



A HANDBOOK FOR ISLAND
BUILDING
BY THE LOST BEAT OFFICER

Every Contact Leaves a Trace
(a handbook for island-building)

~~YOUR RIGHT~~
~~LET YOUR RIGHT~~
~~YOU WILL DO~~
~~IT'S A FREE~~

You are an Island
Entired of yourself
A cut off part of the continent
Your share of the ex-main

The death of something no longer diminishes you
For you are not involved in the world
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls

You sit alone on the shore,
Your shore,
Absorbed in fiddling with your fucking identity

Your right...
It's your right...
It's a free world...
You'll do as you please...
Yes you do!
Yes you are!
Yes you can!

On your crumbled hiding place,
On your cramped studio,
On your sunken fort,
You write my name:
Liberty

On your abandoned island
On your fiercely guarded plot
On your unceasing preparations and precautions
You write my name:

Meanwhile...

I've dropped litter all over your neighborhood,
Chipped away the mortar between your bricks,
Picked all your flowers
And salted your lawn.

I've put glue in your locks,
Keyed your car,
Punctured your tires,
Thrown stones at your window,
Then climbed on through and into your house,

I've lurched into your kitchen,
(leaving a bloody trail in my wake)
Then I've carefully blocked up your sink,
Before turning on the taps,
I've smeared shit on your walls
And pissed in your bed

Afterwards, running out into the cool night air
I've scribbled the same illegible misspelt word
On every wall of the city.

But why?

An act of senseless versifying?
A ritual of the undercommons?
An expression of contempt?
Or perhaps a manifestation of my symptoms?
Was it for wildness? For cheap thrills?
For my obsessive-compulsion?
In the name of creation or destruction?

Don't ask me.

About me: I am a fully grown white man, from planet earth, my hair is short and mouse-brown, and once I was member of the biggest gang there is: the police, INTERPOL. After certain psychological traumas, certain troubling discoveries relating to internal policies and data gathering techniques, I left, horrified, shell-shocked. They paid for my therapy: Cognitive Behavioral, Rational Emotional Behavioral, mindfulness, meditation... radical acceptance, and after doing a lot of work on myself I came to understand that it made more sense to express the injustices I'd witnessed through the medium of Art, through being an artist, rather than by becoming a whistle blower, because all the whistle blowers are in prison or on the run aren't they? So I did that for a while.... Art, but in spite of plenty of support and funding I began to feel disillusioned, constrained, I'd had this naïve idea that art could induce a real change, have an impact, leave a mark, you know?

Sometimes I lock myself into in a small room, like, maybe a toilet, to think, to hide, to sweat, to physically embody my feelings of imprisonment. I wear a grey tracksuit or else an orange jumpsuit; I'm just trying to articulate how I feel... like a prisoner. I'm bear walking, sumo squatting, Russian twisting, leap frogging, shadow boxing, because exercise, a little bit of movement always helps when feeling trapped...

I write your name too:

Liberty

But however much I write it; it never seems to stick....

Liberty... Liberty... Liberty

I make sounds like I'm a bee, with my fingers pressed over my eyes and ears, Putting to work the mindfulness techniques they taught me, trying to visualise a pinprick of light at the centre of my chest, to assimilate, to practice acceptance, to feel blessed, to feel my backside pushed down upon the chair by gravity... but...

This version of liberty: freedom, to be and do as we please, to just do it... It isn't quite... never mind! I write another Artist's statement, I update all my profiles, I do a bit of institutional critique.... something's still wrong... Something's in the way... It's hard to explain, but what if this is all this is my fault?



So, I've started to get interested in training to transgress, learning to disobey, to ignore little rules and be less fearful of the repercussions, to be a real troublemaker, a vandal, a wall fighter. It's exhilarating, it feels good, sort of wild and free, which is an illusion obviously, but still...

So, I've given up being an artist and I'm training to be a vandal. The Vandals were a race of people, they destroyed Rome, and then after that the term vandal was used to describe one who destroys art. The act of vandalism is an expression of contempt for something.

My practice of vandalism has led me into a part of the game that hasn't been properly programmed yet, it's the edge of the "reality" so it's hard to focus on anything, it's hazy and grey with layers of contradictions. There at the edge, people cheat, they make unkind jokes, they have quick wits, they're faster than me, and also they exclude me, because... in spite of all my qualifications and training I'm a little dull, a little slow on the uptake. Sometimes people are kind enough to explain the contradictions and for a moment I see what they're getting at, but then, later on account of my poor short-term memory, I fall back into thinking what I've always thought, what's been drummed into me. It's hard for someone like me, an ex-police officer turned artist, to fit in here. I feel irritated by them because even as I hand out worksheets and share what I've learnt, when they do take an interest I sense that it's largely out of pity for me. In spite of my qualification in psychology they've seen me for what I am: an old fool crossed with a big baby, vulnerable and innocent to the ways of the world but also stiff and rigid.

My body under stress, my eyes, two black dots, like a Lego man's, like I'm drugged or in a cult. I blink placidly and decide to award them all The Champ of the Week Trophy.

Anyway, graffiti is conservative, it's hierarchical, territorial, traditional, it has many rules, it's obsessed with fame and suspicious of change, it's stuck in a bubble-written rut executed with spray cans and costly marker pens. Always scrawled, misspelt or invented words, always seemingly devoid of intention; due to a distrust of language or an inability to articulate anything coherent? An expression of how stupid we feel?



~~Our jumbled frantic random thoughts.~~
~~Our newfound malevolent creativity~~
~~Our interest in counter-creation~~
~~In hidden things, the occult.~~
~~In alien things, the extra terrestrial.~~
~~Beyond a world that makes us sick.~~
We write to escape our prisons
My heads fucking exploding with stuff
To be the hunted is to be alone and to be free?
They went on alone and died alone...

About Us.

We facilitate the construction of archipelagos of artificial islands around the world in anticipation of civilization's collapse back into the barbaric oceans, from whence it emerged. In order to prepare for this inevitable encroachment of the sea into previously terrestrial zones, we're excited to offer this folio of speculative exercises and vigilante construction projects (for individuals and groups) on what is, for the moment at least, dry land.

The process of constructing your artificial island will act as a jumping off point for reflections upon our state of affairs at the dawn of this, the era of islands (from the domestic islands born out of Covid to the luxury holiday islands in Dubai, from the military bases, springing up in the South China Sea, to the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, an island of floating trash). Within fiction islands have always been useful tools for modeling narratives on account of their generally homogenous, contained and controlled qualities, meanwhile reality edges ever closer to chaos.

This project of constructing small archipelagos of artificial islands is an exercise in preparation for a soon-to-be drowned world and the inevitable encroachment of the law of the sea into previously terrestrial zones. It also doubles up as a ritualistic sport, an artistic, creative, physical and collective activity.

The Paris Commune slogan: "Sous les pavés la plage" is flipped, placing desert islands above the slabs, as well as up the walls and all over the city.

These archipelagos will take certain libertarian and transgressive qualities of graffiti as their cue, while pushing on one step further into actually carving out a territory, an autonomous zone, right there on the ground, through marking, molding and manipulating space with clay, dirt, chalk, charcoal, pigments and other organic materials.

HOW TO BUILD AN ARTIFICIAL ISLAND (illustrated drills for prepping)



1. Take in the surrounding environment: you're about to build an island here, think before you act; adsorb the landscape. Are there features of the terrain that you want to utilize? Will you build on vertical or horizontal planes, or both? Will you construct in close proximity to others or keep your distance?

2. Now meditate on the shape of your island. Will the form serve a function? How will it relate to the surroundings? Will your island look natural or man-made? NB: There's a temptation to shape islands into representations some object, a lotus, a palm tree, Snoopy, we advise that you resist this urge.



3. Mark out the shape of your island using charcoal. Make a bold thick dark line. Remember, later you will fill this shape with clay/land. Land resources are limited, time and energy are also factors; do not be over ambitious, you will not be able to fill a huge space within the duration of the workshop, your island will remain unfinished and will surely fall into ruin.



4. The sea is just a single black line. We will now extend it using dark colors and various shading techniques according to your preferences (dots, dashes, cross hatching).

5. Step back and contemplate your Island, is there anything you wish to add before beginning construction? Lakes? Islets? Lagoons?



6. Now we are ready to lay the foundations. We will smear slip, a mix of clay and water onto the landmass. Aim to stay within the black lines.



7. Accident and skill come together in the modeling of the landmass. It is a sacred and ritualistic process. You will throw clay from a distance aiming at your island; chance, energy and skill will define where mountains and valleys form. Don't worry if you miss your target, these parts will form additional islets. How large or small your projectiles are will be based upon your requirements (mountains, valleys) and skill level.



8. Now we will sculpt and build on our base. Think about the kind of geological features that may come in handy: caves, volcanoes, lakes, plains? To endow your island with additional potency and sacred strength we encourage giving it a vigorous pounding. Get it! Punch it! Slap it! In addition you may wish to incorporate found objects from the surrounding environment. We insist that you cover anything you include with clay.



9. Now to add colour. Use caution, these materials are potent and hard to control. Consider when to use powder (great for creating rocks) and when to use liquid (perfect for filling lakes). Be slow, careful, religious in your handling of these minerals, an excess of one mineral will make the island toxic.



10. Take a step back, and look hard, attend to any corrections or additions you feel are required.

Your island is complete, now let's imagine surviving on it: environmental feedback loops have spiraled out of control and something close to a mass extinction event has unfurled: let's picture that 95% of the planet is covered by water.

You look out over the deoxygenated red tides of rotten fish, succeeded by stinking green tides of algal blooms, as a noxious toxic dust whips around you. The poisonous atmosphere has wiped out almost all life forms, except you of course, you, in your high-tech hazmat suit and gas mask, you, peering out at the hostile environment with a worried expression. You, who are very, very hot, with goggles fogged up completely, making it hard to concentrate. But it's not just your mind that's a mess, everything is totally unregulated, everything is a mess. You can forget about the UN, NATO, IMO and the International Court, even if such entities did exist, any attempt to reinforce their policy would be futile. Frankly, this was already the case in 2021, international waters are historically ungovernable, they're shadow lands where bad actors escape, they're legal voids filled with free-for-alls, just totally scary, barbaric and vague. This has allowed us to continue our practices of frenzied unrelenting extraction: we drain the ocean of all its resources while simultaneously using it as the world's trash can, because anything that's everyone's and no one's is classified as worthless. So the sea is awash with plastic and drained of life, we've ruined it and now, finally, it's risen up against us; it's hot and angry and surrounds us threateningly.

Fortunately all of you had the foresight to build islands, so you were prepared when all the tornados, tsunamis, flash floods and aggressive mobs (trying to take your supplies, your lives or whatever) started kicking off... You fortified and defended, put tinned beans in concrete bunkers, kept a baseball bat behind the door, you understood that a tool like a knife is all very well, but you also need to know how to use it. And so you made it through to this "fresh start".



So how about your island? How will you make energy and achieve locomotion? Are you nuclear, housing power stations and matching weaponry? No, probably a bit small for that, and you don't know how, right? Is there petroleum? Nope, all that got used up. Are you industrial, possessing steel, iron, coal and electricity? Given the size of the islands, unlikely. Perhaps you could connect up a bit of wind power or solar power? Except the solar panels ran out of batteries and then melted, and the wind turbines were broken in the tsunamis. Computers? Phones? Not much use since you have no power, and anyway, the heat... And what would be the use in a phone? More importantly, do you have ships? Only sail or row boats would be much help given the above. Do you know how to sail? Do you know how to build a boat? Would you want to go out in one when the sea is so turbulent and toxic? Would there be trade between islands, or perhaps, more likely, pillaging and marauding? Would you consider a state sponsored piracy? What kind of legal frameworks would exist to prevent you? It's likely everyone would be too busy trying to survive to ponder upon whether to enforce or break international law. How about your defence system? It sounds, like your meager possessions would be of little interest to anyone, unless of course you had food... Logically, if only the highest parts of the land are still above water, the terrain will be rocky, not exactly fertile ground for crops or livestock. So, what will you eat? Does the sea still contain fish? Stuffed with micro-plastics and an array of toxins it's unlikely they'll be safe to eat, but perhaps you still have some cans of beans? Meanwhile, in the insufferable heat, certain creatures might begin to thrive and evolve, a suffusion of insects, an army of reptiles-turned-dinosaurs. Perhaps you could eat them? Perhaps they could eat you? With everything festering away in the heat, would certain new diseases arise? How would your blistered and burnt skin cope with the sun? Would you evolve, adapt? Or perhaps you, we, the humans have already stopped evolving?

Probably there would be a lot of free diving down to the sunken cities to salvage all manner of artifacts: tinned fish, can openers, sunblock, trinkets and treasures to play with and cry over: broken telephones, Ming vases, graduation photos, golf clubs. Would certain people of certain nationalities attempt to patrol and lay claim to everything lying on the bit of seabed that was once their land? How would they police their sunken property? Would the islands seek to form alliances or would they fiercely pursue their own self-interest laying traps and fighting underwater battles? Maybe endless free diving would evolve us into creatures with slowed heartbeats, shifted blood and expanded lungs?

Even as this action of making an island aims to get you thinking of how to prepare, it must also make clear the futility of preparing. This is a speculative exercise in imagining the planet's trajectory into a post human world, because, we won't last for long under the conditions mentioned above, the fantasy of invincibility shared between our fragile fleshy human lumps and coils is as flawed as the perception of ourselves as custodians of the planet. The islands are abandoned, they're an exercise in imagining life after humans, in imagining what happens when our impact on nature stops and abandoned zones are reclaimed...



Now, I'll unlock my jaw to tell you another secret: this is also a celebratory ritual, a collective practice of making, a poetic game, a sacred sport, a thought experiment. On top of that, it is an urgent act of re-wilding ourselves, a necessity born out of this era of metaphorical islands... The action should be truly exhilarating, a carving out of spaces where for a moment there is no authority to defy, no revolution, only a sense of possibility; spaces where senseless collective activity is a mode of resistance to an era of profound isolation and immobility. This is a practice in doing odd and unexpected things, a training to transgress, a cathartic, feral, fleeting escape from anxiety through flinging mud and smearing dirt against walls, through making a chaotic collective mess.

May you repeat it...

Lost Beat Officer



