

HALSEY RODMAN AND ANDREA ZITTEL

2/7/03 11:59pm

Hello Andrea!

Okay, email interview it is...

its hard to know how to start. I thought that maybe the whole interview could be us trying to figure out what to do the interview about, but I think that's too tricky...so I think that the best first question that I can think of, given that this is an interview for the future, is: Right now it is snowing and there are seagulls circling outside my window. What would you like to tell the people of the future? (I hope that's not too silly—its just that right now, it seems like the summer is a long way off and that things could be a lot different then.) And then another Q is: How does the whole conception of HDTS (High Desert Test Sight) relate to the future? It seems to me that it is an optimistic proposition for the future—perhaps it is a plan for another way that art could make its way into the world. One of the most appealing aspects of it for me personally has been the way it functions as a place to imagine how specific projects might occur in the near future...I hope that this is a good start—and that it won't feel like homework! Another thing that would be great to discuss in future questions is your idea about the “moving salon” with trips to Biosphere and such, and then also, life on Mars.

Best, Halsey

2/10/03 1:27am

Hi Halsey,

God I'm feeling brain dead at the moment! All of last week was a huge push to get another Homestead Unit finished and shipped out, and now tomorrow I have to fly to NY for one day to install it and then on to Sweden for the next project...and this period of orbit won't be over until sometime in mid-March. Maybe you could ask

me a different initial question since I'm really just drawing a blank about ideas about the future.... (Sorry!)

AZ

PS. your questions are harder than the profile that people have to fill out for Nerve.com! (which is why I never did it...do you know what I am talking about?)

2/13/03 8:35pm

Hello Andrea!

I am guessing that you are in Sweden right now... where in NY is the Homestead Unit? I would love to go and see it...Sorry about the difficult questions...(but I am sure that we can delay further if you are busy until mid-March...). Will you be in NY anytime before that and have time to interview in person? I hope that your projects are going well and I look forward to seeing you soon!

Best, Halsey

2/17/03 8:06pm

Hello Andrea!

It is snowing like crazy here, a blizzard even—buses and planes are stopped, etc. but its great because it is still and quiet without the traffic and stuff. So, as far as the Interview is concerned, what do you think about this general idea of an interview for the near-future? We are sending out messages in the winter for people to read in the summer...So many things seem to work like this—made in the present to be used in the future (I always think of the Devo album called “Duty Now for the Future”. But anyway, a substantive interview question on this subject is: What is in the future for the HDTS? I hope that you are well and that your projects are going well!

Best, Halsey

2/18/03 5:31pm

Dear Halsey,

I'm on a plane from Copenhagen and flying into that NY snow storm as I write this. I think that your suggestion of making the interview about the future threw me but I'm not sure why. I guess maybe it is because I'm sort of having a blank about the future. Actually in July I'm

going to finish up all of the projects that I've been working on for the last few years and will finally get to start some new work—so I'm really obsessing about all of the paths I could take—perhaps that has something to do with the future. I can't quite figure out how to define what I am after, but it has something to do with motion as a condition—or state of being. Like when you are driving in a car, and ostensibly you are driving somewhere but the state of moving forwards in the car is almost more of the destination than the end goal. It would be cool if I could use this interview to try to figure out what I am doing with my next body of work. Maybe my future work will have something to do with being suspended between the past and future indefinitely.

But you also asked about the future of the hdts. Well I think that a big chaotic bundle of indefinable energy is probably the ultimate future. At least I hope that it is. As far as I am concerned the whole project is pretty experimental and doesn't necessarily have to last forever or turn into a concrete entity. I was always fascinated by the fact that the Bauhaus only lasted such a short period of time and yet it had such a far-reaching and long-term impact.

Oh, but before I forget I wanted to go back to an earlier idea which was that we should be talking about the frontier instead of the future. I think that the frontier is the future in many ways - but it is the future now. That is something that I can sink my teeth into. I was thinking that in our interview we should define where frontiers actually exist, since I think that these days we have to invent our frontiers rather than discover them (for instance, did you see DOGTOWN AND Z BOYS?) What kinds of frontiers do you think that we can invent? your turn now.

Andrea

2/18/03

PS Video Screen Sculpture looks really great. Do you still think that there is a way that it could happen for spring?

AZ

2/21/03 12:04am

Hello Andrea!

Wow, that's a lot of stuff to talk about! The crazy thing is that we are perpetually suspended b/t the past and the future—we're like some freakish sea creature that only exists under extreme pressure w/ no oxygen or light and at high temperature...except that our unlikely circumstance is that we live in the crack between past and present—and yet we are perpetually aware of those other times that we can only imagine. This reminds me of the movie we watched before New Year's, SLAUGHTERHOUSE 5, with the main character who becomes unstuck in time and the aliens from outer space for whom every moment lasts forever...But regarding the frontier vs. the future and what new frontiers are there?

I did see DOGTOWN AND Z BOYS. It is amazing how much skateboarding has changed since then—tricks that those daredevils thought were crazy (not to say that they weren't at the time) are not near as extreme as the stuff people pull off today — handrails, stairwells, and 720 degree plus airs on the halfpipe. This is not to say that they weren't pioneers, but rather that it is amazing that peoples' abilities could progress (or is it just a change???) so rapidly. As peoples' imaginations of what they can do expand, the things they can do expand as well. Of course, this same sort of thinking leads to horrible mass destruction as well.. but maybe it is better not to follow that tangent right now (I recently read a book on this subject called CREPUSCULAR DAWN, so perhaps I'm currently thinking a lot about the complicated inevitability of progression).

This is a big ramble! I think that the idea of the frontier has everything to do with fiction...In other words, something must be imagined (something in the future) for the frontier even to exist as such...

Best, Halsey

2/25/03 8:06pm

Hi Halsey -

So tell me more about the complicated inevitability of progression... One of my favorite essays was about "Decadence" in a book called THE FIVE FACES OF MODERNISM. The idea was that people in the late nineteenth century thought that as our culture progressed, it was also coming closer to an end or demise. This way of thinking can actually be seen as a logical outgrowth of the belief in linear evolution since the more one evolves along a path the closer they come to the end. Sort of like growing up and getting old and dying.

The essay talks about Huysmans and Oscar Wilde I think. It also describes the fashions of the late eighteen hundreds when it was cool to look sick and almost jaundiced, so people wore yellow make-up or took amounts of arsenic (I will have to check this) to make themselves look deathly pale. Oh—and the thing is that this all coincided with the end of the century which probably had some sort of subconscious significance in people's minds—the same way that the millennium did for us. Anyway, it is sort of interesting to compare that phenomena with that of the late 80s and 90s when Goths and punks and death rockers all lived out a fascination with doom, death and demise.

So I still want to get back to the idea of creating new Frontiers in our interview—but I think that this interplay of growth or progress and demise is a significant factor to add to our mix.

talk to you soon, Andrea

2/26/03 10:51pm

Hello Andrea!

The complicated inevitability of progression or progress! I think that the idea that you described about evolving toward an endpoint is very close to what Virilio sets forth in CREPUSCULAR DAWN...It also reminds me of an opposition suggested by Jaron Lanier, a computer/virtual reality virtuoso, when I saw him speak about a year ago. He described a split within the technology development community, between those who believe that the devel-

opment of technology is heading in a particular direction towards some sort of evolutionary endpoint, a point where humans are outmoded by immortal conscious super-machines (he referred to this as a messianic outlook), and those who saw the development of new technology as more of a sustained adjustment of circumstances, not heading towards some ultimate endpoint...But, back to the idea of the Frontier...I have been thinking about another kind of frontier...Did you ever see the movie Microcosmos? It is this movie about what the insects do in one particular field in France... The filmmakers had to design special cameras in order to be able to film the bugs flying around in extreme close-up — it is really amazing— but the thing that I was thinking about in regards to the Frontier was the way that the making of the special equipment they used to film the bugs flying around created a new frontier that did not exist prior to the making of that equipment. This is not to say they created a new location, but that the existence of this equipment actually allowed a new space to exist...It is kind of like how the creation of cars necessarily created the possibility of car crashes (I think that is straight out of Virilio) but in a more positive sense... I am trying to think of more examples. What do you think about this??? Would the existence of a workable Moon-settlement cause us to settle the Moon? Build it and they will come? (Isn't that from a Kevin Costner movie about a baseball stadium...)

The thing that you described about 19th-century people at the turn of the century taking arsenic to look closer to death is wild! It reminds me of Botox now...although Botox seems more like youth as suspended animation... But anyway, what do you think about the frontier/equipment relationship?

I hope that you are well!

Best, Halsey

3/7/03 3:01pm

Hello Andrea!

I am guessing that you are extremely busy right now with the Armory and such...It would be great to see you while you're here if you have any free time! Nonetheless, I am looking forward to continuing the interview! I will attach a transcript of the interview so far to this message so you can check it out...I hope that you are well and I look forward to seeing you soon!

Best, Halsey

PS do you think that we should edit it or just go Warhol-style and submit it all unedited?

3/8/03 9:36am

Hi Halsey,

Wow, it would be great to see you before I head back to California. What are you doing today? Will you be at the art fair? Giovanni is in town and maybe we could all meet up over there this afternoon?

talk to you soon, Andrea

4/4/03 2:37pm

Hello Andrea!

How are you? I hope that things are going well for you! I'm sorry that I never got back in touch with you after you were here but I hope that you had a great camping trip. Camping sounds so phenomenally appealing right now. I think this was a couple of weeks ago but I'm not really sure. It could have been longer. I have been spazzing out getting ready for the thesis show so I'm losing track of time. But, I saw a mock-up of the zine that our interview is for and it looks really good!! — very colorful and full of all different kinds of things...so, I have kind of lost track of where we were in the interview...Also, how are preparations for HDTS2 coming along? I wish I could come but, unfortunately, we are graduating the Wednesday before that so it might be too crazy...but then again, maybe it is the perfect thing to do post-graduation!

I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Best, Halsey

4/8/03 7:36pm

Hi Halsey,

It is good to hear from you. Don't worry about the delay since things have been unbelievably hectic getting ready for shows at this end too.

I think that that camping trip changed my life...I go out driving around all the time and when I do that I often sleep out in the back of my truck. But that was the first time that I ever consciously did something as slowly as possible on purpose. We only covered about a hundred miles a day and tried to find a camping site by lunchtime every day. I didn't open my computer or cell phone once for four days. By the end of the trip I felt like I was on some sort of drug—everything seemed slower and quieter and more clear somehow.

As long as we are talking about the future I will confess my fear that it is an unavoidable law of western progress that things will continue to speed up faster and faster... and that as this happens we will lose any sort of real experience and will simply process the events that are flying by.

Did I tell you in one of the earlier emails about my year off? Actually my friends think I am out of my mind because tomorrow I'm buying a four wheel drive vanagon and plan to totally fix it up so that I can live in it. I think that it would be so satisfying to be "at home" no matter where you are. Like if I went to LA to talk to a fabricator I could cook lunch or take a nap without having to drive three hours back to my house. or I could drive to visit people on my way back and forth between NY and LA... what if everyone lived like that and we would all be free floating entities? would it be good for the planet because we wouldn't need tract homes and living in a vehicle would reduce the need to consume large numbers of consumer goods—or would it be bad for the planet because it would become over run by fossil fuel guzzling parasites? I wonder if living like that will make me feel stronger and more centered, or more vulnerable since I will be drifting in such a small capsule?

Andrea Sk