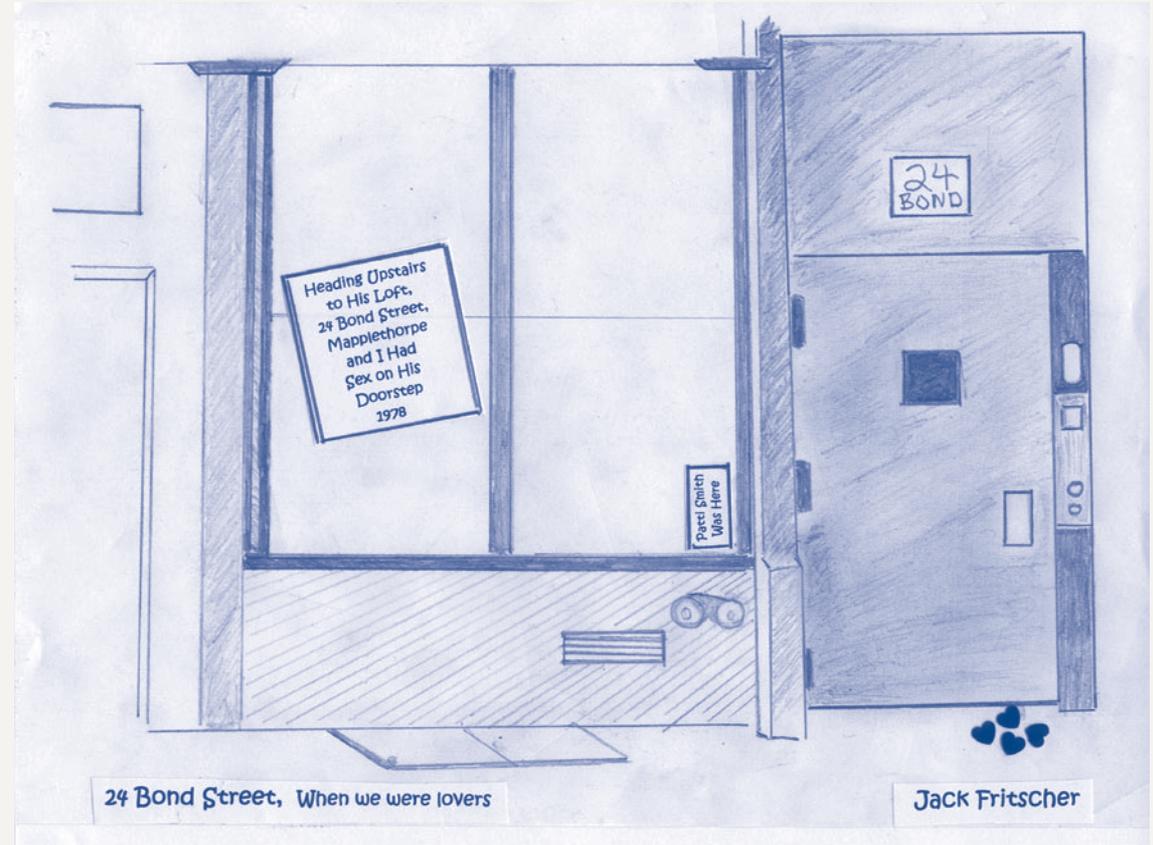
I've now lived in the East Village over 20 years, and I am shy about giving details—but I do remember going to this place on the way home from a night of "bar-hopping", and meeting one of the hottest NYC bartenders here (who had just served me drinks two hours before). We had gone home together from here and had a wild time—today we are still friends, but only just friends.

I did the painting from memory and from a blurry Polaroid or two I had taken in the '90s... what had always struck me was how the building looked so much like this 1927 painting by Edward Hopper called *Drug Store*... had it actually been the same place?



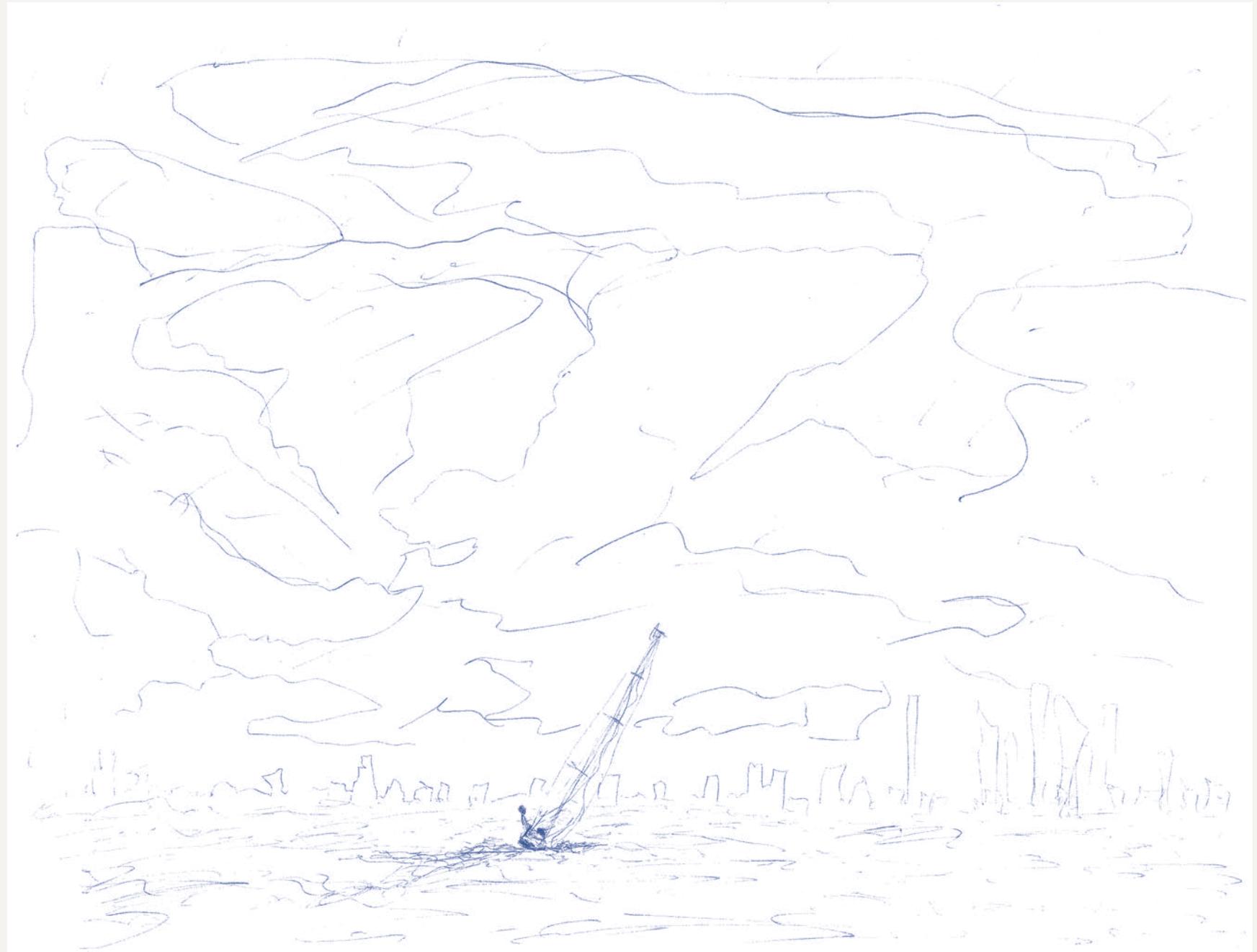
JACK FRITSCHER

24 Bond Street: When Mapplethorpe and I Were Lovers



JACQUES
SERVIN

Making Headway



JAKE YUZNA

28 Locust Street



JARROD BECK

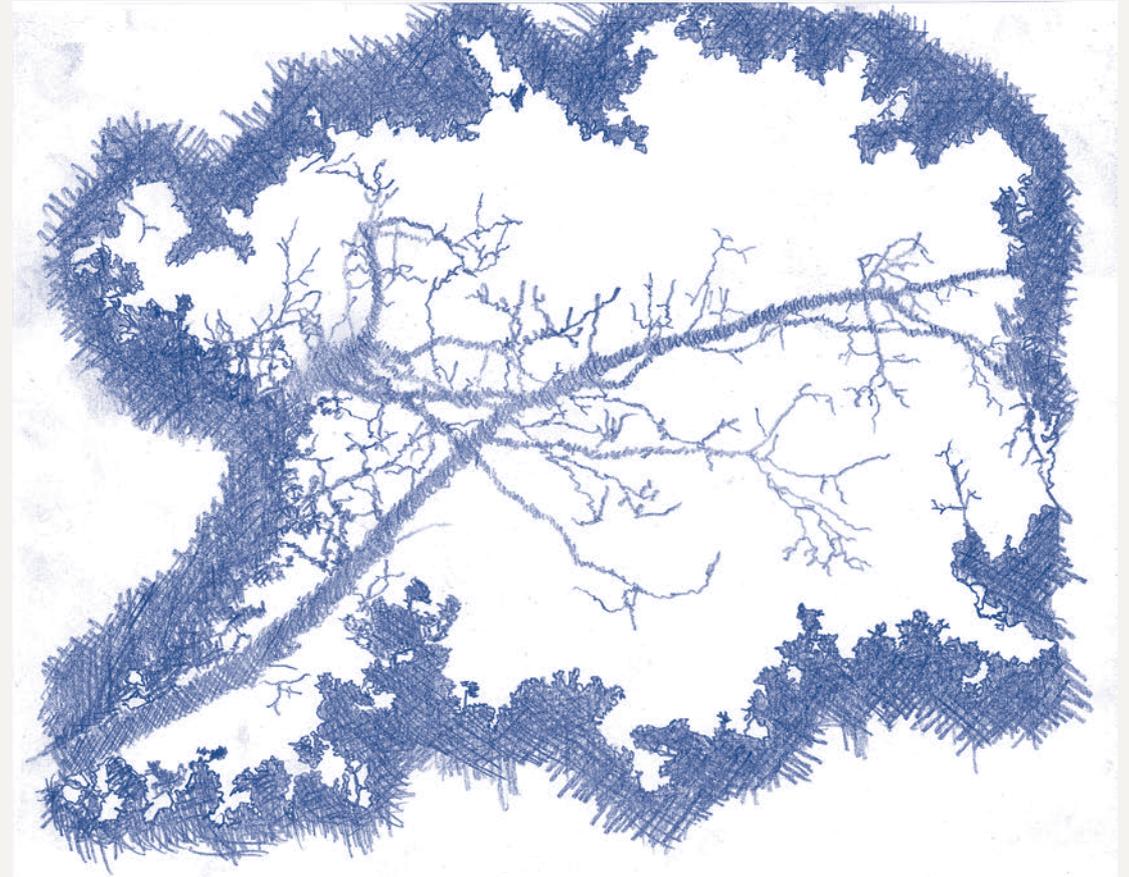
Local

86th Street subway, B/C line.



JASON WEE

Starlight



In The Brambles, Central Park,
at night, with starlight through
the branches, and the quiet.

Jason Wee
2011

JEAN DE BOYSSON

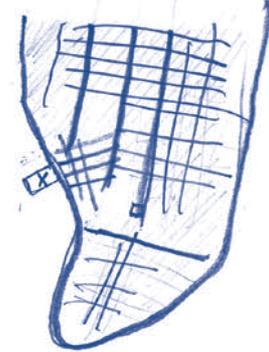
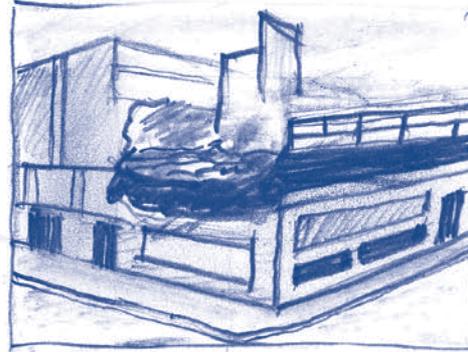
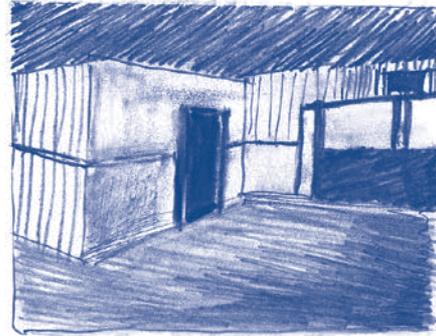
With Carl in snow-covered
Central Park



JEAN-MICHEL SIVRY

West Side

It was Sunday. We marched westward through Bank, Perry, or Charles Street. At the crossing with Greenwich Avenue there were the trucks side-by-side. We reached the final avenue before the river. Guys passed beneath the decrepit structure of the elevated highway. On the other side, the docks, the wonderful wharves. In the vast warehouses in ruins, openings were used, doors had been opened, gaps in the walls. Inside: stairs, scales, holes through the floors, metal debris, spokes of light, glass canopies, panels collapsed... an architecture of desire.



C'était le dimanche. On marchait vers l'Ouest par Bank, Perry ou Charles. En croisant Greenwich Av, il y avait les camions, côte-à-côte. On atteignait la dernière avenue avant la rivière. Les gars passaient sous la structure décrépite, de la voie surélevée. De l'autre côté, les quais, les merveilleux quais. Dans les hauts entrepôts en ruine, des ouvertures étaient pratiquées, des portes s'étaient ouvertes, des brèches dans les murs. À l'intérieur, escaliers trous dans le sol, débris métalliques, rais de lumière, verrières, pous effondrés... une architecture du désir. Jean-Michel Sivry

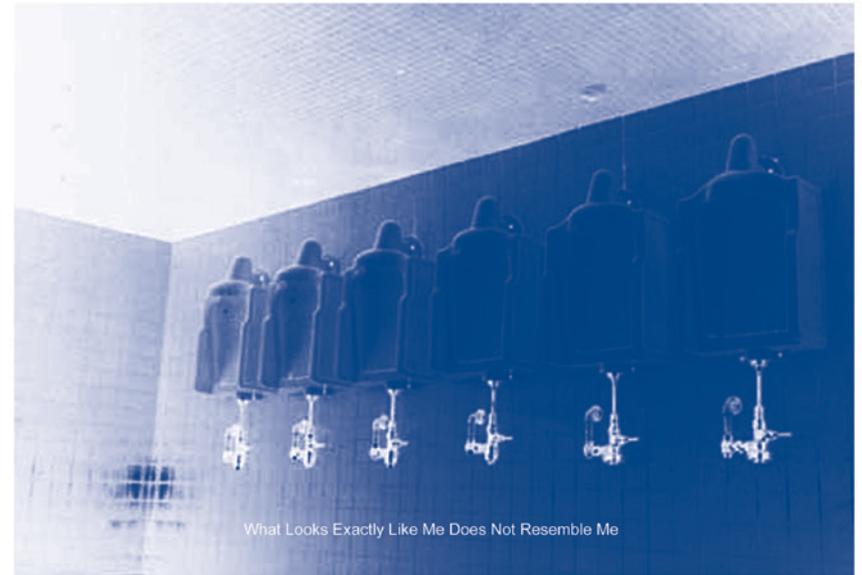
JOHN J.
SPENCER III

East Village Street



JOHN JURAYJ

Untitled (What Looks Like Me But
Does Not Resemble Me)



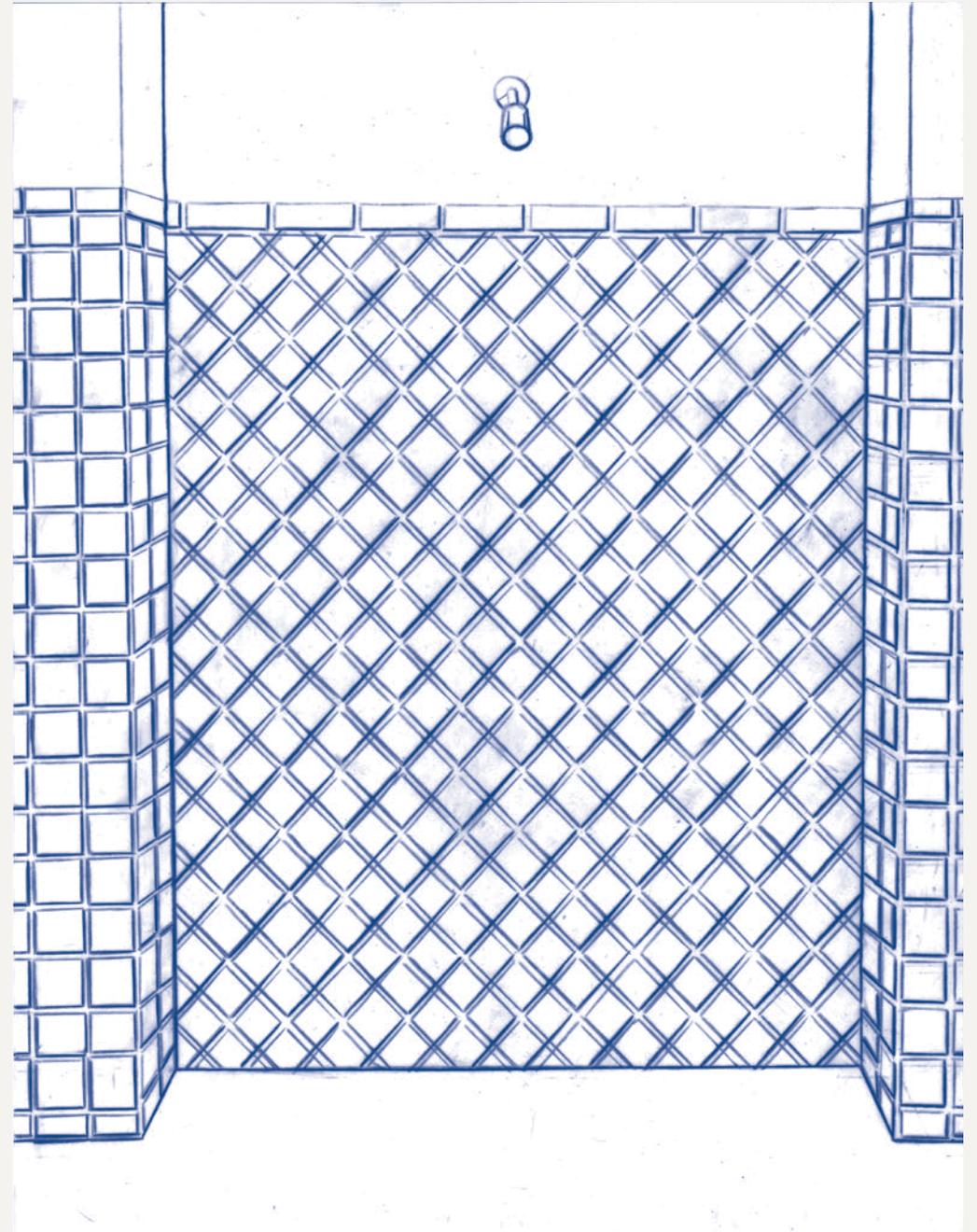
What Looks Exactly Like Me Does Not Resemble Me

JOHN MONTEITH

Swimming Pool Shower

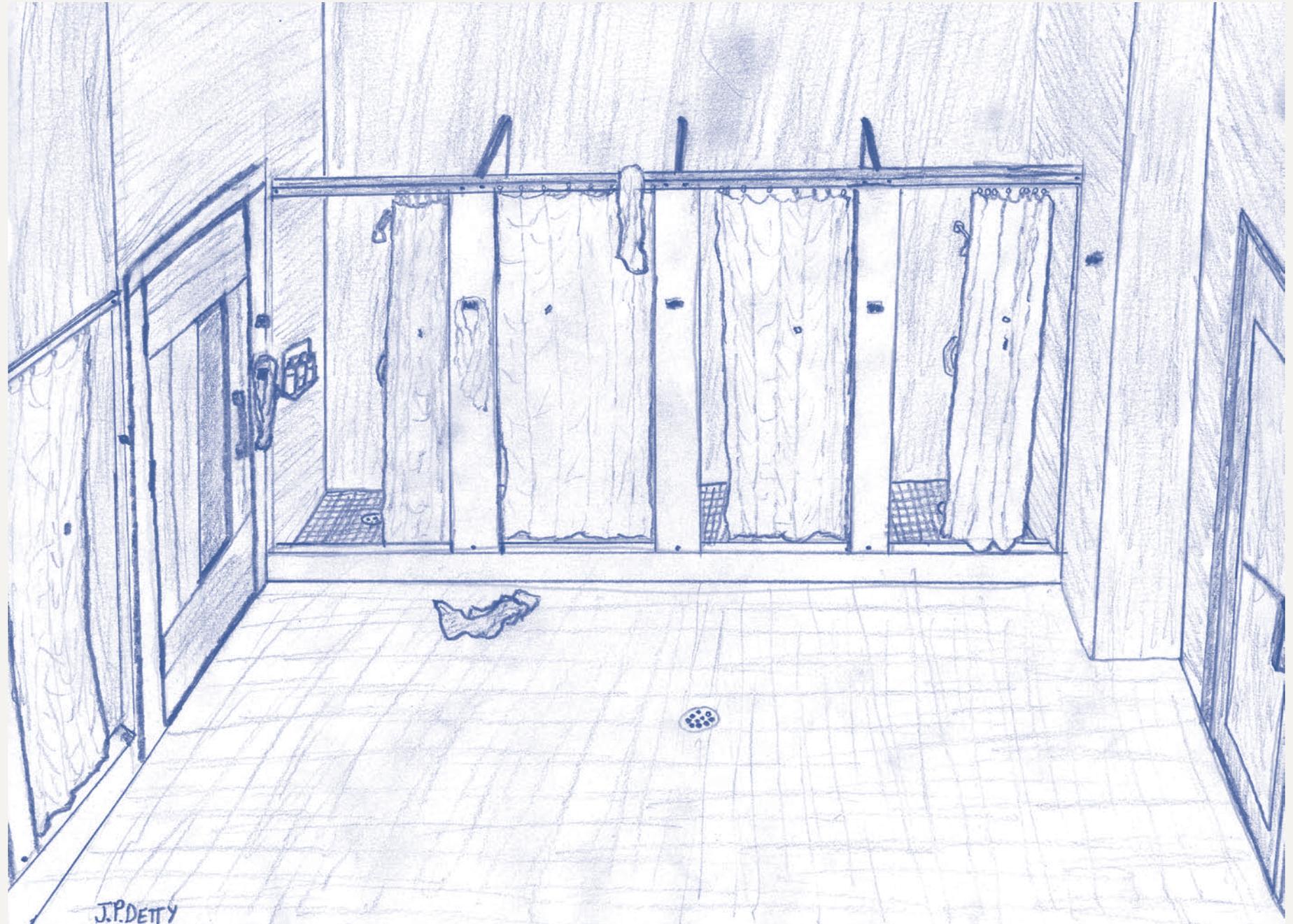
I met a guy when I was visiting Williamsburg for the first time in July 1996; I had until then only visited Manhattan. I can't remember what swimming pool he took me to, it might have been the Douglass and Degraw pool. We hung out swimming and tanning all afternoon, then cruised some guys in the shower together and jerked off when we thought we were alone.

I remember the shower as being inconsistently tiled with bright light filtering in and lots of guys making eye contact and checking each other out. I often think back to that experience, remembering that week when I was 23 as one of the most fun trips I'd taken to New York before moving here in 2006. I've always considered myself lucky that I was able to get to know New York before the sanitization of the city.



JOHN PAUL
DETTY

Untitled



JONATHAN CRESPO

Bijou Urinal

Club 82/Bijou East 4th Street. Night of
the reopening of the now Cock.



JONATHAN VANDYKE

Untitled

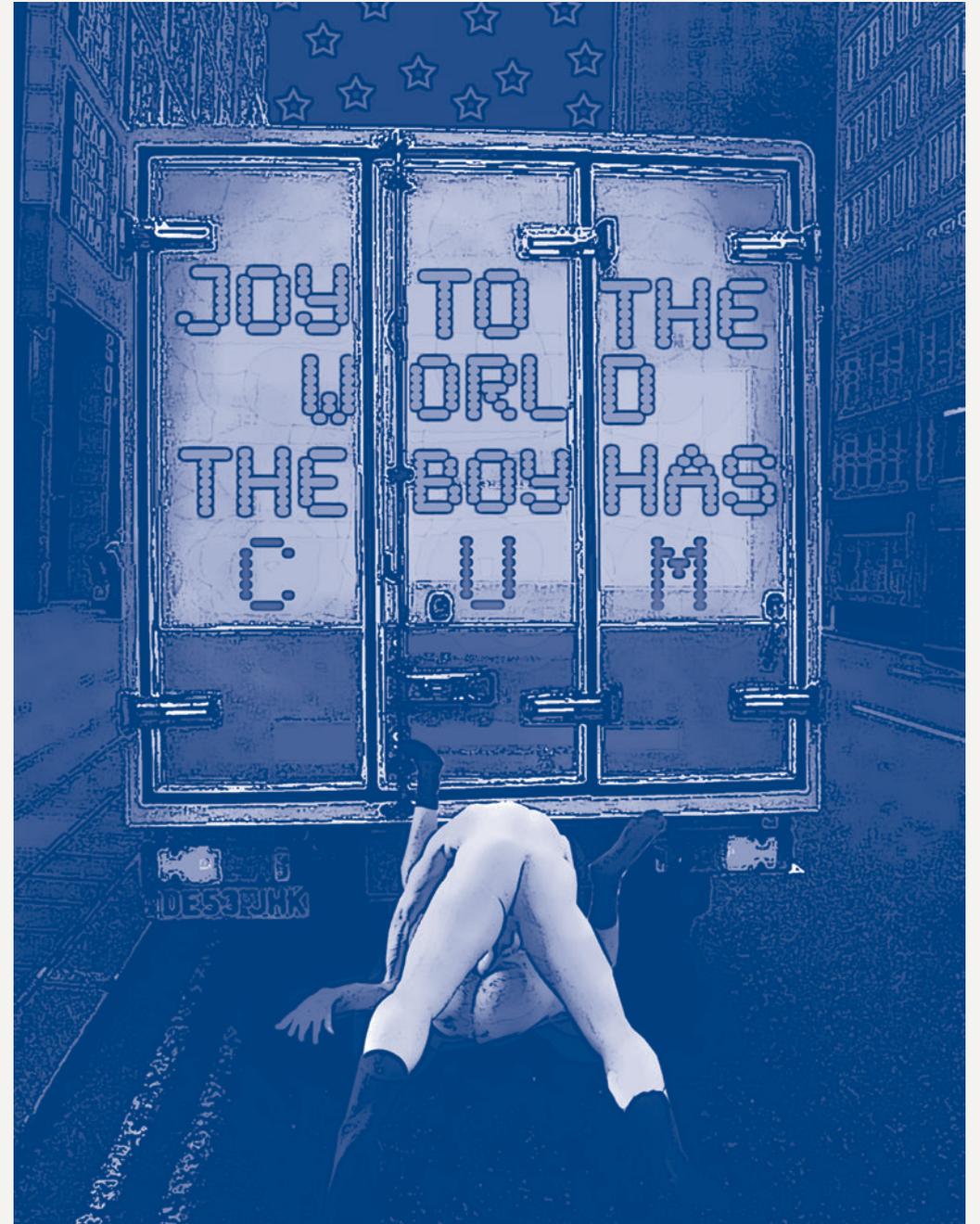
In a taxi going over the Williamsburg
Bridge with the water rushing below.



MANU RODRÍGUEZ

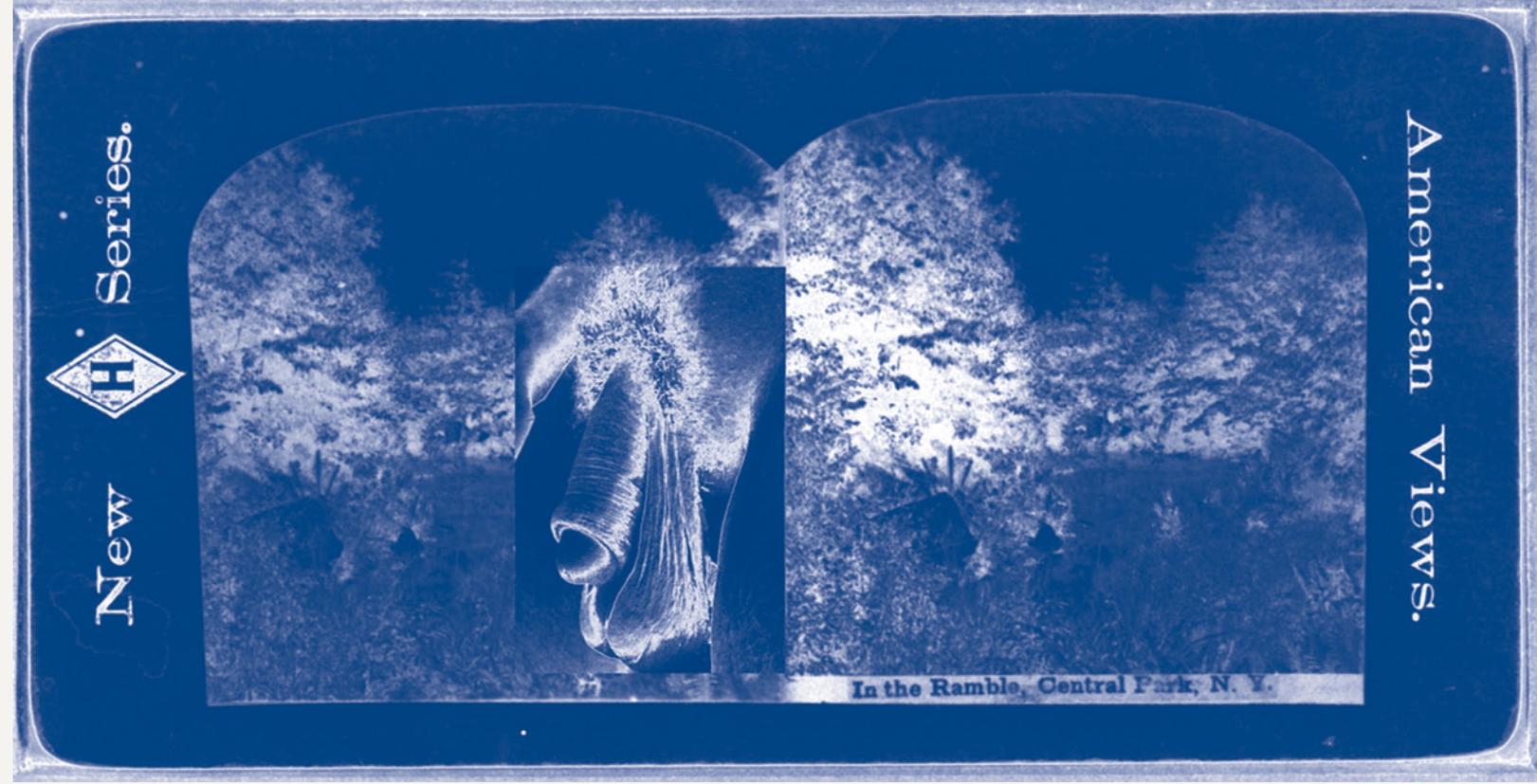
Truck Stop
(Chelsea NYC - circa 1995)

Location: somewhere in Chelsea off
Sixth Avenue.



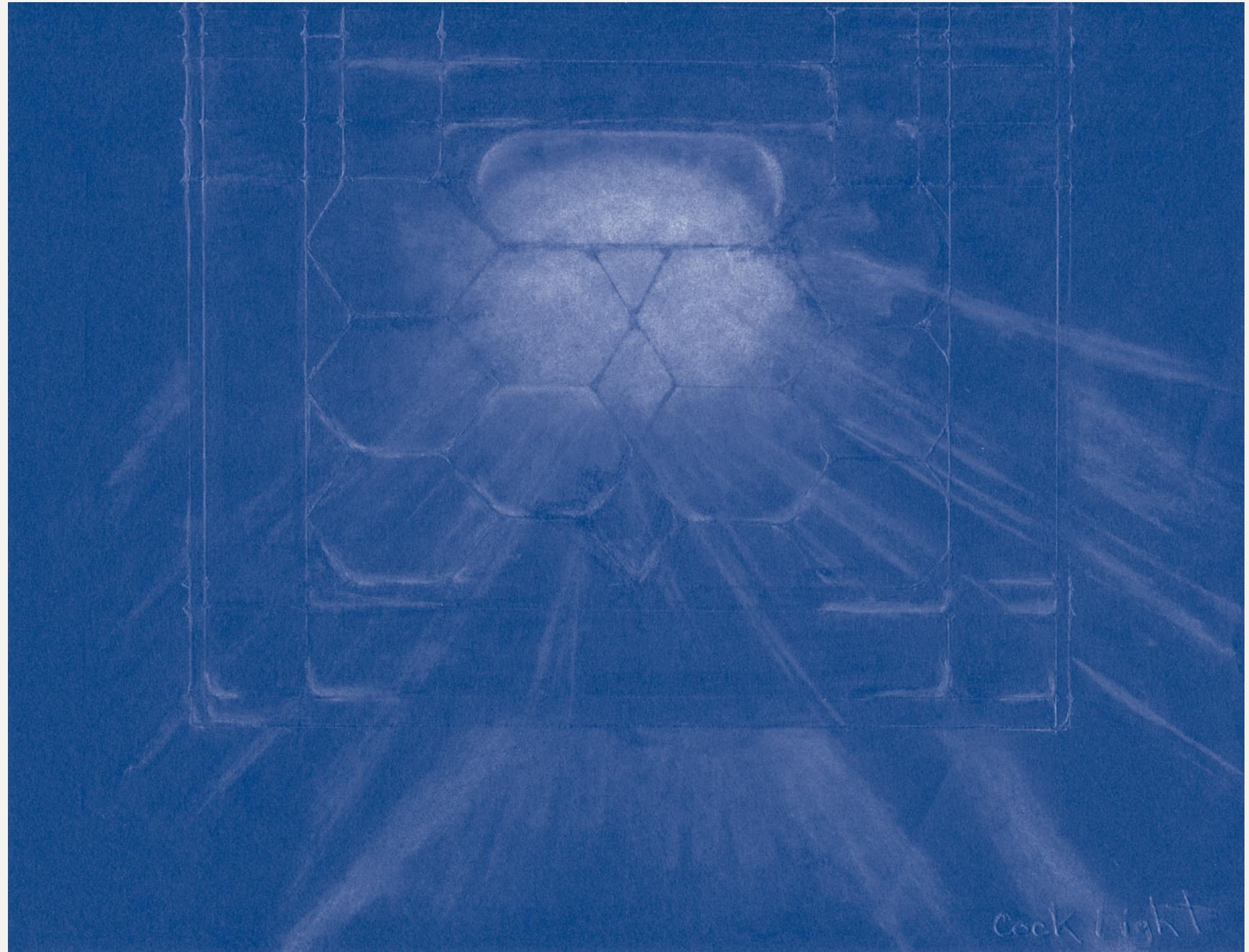
MATTHIAS
VRIENS
MCGRATH

Rambles



MATTHU
PLACEK

Cock Light



MATTILDA
BERNSTEIN
SYCAMORE



MAX STEELE

Petite Mort

131 Orchard Street is the doorway of an apartment building, where a boy once dragged me by the hand. We had been at a nightclub up the street, but he brought me there to blow me. People were walking by and absolutely saw us, but it still felt somehow private, like hiding in plain sight.



MICHAEL

Taxi in Bed Stuy

A couple years ago I was in a taxi headed home to Bushwick. It was late and the driver asked me if I would give him a blow job. I was pretty down about a guy and life and being twenty-four so I said sure fuck-it-whatever and he pulled over in Bed Stuy near the J train. I moved to the front and gave him head. It didn't really help.



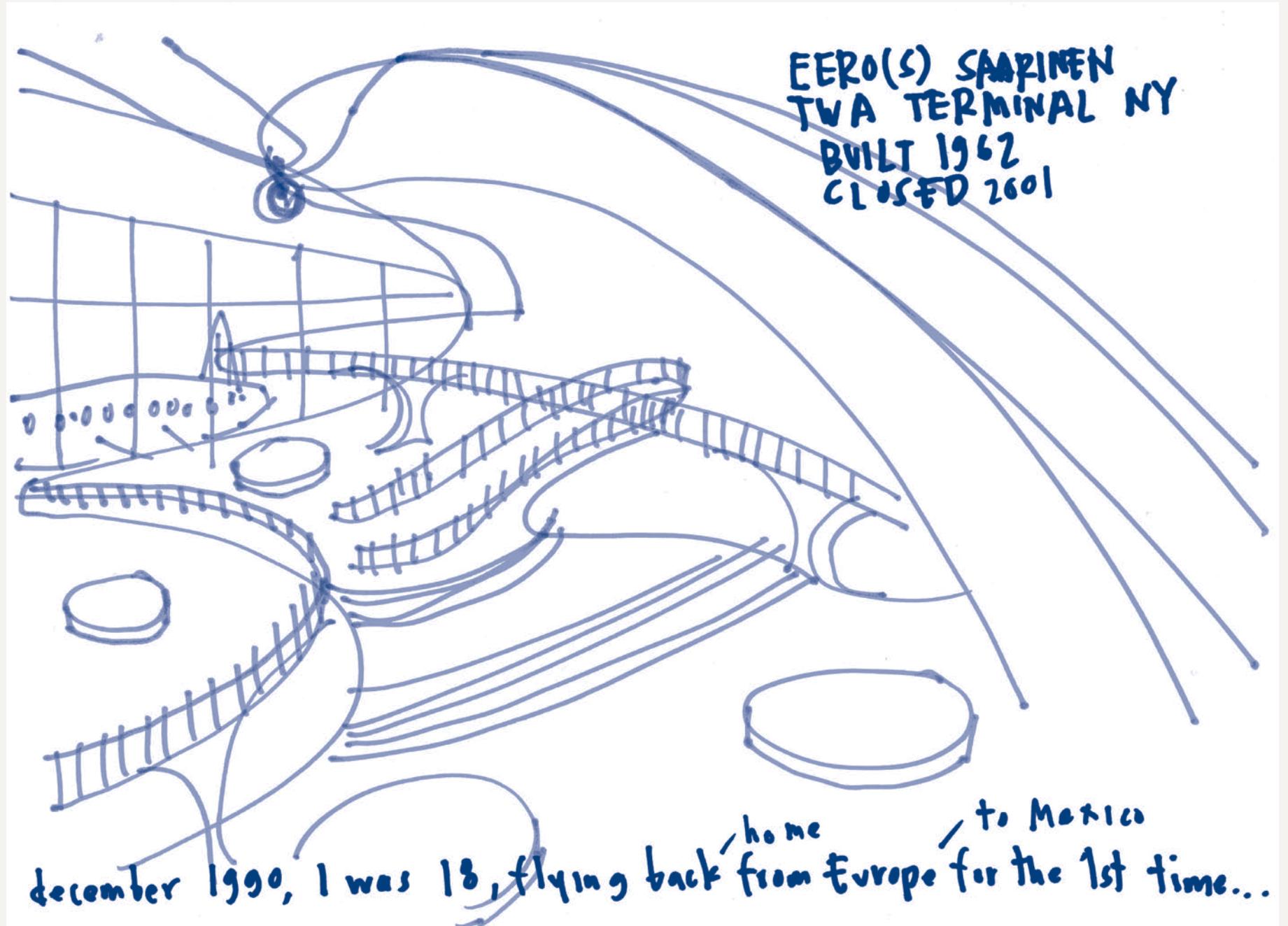
MICHAEL
LEHMAN

Bathroom (The Hole), 2004



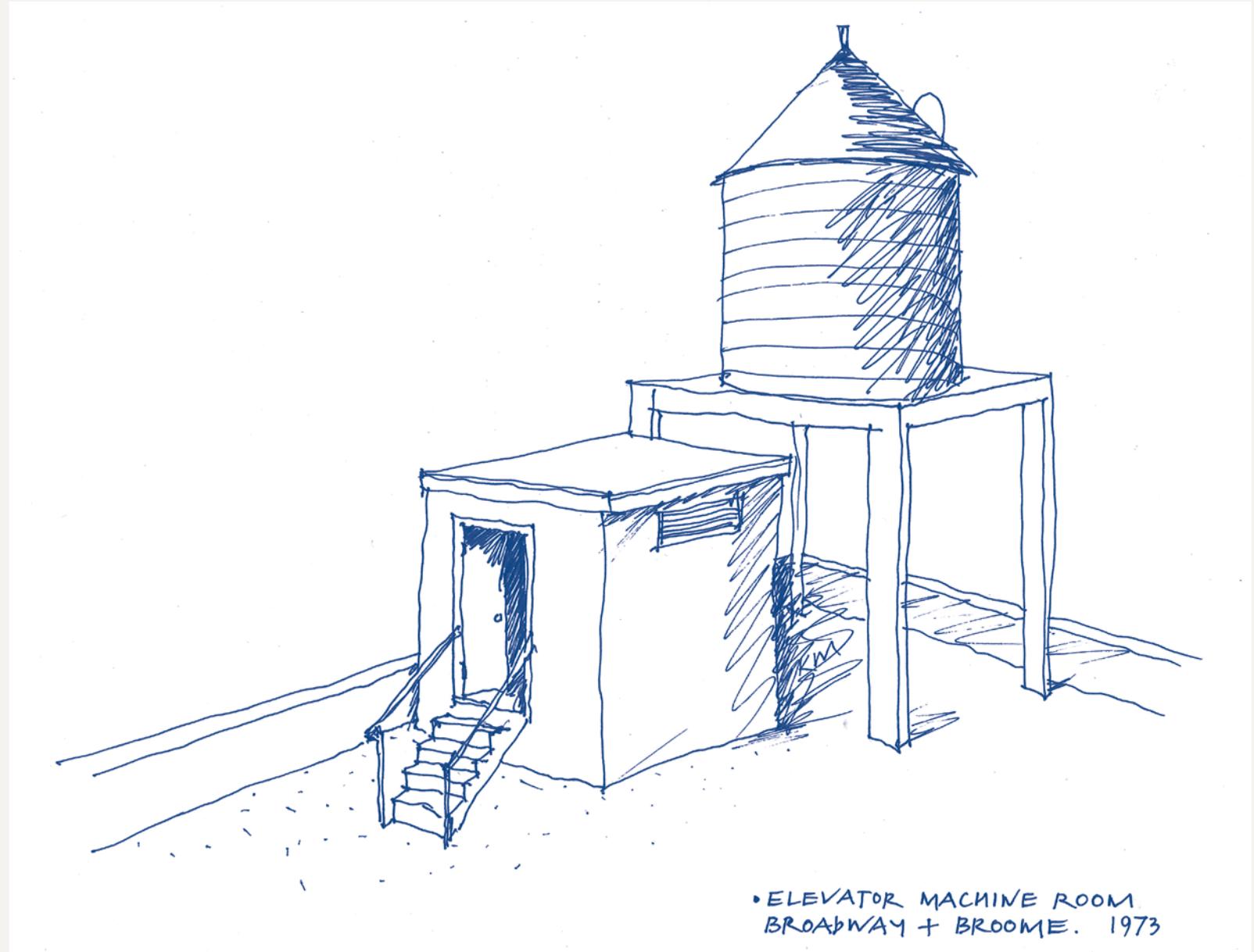
PABLO LEÓN DE
LA BARRA

Eero(s) Saarinen TWA Terminal NY



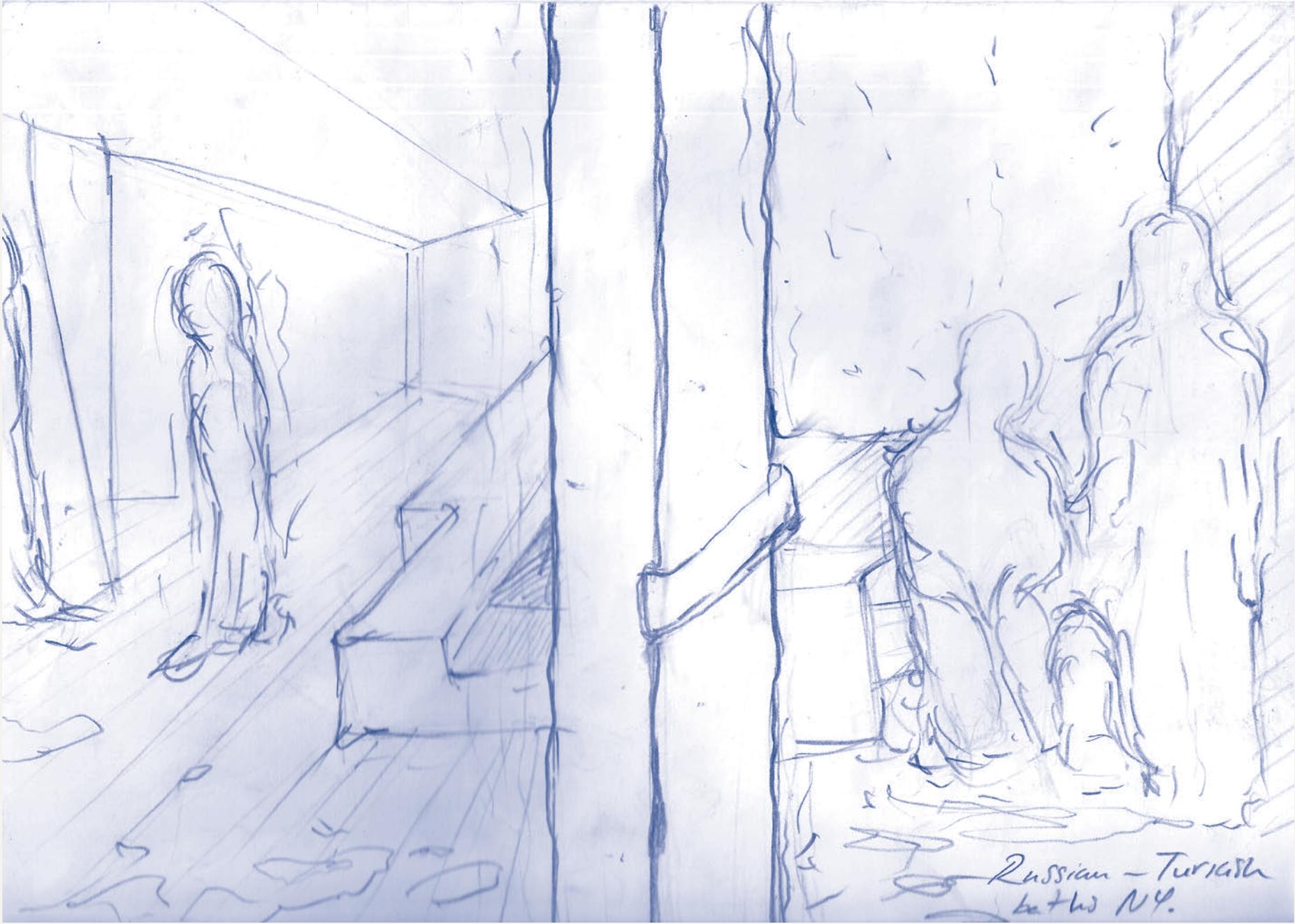
PATTERSON SCARLETT

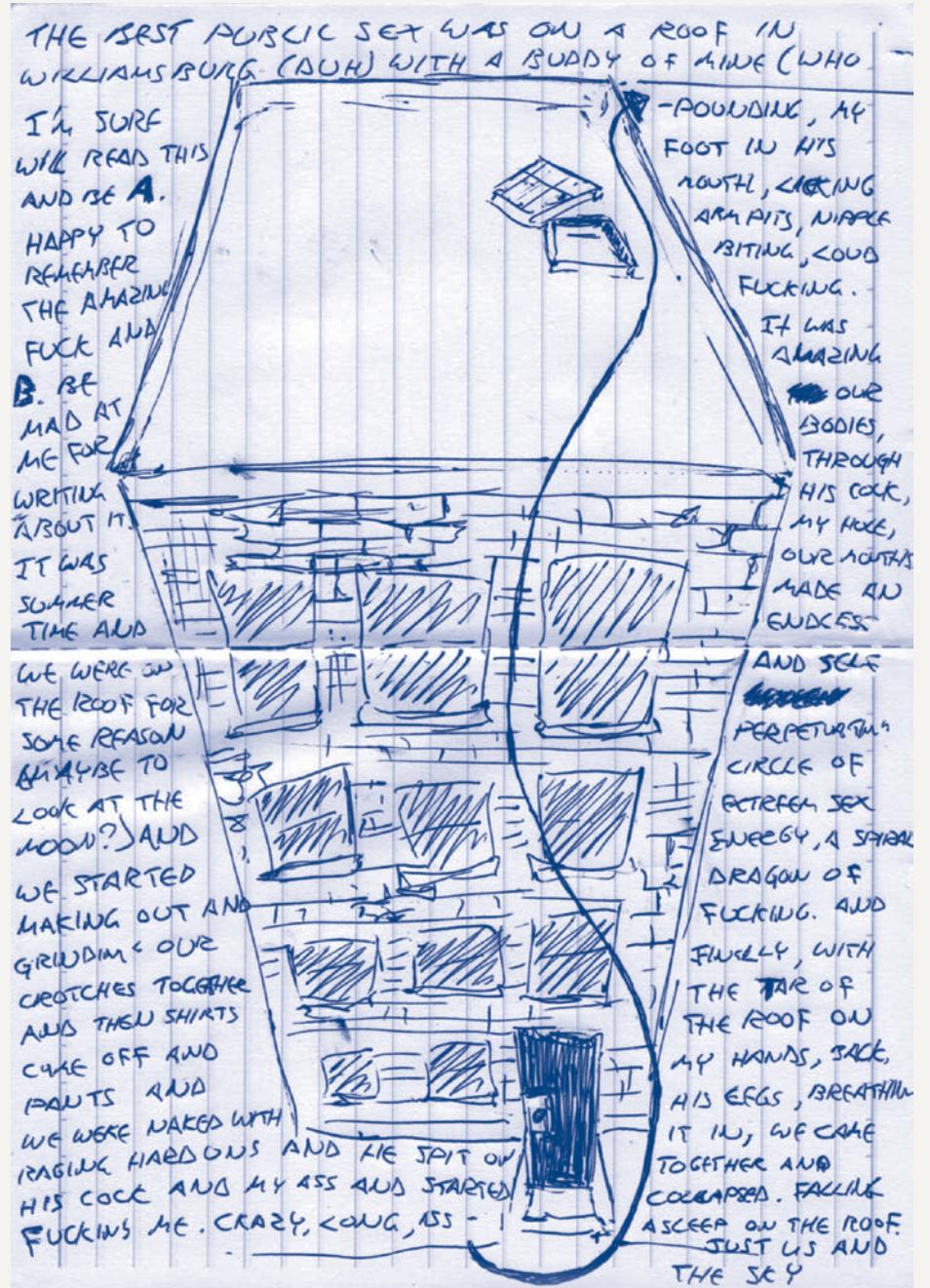
Broome Street at Broadway
(Roof Top Elevator Room)



RAFAEL PEREZ
EVANS

Untitled

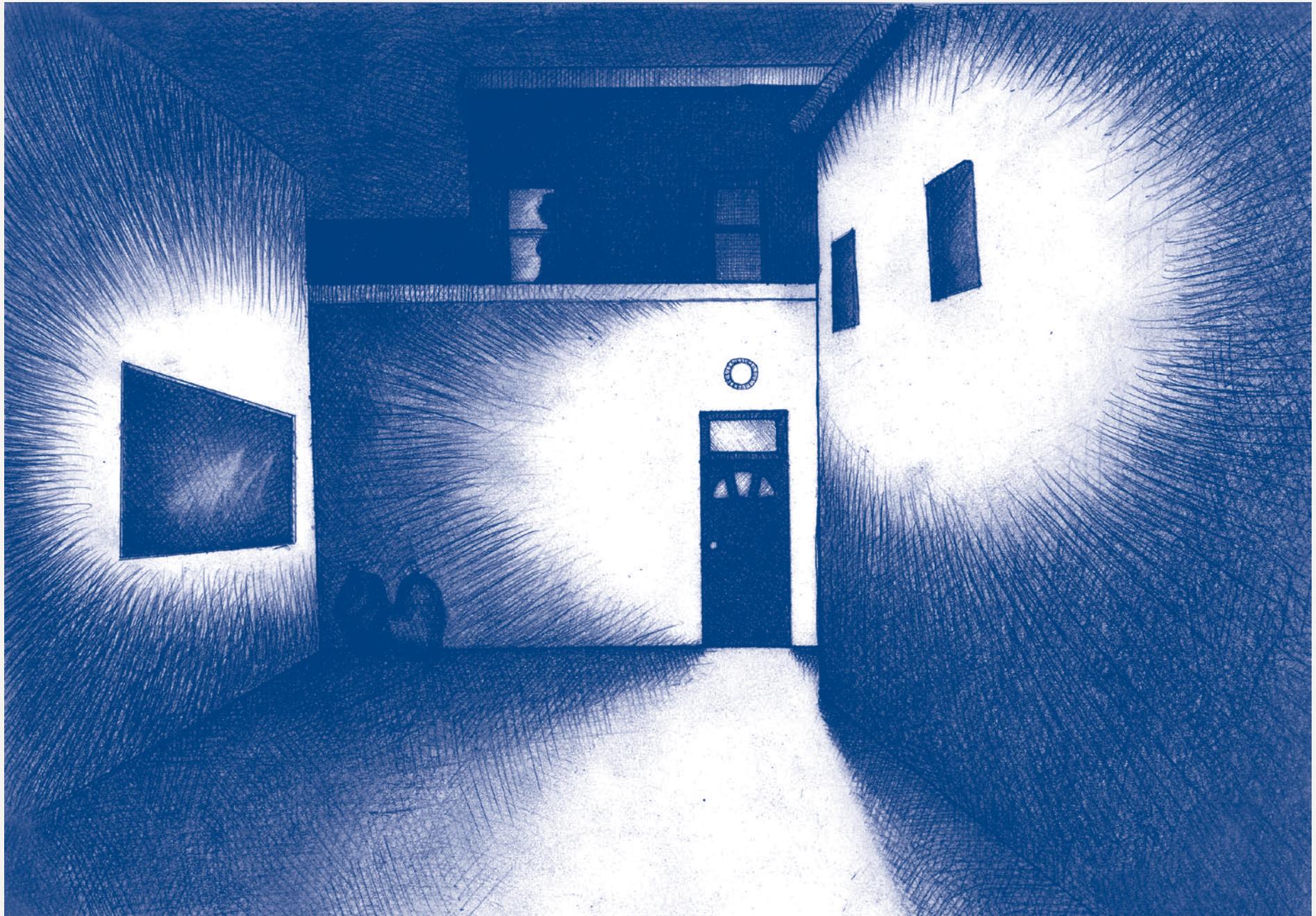




SEBASTIANO MAURI

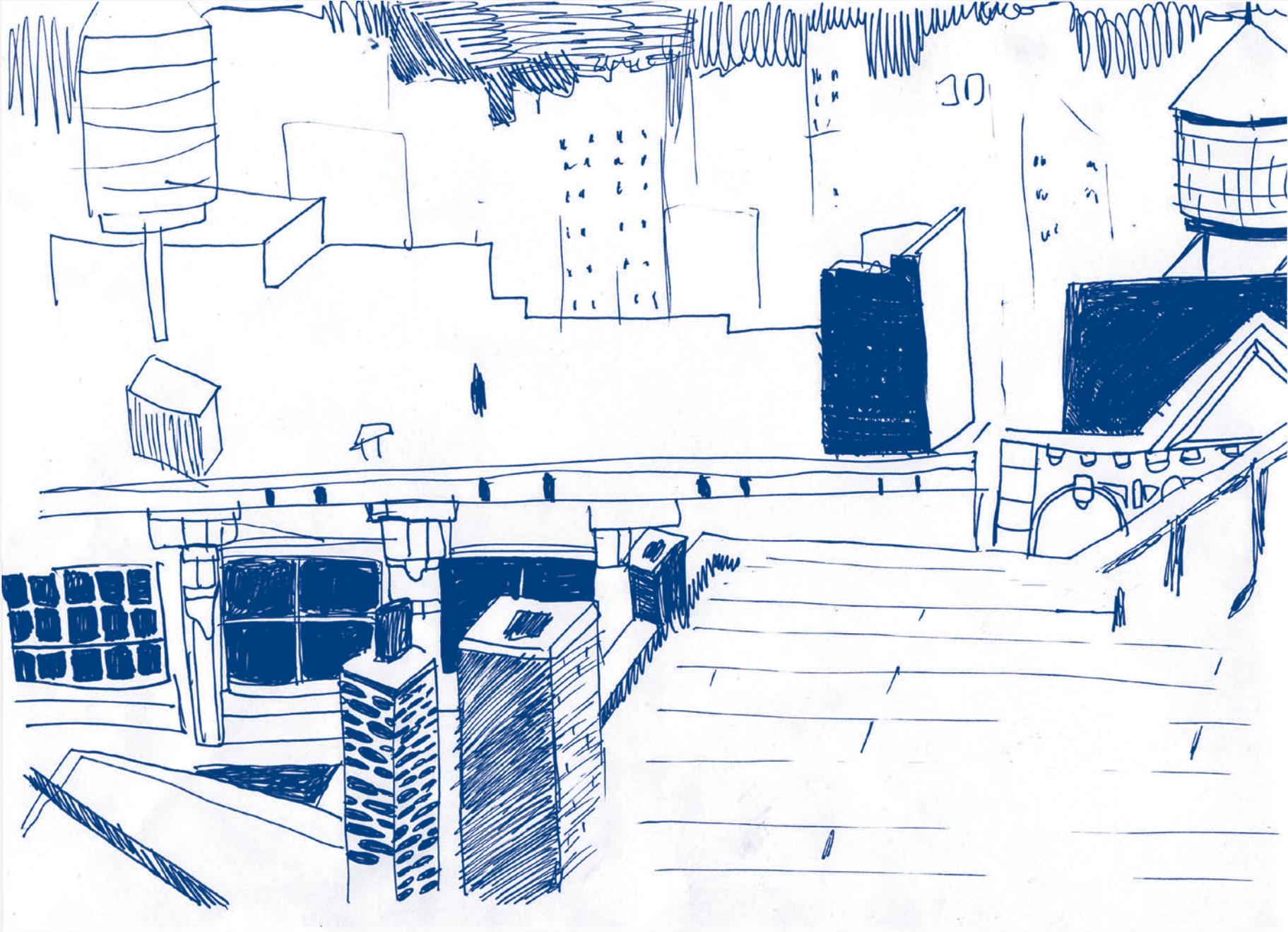
Memory with witness

An anonymous corner of Williamsburg. A single cold light illuminates the otherwise dark alley. A stiff figure, lit by a television set, is silhouetted in a window. Desire and fear become one indistinguishable experience.



SERGIO ROGER

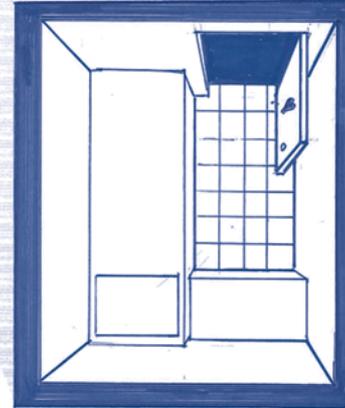
No Title



SETH JOSEPH WEINE

Hole In My Heart

BATHHOUSES, A.K.A. THE BATHS. THE CLUB BATHS. MAN'S COUNTRY. THE EVERARD. THE EAST SIDE SAUNA. THE ST. MARKS BATHS. THERE WERE CERTAINLY OTHERS I KNOW I VISITED, WHOSE NAMES I'VE FORGOTTEN, THO' THEIR LOCATIONS AND SOME OF THE ENCOUNTERS I HAD IN THEM REMAIN VIVID. LIKE AN APPALLINGLY FILTHY ONE ON THE UPPER FLOOR OF A COMMERCIAL BUILDING ON EAST 46TH STREET, NEAR THE UN, WHERE I HAD AN EARLY & RARE EGG-INFLATING EXPERIENCE OF BEING OFFERED CASH; OR A SPACIOUS BUT DISMAL PLACE ON A LOFT-LIKE FLOOR WEST OF TIMES SQUARE, WHERE I WAS NICELY ENTERTAINED BY A FLIGHT ATTENDANT WHO REGARDED THE GIFT OF MY UNDERPANTS AS A PROFOUND PRIZE; OR THE TINY, FILTHY ONE DOWN ON ANN STREET, JUST A FEW BLOCKS FROM CITY HALL, I WAS TOO YOUNG TO HAVE GONE TO THE FAMOUSLY FAB CONTINENTAL BATHS DURING ITS GLORY DAYS, BUT I DID ONCE TRY A BATHS THAT LATER RENTED THAT SAME LOCATION (A TIME AFTER ITS PLATO'S RETREAT STRAIGHT PHASE). I DON'T REMEMBER IF THEY TRIED TO RE-CYCLE THE CONTINENTAL NAME IN THIS LATTER INCARNATION, BUT I DO RECALL THAT IT HAD AN IMPRESSIVELY LARGE INDOOR POOL—THO' UNUSED WHEN I VISITED. DID I MENTION THAT SOME OF THESE PLACES WERE DIRTY—OH GAWD, HORRIBLY SO!—AND SOME COMMENTATORS TOOK THIS AS A MANIFESTATION OF THE STRAIGHT OWNERSHIPS' CONTEMPT FOR THEIR CUSTOMERS. I RECALL ONCE LOOKING DOWN ONTO THE FLOOR OF A SHOWER STALL AND WONDERING WHAT THE DIRE CONSEQUENCES MIGHT BE IF I STEPPED IN. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME, LIKE THE CLUB AND THE RENOVATED ST. MARKS, WERE FAIRLY WELL-KEPT AND HAD A GLOSSY VENEER OF DESIGNERLY TOUCHES TO MEET THE EXPECTATIONS OF A RISING CLASS OF CLASSY QUEENS. BATHS ARE UNIQUE HUMAN INSTITUTIONS, IN THAT THE REASON FOR GOING TO THEM IS SO ABSOLUTELY PURE. AFTER ALL, THINK OF ALMOST ANY OTHER PLACE WHERE OUR SPECIES CONGREGATES AND YOU'LL FIND THAT THE REASONS FOR ATTENDING ARE INEVITABLY RICHLY MULTIFARIOUS. ONE MIGHT PROPOSE THAT THE REASONS PEOPLE GO TO GAY BARS IS PRETTY CLEAR & DIRECT—BUT IT AIN'T SO: PEOPLE GO NOT ONLY TO PICK UP SOMEONE FOR SEX (THE PUTATIVE REASON), BUT ALSO TO GET DRUNK, TO MEET THEIR FRIENDS, TO NOT BE ALONE, TO EAT, TO BE IN A GAY ENVIRONMENT, AND SO ON. BUT WHEN A MAN GOES TO A BATHHOUSE, THERE IS A SINGLE PRECISE REASON. WHAT OTHER KIND OF PLACE, AMONG THE HUMAN FAMILY, IS SO UTTERLY & PURELY & CLEARLY MONOPURPOSED? REMARKABLE. WHY GO TO THE BATHS? THERE'S A GAY PLAY WHEREIN A CHARACTER SAYS THAT PEOPLE ACCUSE SEXUALLY ACTIVE GUYS LIKE HIM OF "HAVING A FEAR OF COMMITMENT" WHEN THEY GO TO THE BATHS OR BACK-ROOMS, WHEREAS HE THINKS THAT HIS ACQUAINTANCES HAVE A "FEAR OF CONVENIENCE". A GOOD LINE—AND THE BATHS DID/DO OFFER AT LEAST THE POSSIBILITY OF FINDING A SEX PARTNER 24/7, AND—SHOULD YOU MAKE A CONNECTION—IMMEDIATE GRATIFICATION. NOW THAT'S CONVENIENCE! BUT SOMETIMES NOT: UNLESS YOU WERE A "BEAUTY" (AS WARHOL CALLED THEM) AND COULD ATTRACT PRETTY MUCH WHOMEVER YOU WANTED, GETTIN' SOME AT A BATHHOUSE WAS NEVER GUARANTEED. BUT THE POSSIBILITY WAS ALWAYS THERE, AND THE PATRONS THOUGHT THAT THE GAMBLE OF THEIR TIME & MONEY WAS WORTH IT—OR THEY



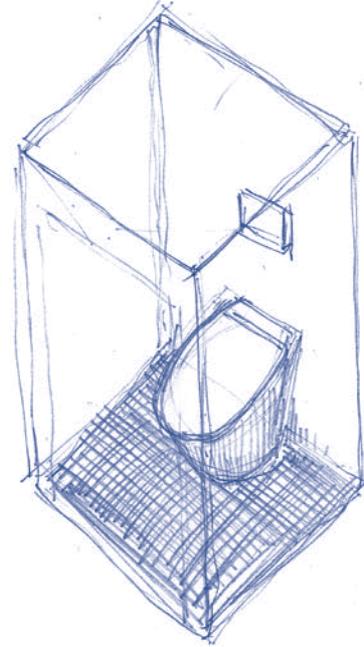
WOULDN'T HAVE MADE THESE PLACES INTO LONG-LASTING BUSINESS SUCCESS STORIES. IT'S NOT UNLIKE HOW ONE SOCIOLOGIST CHARACTERIZED GAY BARS: THE OWNERS WEREN'T REALLY IN THE BUSINESS OF SELLING DRINKS; THEY WERE IN THE BUSINESS OF "SELLING THE PATRONS TO EACH OTHER". WELL, THIS ALL CERTAINLY WORKED FOR ME. I DIDN'T CONSIDER MYSELF A BEAUTY, BUT I ATTRACTED GUYS OFTEN ENOUGH TO KEEP ME RETURNING. AT TIMES, THE RESULTS WERE WONDERFULLY AND MEMORABLY AMAZING. I ONCE ENGAGED WITH A DREAMILY HANDSOME GUY IN THE EAST SIDE SAUNA; THE TWO OF US SPRAWLED ON THE SAUNA ROOM'S PADDED FLOOR AND THE ROOM'S KEENLY HIGH TEMPERATURE BROUGHT FORTH A LAYER OF CLEAN PERSPIRATION ON THE SURFACE OF OUR TWO SKINS, WHICH ACTED AS A FULL BODY OILING AS WE KISSED AND SLID OVER EACH OTHER DURING THOSE LOVING GYRATIONS. SURELY IT'S 3-1/2 DECADES SINCE THAT ENCOUNTER, BUT I RECALL IT AS ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS IN AN EGROBSEEKING LIFE. YES, OCCASIONALLY MORE SIGNIFICANT AND LONG-LASTING RELATIONSHIPS WERE INDEED STARTED AT THE BATHS. I MADE A LONG-TERM FRIEND, (THE LATE RICHARD B.), AND MET A GREAT BOYFRIEND (RANDY J. K.). WHEN I FIRST MET RICHARD, WE HAD A LENGTHY CONVERSATION, STANDING IN JUST OUR TOWELS, RIGHT OUTSIDE MAN'S COUNTRY'S BUNK ROOM. AFTER A WHILE, RICHARD ASKED: "WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO IN THERE AND COMMUNICATE AT ANOTHER LEVEL?" THE STRANGE THING, AND THIS IS NOT THE PLEASANT PART, IS HOW ONE COULD HAVE A TRULY LOVELY AND VERY "REAL" EXPERIENCE WITH SOMEONE—YOU KNOW, WHERE YOU FEEL THAT YOU'VE BOTH CONNECTED IN AN AUTHENTIC & SPECIAL WAY, ONE THAT PROMISES SOMETHING FINE FOR THE FUTURE—ONLY TO LATER (AND CRUSHINGLY) FIND THAT THE OTHER PERSON WASN'T INTO FOLLOWING-UP AT ALL. HAD I BEEN FOOLING MYSELF? OR WAS THERE SOMETHING ELSE TOO? IT WAS, AFTER ALL, THE ERA WHEN WE REFERRED TO EACH OTHER AS "NUMBERS" (AS IN: "OH, HE'S A HOT NUMBER" OR "I'VE HAD THAT NUMBER ALREADY"). ETYMOLOGISTS HAVE SPECULATED ABOUT WHY GAY MEN USED "NUMBERS" IN THAT WAY, AND SOME THINK IT'S RELATED TO THE PHONE NUMBERS WE EXCHANGED AFTER MEETINGS. BUT I THINK IT ALSO HAS TO DO WITH US SEEING EACH MAN WE MET AS JUST ONE MORE UNIT IN A POTENTIALLY INFINITE SERIES OF INTEGERS—AND HENCE NONE PARTICULARLY MORE VALUABLE (OR WORTH FOLLOWING UP WITH) THAN THE NEXT. THERE'LL ALWAYS BE ANOTHER—OR SO WE THOUGHT. ANYWAY, AFTER ABOUT 5 OR 80 YEARS OF GOING TO THE BATHS SEVERAL TIMES A MONTH, I BEGAN TO EXPERIENCE AN UNPLEASANT EMPTINESS. THE EROTIC PROPULSION TO GO REMAINED—INDEED, STRONGLY—BUT UPON LEAVING SOMETHING FELT WRONG: I FELT A VOID INSIDE MY CHEST. AND SO I CALL THIS WORK *HOLE IN MY HEART* FOR THE LATTER YEARS OF GOING TO THE BATHS WHEN I ENDED UP FEELING EMPTIED RATHER THAN FULFILLED. WHAT'S DEPICTED ABOVE IS A DOWNWARD VIEW INTO A TYPICAL BATHHOUSE ROOM. THE SET-UP IS ALMOST ALWAYS THE SAME: A THIN AISLE NEXT TO A LEDGE-LIKE BED, A NIGHT TABLE OR SHELF FOR HOLDING UNGUENTS AND ACCOUTERMENTS, AND THE OPEN DOOR THROUGH WHICH YOU VIEW (AND ARE VIEWED BY) THE PASSING PARADE THAT IS CHOOSING YOU AS YOU CHOOSE THEM—OR NOT.

—SETH JOSEPH WEINE, NYC, JUNE, 2011

TERENCE GOWER

The Palladium Toilets

THE PALLADIUM TOILETS



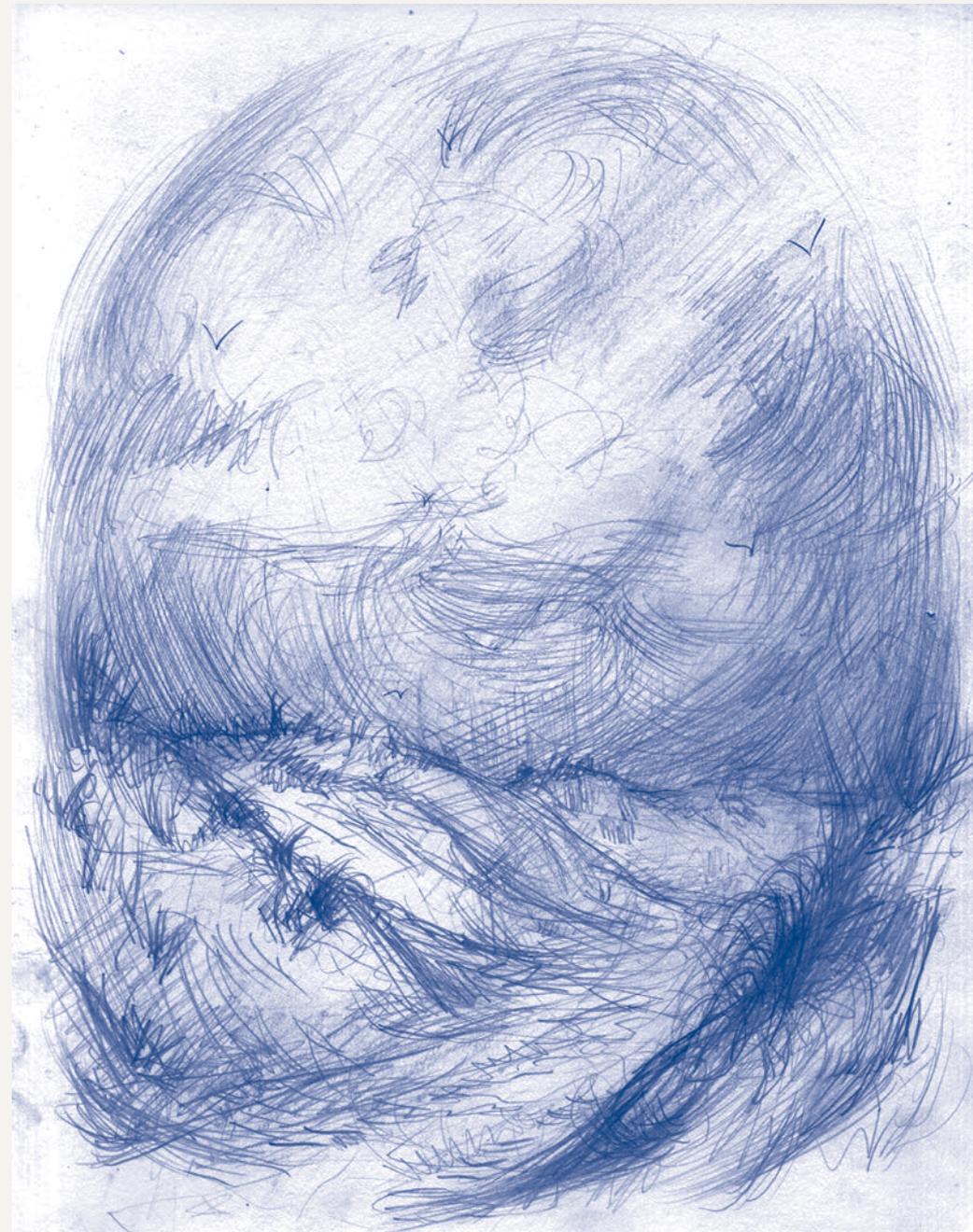
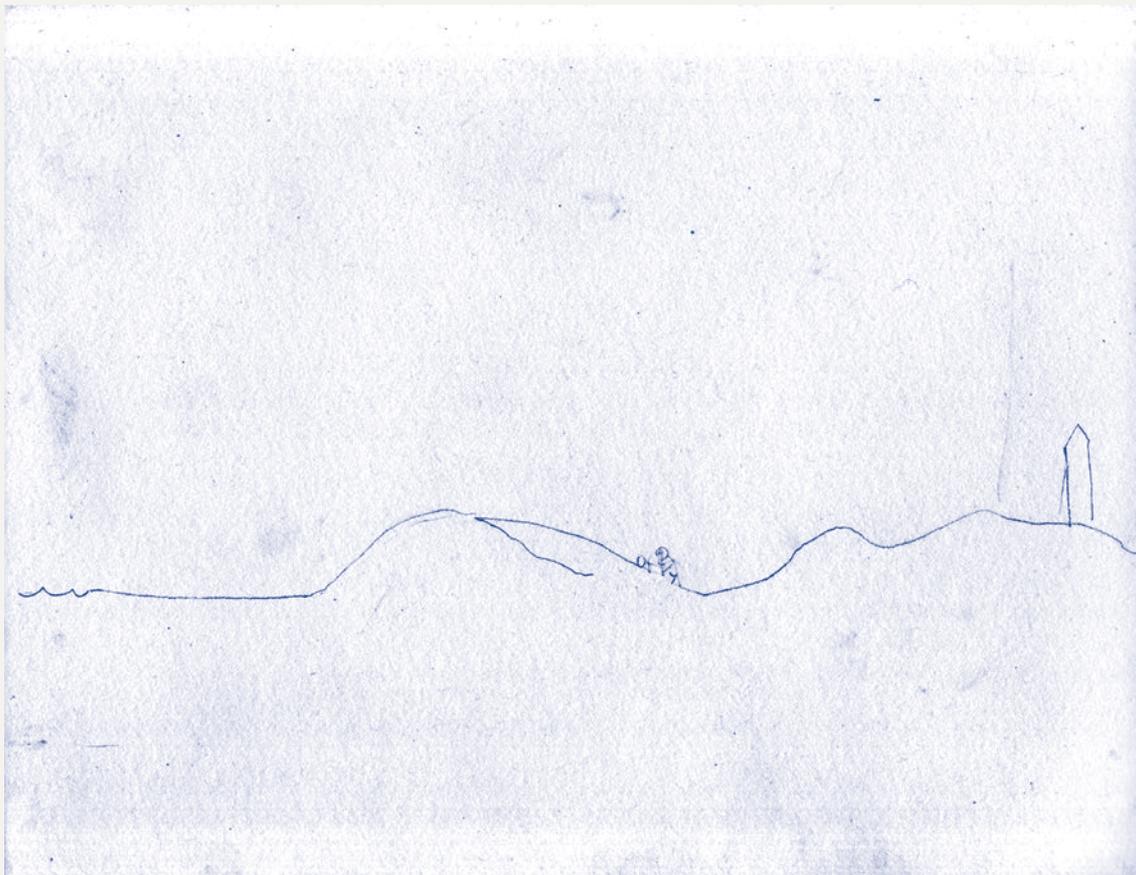
"Mr. Isozaki's insertion is
crisp, hard and direct,
revealing all."

-Paul Goldberger

An Appraisal: The Palladium
N.Y. Times May 29, 1985

TM & LIAM DAVY

The Dunes of Field 6



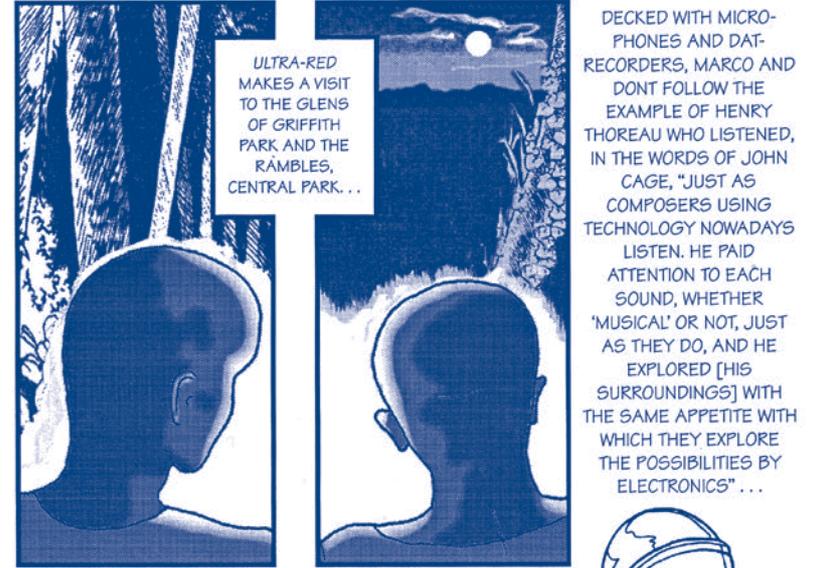
TRYGVE LUKTVASSLIMO

Lincoln Tunnel



ULTRA-RED

Second Nature



ULTRA-RED MAKES A VISIT TO THE GLENS OF GRIFFITH PARK AND THE RAMBLES, CENTRAL PARK...

DECKED WITH MICROPHONES AND DAT-RECORDERS, MARCO AND DONT FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF HENRY THOREAU WHO LISTENED, IN THE WORDS OF JOHN CAGE, "JUST AS COMPOSERS USING TECHNOLOGY NOWADAYS LISTEN. HE PAID ATTENTION TO EACH SOUND, WHETHER 'MUSICAL' OR NOT, JUST AS THEY DO, AND HE EXPLORED [HIS SURROUNDINGS] WITH THE SAME APPETITE WITH WHICH THEY EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES BY ELECTRONICS"...



ULTRA-RED DIRECTS ITS APPETITE TO WHERE A "NATURAL" AMBIENCE DOMINATES AN URBAN SOUNDSCAPE.

IT IS A HOT, RECORD-BREAKING JULY EVENING; THE HUMIDITY SOAKS THEIR SKIN IN A PUNGENT MANTLE. AS THE NIGHT LINGERS, BOTH LOS ANGELES AND NEW YORK REcede INTO THE LOW-END OF WHITE NOISE. ONE OF THE MUSICIANS REACHES THROUGH THE LEAFY UNDER-GROWTH, HIS FINGERTIPS LANDING A WOOLLY GIFT...



THE SUBSEQUENT RECORDING ALL CRICKETS AND RUSTLING, THE TWO CITIES MOANING LIKE ENGINES IN THE PARK.

VINCENT W. GAGLIOSTRO

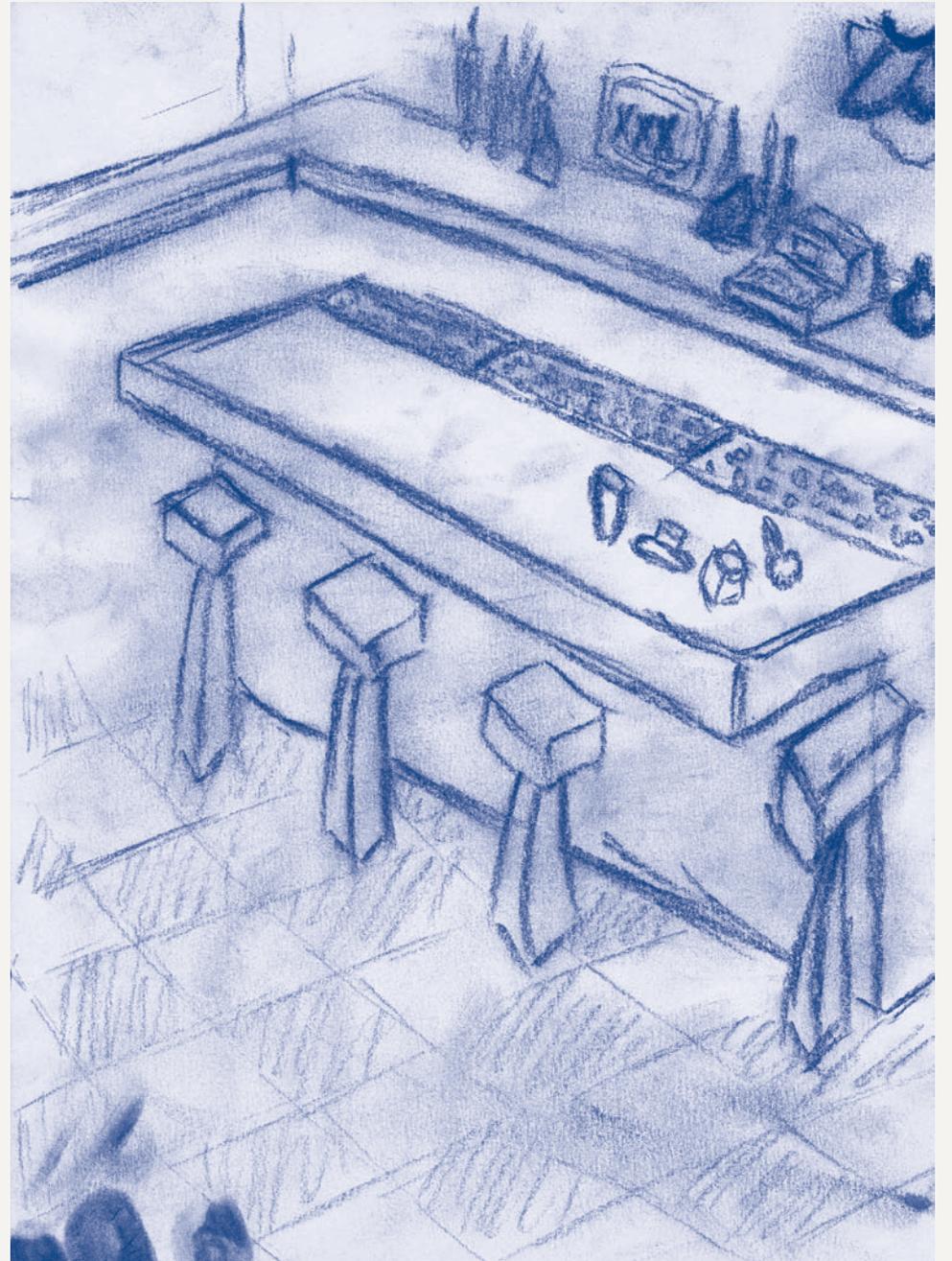
55th Street Playhouse

Was on West 55th Street between 5th and 6th Avenues. It premiered Wakefield Poole's *Boys In The Sand*. All notable given its location in uptown Manhattan. My recollection reflected here was of many hues of grey cut by shards of light from the backlight of the movie screen which we would gather behind and form small huddles. One night all eyes, especially mine, sighted the silhouette of an amazingly beautiful torso being revealed as this stallion-like creature removed his t-shirt. All in a great rush swooped on to him—and worshiped.



W. CHASE

Goat Check



PUBLIC ASSEMBLY AREA: $3 \times 2 \times 2 + 12 \text{ PERSONS} = 116 \text{ PERSONS (CREATED)}$

TRAVEL DISTANCE AS PER TABLE 8.1

	LEGL 1	LEGL 2	ACTUAL V/S ALLOW
PRIMARY	30'-0"	24'-0"	34'-0" < 35'-0" OK
BOUNDARY	30'-0"	64'-0"	94'-0" < 125'-0" OK

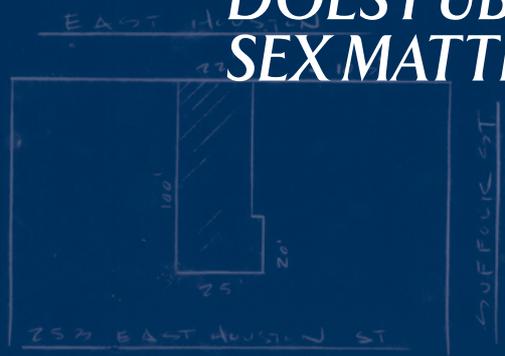
DOOR	SIZE	QTY	UNIT W/TH	PER UNIT	ALLOW ABLE	ACTUAL
A	36"	1	1.5	50	75	
B	36"	1	1.5	50	75	

150 > 116 PERSONS

MIN # OF PLUMBING FIXTURES AS PER TABLE 9.9

116 PERSONS 2 FIXTURES EACH SEX

	W/C REQ'D	W/C PROVIDED	LAV REQ'D	LAV PROVIDED
MENS	2	2	1	1
WOMENS	2	2	1	1



PCL: 755
LOT: 52
ZONING: 27-2
MAP: 13-C

PLOT PLAN

DOES PUBLIC SEX MATTER?

WRITINGS BY

- Aiken Forrett
- Ann Pellegrini & Janet R. Jakobsen
- Eileen Myles
- Gordon Brent Ingram
- Jill H. Casid
- Johan Andersson
- John Paul Ricco
- José Esteban Muñoz
- Kate Bornstein
- Katherine Franke
- Tim Dean

PUBLIC ASSEMBLY NOTES

1. MINIMUM WIDTH OF BASIC AISLES TO BE 3'-0" IN EACH ROOM, AND EACH BASIC AISLE TO BE AN APPROVED MEANS OF EGRESS.
2. CAPACITY SIGNS AT LEAST 12" WIDE AND 16" HIGH TO BE POSTED WHERE SHOWN IN COMPLIANCE WITH C26-801.3 B.C.
3. EXIT SIGNS TO BE AT LEAST 8" IN HEIGHT WITH STROKES AT LEAST 3/4" WIDE TO COMPLY WITH SUB ARTICLES 606.0, C26-801.10(e), C26-801.17 B.C.
4. SIGNS TO BE INTERNALLY LIGHTED TYPE IN ALL SPACES WHERE GENERAL ILLUMINATION IS REDUCED TO LESS THAN 5 FOOT CANDLES DURING OCCUPANCY. SIGNS TO BE LIGHTED AT ALL TIMES DURING OCCUPANCY PER C26-801.17 B.C.
5. DRAPES, CURTAINS, DECORATIONS AND SCENERY HAVING FLAME SPREAD RATINGS EXCEEDING 25 TO BE FLAMEPROOFED TO COMPLY WITH C19-161.1 OF THE FIRE CODE PER C26-802.2 B.C.
6. ALL NECESSARY PERMITS TO BE OBTAINED WHERE REQUIRED.
7. HOODS OVER RANGES AND FLUES SHALL BE THOROUGHLY CLEANED AT LEAST EVERY THREE MONTHS. A RECORD INDICATING THE PERSON OR FIRM WHICH COMPLETED SUCH CLEANING PROCESS AND THE DATE WHEN SUCH FLUES WERE CLEANED SHALL BE KEPT ON THE PREMISES AND SHALL BE AVAILABLE FOR EXAMINATION PER C26-1444.0(b) B.C.
8. EMERGENCY LIGHTING FACILITIES TO BE PROVIDED OF AT LEAST 5 FOOT CANDLES OF ILLUMINATION AT THE FLOOR LEVEL. PROVIDE SEPARATE CIRCUITS EITHER TAKEN OFF AHEAD OF THE MAIN SWITCH OR CONNECTED TO A SEPARATE EMERGENCY LIGHTING POWER SOURCE AND BE ARRANGED TO OPERATE AUTOMATICALLY IN THE EVENT OF FAILURE OF THE NORMAL LIGHTING SYSTEM. LIGHTS TO BE 20 WATTS MIN. AND 9'-0" ABOVE FLOOR AND COMPLY WITH DIRECTIVE 5 OF 1979, PER C26-801.16 B.C.
9. PROVIDE AT LEAST FIVE (5) FOOT CANDLES OF ILLUMINATION AT FLOOR LEVEL AT EXIT AREAS.
10. THE EXIT AREA TO BE ILLUMINATED WITHIN THE ASSEMBLY SPACE SHALL CONSIST OF THE EXIT SIGN, THE EXIT DOORWAY AND A SQUARE AT THE THRESHOLD OF THE POINT OF EGRESS WITH A SIDE WHOSE DIMENSION IS DOUBLE THE WIDTH OF THE EGRESS OPENING, OR EQUAL TO THE WIDTH OF THE CORRIDOR (WHICHEVER IS LESS). LIGHT MEASUREMENT SHOULD BE ON THE HORIZONTAL.
11. THIS INTENSITY OF ILLUMINATION SHALL NOT BE DIMINISHED TO LESS THAN TWO (2) FOOT CANDLES AT A LEVEL OF EIGHTEEN (18) INCHES ABOVE THE FLOOR AT CROSS AISLES.
12. THE INTENSITY OF GENERAL ILLUMINATION SHALL NOT BE DIMINISHED TO LESS THAN ONE (1) FOOT CANDLES AT A LEVEL OF EIGHTEEN (18) INCHES ABOVE THE FLOOR ELSEWHERE.
13. THE LIGHTING UNITS SHALL BE SO ARRANGED SO AS NOT TO:
 - A. INTRODUCE DISORIENTING GLARE TO THE PATH OF ESCAPE.
 - B. DRAMATICALLY ALTER THE CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF ILLUMINATION.
 - C. PRESENT A HAZARD TO THE OCCUPANTS AND BE PROTECTED AS IS NECESSARY.
14. ILLUMINATION SHALL BE ARRANGED THAT THE FAILURE OF ANY SINGLE LIGHTING UNIT, SUCH AS THE BURNING OUT OF AN ELECTRIC BULB, WILL NOT LEAVE ANY AREA UN-ILLUMINATED.

LEGEND

- 2 Head emergency light with battery back up
- 3 Head emergency light with battery back up
- Exit sign and light with battery backup
- CAPACITY SIGN
- EXISTING WALLS TO REMAIN
- 1HR PARTITION
- 2HR PARTITION

CONTROLLED INSPECTIONS

-EMER LIGHTING

-NONE

R.I.P.
CONSTRUCTION CONSULTANTS, INC.
372 BROADWAY - LOWER LEVEL
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10013
TELEPHONE (212) 619-0100

MIRAGE

257 HOUSTON

99-17045

UDG

JAN 12 2000

BUILDINGS
BOROUGH MANHATTAN
INSPECTOR'S OFFICIAL

MANHATTAN
THIS PLAN IS TO REMAIN PERMANENTLY ON
THIS PROJECT UNTIL THE WORK IS COMPLETED

VOGESH PATEL

AIKEN FORRETT

The Towers of Cum & Horndogs of Yore

Up until 9/11 (a fatal event that *The Man* used as an excuse to implement sweeping anti-homo measures), EVERY public restroom, secluded park area, roadside stop, et al., since the beginning of time, was a potential or actual orgy room.

I stumbled upon several hot spots for public sex within my first few days in New York City back in the late-'70s, and then discovered even more when I started living here full-time in the mid-'80s. There is not enough room here to outline even a fraction of what existed until The End but one such spot was most definitely The World TRADE Center.

Stop #1 on a sex tour of the WTC would be the men's room on the lower level near the entrance to the PATH trains—where you could find rows of guys jerking off 24/7 since the day it opened 'til the day it blew up. There was every combination of guys there:

from workmen, delivery boys, shop workers, executives, tourists, random dads, and well...you name it. Lunch hour was typically out of control and the cops would periodically try to bust it up by standing around for a while with their walkie-talkies turned up loud for effect, or they'd knock a nightstick on the stalls and bark something like "OK ladies, time to break it up." But then the minute they'd leave, the boys would be back at it. Besides the wanking at the urinals, there'd be *hanky-panky* going on in the stalls. One guy would stand on a toilet seat so his legs would be out of view, while another would blow or even screw his partner(s). That, or the doors would open and close as random dudes flashed boners. Some guys went there specifically for this kind of action but many would simply wander in and get caught up in the heat of the moment.

For the more in the know there were other, more private, restrooms on other floors...sometimes you'd need a key and sometimes not. Sometimes you could get

access via a horny employee and other times you'd just catch the door opening as someone was exiting. In those tearooms, there'd often be more leisurely fucking and sucking going on—sometimes with multiple participants. There were also private unused offices and then one time, I followed a workman through a series of back hallways to a storage room and got busy with him there (although he was mainly into black guys with huge dicks and only settled for me on a couple occasions as a last resort I guess). In all cases, in every area of the complex of buildings, it'd be a mix of white-collar and blue-collar guys of every race, class, and ethnicity.

The best place by far though was the underground stairway and stairwells leading up from the underground parking lot. Basically, nobody took those stairs except horndogs who used it as a secluded sex spot; everybody else took the elevator—which was faster, cleaner, and more convenient. The thing about that stairwell that made it so popular

was that cops never patrolled it and you could hear someone coming from several floors above or below. And THE best area of all was on the ground level because the door only opened from the inside out, so if you did hear someone coming, you'd just duck out onto the busy street and get lost in the crowd of pedestrians. Because of that feature, that part of the stairway was literally covered in decades of cum. There were also years' worth of raunchy graffiti where guys would write stuff like "Meet me here on Tuesday to get fucked by my 10 inches," etc. Used condoms were strewn everywhere and obviously the workmen and anyone else who happened to see that area could have figured out what was going on there and how often(!) Shit, a retarded squirrel could have seen that in about a half second. I have no idea how it got there, but I swear I once saw a thin plastic mattress tucked under the stairs, presumably for fucking. Anyways, I could go on and on, and that was just one of many, many places I

knew about in the Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and the Jersey City metro area.

This is prolly enough type here for your thing but back in the day I met a very experienced guy who marked up my subway map with various hot spots around the city and told me what time of the day or night was best for each location. It'd be one of the men's rooms in the subway early in the morning (yes, they had restrooms in the subway!), Borough Hall an hour after that (where you'd see Hasidic boys and men jerking off), WTC to catch the rush at lunch hour, Washington Square Park a bit later, and so on.

Anyways, it all ended everywhere in every part of the country over a decade ago and is regrettably ancient history now. But I know for a fact that there was dick sucking and butt fucking going on there the day the planes hit those buildings. I have talked to at least one guy who was THERE, and narrowly escaped. And since it was always going on, well...nuff said.

EILEEN MYLES

The Pussy in Public

YEAH IT MATTERS AND IT COULD BE ANYTHING. I MEAN FOR INSTANCE A GAY MAN ACTUALLY TOLD ME WITH A BIG SMILE ABOUT HIS DIFFICULTY WITH THE SIX PAGES OF PUSSIES IN MY LAST BOOK. IT'S WEIRD SINCE I'VE NEVER THOUGHT MY DISINTEREST IN MEN'S DICKS WAS IMPORTANT FOR ME TO SHARE WITH THEM. SO TO SHARE HERE THAT PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS BY MEN STRAIGHT OR GAY OR WOMEN TOO ABOUT FEMALE GENITALS BEING UGLY TO THEM IS AN AFFRONT TO MY DESIRE TO HAVE PUBLIC SEX BY WHICH I MEAN TO FREELY CONDUCT THE ONGOING CELEBRATION OF THE PUSSY WHERE I AM—OWNING ONE AND LOVING ANOTHER.

ANN PELLEGRINI &
JANET R. JAKOBSEN

Sex Matters

As we write this, the state of New York is busily revamping its marriage licenses to reflect the June 2011 passage of legislation recognizing same-sex marriage. What a strange month June 2011 was for New Yorkers. If the end of the month was dominated by public debate and legislative maneuvering over same-sex marriage, the first half was taken up by the sexting scandal and media circus that ultimately drove Congressman Anthony Weiner from office. Together, these two events have much to tell us about how profoundly public sex matters. How so? Although public sex is usually negatively contrasted to some gold standard of the private conjugal couple, in fact, marital sex is *always* sex in public. If the state is involved—as it is in the case of marriage—then so is the public.

In general, though, what married couples do in practice, behind the curtain of marital privacy, is their own business. The very public nature of marriage is what provides the cover of privacy (for those

whom the state desires to protect). Indeed, marriage is an alibi that covers a host of sins, but the trade for public recognition is that sexual transgressions within marriage are supposed to be and remain private. (Former Congressman Weiner should have taken a few classes in privacy settings before using his Twitter, Facebook, and email accounts.) Versions of this idea, that what happens between husband and wife are or should be a private matter, have of course long propped up patriarchal privilege and male violence against women and children.

We do not dismiss the desire of many gay men and lesbians for state recognition of their intimate relationships, especially as this public recognition brings with it a host of material benefits and privileges that are not otherwise (easily) available: access to health care, immigration sponsorship, the right to inherit even in the absence of a will, and parental recognition. The list goes on. But marriage is not only a conduit through which the state delivers and restricts what are

or should be public goods. It is also a rite of recognition that bestows symbolic goodness on its chosen few. Of course, gay men and lesbians should be equal before the law, but as we have written elsewhere, we think equality before the law is settling for too little.¹ The same-sex marriage movement, even as it might be expanding the compass of marriage, yet contributes to an ongoing narrowing of what is or can be properly public, what can be a matter of public value.

As marriage becomes the gold standard for anyone who wants to lay claim to the public value of their intimate relations, it is worth remembering the web of queer intimacies that have sustained so many of us—gay and straight—for richer and poorer, in sickness and in health, in good times and bad. In the rush to City Hall, let's not forget all the many ways in which sexual relations matter deeply, publicly.

1. Janet R. Jakobsen and Ann Pellegrini, *Love the Sin: Sexual Regulation and the Limits of Religious Tolerance* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004).

GORDON BRENT INGRAM

The importance of public sex in an age of digital appliances

Not so long ago, sex was a way to make friends and even to find détente with enemies, to take a furtive communion in the midst of hostility, and to get the lay of the land naked in some obscure location that could barely be argued to be “in public.”

Once upon a time, there was a neo-tribal kind of linear progression: a simple arc starting with desire, then investigation, the creation of a map, eventual contact, sex (singular or countless), pleasure, a bit of satisfaction, inevitable exhaustion, and then dispersal. A few marriages resulted but they were incidental. And for a few moments, the city, the town, and even the forest were transformed, especially for sexual minorities, from battlefields to playgrounds.

But this formula was always a bit naïve like those early 20th-century books written by anthropologists

who went into remote villages, had sex with a few eager young people, and then went on to attain academic stardom on the strength of their self-delusions. Throbbing phalluses were never quite the antennae reconnecting planetary forces (though I swear it felt that way). And rather than temples to nature, the “open” spaces in which we found refuge were more often trashed and neglected rather than ecosystems comparably rich as our desires and capabilities.

In these modern times of social media, public sex is just as important as it was before Craigslist and Facebook. In many parts of the world, aside from those urban parks of yesteryear that too often today have video surveillance, there is more, not less public sex. After many legal battles, with many losses and some victories, much more of the world’s cities harbor some zones where public sex can be had with minimal risk of violence and arrest. However, social media is inverting and diffusing the flows in these new forms of neural nets such that actual sex

is more often the foreplay and the money shot is that nanosecond of initial digital contact and fantasy.

Today our lives are littered with cheap, electronic appliances that do not make up for bisphenol A (BPA), declining sperm counts, lack of exercise, overwork and stress, and cancers. Public space and public sex are being regulated through poorly functioning appliances. The gorilla glass will eventually shatter. The viruses cause grief and the batteries will eventually poison drinking water. Does it feel any better to maneuver through a toxic waste dump rather than an “enchanted” forest? Not really. But occasionally we still have fun, make friends, learn something new, and push a little harder on the cages that so constrain who we are, what we can be, and who and how we enjoy and sometimes love.

JILL H. CASID

Excerpt from an email exchange with Joshua Lubin-Levy (August 4, 2011):

...Please forgive the delay in responding to your gracious and quite fascinating email. It must be deeply nerve-racking to be working so close to your deadline. The project is very exciting and I very much hope to see the book. I have a series of Polaroids I’ve been doing for years called “Kissing in Public,” which is an homage to the queer history of the SX-70 Polaroid camera that, in its condensation of the taking and making of the photograph and thus its ability to bypass the eyes of the local photo developer, became, from its release in the 1970s, a vital accessory to intimate encounters. And, thus, I’ve been thinking in various ways about how public sex matters in the sense of value but also in the sense of the material conditions and conduits of that mattering. But I understand you’re soliciting written reflections and

reactions and I’m overburdened at the moment with a small mountain of writing deadlines...

...It feels not just spare but also bare to have something so breathlessly brief and unedited appear in print, but perhaps that’s in the spirit of public sex and the messy quickness that is both pulsing and almost skinless in its exposure...

...If there were time for some more back and forth, I’d want to respond to your mention of the legal conditions regulating display of bodies and faces and discuss the fact, for example, that photographers usually need a “model release” even if those represented aren’t recognizable. I’d want to talk, too, about the material differences between original drawings and photographic multiples but also the ways that the small Polaroids (hand-sized, tucked into pockets and drawers) defy some of those differences in the material facts of their being singular (reproducible only if digitally scanned) and also somewhat writerly—notorious actually for the volatility of their

emulsion and the curious way one can push the emulsion around before the picture develops and hardens, creating strange trails of viscous fluid in and across the image that come closer to effects like those of Andy Warhol’s piss paintings than anything one usually attributes to photography. That last point leads to the precarious and volatile remains of public sex, to what defies preservation even when photographed, when made to matter and made material...

...So then, I guess, yes, go ahead and use what you think helps make the points you want to press. Warmly—Jill

JOHAN ANDERSSON

While romanticized notions of cruising as egalitarian queer culture have often ignored the ways in which parks, bars, and piers were always hierarchically stratified, the eradication of sex from public spaces nevertheless has democratic implications. It is not that the contemporary city is being desexualized, but rather that liaisons arranged online or with GPS technology on smartphone applications are now more likely to take place in the private sphere of the home. Such reprivatization of queer sexuality is bound to undermine what was once its most attractive feature: the ability to transcend classed binaries of “host/travel” (and “your place or mine?”) in favour of a sexual realm beyond anxious domesticity.

JOHN PAUL RICCO

Public sex¹ happens. The simplicity, brevity, honesty, and candor of this proposition, is, I contend, one of the most principal ways in which public sex matters.

It matters because it happens, and it happens because it matters. This is no small thing. It *still* happens and matters, even now, after so many attempts to ensure that it no longer does. Public sex is resilient and persistent, and its temporal-historical stamina lies—in large part—in its geospatial anonymity, itinerancy, imperceptibility, and illegality.

Contemplating my response to the artists’ query, I considered the possibility of simply supplying them with a list of all of the places where I have had public sex (necessarily non-exhaustive due to the innumerable number of places over the years, as well as the limits of memory and the evanescent residuality of the encounters that it would retrace).

But as I thought back to these remembered incidents, I found it easy to recollect and draw out

images of these scenes, yet nearly impossible in most instances to locate with any kind of cartographic accuracy the exact name or address of these particular spots—less punctuated locations than elliptical lines—easily returned to in memory or in actuality, yet difficult to nominally cite in a list.

Herein lies the other principal way in which public sex matters: where it happens is without adequate or appropriate address. Less a place per se, than it is a non-appropriating taking place, public sex is the erotic/libidinal/desirous and pleasure-filled happening and coming together of two or more bodies in the pure exhilaration of this singular shared encounter with the space of their separation.

1. Or is it to be written: Public Sex (the difference being a matter of erring on the side of the adjectival or the eidetic)?

KATE BORNSTEIN

Midsummer's day, Vienna, 1994, at the city's first ever Transgender Film Festival. I was a guest of honor at a luncheon panel. Think academic dinner theater. The woman seated next to me looked like a French runway model, which, in fact, she turned out to be. She had two fingers up inside me. I toyed with my strudel for a while. Then...

"Get up. We're going outside."

I don't know if any of the people passing by the end of the alley turned their heads to see her slam me up against the brick wall and fuck me so good that we did it again an hour later in the last row of the next festival screening.

Well, that's when I learned to respect and adore public sex.

JOSÉ ESTEBAN MUÑOZ

Sharing Public Sex

There is a question that stands to the side of whether or not public sex still matters and I answer it as a way of eventually returning to the initial prompt.

A great deal of my writing has occurred under the sign of public sex. That writing certainly calls on experience, to some degree my own, but more prominently those of others who have left ephemeral traces of lives that met obliterating negation. Such writing mimetically and performatively reflected styles of intimacy that seemed haunted and detached from/at their inception.

Looking back, I now notice that this writing transpired under a sign that had become maybe too celebratory, too ecstatic. Often it amounted to the sharing of something that resisted the protocols of sharing. I wrote about gay sex before AIDS as a reflection on a world that was always on the cusp of expiration. Reflecting on the work that others and I have done under the sign of public sex

gives me pause. My writing was an effort to share this thing that resisted its inscription, or notation.

Maybe the point is not to cast the bright light of publicity on flickering signs of sexual dissidence lived in public. If we move our emphasis away from the purportedly "liberated gay man" who wishes to inhabit experiences of renegade intimacy in the open and, instead, imagine other people who attempt to flourish within illicit economies that include public sex, the imperative to document and narrate the experience comes into question.

Does the writing of public sex potentially share too much? How does it risk the over-rendering of life that by its very nature resists a certain conceptual grid of knowing? The strategy of weighing, marking, and measuring public sex through writing needs reassessment. Public sex matters in vastly different ways than it once did. The time has come to understand public sex as an unshareable thing that queers manage to share. But the sharing needs to resist the

impulse towards ecstatic celebration, romantic remembrance, and spectacle. Maybe it's enough to know public sex simply matters and to practice resisting the impulse to pull it apart and put it on display. Let us be content to share the fact of the unsharable.

KATHERINE FRANKE¹

Public Sex, Same-Sex Marriage, and the Afterlife of Homophobia

Consider two events that dominated the news in the summer of 2011: Anthony Weiner resigned from Congress after it became public that he had been tweeting to some of his female Twitter followers photos of himself in various stages of undress, and New York State became the largest and most significant state in the U.S. to grant same-sex couples the right to marry. Two iconic images captured this juxtaposition: a thumbnail of Weiner's bulging briefs and wedding cakes topped with same-sex couples.

While these two events may bear no strict causal relation to one another, they are meaningfully related synchronically. How so? The panic that unfolded upon the revelation of Representative Weiner's taste for a kind of public sexuality that Twitter enabled was fueled in important respects by something I'll call the *afterlife*

of *homophobia*; an afterlife that appeared in the wake of the success of same-sex couples' demand for marriage equality rights. The summer of 2011 marked an important turning-point in the geography and politics of sex: public sex, previously a domain dominated by the specter of a hypersexualized gay man, became the province of the irresponsible, foolish, and self-destructive heterosexual man, such as Anthony Weiner. Meanwhile, homosexuals were busy domesticating their sexuality in the private domain of the family. Just as hetero-sex shamefully seeped out into the open, homo-sex disappeared from view into the dignified pickets of private kinship. While Anthony Weiner was exploring—at his peril—new sexual publics that social media made possible, same-sex couples celebrated their official, legal inclusion in the domain of the traditional, sexual private.

The twin projects of privatization and legitimization of homosexuality began, of course, with Justice Anthony Kennedy in his 2003 opinion in *Lawrence v.*

Texas, in which he put an end to the identity of the homosexual as the sodomite by refiguring the homosexual in homosocial terms. As I have written elsewhere:

With respect to the right to make decisions about intimate affiliations in private settings, Justice Kennedy notes that “[p]ersons in a homosexual relationship may seek autonomy for these purposes, just as heterosexual persons do,” and that the statutes at issue in *Lawrence* and in *Bowers* “seek to control a personal relationship that, whether or not entitled to formal recognition in the law, is within the liberty of persons to choose without being punished as criminals.” Note that the analogy here is between persons in a homosexual relationship and heterosexual persons. Thus, the issue in *Lawrence*, as well as in *Bowers*, was not the right to engage in certain sexual conduct—that, says Kennedy, would be demeaning to John Lawrence and Tyron Garner. They would be disgraced just as a married couple would be if the claim were made that “mar-

riage is simply about the right to have sexual intercourse.” Kennedy writes that “[sexual conduct] can be but one element in a personal bond that is more enduring.” More enduring than what? Than sex?²

Justice Kennedy's finding in *Lawrence* that the Texas sodomy law violated a fundamental liberty right was premised upon a story he made up about Lawrence and Gardner being in a relationship in which their interactions allowed them to elaborate their “concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life.” Dale Carpenter's work on the backstory of this “relationship” tells a quite different tale—but the truth of the matter is really irrelevant.³ What is important is that the Supreme Court was willing to welcome lesbian and gay people into the community of rights-bearing citizens not because of the sex we have, but rather because of the “enduring personal bonds” we seek—bonds that gain constitutional protection for reasons that are not squarely or even obliquely about sex.

This new emplotment of gay life, one animated by characters who are kin not hookups, whose connection is romantic not sexual, is taken up in the briefs in the marriage equality cases. The

homosexual portrayed in these filings is the soccer mom, the partner who is a good provider, the loving father, the de-facto daughter-in-law, and the fellow who attends stamp-collecting conventions. The legitimate homosexual is he or she who is willing to keep quiet about the *sex* part of *homosexual*. In this sense, the space cleared out by the vanquishing of sodomy law's homophobia is a space for the desexualized gay subject who longs for the stability and fidelity of “enduring personal bonds.”

In the marriage cases, the decent, loving, faithful gay character is met by adamant arguments from the other side insisting that marriage is essentially a procreative enterprise, and that since only a man and a woman can procreate, marriage can only be made up of husbands and wives. In response to this heterosexualization of marriage, the same-sex couples insist that “we too have children, just not the way you do.” It makes sense for the plaintiffs in these cases to insist that there are ways to make babies that aren't essentially heterosexual, but the consequence of this argument is that homo-sex loses any political, legal, or social significance. Marriage, it seems, is where homo-sex goes to die. While the path of the argument may not

have been one we initiated, lesbian and gay advocates have been complicit in the marginalization, if not erasure, of homo-sex and other forms of sex that are the excess over reproduction. Of course the female orgasm, contraception, and abortion have a stake in this politics as well. But who, if not lesbian and gay people, see themselves as having an interest in carrying a brief for sex? Sex for its own sake, and as part of a politics of freedom.

How did we get to this curious place, a place with a politics that would be almost unimaginable to the sexual freedom fighters of Stonewall? Once here, should lesbian and gay-rights activists care about sex in public any longer? Should we cede that terrain to misfits such as Weiner while we celebrate the legitimization of same-sex love that marriage rights afford, or do we maintain a stake, or at least an interest, in the notion of sexual publics? Better yet, now that homo-sex has become privatized is sex in public only of interest to those who define themselves as Queer?

The space evacuated by the repeal of sodomy laws need not be taken up immediately or entirely by the domain of kinship and the family—but there is a great risk that it would be. This space could be

one in which a kind of sexual legibility might emerge that is not private, does not entail property relations, is not matrimonial, does not take the couple form, and is not necessarily enduring. The terms of its zoning would be beyond marriage, kinship, or the family. Although serious attachments may form, they simply wouldn't be ones whose terms of legibility are set out by the state. It is these spaces that are most threatened by homophobia's afterlife.

In a time when homosexuality has been heteronormativized (so long as it conforms to the hygienic rules of marriage) certain forms of sex-based shame and perversion have been rendered all the more vulnerable to social and legal stigma. Here we find the afterlife of homophobia. Homophobia's work has shifted from buttressing the criminalization of sodomy, and from justifying the ongoing exclusion of same-sex couples from legal marriage, to imposing a kind of penalty on those people, regardless of their sexual orientation, who cannot or will not organize their desires, their attachments, and their values in a way that echoes the model homo-citizens recounted in the briefs in the same sex marriage cases. The desires these cases leave out

find themselves ostracized into a domain of increasingly marginalized illegitimacy, if not degeneracy. Now, as much as, or even more than ever, these outlaws are regarded by more conventional members of the community as out of step with the main current of gay politics—and indeed they are seen to pose a threat to that politics insofar as they undermine the claims to decency, respectability, and dignity that the plaintiffs in the marriage cases claim entitle them to the benefits of legal marriage.

So here's where Public Sex can be so crucial as a site for resisting homophobia's afterlife and for imagining a kind of sexual citizenship that isn't defined by and through the redemptive pastorality of marriage. It's time sex pushed back and resisted a hygienic sexual politics that aims to cleanse homosexuality of its raunchier elaborations, and demanded a legitimate presence in quasi-public spaces such as Twitter and Facebook, along with the more commonly understood public space of the street, the bar, or the bookstore. Since same-sex marriage advocates have surrendered to, if not embraced, the heteronormativity of the private family, the public sphere may be the last refuge for sexual liberty. In this sense,

Anthony Weiner may be more of an ally in the cause to defend sexual liberty than are lesbian and gay rights advocates. The elaboration of sexual publics (and by this I don't mean weddings) and new forms of Public Sex are essential as counterweights that can challenge the hegemony of the matrimonialized gay subject/gay couple.

1. Professor of Law, Director of the Center for Gender & Sexuality Law, Columbia Law School. © Katherine Franke.
2. Katherine M. Franke, *The Domesticated Liberty of Lawrence v. Texas*, 104 *Columbia Law Review* 1399, 1408 (2004).
3. Dale Carpenter, *The Unknown Past of Lawrence v. Texas*, 102 *Michigan Law Review* 1464 (2004). Carpenter's description of Lawrence and Garner's "relationship" is quite different from that portrayed by Kennedy's opinion. The two men, Lawrence white and Garner black, were not in a relationship, but were more likely occasional sex partners. The night of the arrest another sex partner of Garner's called the police to report that "a black man was going crazy" in Lawrence's apartment "and he was armed with a gun." (Carpenter notes that a racial epithet rather than "black man" was probably the term used.) The police arrived at the apartment and found Lawrence and Garner having sex.

TIM DEAN

Suffering from a telling amnesia, I was under the impression that I'd never had public sex in New York City (it has all been in San Francisco or Seattle), until, prompted by the invitation to contribute to this book, I recalled an afternoon over twenty years ago, when I visited the city to view "Picasso and Braque" at The Museum of Modern Art. Seeing Cubism up close and personal was great, but I wanted to look at something else, so I slipped out of the exhibition to investigate porn theaters in the neighborhood.

It's thanks primarily to Samuel R. Delany's *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue* (1999) that we have a record of those amazing institutions, which have since been destroyed. Books such as Delany's—and *Petite Mort*—are important for preserving and, indeed, renewing memories of the passing encounter, moments of contact where something is exchanged between men. In semi-secret spaces, men come together to exchange neither names nor rings but something more fragile and impermanent.

Memories of those exchanges are especially significant at an historical moment when recognition of same-sex desire is being completely subsumed under the banner of marriage.

On that fall day in 1990, I ditched the Picasso and skipped by the Eros, one of the gay porn palaces, in favor of a theater showing straight porn, where there was plenty of action among the exclusively male audience members. That afternoon showed me how public sex affords a unique way for getting to know the denizens of the city.

For some people, the fact that it takes place outside the home, away from domesticity and familiar coordinates, is the best part of sex in public. This kind of sexual encounter offers a welcome respite not only from the home but also from oneself. Public sex provides a vital means of exploring urban spaces and their shadowy multitude of mobile men. But it also opens up a highly pleasurable avenue for exploring the less familiar aspects of one's own desire.

Petite Mort

Recollections of a Queer Public

A PROJECT BY

Carlos Motta & Joshua Lubin-Levy

CO-CURATED BY

Ingrid Chu & Savannah Gorton,
Forever & Today, Inc.

DESIGNED BY

Carl Williamson,
Familiar

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Charles W. Leslie, Ingrid Chu & Savannah Gorton, Joel Czarlinsky, José Esteban Muñoz, Kira Shewfelt, and Sean Johnson.

THANKS TO

All the contributors, authors, performers, Alan Ruiz, Asher Remy-Toledo, David van der Leer, Douglas Crimp, Edmund White, Jeremy Steinke, Lawrence Jacobson, Rubén Gallo & Terence Gower, and Sergio Muñoz Sarmiento.

IMAGES

Details of architectural blueprint of El Mirage, 2000, courtesy of Joel Czarlinsky. Pages: 2-3, 6, 14, 16, 20-21, 144-145.

FUNDING BY

Petite Mort: Recollections of a Queer Public was funded through USA Projects, an online initiative of United States Artists with donations by: Anonymous, Alexander Thebez, Allen Frame, Andrea Blum, Anthony Nikolchev, Ari Shapiro, Aziz + Cucher, Barbara L. Goldsmith Foundation, Barry Ellsworth & Camila Motta, Ben Grube, Ben Pryor, Ben Riskin, Brent Sikkema, Caleb Hammons, Camilo Godoy, Charles W. Leslie, Charlie Morris, Chris Benecke, Daniel Greenfield, Daniel Handal, David R-O, Douglas Crimp, Edward Winkleman, Frédéric Moffet, Fritz Haeg, Griff Tester, Ira Sachs, Irit Batsry, Jamie Angell, Jeanne Gerrity, Jesús Martínez, Jill Mayer Burstein, Joe Roumeliotis, Jonathan Crespo & Antoine Vigne, Justin Wolf, Kaneza Schaal, Kara Jesella, Kara Maguire, Keaton Kail, Kelley Walker, Kim Saal, Larry Rinder, Lee Isaacsohn, Leticia Robles-Moreno, Lisa Gabrielle Mark, Luca Borghese, Marie Shurkus, Melissa P. Bidot, Michael Hart, Michael Lehman, Mónica Espinel, Monika Bravo, Nancy Lubin-Levy & Donald Levy, Nathalie Anglès, Nicholas Fonseca, Patrick Nolan, Patterson Scarlett, Paul Sepuya, Philip Yenawine, Raegan Truax-O’Gorman, Sara Bremen-Moreno, Sean Johnson, Sean Strub, Stephanie Lubin-Levy, Steven Siqueira, Todd Shalom, Vicki Thai, Yaelle Amir, and Zoe Leonard.

