

RESIDUALS



HELSINKI · LOS ANGELES · NEW YORK · TOKYO · PARIS · WIEN · WIEN

BLP BRIGITTE LÖCKER PROJECTS (Hg.)

R E S I D U A L S

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Idee, Konzeption & Herausgeberin: **BLP** Brigitte Löcker Projects

AutorInnen

Alexandra v. Stromberg
Herta Frischenschlager
Suzan Wines, Burle Avant
Margarita McGrath
Werner Mörath
Brigitte Löcker
Hanno Kainz

Lena Holz

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LOS ANGELES · MARGARITA McGRATH

Standpunkt: Los Angeles

Half past 4

Awoken again to the pounding wings of descending clouds of locusts, rubbing free of the fantasy of a dream world to the reality of airborne neighborhood surveillance — just an LAPD Aerospatiale helicopter hovering overhead. Protecting the dream.

The riots shattered any lingering perceptions of a land under a sky always blue where people grazed like rabbits, light haired, taut skin — fantasy in being.
The Palace.

For protection we wrap our buildings — caulk and seal against the outside. Surfaces taut and jointless. Cosmetic Surgery.

4:30 AM 17 JANUARY 1994

A lot of these seals sprung leaks. Buildings failed, facades were broken (buildings lost face), people slept in the street.

Afterward, time seemed to pool like blood inside of red-flagged buildings, slipping out onto the street behind yellow police lines...



Container at Culver Junction

Los Angeles is a kind of urban Rorschach test, a city whose edges are indeterminable. Where natural geography foils its expansion, LA spawns sisters of itself in outlying territories. Attesting to this are the long shadows it casts into the desert: Las Vegas - its bastard son, and Phoenix - Orange County's legitimate heir.

"Everything seems to come together in Los Angeles", the urban geographer's (Ed Soja) 'totalizing' Aleph. Or the terminal for pulp apocalypses.

Linked homogeneity erases catastrophes, and congruent identity forgets the saying goes, has triumphed over myth. No, it is Euclidean space topology, it is transport and displacement without obstacles that have the ancient journey from islands to catastrophes, from passage to fault, labyrinth. Myth is effaced in its original function, and the new space is it sustains, only because within it there are no more encounters. As Plato legs, follow the diagonal, freely choose the longest or shortest route, ode, wishes. The earth is measured (geo - metry) by means of just measure (the flock of chaotic morphologies is subdued. Thus the Statesman is written.

The criss-cross of contradiction is perpetually effaced, the wound differentiation's passage emerging only as the determining lines of as its own treasury. This is the propriety of the totality, and the connected and combined in the growing complexity which totalizes and history) gathering up of differences, in this very act, both of them contradiction by means of integration.

FORSCHUNG : Tagging

If this 'productive difference' [Marin] occurs where spaces encountered are "perfectly defined ...without waver or blur", then perhaps we should look for 'impotent differences' — the inverse, if you will, where spaces are imperfectly defined. Imperfections might be sensed when two spaces are compressed to the extent that the status of each wavers between foreground and background. The flickering or slippages detected in these disputed territories might provide hints of a division forgotten.

Several locations/instants of 'imperfect definition' in the city were studied. Here, possibly through neglect or misuse, a residual managed to escape the net of linkages and safeguards designed to alleviate chance encounters or sources of probable conflict (productive differentiation).

The most effective, yet perhaps spatially intangible separations are those held by 'tagging'² — where difference is indicated by a thin line of language. These lines mark off a difference between inside and outside, between those who know the codes and the 'barbarians' outside. The enclosures weaved by language are constantly patrolled and under the threat of the failure of language. Their instability is registered in a private obsession with the construction of bulwarks erected against a word forgotten or slips of the tongue.

Redlining - a form of 'economic tagging' practiced by financial institutions, cordons off precincts on the basis of financial risk (loan guarantees). These abstract economic partitions hold sway over other differences. Perhaps these are the lines of Serres' *Staatsmann*, of a geometry of rational measurement drawn on the city map.

On the ground, a whole other war of encodement is fought. This is a war of language, in which graphic and pictorial signs and codes are employed to demarcate neighborhoods. From security signs planted in the front yards of Bel Air to the Virgin of Guadalupe painted on the walls of shops in South Central LA, the dialect spoken here is not empty. This language menaces, it promises and delivers protection. In the case of redlining, the lines drawn on the map are allegorically equitable with those inscribed in chalk around a fallen body — both delineate the position assumed in death.

tag, *n.* 1. something used for identification or location- FLAG

tag, **tagged**, **tagging**, *vi.* 1. to provide or mark as if with a tag as a: to supply with an identifying marker or price - LABEL, BRAND

tag line, *n.* a reiterated phrase identified with an individual, group or product slogan

difficult homeomorphisms. Reason, as that has repressed a barbarous suddenly taken the place of the journey, from bridge to well, from relay to universal, as is reason or the ratio that says, one can walk there on two or four or period, and so on, as much as one King). The multiplicity, the dangerous Serres, *From Oedipus to Zola*, p. 52.

cauterized, the traces of the whole which has capitalized on them differences are established and them... In their (the totalities of being cancel productive differentiation and Marin, *Utopias*, *Second Preface*, xix

Our first task was the isolation of the residuals or ghosts — the research part of the case. The second task was mediation — 'ghost-busting'. Dehaunt a city? The ghosts were detected in the flickering, or transgressive slippages where spatial overlaps occur. To de-haunt LA then, would be to 'perfect' spatial divisions within the city either by breaking down any lingering separations or by enforcing them — i.e. by exorcizing the flicker that signals difference.

INSTALLATION: Balk³

An intriguing notion might have been to try to construct Los Angeles without using any images from LA at all, but instead using frames from the other cities. The premise of the overall *Residuals* project was the „Konstruktion einer Großstadt“. Here the visual techniques of representation might misleadingly suggest a „congruent identity that forgets difficult homeomorphisms“ [Serres]. Los Angeles' materialization in the *Residuals* installation is as the structure which enforces difference. Designed to frustrate the forming of convenient linkages, the dehaunting devices then are merely separators that impair simultaneous apprehension of the cities. A *Großstadt* is constructed from the remainders that elude forgetting.

balk \ \ [AS balca ridge, akin to ON- balkr partition, boundary] 2: A ridge of land left unplowed between furrows, or, as often formerly, between the acres or fields in common lands; also: to forget a piece missed in plowing, as by carelessness 3: A blunder or slip; a mistake b: obs. exc. Dial. An omitting or skipping 4: A hindrance or disappointment; check; defeat 6: Dial. Eng. a: A beam or bar across a traction/Balkan frame, chimney or kiln. b The beam of a balance 7: A bar or shaft block to stop machinery used in stopping machinery, esp. a loom 9: Athletics. Failure of a competitor to jump, vault, or the like, after taking a preliminary run and crossing a certain line [called spec. balk line], to forget
balk \ \ 2 to omit, avoid by chance or intent or to let slip⁴



Virgin of Guadalupe at Vallejo Market

Foto: Jose Fortuono



