



MIA FEUER | DISPLACEMENT

*(Social) space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity – their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder.*¹

– Henri Lefebvre

In *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre theorizes social space as the lived experience of space that emerges as a result of the dialectical relation between spatial practice and representations of spaces; we humans both create the world around us, and are also heavily shaped by it, and thus we are then created by the world around us. In discussing the experience of the human and urban environment, Lefebvre states that the city “is a space just as highly expressive and significant, just as unique and unified as a painting or a sculpture.” Further, Lefebvre asks “But what – and whom – does it express and signify?”²

Displacement presents two life-size sculptures exploring the geography and absurdity of the human-built environment, and invites the viewer into a turnabout of infrastructure, borders, and notions of space. Dark and foreboding, built of gun-metal grey steel with occasional spurts of bright yellow, *Turnstile*, is a cacophony of geometric patterns, moving parts, and cast shadows. Inspired by the artist’s experience of traversing the border between Israel and Palestine, and referencing the arbitrary nature of contested political borders, this sculpture can be broken down and reassembled in a different formation in different places. Examining the juxtaposition of abstract ideas such as freedom, borders, and dehumanization, and their tangible manifestations on the individual, *Turnstile* functions both as a sculpture but also as a working crowd control device, and expects the audience to physically interact with these ideas and to feel for a moment the transformative effect of this liminal space between liberty and restraint.

An explosion of cobalt blue abutments, trusses, bracing, and girders, cantilevered from the gallery wall, *Collapse*, delves into the myths and desires of a very different landscape: Winnipeg, Canada. Inspired by the rusty and dowdy Arlington Bridge built in 1912 that now serves primarily as an overpass for Canadian Pacific Railway trains in Winnipeg, *Collapse* is a deconstruction of this functional structure. The bridge has a storied past: rumored to have been built in England to be sold to Egypt to span the Nile River, unfortunately it was too short for the Nile and came to Winnipeg instead. The story seems to be lacking in any historical evidence; however it has become a part of the narrative and folklore of Winnipeg. Falling short of the Nile, the Arlington Bridge is reconfigured in *Collapse* as a monument to its imagined grandeur and geographic exoticism and longing. Together these works explore the human desire and longing for concrete manifestations of perception, and encourage us to recognize structures, borders, and geography not as objective reality, but instead as fluid social, political and cultural experiences.

Rather than acting as “isolated and lifeless objects,” these works allow us to ask how they (and we) exist within the relationships of production of our time, and therefore also the production of space.³ From this, we can experience what Trevor Paglen calls “the infrastructure of feeling,” not just of these far-off locales, i.e. the Palestinian – Israeli border and Winnipeg, Canada, but also of the gallery space itself. We can move beyond simply a mode of cultural critique into “the realm of practice” and delve into the transformative possibilities of cultural production.⁴ Inherent in this lies an optimistic possibility: the production of new space, and therefore new ways of being.

– Angela Jerardi
FLUXspace

Mia Feuer was born in Winnipeg, Canada. She received her BFA Honors degree from the University of Manitoba in 2004. In 2006, she had her first solo exhibition *A Land That Buries Its Children* at Outworks Gallery in Winnipeg. Mia is currently a 2009 MFA candidate in the Department of Sculpture and Extended Media at Virginia Commonwealth University. In the summer of 2009, through the funding of the Winnipeg Arts Council, she will be traveling back to the Palestinian Occupied Territories to conduct further artistic research.

Angela Jerardi is a curator based in Philadelphia, PA. Angela has worked with a number of mid-Atlantic art museums, non-profit organizations, and alternative spaces, including: the Freer and Sackler Galleries, Smithsonian Institution, the Gallery at Flashpoint, and Transformer, all in Washington, DC, Maryland Art Place, Baltimore, MD, and the Arts Council of Fairfax County, Fairfax, VA. Recent curatorial projects include: *CONSUME* at the Gallery at Flashpoint (Washington, DC), *re:place*, co-produced with the Art in Transition program (Silver Spring, MD), *beauty and the mundane* at Maryland Art Place (Baltimore, MD), and Oxford Occasional projects *dance by chance* and *a commemoration of now!*

FLUXspace is a Philadelphia based 501(c)3 contemporary arts space which provides artists, curators, and other practitioners the opportunity for unrestricted and uncensored experimentation, professional presentation, and critical dialogue for the purpose of exploring and creating new art practices and media. FLUX consists of an exhibition space, an artist residency program, as well as public programming including artist lectures, panel discussions, workshops, movie nights and performances.

¹ Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space* trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991) 73.

² Lefebvre 73

³ Benjamin, Walter, "The Author as Producer," the Institute for the Study of Fascism, Paris, 27 April 1934.

⁴ Paglen, Trevor, "Experimental Geography: From Cultural Production to the Production of Space," *The Brooklyn Rail* March 2009: Express.