Winter 2017

Letter From the Editor

It's been a year since the election, and with that distance, the ripple effects of "filter bubbles"—those nettling online algorithms that create tailored content based on user activity—have become increasingly clear. Our social feeds have cloistered us each into a self-reflexive tunnel, one that silently plods along, daily reinforcing our individual biases. A recent *Wired* article explained that "the global village that was once the internet has been replaced by digital islands of isolation that are drifting further apart each day."[1]

This is not just an internet problem. The notion of the filter bubble is echoed across industries. As I thumbed through countless articles this morning regarding the hyper-specialization proliferating through the tech industry, I couldn't help but wonder if we too—in our hallowed sanctum called the art world—are becoming increasingly segmented in the way we talk about and view work. Granted, the art world has always existed in its own rarefied feedback loop, but within art discourse, it seems trends towards specific segmentation are all the rage: women, people of color, and even those with specific sexual preferences are being corralled and shown together.

A recent example, Pacific Standard Time LA/LA (PST: LA/LA) has been a fantastic and gargantuan undertaking, though it presents show after show of work within specific geographical and racial demarcations. Some argue that grouping artists by gender, race, region, or even sexual preference provides needed context to fully digest and understand a given artwork. Maybe. But, could it be also encouraging the ever-present tendencies towards hyper-specificity, hypersensitivity, hyper-political-correctness? ("There are so many ways to step on a land mine now," confessed a progressive writer on *The Dish*.)[2]

Here, in our 10th *Carla*, we ceremoniously provide a big ol' issue, chock-a-block full of words by writers each navigating our contemporary moment of hyper-specialization. Eli Diner links domestic art spaces to a sort of Uberization of the gallery world. Catherine Wagley looks back at four influential female gallerists whose contributions have remained largely unexplored despite their outsized support of infamous artists of their day. Travis Diehl discusses new trends in trash, and how artists might be working through gentrification woes (or is it guilt?) through the inclusion of site-specific detritus. Later, I discuss the problematic languages of the all-popular all-women exhibition, and how the titling and context around these shows may in fact be reinforcing ingrained biases. In an off-the-cuff interview, Hamza Walker discusses his unique take on the Dana Schutz/Emmett Till controversy, and the sensitivities therein. In our special PST: LA/LA section, we've approached coverage with multiplicity in an attempt to echo the vast activity that the initiative has created.

If society, and press, is moving towards specialization, it is undeniable that this magazine—a regional, artist-run, liberal, and (dare I say) feminist publication—fits within that mold. I make no mistake that our discourse is a specific one (my father-in-law lovingly confessed to me that a recent issue read to him like a scientific journal). Though amidst this specific discourse, we remain steadfastly committed to connecting broad segments within the art world by discussing, mulling-over, and challenging old norms and new trends alike, not in a spirit of policing, but one of continued dialogue within this tumultuous field of art that we call home.

Lindsay Preston Zappas
Founder and Editor-in-Chief

1. Mostafa M. El-Bermawy, "Your Filter Bubble is Destroying Democracy," *Wired*, Nov. 18, 2016, https://www.wired.com/2016/11/filter-bubble-destroying-democracy/.

2. Freddie DeBoer, "Where Online Social Liberalism Lost the Script," *The Dish*, Aug. 21, 2014, http://dish.andrewsullivan.com/2014/08/21/where-online-social-liberalism-lost-the-script/.