



Dash Snow, *The Drowned World*
Selections from the Dash Snow Archive
March 31 - May 12, 2019
Opening reception, Sunday, March 31, 7-9pm

From March 31 - May 12, 2019, PARTICIPANT INC in collaboration with the Dash Snow Archive presents *Dash Snow, The Drowned World: Selections from the Dash Snow Archive*. Comprised of the contents of the studio of Dash Snow (1981-2009), the exhibition draws from this vast archive including Polaroids, 35mm photographs, collages, sculptural works, Super 8 films, and zines. Polaroids and serial works on paper highlight the methodical aspects of Snow's daily practices and lifework, as do process sculptures, including three major assemblage works being exhibited for the first time. Snow's earliest artistic output began during his teenage years in the mid-'90s as a third generation graffiti writer on New York's Lower East Side. As described by friend, poet, artist, and writer Rene Ricard: "Any Tag by any teenager on any train on any line is fairly heartbreaking" ("The Radiant Child," *Artforum*, December 1981). A portrait of Snow above the entrance to the F train on Allen Street has still not been bombed over.

Art critic Edit DeAk, in speaking of the street art she championed since the '70s, once called it "information from the middle of the night" ("Edit DeAk: an interview by John Wallace and Geralyn Donohue," *REAL LIFE Magazine*, 1982). This seems an apt description of Snow's transition from graffiti writer to Polaroid documentarian, using his next choice of medium to mark time, remember, and be remembered through long darkneses. This exhibition was initiated in 2014 by Blair Hansen, founding director of the Archive, who has noted of his Polaroids (2000-09): "Snow began shooting the Polaroids in large quantities roughly around the time of 9/11 when he was twenty years old. These photographs offer a time capsule of the years following 9/11, and of a coming-of-age, giving us a larger picture of the wiliness and abandon that propelled the artist and his friends after the World Trade Center attacks. The Polaroids also present Snow as a street photographer who was as taken with total strangers as he was with close friends and family. He valued the medium for its physicality: a durable record one could carry around the city, give away, scratch on with a ballpoint pen, singe with a lighter, or glue into a zine or collage" (Blair Hansen, from *Freeze Means Run*, Brant Foundation, 2016). The medium offered an immediacy and physicality at the heart of all Snow's work, allowing him direct interaction and a document of lost time that could be scratched into, drawn over,

collaged onto, set alight, and blown up; as well as an anachronistic, self-obsolcescing format that expressed his distrust of distancing, disembodied technologies. Snow later shot on 35mm, recalling references ranging from the educational *American Pictures* by Jacob Holdt to the biographical *Ballad of Sexual Dependency* by Nan Goldin.

Filled with DNA, Snow's serial works on paper cite the artist's particular interest in language, political speech, and its debasement or elevation through Dada-esque techniques; as well as his love for analog ancestors such as Hannah Hoch and John Heartfield. An outgrowth of his early 2000s zines made for intimate distribution among friends, Snow's collages offer another obsessive archive of post-9/11 New York City: his monumental ejaculate-on-newsprint collage *Fuck the Police* (2005-07) and *Saddam Glitter Cum Series* (2006-07) becoming perhaps his best-known series. Speaking of the sources and supports of Snow's collages, Hansen has noted: "at all stages, his process involved surrounding himself with a mass of extracted pieces from obsessively collected book and print media sources. Snow kept an especially extensive archive of the *New York Daily News* and the *New York Post*, whose salacious headlines lent themselves to his argument against the wanton hyperboles of the press. [...] The collages take many forms: ransom notes, poetic and resonant offerings from a conspiracy theorist, or flowing shapes merged from disparate contexts that recall Surrealist exquisite corpse drawing. As with his Dadaist forebears, Snow's suspicion of power manifests itself in visual deconstructions of power's supporting logic." In contrast to the methodical, meticulous, and contained rebellions of his collages, Snow also perpetrated large-scale insurgences against establishments in collaboration with Dan Colen, staging "hamster nests." Initially trashing hotel rooms, with *Nest* (2007) they upped the scale to Jeffrey Deitch's Grand Street gallery. Snow's daughter, Secret, was born the morning prior to its opening.

In 2008-09, Snow made numerous Super 8 films, edited in-camera, often the duration of a Super 8 reel, with two lengthier, multi-reel works, *Familae Erase* (17:07 min, 2008) and *Sisyphus, Sissy Fuss, Silly Puss* (16:38 min, 2009). *Sisyphus, Sissy Fuss, Silly Puss* follows his partner Jade Berreau and their daughter Secret on a rural walk, climbing mounds of gravel, and was exhibited in 2015 as the final exhibition at Home Alone 2, New York. *Familae Erase* reveals much about Snow's process, "the homemade effects with blood, glitter, and light; the collage materials, books, and pornography he swirls around himself and begins to juxtapose; the ritual and cumulative actions of making the sculptures from whatever materials are on hand. We see him enact a kind of Gothic irrationality and melodrama, performed within his belfry of a studio space..." (Hansen).

Dash Snow was born in 1981 in New York City, where he worked throughout his life. He was sent to a juvenile facility in his teenage years, from which he ran away, moving in with friends on the Lower East Side in 2000. With artist Kunle Martins (Earsnot), Snow joined the IRAK graffiti crew, marking the city with his signature SACE tag. Encouraged by close friends such as Ryan McGinley and Dan Colen, in 2005 he entered the art world with his first solo exhibition *Moments Like this Never Last* at Rivington Arms, the gallery neighbor of Participant Inc at that time, long before the neighborhood was home to commercial galleries. This growing community of artists who came to define the post-9/11 art scene in New York, including Colen, McGinley, Hanna Liden, Agathe Snow, Terence Koh, Nate Lowman, among others, soon gained attention and were labeled by some 'the Bowery School.' Snow's work has been exhibited at venues including the 2006 Whitney Biennial; New Museum, NY; Brooklyn Museum; Brant Foundation, CT; Pergamon Museum, Berlin; MACRO Museum, Rome; Tel Aviv Museum of Art; Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt; Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden; Rivington Arms, NY; Peres Projects, LA, Berlin, Athens; Deitch Projects, NY and Miami; Contemporary Fine Arts, Berlin; and Home Alone 2, NY.

PARTICIPANT INC wishes to thank Jade Berreau, Blair Hansen, Dan Colen and Studio for making this exhibition possible. With thanks to Gerald Kurian Framing.

IMAGE: Dash Snow, *Newspaper 1*, 2006, c-print from 35mm © Dash Snow, Courtesy the Dash Snow Archive, NYC

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PARTICIPANT INC is located at 253 East Houston Street, between Norfolk and Suffolk Streets on the LES, ground floor. Subway: F to Second Avenue, Allen Street exit; or JMZ to Essex/Delancey. The gallery is wheelchair accessible from the street and has wheelchair accessible non-gender-segregated bathroom facilities. We welcome service animals.

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