

Desperate Holdings: Dis-Investment Manual

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Leigh Claire La Berge

Cassie Thornton is unreal. What other adjective can describe an artist and activist who has a seemingly endless reservoir of emotional and creative energy to direct at overcoming forms of oppression, as well as to offer in support of anyone who finds themselves oppressed? From those who work as yoga teachers to those who seek solace through yoga; from those employed as real estate brokers to those who have been displaced by increasing real estate prices; from "the poetry of the future" (Marx) that might spring forth from any security guard to the securitization of capital which seeks above all to make the future the same as the present; and finally from those who have been subjugated to the racism and immiseration of colonization to those who seek to overcome it. In each of these situations, Cassie arrives with both energy and art, eager to join the struggle.

I speak here, of course, of several of Cassie's recent projects: her Post-Work Yoga (2017-8), her Desperate Holdings (2018-9), her Poets' Security Force (2013-4), and her ongoing activist work with Thunder Bay, Canada's indigenous organization, the Thunder Bay Bear Clan (now called Wiindo Debwe Mosewin). In each of these

(un) Real Estate

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projects one notes a commitment to uniting art and activism against the relentlessness of capital accumulation. And in each Cassie attempts to conjoin affects of outrage at the situation with affects of hope for its overcoming along with open excitement and acceptance for anyone who will accompany her. Cassie is unreal in her commitment, but, as she makes clear in this newest project, Desperate Holdings, she also understands that all real estate makes a claim on its opposite: the unreal.

This specific construction, unreal estate, I take from Jane Smiley, in her 2010 novel, *Good Faith*. In that text, Marcus Burns, a second-tier DIY real estate agent, arrives in a small Connecticut town and, after getting local investors involved in an ever more progressively outrageous real estate scheme, flees town with the investors' money, and indeed, with some of their pride. Before he absconds, and before the townspeople realize they've been had, one of Marcus's close associates finds an odd, somewhat suspicious document left on the photocopier and asks Marcus about it. "Oh that," he replies, "well, there's real estate and unreal estate, as they say."

We get the joke, and it's funny. Except it's also not a joke. Real estate always combines the most real of capitalism—the tangible, immovable problem of land, space, the built environment—with its opposite: fantasies of ownership, power and domination, and ultimately the fantasy that once the physical reality of capitalism takes shape, it becomes impervious to change. Thus real estate has a dark history. In the antebellum American South, slaves were a form of real estate and thereby adjudicated as objects of capital. In the massive, federally subsidized post-war expansions of suburbs and cities, people of color were routinely "red-lined" out of forms of capitalist real estate. And, of course, all the real estate of continental North America is already a site of eviction and genocide.

Desperate Holdings seeks to both reveal these processes and to ask: might they be different? Might there be a remainder? Might other lands and places come into being? We cannot know these answers in advance, but we can hold open a hope that other answers exist. In Desperate Holdings, that potential is located in a small piece of (un)real estate, some clay extracted from an excavation site of a giant office tower in San Francisco. Cassie travels with this clay, fantasizes about it, offers to

share it and ship it, and holds it close as it now functions as "the last land a non-millionaire can touch" in San Francisco. Under her stewardship, the clay changes form. It becomes "liquid real estate."

Thus in Desperate Holdings, real and unreal estate cannot be disarticulated. It's all unreal estate. We don't need a scandal, like the Savings and Loans Scandals of the 1980s, or the recent 2007-8 credit crisis, to show that something's rotten and out of sync. Nor can the solidity of real estate be disarticulated from the necessary liguidity of capitalism. When Marx and Engels declared that as capitalism arrives on the scene, "all that is solid melts into air," they suggested that the abstract and the concrete are two sides of the same coin. And when the political economist Robert Meister writes that "our entire financial system is vulnerable to illiquidity" he means that capital must always have this shape-shifting, this abstract/concrete duality at its disposal. But now, when Cassie writes of "some liquid vulnerability deep inside," she wonders whether this dichotomy might be reappropriated.

Desperate Holding's tone conjoins openness and intimacy—sometimes friendly, sometimes militant—with a willingness to share Cassie's aspirations to end capitalist real estate as well as a determined pursuit of those who are reluctant to become involved in her project. And here she seemingly gets into problems. Correspondence is omitted. Indigenous interlocutors take offense. Cassie takes risks. In a sense, she has to. She tells us that she's been "displaced from every city I've lived in because of land speculation." Yet the biggest risk would be to accept the solidity of the ideology of the real estate industry, of whiteness, of colonization. "Social revolutions," Marx writes, "cannot take their poetry from the past, but only from the future." Is it any wonder Desperate Holdings begins with a poem?

What's under here
Don't know
Dig it up
Must be bad if its not moneyish
Toxic
Send her to the dump
Sanitize her
She can come back as concrete

You dug us up to replace with metal We were happy to hold you up Make this place so nice You love it But you sent us to the toxic dump And sanitize us Like something so bad We made this place so nice and kinda interesting And you made it really unstable when you removed us Now you feel unstable Unsafe Out of place If you dig us all out There will be nothing to stand on Or hold onto

For a while

I'm under here

This irrational narrative study investigated the relationship between experiences of dis-investment in the real estate market for artists who were invited to become futurist real estate agents as they were touching clay from below the financial district of SF, which is also potentially a sacred indigenous burial site. Dis-investment was defined as participating in activities, conversations and thoughts that run counter to social and financial norms for acceptable behaviour that produce and reproduce the idea that the only way to distribute homes, land, and belonging is through a winner takes all financial market. Dis-investment in the broad field called the real estate market, which is the landscape most settlers live in, was measured by counterproductive market behaviours (CMBs), which included actions such as letting go of fantasies of home ownership as a form of stability; stealing or sharing space for living; and malingering and fighting with the rich as well as government officials. CMBs were used to predict changes in how individuals perceive the idea of home and belonging in relation to money. Consistent with these hypotheses, greater amounts of CMB were associated with the broad emotional and cognitive change towards the belief that the growth of everyone's belonging is numerically and qualitatively tied to the care and belonging of all those around them.

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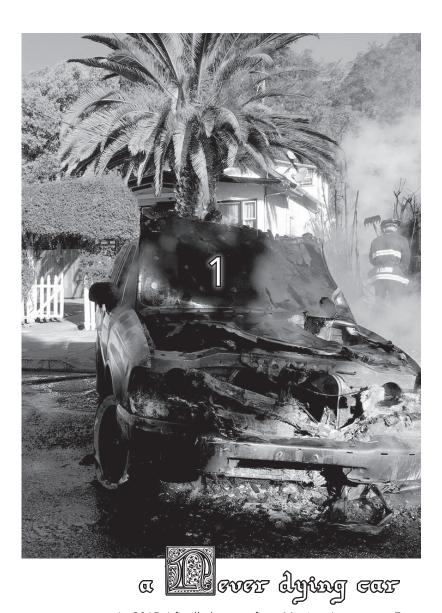
A NEVER DYING CAR
A DROUGHT
A PROPHECY OR A HOLE
A GIFT
A DEBT
A GOODBYE
A FLUID DESPERATION
DEAD REVENGE
AN AGENT
A LETTER
A FLOOD
ANOTHER LETTER

2

A LETTER TO OUR SHAREHOLDERS
OUR TEAM
GOOD LIFE HOSPICE SUPPORT GROUP
LAND ON THE FACE LUXURY SPA GROUP
GIVING THE LAND BACK TO ITSELF
DETOX ARCHIVES
ART THERAPY FOR REAL ESTATE AGENTS
& SURVIVORS' GUILT
UTOPIAN VISIONING IN SMALL CLAY FIGURES
CLAY IS + HOLDS

3

LETTER 3
LETTER 4
IT IS NOT WORTH ANYTHING,
UNTIL SOMEONE BUYS IT
JAMES WALKER, IN FACT THE PERSON
SQUEEZING WATER
SLATE
SOFT THREATS



In 2015, I finally let go of my Mission Apartment. Even if it was cheap, I felt slighted for having to pay \$750 per month to watch tech workers act like poorly behaved children, doing 3D online therapy on my corner while wearing google glass.

In 2010, I was driving from NYC to San Francisco to go to grad school. On my way I stopped in Fox Lake, Illinois, where I parked my \$1000 1980 Volvo Station wagon at Mark's house, who was my favorite non-biological parent. Using many of the same supplies that we had used in the year 1999, when we detailed the cars of my highschool friends, we painted the car. Since I was going to be the first person in my family going to grad school (or university for that matter) we thought we would start with something subtle and classic, so we put a 24" wide bright yellow stripe down the middle. It went front to back, to make the big boxy station wagon look more aerodynamic. Mark fixed the brakes and the gas tank and we put in a subwoofer. With his blessing the car would never die. He had a metaphysical relationship to cars. His gift to society may have been that he fixed the car of every person he met. After I moved to San Francisco, I borrowed an electric car from my friend Cara. When it wouldn't start, I called Mark in rural northern Illinois, where he sat making sly comments about Amazon products. He had never ridden in a Prius, but he had me lift the hood and check three parts. In 5 minutes he had figured out the problem, told me which hose to adjust, and it was fixed.

the sun never stopped shining & it was a perfect temperature every day



a Drowglod

As I drove across the US on my way to the San Francisco Bay Area, to get radicalized by those far lefties, I learned how to camp. I didn't have a tent and I had never started a fire before. At a glorified ditch in rural Montana, I was about to start my first fire when a small white hatchback drove up, playing loud techno. The two people transported by this little bop were a couple; two women moving to NYC from Oakland. Simply based on the synchronicity of our paths crossing, they gave me an unforgettable, life-saving tip about the apartment I would soon move into. This apartment in the center of the Mission had been passed down from poets, and it had been a place for readings and strange living in the decades before me. I moved in with a poet named Amanda who lived outside of time and maybe more on water than land. On Fridays she had a writing date at the sci-fi cafe, and on Mondays she went swimming at the Dolphin Club. She moved to NYC a year after I arrived, and in order to move Amanda's couch out of the door. (a couch which had the feeling of being permanently damp from all the fluid people slithering on it) I had to actually cut it into small pieces. I felt like a cannibal and a gentrifier, but I kept our bunker (without a couch) as a shelter from the tech storm for 5 years. By that point the corner store sold avocados for \$4 and the tacos were getting worse and more expensive because the cooks were commuting from Antioch, 2.5 hours away on public transport. Our alley was home to a network of homeless disabled folks who shat in mysterious places as well as a Virtual Reality laboratory. After moving to a sublet, a boat, and then a big shared home in West Oakland. I found a tiny house to live in East Oakland. Because I was in a relationship with my potential roommate, we could both pay \$500, and save money in exchange for being poorly matched and unhappy.

Welcome to 2014; the sun never stopped shining and it was a perfect temperature every day. It had been dry since 2011, but this year the official NorCal drought began. Everything in our backyard felt crispy. There was a damp creek bed at the back of our yard, just beyond our fence. Mostly wind, rocks, and wild dogs went through, with an occasional object that seemed like evidence of some human-on-human violence. There were a few old hens living in our backyard, who no longer laid eggs,

and who would be ritualistically picked off by white dogs who would jump the back fence. I bought two tons of composted soil and had it delivered to the backyard for about \$250, which was probably how much I earned for two nights of catering. One wheelbarrow at a time, I spread it across our huge backyard by myself. I stopped doing art projects and focused on digging, and on economic justice. I certainly needed some economic justice. I was catering for people like Janet Napolitano (former head of the Department of Homeland Security) for \$15 per hour and I rode my bike to get everywhere so not to spend that hard earned money on gas or transit. I got free produce from the vegetable market at a local commune, who distributed all the leftovers from the other expensive farmers' markets. I watched the Black Lives Matter movement blossom into huge highway stoppages, a few which kept me from getting to work on time. I was often working during those protests, so I would talk to my friends on the phone while they were there and cry. I liked to think that my internal drought would at least help keep the dry soil alive.



I chose a 30 day period in which I would change my life, though I couldn't say how that would happen. It was a time much like right now, in that I felt like I didn't know how to be useful or happy in a horrible society. I decided that I would spend a month focused on doing what I knew would help me to feel as good as possible about continuing to exist in the apocalypse. I did what white people do in California: I got a payday loan to pay for yoga teacher training in the fall, which was 2 seasons away. While I waited, I set up a few protocols to make my 30 days matter. I planned a few public rituals, including a clothing swap, a group bike trip, and a bonfire.

On the third Sunday in March, the penultimate day of my 30 days to change my life, I was giving a talk at the Queer Astrology Conference at the Center for Sex and Culture in San Francisco. I was speaking about the inter-

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section of credit reporting and astrology with Stella Lawless. Rob Breszny sat bright and upright in the center of the first row, near Astrobarry and in front of Chani Nicholas and Jessica Lanyadoo. Our presentation exploded into dramatic conversation where these famous and heroic astrologers were standing and talking over one another, to project some of their celestial light on the moral divisions and delusions about the predatory debt contract's location in the astrological chart. Some younger astrologers were hung up on the necessity to follow through on contractual obligations of all kinds, whether they were predatory or not, and how one's relationship to contracts is written in their astrological charts. I felt some heat that I could not actually understand (I'm not an astrologer, I just dress like one) so my friend Aurora and I took a walk around the neighborhood to cool off. As we walked and talked in this rich but blighted area, the only people who spoke to us asked desperately for change, singed by sun and wind and neglect.

Our walk was interrupted by a gaping hole, which would become the Salesforce Tower. If it wasn't for the dressings. I would have assumed a crater had hit. As we entered the financial district, we approached a huge construction site. One block of the site remained open to the street, like a hospital room with the curtain pulled open, so trucks could drive in and out. From the street we could sense the scale of the hole, but we weren't close enough to see how far down it went. I felt disgusted at how distracted I had been, that I would not know that the earth was being dismantled in such a way just a few miles from my home. I stood at a newspaper stand and made videos of the huge machines digging far below the surface, cringing when I heard loud sounds of breaking, mashing and ramming. There were large pumps sucking something liquid out of the bottom of the hole. I was glued to this scene of massive surgical extraction.

(un) Real Estate

100 fee

What was this liquid stuff
they were removing?
Could they have been pumping out
this very valuable real estate?
Or is this liquid land?
What's the difference between
land and real estate?

The developers had to get rid of any softness they found in the land. What they were removing was rich, deep "old bay clay," the soft soil foundation 150 feet below most of the surface in San Francisco. When we put buildings in this soft, supple, protected, and financially securitized "bay" "area," they often sink. For example, it only took a decade for a 58-storey luxury condominium known as the 'Millenium Tower' to visibly sink and tilt. Based on the clay's ability to sink such a huge investment, when building the Salesforce Tower and Transbay Terminal all the clay was removed and sent to a toxic dump to be sanitized. Before it had even left town it was replaced with cement, steel, and glass.

Real estate is what we want, trade, and expend our energy on when there is nothing left of real value. It's said that real estate investments make up 60% of all investments on earth. In cities which have already polluted all the natural resources and removed all the indigenous, elderly, poor, racialized or economically incapable/disinterested people, all that is left is to give our lives for is a temporary place to be. I had forgotten, in all my economic striving for survival, that I lived on land. I knew almost nothing about the land that I was living on.





I asked Aurora if she would go ask the construction workers for some of what they were digging out. She got a bag at Walgreens and brought it to the entrance of the construction site. Patricia, the person in charge of the traffic to and from the site, was standing near the entrance. She was one of two women among thousands

working on the construction site. When Aurora asked Patricia for a bit of what she found below, Patricia was thrilled to talk to her. Patricia had been working seven days a week, with twelve hour shifts as a traffic control supervisor, one of only three women working on the site. The diggers had just reached a layer of clay that they had not expected. It was rich, dark, wet clay. Aurora hailed me to come over and chat. Patricia gave us a small bag full of the clay and we all touched it together, in awe. It was the first natural clay I had ever seen, and it appeared to be so clean and smooth, despite having been below a transit center since 1931. Patricia said it was from about 150 feet below the surface. The clay felt so alive-not exactly the dead commodity that this concrete, glass and metal neighborhood appeared to be built on. She told us to come back after 10pm with a truck and her workers would load us up with some clay. All we needed to bring in exchange was some McDonald's for the workers. For \$26 of McDonald's cheeseburgers, we filled up Aurora's truck with clay. Aurora and I drove home talking about all the things we would make with it-urns, beads, gravestones-for a city that had died.





3bA

The day after we transported the clay body to my house, I woke up at 9am to a call from a phone number I had never seen before. I never answer those calls because I am waiting for the statute of limitations to lift on some debts I have stopped paying. In order to avoid reawakening the almost-dead contracts I have with evil companies



who want to pump all the value out of me, it is important that I never speak to any debt collectors. Strangely, I answered this call. The phone call was from Angela, a friend of my dad's.

Angela was calling to tell me that Mark, my chosen dad and daily phone conversant, had not shown up to work that day. Early that morning he had passed away, and she was standing outside of his house having just found his body.

Mark had been quite unhappy and unhealthy for the past decades of his life, so a small part of me knew this was ok with him. Most of me was very upset at the forces that led him to die- a debt load for medical care and a lifetime of work that resulted in no access to care. When Mark's boss of thirty years had found out about his first heart attack, it was just after he had canceled his medical insurance due to the business' bankruptcy. Mark had worked the same job for thirty years, and now he couldn't afford the prescriptions that he required after he had life-saving heart surgery, and he was too stressed to take on more debt. His boss tried to encourage him to find a way to get the pills and run. To make light of it, his boss tried to comfort Mark by saying that "they [the hospital] can't squeeze water out of rocks." That phrase stuck to my ribs like permanent chewing gum.

After what felt like lifetimes of mourning and anger, misunderstanding debt as something simply hard and financial, and rock as something dead and dry, I read on Space.com that moon rocks have water inside of them. This changed everything. Of course the moon is alivenot just some dead body that blocks our sun half of the day. I have desperately held onto this idea of how the largest hardest rocks can actually contain water. Some things are hard, but maybe that hardness is there to protect some liquid vulnerability deep inside.



That was the end of my 30 days to change my life.

Aurora's father had died barely one season before mine did. If it wasn't for her persistent care, I don't know where I would be or what I would have become. When Mark died, she took the day off of work at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMoMA) to come to my house. I asked if she would take me to the East Bay Center for Creative Reuse to get some supplies for a day of ceremony. We got some old landline telephones with the

kinds of cords that look like little slinkies. We took our phones to Ocean Beach where we visited Trouble Coffee, which was founded by someone with mental health and addiction issues. I knew I could go there with death on me, because it is the number one place to go if you like cafe employees who are both aloof and unhinged.

I had taken Mark on this same walk on my birthday four months before. We had gotten two strong little cappuccinos in small white cups and walked them to the ocean even though he had stopped drinking coffee. We stood in the sand for a while without moving, and he closed his eyes as his long wispy hair blew away from his face. He looked temporarily happy, but also deeply disappointed. He was like an eco-feminist dependent on and addicted to the shrapnel offered to him by Coors-drinking crypto fascists. On our way home he felt tired so we bought a frozen pizza and two gallons of orange juice. We watched Eraserhead for the 50th time. In the parking lot of the grocery store he had mentioned the possibility of dying, and how I could have anything I wanted of his. But I should get it before Chase Bank did.

Aurora and I walked from Trouble Coffee to Ocean Beach, and stood where Mark had stood on the beach. We buried two phones, for two dads, in the sand. This way, we could always make a call if things got urgent.



Time went by and Aurora move To Hawaii. I couldn't open up the container of clay that we had shoved alongside my driveway. I talked about it a lot, and thought about it constantly. I called it liquid real estate and I bought a url–www.sfluxuryrealestatejewelry.biz–which was what I knew to do for anything I loved. Every once in a while, when I was desperate, I would take a small handful of the clay and hold it.

Ways in which I was desperate:

1. By the following January, I had broken up with my boyfriend, and moved my stuff into my tiny art studio, where the windows didn't open. I slept at my friend Tanya's house for a few months while I worked 6 days a week on a Sol LeWitt mural at the newly rebuilt SFMoMA. I paid Tanya rent by giving her a tiny brass rock which was a heavy piece of my

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debt, cast in Grad School.

- The landlord of my art studio offered to build me a house deep inside of the studio building complex, but warned me that all his buildings were haunted (that's how he could afford them).
- 3. Someone offered me a chance to illegally sublet her beautiful studio apartment with a violent landlord for only \$1500 per month. Despite the rent being three times what I had been paying, I really really considered it. I felt a bit desperate but I decided not to trust that situation. But I also couldn't bear to go to another roommate intake interview where I would compete to get a bedroom for nearly the same price. How much did rent rise between 2010 and 2016? It is so much that it doesn't matter.
- 4. I got repeated calls from my former landlord demanding that I change my mailing address and move my liquid real estate out of her yard. I couldn't move the clay or change my address, because I didn't know where to send my mail or where to put my land, which became more precious as I felt more homeless. So I ignored both requests.
- 5. The clay was too heavy to move out of my former yard. To ensure this was the case, sometimes I secretly added water to the clay at night, to make sure it stayed heavy and didn't harden. I hoped the drought wouldn't ruin my real estate.

ead revenge

After I spent 3 months away, my landlord had become cross about the mail and the land. Based on a series of facebook posts between my ex, the landlord and my former roommates, I gathered that they were speaking critically of me for leaving my liquid assets around their property. I asked two friends if they would move my real estate to one of their homes. Somehow, they did it. Days later, I saw something on the news about a truck that had blown up in my old neighborhood, Fruitvale. I didn't think much of it until I saw a post on instagram from my ex, who posted the news footage of his truck (our truck) with huge flames coming out of the hood (not painted). This Mazda truck was purchased when Mark died, so that I could drive some of his stuff from

Illinois to California. My uncle Steve had helped us find and fix it the night of the funeral. When I left the relationship and house I shared with my ex, I left the truck as a peace offering. I shrieked when I saw that Mark's spirit had facilitated this pyrotechnical revenge. No one was injured.

The California I had lived in and loved seemed to have no space for people who were not energized or interested in economic success. Despite my sense of rejection and my abandonment issues (by the economic landscape), I still wanted to know the liquid real estate was safe. Yasmin and Christian were the ones who moved the real estate. Yasmin, who took care of it first, sent me some updates as it sat prominently in her front yard. After 6 months it was an eyesore. The size and weight of the plastic bin that contained the lumpy clay body was about the size of a man. On a visit I asked a young and strong friend of mine named Christine to go visit the land with me, and we couldn't move it because the body was so heavy and limp. We subdivided it into small white buckets and brought it to my studio, where I slept next to it.



Over the next year I decided to move to Canada with my new partner Max. I came back to Oakland twice to be with the clay in 2017. As an artist forced into entrepreneurship I still felt like I should do something economically "disruptive" with the clay that would prove my wits and make me rich, but I couldn't. I imagined making this real estate into really expensive jewelry so the land could be worn. Sales from the jewelry would allow me to live in the Bay Area for a month, or a week. I forgot that I had never sold any artwork (or land) before and I didn't know how to. Instead, I sat with it, talked to it and talked about it, held it, and took out sharp pieces. I found that when I worked it with my hands, my sharp and blinding anxiety would go away. The more water I put into the clay, the more the hard pieces became soft.

I had a two month residency at Real Time + Space, an art

studio in downtown Oakland. I don't know how many hours I must have spent just touching it, mushing the lumps over a screen. I had no idea what I was doing, and had never worked with ceramics. I added so much water that I accidentally made it into pudding. I occasionally used gloves, but not religiously. I was addicted to seeing what happens when rocks turn into water. I felt that the land was pure, whatever that meant. It didn't smell like petroleum, and there was no oil separation when I added water. I didn't know what else to worry about. After 60 days of adding water, squeezing, and holding, I had only cleaned half. By touching it, I would lose track of Time + Space. I contacted many real estate agents to invite them to come touch it, but none did.

I finally met with a real estate agent named Gina, who was also a witch and a shaman. She was willing to meet if I drove to Stockton. We met at Starbucks and I asked her to wear a ring I had made out of the clay while we drank coffee. She told me that she had to live in Stockton because she couldn't afford to live in the central Bay Area on her small income as an agent. She was selling off the land that she could already not afford.

I wish that the Bureau of Linguistic Reality had a hotline, where they could help you find an emergency word when you are going crazy with an experience that lacked vocabulary. All I have is an ongoing common experience, no word:

______(n) when a person sabotages their long term ability to thrive so they can make more room for survival in the short term.



On one of my days at Real Time and Space, I contacted the people from Sogorea Te' Land Trust, who I knew worked on preserving sacred burial sites as well as acquiring land for indigenous communities to live in the Bay Area. At the time what I knew of their work was called the Shuumi Land Tax: "The Shuumi Land Tax is for non-Indigenous people who live in traditional Chochenyo and Karkin Ohlone territory to make a voluntary annual financial contribution to ... Sogorea Te's work to acquire and preserve land, establish a cemetery to

re-inter stolen Ohlone ancestral remains and build urban gardens, community centers, and sacred arbors so current and future generations of Indigenous people can thrive in the Bay Area."

Dear Corrina and Johnella.

Thank you so much for your work. I am a settler and an artist who has lived in the Bay for the past few years. My work has been about transformation, and trying to help others find access to imagination and desire that works beyond money and debt. Recently I moved away to Canada.

When I was living here I collected a large amount of natural clay, about ten gallons, from the hole that they were digging to build the Salesforce Tower in the financial district of SF. It's the tallest tower west of the Mississippi river. The clay, and thus the land, is very rich. It's dark gray. Anyway, this clay that was dug up was meant to be sent to the toxic dump, and I think it is a really interesting metaphor for how the cities deal with indigenous people, poor people, and racialized people. We are often sent away when we can be replaced by money. I don't think that is what anyone wants, but it is what happens.

I have been trying to figure out what to do with the clay for a few years. I have seen it as a funny version of property, or even poor people's real estate. I thought of making jewelry out of it, so that it could be real estate that we could wear. I thought about holding art therapy workshops with people who profit from selling land like real estate agents, so they could remember the connection between real estate and the land. But I have had a hard time doing any of these things, and also a difficult time letting go of it. Part of the problem might be that I don't particularly believe in property ownership, and part of it may be that I am not the right person to have this land. It may be symbolic, but it is also real to me.

Anyway, I am only here for a few more days, and I have been caring for the clay while I was here. I was wondering if you, your group, or your com-

I include my letters to the Sogorea Te' Land Trust because I learned so much through contacting them. Their responses are not in this dossier, because they did not ever wish to be a part of this project. However, the letters that I wrote to them, included here, represent my growth and maturation, as a settler and artist. With that said, my respect and gratitude for their patience with my process.

munity would benefit from using this clay. If you would like it, I would be happy to bring it to you. I also have a few friends who make really beautiful ceramics, and I thought that we could even make a bunch of ceramics of the land/clay, and perhaps those could be sold to raise money for the land trust. Maybe using the clay, people could pay taxes by creating pots, selling them. or buying the products.

Thanks for your patience with this long email. I hope you are happy and well, and I look forward to hearing from you.

I never heard back from the Sogorea Te' folks. At this exact time, Sogorea Te' was involved in protecting West Berkeley Shellmound, a 5,800 year old funerary monument, which is among the most ancient sacred sites in the Bay Area. At the exact time of my residency at Real Time and Space (March and April of 2016) while I sat with my hands in the clay, trenching began at this West Berkeley site for a new retail development. The remains of ancestors were unearthed against the will of Ohlone leaders.





Before I left the residency, I began to offer art therapy workshops for real estate agents. Because the agents themselves didn't come (I didn't realize until too late that agents work on the weekends) I paid my friends to be actors, to perform as if they were real estate agents in the workshops. Their very existence was like an advertisement for Oakland. At the end of my residency I used the studio space to pack two pallets with boxes of all my belongings, but I was also still cleaning the clay, so all the boxes had handprints of clay on them. Most of my belongings had been recently inherited tools and records from Mark's house, or things that I found in the garbage, or stuff I made and put in tupperwares for some unknown future retrospective. The clay was on everything, in buckets and under my nails. So much of it had dried and begun to turn to dust.

In January 2017 I unpacked my suitcases in Thunder Bay, Canada. The clay Patricia had handed us that first day sat in a bag in my art studio in Oakland for the following two years, until I sent it to myself in Canada. It had remained moist so long as it sat in the Bay Area, so I knew I couldn't travel with it across borders. In the past some of the clay had been confiscated by customs because it was "the consistency of toothpaste." By the time it arrived in the mail in Canada, through international customs, it had dried into a very hard rock. Completely dry, as I could tell. Funnily, that's about the same time when the drought in California let up. It rained buckets. Around the New Year, just before and after Trump's inauguration, the reservoirs in Northern California were at capacity, the result of an atmospheric river that had been building up for years.

I slept ten hours a night for a month in a city called Thunder Bay, where it was too cold to go outside. No matter how much I ate, my body kept shrinking. It was so much work to stay warm, so I just slept. My bedroom window looked onto a huge rock formation called The Sleeping Giant. The Sleeping Giant is a reference to an Ojibway legend, which identifies the rock formation as the sleeping body of a giant named Nanabijou. Nanabijou is the spirit of the Deep Sea Water, turned to stone when white men arrived to this site.

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· do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers



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Dear Inez, and Dear Corrina,

I hope you are both doing so well. I am writing you from Northern Ontario in Canada where I currently live and work for an indigenous led community safety initiative called The Bear Clan, and I also do lots of other de-colonial anti-poverty work. I'm such a fan of your work, and speak often of Sogorea Te' Land Trust.

I am writing you this email because I wanted to know if Corrina would be interested to do a phone interview with me in late February about the idea of 'home' in contrast to the real estate market. I find it so moving how initiatives like the Sogorea Te' Land Trust and the protection of the Shellmounds both treat the land as home, and also see the land as a subject who offers healing and care to the people who protect it. I would use the transcription in the written materials for a project I am working on in the Bay Area this spring. The project is called Desperate Holdings Real Estate, and at its heart is about challenging the orientation of settlers to land and home as a lifeless commodity in the overly commodified land of your ancestors. Inez, I would love to invite you to be a part of the exhibition/project, if you are interested. Of course I am happy to contribute money or other energy to both of you or your projects in exchange.

Before going further I wanted to say that, in this project I am trying to understand the connection between land dispossession experienced by indigenous people and people who have been priced out of homes, but I am not for a second equating them. They are not equal forms of injustice.

Below, I describe the project in further depth. It's not necessary to read, but I wanted to share the story of the project in case you were curious.

If either of you have time to write back or call me, I would love to hear from you.

Story of Desperate Holdings

In March I will come back to the Bay Area, my prior home, to do this project. It all started because of some clay that I have from underneath the financial district of San Francisco. The clay was given to me by construction workers in 2015 when they were digging the foundation for the Salesforce Tower. If I didn't get it, these buckets of land would have been sent to the toxic dump. I've been having friends care for the clay for 4 years.

In order to have a place to share this clay, which seems so precious, I am opening a temporary real estate agency called Desperate Holdings Real Estate, for one month. I wrote this about it: "This fully immersive installation of a real estate office from the past and the future offers clients an edge on today's deteriorating potential for finding escape, security or shelter. In the fantasy where this agency rests, there is no land to rent or buy. At Desperate Holdings we practice real estate 4.0, where we let go of that which no longer serves us. How? We look like real estate but we run like a health spa, offering our clients services to soothe and detoxify their broken fantasies of the good life, that can not continue if we are to survive collectively."

Inside the real estate agency installation, I will invite artists and activists to act as real estate agents, and to design services that will help other settlers (like me) to transform their relationship with private property from seeing it as a commodity to seeing it as something living, that has been in relationship with indigenous communities for millenia.

I loved what Corrina said in an interview I listened to recently. When defending a sacred site, you thought you were defending the land, but the land actually healed you and the community that gathered there. I am inviting the artists who work in the real estate agency to use the clay that I have as a healing substrate, to invent new little ways and rituals to heal the financially driven impulse to commodify our home. We would love to create a space to teach people about the tax program that supports the Sogorea Te' Land Trust within this project. In a way, people giving their money to the land trust could count as a form of healing, for people with money and property, from the real estate market.

2. A LETTER TO OUR SHAREHOLDERS

This document contains forward-looking statements within the language of the Feminist Economics Department (the FED). You can identify these statements by our use of the words "assumes," "believes," "estimates," "expects," "quidance," "intends," "plans," "projects" and similar expressions that do not relate to material matters, until they do. You should exercise caution in interpreting and relying on forward-looking statements because they involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors which are, in some cases, beyond Desperate Holdings' control and could materially affect actual results, performance or achievements. These factors include, without limitation, Desperate Holdings' ability to describe or respond to the uncertainties of settler colonialism from inside of it, a leaible responsiveness to the overwhelming nature of real estate development in a timely or rational manner, the ability of our team members to satisfactorily change the inner weather of the clients we are met with, the effects of local, national and international economic and market conditions (including the impact of colonialism underneath sovereign debt issues) which may kill, maim or seriously disable any of our team or our clients at any time. Desperate Holdings will probably undertake a duty to update or revise our forward-looking statements, as a result of new information, advice, future events, or strong feelings.

Dear Fellow Shareholders,

As you know. Desperate Holdings is the #1 real estate agency from the near future of the Bay Area. We are a different kind of real estate company, because we do not buy or sell land. We operate with a set of core values – remembering a time before shareholders was the term we used when we referred to people, considering every person our shareholder, realizing that all shareholders die, honoring the fact that land is made of dead shareholders, caring for all our shareholders, considering every shareholder an animal, considering every animal a person, considering every person as deserving of a home and sense of belonging, ALL while driving people towards ideas of collective liberation as a non-negotiable alternative to this cesspool of houselessness and unbelonging on a dying planet... AND fostering the equality of every human being against a market that actually wants to kill them and bury them as quickly as possible so they can build an office tower.

Where did we come from, and HOW DID WE GET HERE?! Starting with just a little pile of clay, how did we join the race to rewrite the unwritten laws that govern our contemporary western settler belief in private property and real estate investment? Let us tell you, it started when a friend with a storefront gallery called Dream Farm Commons offered us the chance to transform the space into a pop-up real estate agency in the spring of 2019. With just under \$2000 (Canadian) of reimbursements from Canada Council Grants, we were able to produce an improbable intervestment into the real estate industry that will never die.

OUR VENTURES

By putting our values into action on behalf of all our shareholders – which are: people, places, and things, living and not – we deliver our customers slow progress towards de-growth in the real estate sector, using patented strategies developed by some of the last artists, organizers, and healers left in the Bay Area of San Francisco. Our team of precariously housed people fearlessly mounted and attacked the task of healing our clients' broken potential for finding escape, security, or shelter in the apocalyptic tech crisis we call the Bay Area. In spring 2019, we launched a number of trailblazing



Desperate Holdings REALESTATE AGENTS

social technologies designed by our team, for changing the public's relationship to land. These technologies demolished the psychic, social and economic wall that keeps us from cooperating towards more rational housing and land ideas and policies, including:

Good Life Hospice Support Group™,

facilitated by Lindsay Tunkl

Land on the Face Luxury Spa Group™,

by Tara Spalty and Cassie Thornton

Fixed Earth Therapy™ and Giving the Land Back to Itself™,

performed by Sarah Rowe

The Detox Archives™,

researched and performed by Danielle Wright

Art Therapy for Real Estate Agents™ & People Living with Survivors' Guilt™, by the FED

Utopian Visioning in Small Clay Figures™, with Ann Schnake

Cloudburst Philanthropy™

delivered by the anonymous collective HUMANS HAVE PREDATORS

OUR GOALS

Guided by our values, Desperate Holdings surpassed the concept of revenue in fiscal year 2019, and we reached this milestone faster than any other enterprise in history—we did it before the year even began. Our extraordinary de-growth agenda is powered by the transformation of people and companies of all sizes, and this transformation will be complete when our lousy society decides to stop relying on a market to determine who gets to live and "belong" and who will die without care or a home.

Our trail has been blazed for us. With a worldwide homeless problem that is economic, environmental, racist, and psychic, we now have nearly twice as many relation-

ships with people who feel desperate than we did just a year ago. In the past year, Desperate Holdings powered people to consider a deeper sense of belonging than one earned financially using our pseudo-artificial intelligence technology, intuition. Using intuition, we can now generate an unforeseen number of tiny ruptures in reality per day thanks to our growing divestment in the market forces. And with any luck, everyone we know will unlearn all the horrible lessons they learned that they once needed to thrive in our cruel racist and murderous digital economy. For these reasons, Forbes declared us the Flying Knife Towards the Market of the Decade.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

We continue to destroy the property of the people who are destroying or wringing the life out of communities where we live and work, using smear campaigns, where we put clay on our hands and then place our hands on the faces of the powerful. Over the past 4 months, Desperate Holdings and our various interconnected entities have given more than \$200 million worth in hope and sense-of-possibility (SOP) to everyone from CEO's to street urchins, for a better way of organizing land distribution and housing. All we had to do is mention that we believe that there are better ways to understand and distribute land and belonging besides the market. Our unpaid employees have also volunteered more than 2.6 million hours starting before they were even born. Thank you for your continued support. I'm extremely grateful to each of you, and I'm excited for another incredible never beginning or ending year of growth and success together.

Mahalo,

The Feminist Economics Department
Desperate Holdings Real Estate + LandMind Spa

OUR TEAM

The following statements were made by artists, organizers, and healers who designed services to offer the public where the idea of real estate and property could morph through a relationship with a creative process that involved clay unearthed from beneath the Salesforce Tower, in the financial district of San Francisco, CA.

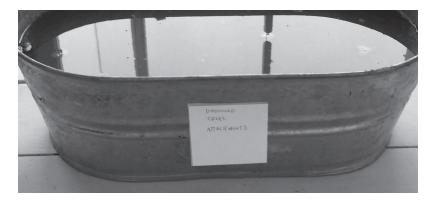
Good Life Hospice Support Group

LINDSAY TUNKI

I planned to use the clay during the Good Life Hospice group as a conduit and symbol for participant's exhaustive experience with cruel optimism. Through a contemplative exercise folks would collect their individual portions of clay and be invited to express their emotions regarding cruel optimism, physically with the clay. Participants would be asked to move the energy of cruel optimism in their body into the clay and then submerge their clay in vessels of water. The group would decide from there how to handle the clay.

As participants grew in relationship to their clay, different things emerged. One participant threw their clay on the floor over and over again until it became an amorphous charged object. Others rolled their clay into perfect balls or shallow bowls. Participants that chose to submerge their clay objects in water lovingly and humorously referred to the process as drownings and satanic baptisms. The clay objects sat in water for weeks, decomposing together and melding into one another. The group then took the vessels of water and clay to the Bay and returned the clay to the land and water it came from.

The clay was obviously powerful for those who could connect to what it is and where it came from – the holiness and sacredness. It also absorbed energy and allowed for the breakdown of certain energies. It is important to note that the clay was a steward and not a tool to be worked.



Land on the Face Luxury Spa Group

TARA SPALTY

I wasn't really ever comfortable with putting the clay on my face or body and I never had an articulate reason why, just the thought of it kind of freaked me out, even after getting the tests back that said that it didn't have any scary materials in it. I can't say whether this fear or avoidance stemmed from some deep sense of intuition, or having to do with the history of the clay itself, not wanting to absorb some sort of toxic metals into my body, but mostly it feels like it had to do with a general fear of literally smearing the unknown all over my face. So, of course I did just that. I still didn't feel entirely comfortable with it afterwards; it's almost like it haunted me. It definitely dried my skin out in the moment, but also made it feel really smooth and clean.

I think it had many purposes, both as a simple medium to transmit our goal of wanting the participants to actively and deeply "see" each other by painting it onto faces and hands, in which it brings out the lines from work and living that are embedded in people's bodies, but also to think about the clay itself, where it came from, what is happening there and all that the land in that location has been through and the people who have lived on, worked on, stewarded and exploited that land, and what's going on there now. It made me think about those things, and I am still thinking about those things and that thinking has shifted and expanded my sense of local history, and thus my worldview and actions, so I think that is tremendously successful in a sense.

Giving the Land Back to Itself

SARAH ROWF

The clay is alive. I wanted to honor its place and give it space and voice. It is heavy with minerals and history, nourishing and cleansing, but so very vulnerable to the powers that be. I wanted the clay to literally rise up, to make things dirty in a good way, to watch it and help it spread and reclaim its place and remind us of our sacred connection to land. I wanted the clay to rest in the fingernails, the floorboards, to follow footsteps out onto the concrete as it quietly shifted our awareness of our place in a timeline of environmental injustice. We are walking with the ancestors, and one day we will become the ancestors. Cells and earth colliding, constantly making and unmaking. We are stewards of this place and that is the true magic of being alive.

Witnessing a community ritual in a real estate office was strange and exhilarating. I loathe office spaces. But seeing a mass of people with clay up to their elbows, hunched over the floor, building their own sacred mound was powerful. I wanted the clay to swallow the desk. We need to dig up more of that history and bring it to light so no one can deny or look away. I was humbled holding space for the community while making prayer ties with pinches of clay as they built the office mound.

I felt transfixed as we handled the clay. It was grounding. People were so open and willing to share their story. They let me touch their hands and knot prayer ties together. The clay created a growing community and sense a place.

Can you put clay fingerprints on the pages?

The Detox Archives

DANIELLE WRIGHT

I originally planned to use the clay as part of a detoxifying foot soak for houseless folks in my community in West Oakland. There is a part of me that had hoped to make a more pronounced use of it to feel more a part of the larger project of Desperate Holdings. I thought that people might want to slather their feet in clay and I could document that in some way or write out some of folks stories using clay slip and add that to the care packages I eventually sent out to the Desperate Holdings Real Estate Agents. Logistically, it was easiest to just throw a little clay into some warm bubbly water. I imagined people who may not have regular access to a shower or bath wouldn't have had much interest in covering their feet in mud anyway. Conceptually, it ultimately seemed to work to have the use of material be more careful and understated overall.

Most participants did not ask many questions about what was in the foot bath, which I was surprised by. It was a Dr. Teal's ginger & clay epsom salt bubble bath with a small amount of the Salesforce clay dissolved and mixed in. People soaked their feet and told me stories about their lives and their neighborhood. Some people opened up quite a bit, while others were more quarded. I also decided to add clay to the care packages and care instructions that were delivered to other Desperate Holdings Real Estate Agents. It was my plan from the beginning to include the clay in the archiving and sharing of information but I wasn't sure how. When the clay became part of the care packages, it felt like the closing of a loop and helped me to resolve the project. My intention from the beginning was not only to connect with interviewees but also to the other Real Estate Agents in the process, ideally aiming to be a bridge between the two groups. This was particularly relevant for me as a bi-racial person, considering that (to my knowledge) most of the Desperate Holdings Real Estate Agents were white and almost all of the interviewees were Black. Even though it was subtle and delicate, the clay worked towards facilitating that connection.

There was far too little clay to do much "detoxifying" on its own, but in combination with the other kinds of care

provided, it "worked" to make space for folks to share. In terms of detoxifying, I hesitate to say it "drew" a lot "out" of folks, because I did not want to simply pump people for information for my own purposes. That would have felt slimy and counterproductive to the ultimate goal of my work. It was a slow process that was not intended to be transactional, invasive or extractive in that way. While it may not have done much physical detoxifying for interviewees or Desperate Holdings Real Estate Agents, it did provide a more interpersonal connection between these otherwise disparate groups of people.

The clay served as a tool to invite Desperate Holdings Real Estate Agents to take time to listen to people's stories and, I hope, to reflect on the connection (or lack thereof) to other folks from and of this place. I hoped that the mirroring of materials provided to folks experiencing houselessness and Desperate Holdings Real Estate Agents would lead the latter to be curious about this connection or disconnection to the people I met with, and what their personal relationship and responsibility is regarding the housing crisis and displacement of Black and brown people. In this respect, I hesitate to say the clay was not all that successful and lean more toward the idea that I could have been more explicit about that. It is never the material's fault:) It is, however, a tricky problem to figure out how to confront folks and to do so with kindness and I simply ran out of time.

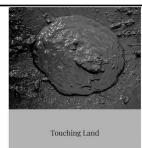
THIS HOUSE SHOULD BE RECLAIMED by people for people! 750 Castro Street

The Home of Eviction Attorney, Andrew Zacks

Eviction lawyer ANDREW ZACKS, is currently named as the lawyer hired to litigate against building a homeless shelter near Embarcadero. Previously he worked with eviction profiteers who drove Ms. Iris Canada to her death. They evicted her, a 100-year-old black elder, from her home of over 50 years in the Fillmore, a historic black neighborhood devastated by "redevelopment".











Art Therapy for Real Estate Investors and for Survivors' Guilt

CASSIE THORNTON

I thought that I wanted to help people who are accustomed and or limited to thinking about land as real estate, to make a connection between land, life, and a longer sense of time using the clay. To do so, I was hoping to hold art therapy sessions for real estate investors, agents, and other people immersed in the industry of buying and selling land. I vaguely imagined people in suits touching the clay and thinking about land, while doing various visualization exercises. While their eves were closed I would be locating their vulnerability. Somehow I hoped to cause these morally bankrupt people to realize the absurdity of their relationship to land as profit, by becoming conscious of their own death. Specifically, I wanted them to consider how land is made of decomposing life, that it holds all death, and that means the land is alive. As a living thing that will die like everything else, even speculative real estate investors will be a part of this cycle. I hoped that if they felt their own life in their hands, maybe they would not continue to treat land as some dead thing, disconnected from life itself. And maybe they would begin to value life and people instead of some vague idea of financial growth. I wanted the clay under the nails of the people who profit off of displacement, for them to feel the soft responsiveness of the clay and the aliveness of the land compared to their cold money- driven careers formerly known as lives. I wanted rich peple to go into epileptic shock, and to wake up covered in clay up to their eyeballs.

Since the intent behind the initial proposal was not very kind, it was hard to get people to sign up for this service even though it was free. Just as I gave up on finding a client for this service, someone who is not real estate involved (who I like), suggested to me that she would like to do the art therapy for real estate investors. She had just bought a house in the San Francisco Bay Area with an awareness of the huge homeless population, so she wanted to deal with what she referred to as her 'survivors' guilt.' In our session, I invited this guilt-survivor to imagine herself in a situation that she has recently encountered where she was surviving (or even thriving)

next to, or even at the expense of someone who seemed not to be surviving or thriving in some way. I asked her to feel her survivor quilt, and then to imagine scanning her body, searching for a part of her body that clenches when she witnesses being the top dog in first hand inequality and the related feelings. When she signaled that she identified this location in her body. I gave her a bucket of warm chunky wet clay and told her to imagine shoving her hand into her own body where the tension resided, and pulling out one of her affected organs. As she pulled out and held a small pile of mushy clay in her hands, she said she was holding her heart, and that she realized that it was also the other person's heart who was not surviving well. She gently reshaped the heart and pulled out the hard chunks, and we made a list of feelings that she associated with these hard parts:

- 1. It's so unfair dollop
- 2. I'm so lucky
- 3. I work hard to get what I have
- 4. Other people work hard and don't get what I have
- 5. I want to reach out and help but I feel inadequate
- 6. Human beings are more than repulsion
- 7. If a hand is offered, I take it
- 8. He's taking care of the street as I care for my house
- 9. I don't know his internal landscape
- 10. He has desires that I cannot understand
- 11. He is someone to know, and I don't know him
- 12. I wish for him a bed, a place to call home

After feeling all the feelings in the mushy heart(s), she shoved it back in her body, back in the bucket.

The clay failed me in doing what I wanted to do. It made me do something else instead. The clay, which is very soft and moist but not sticky, is in a constantly additive process and less of a progress of negation or critique. Things get added to it just by existing near it. I feel like the clay held onto the things that were closest to it. I was making Desperate Holdings out of sheer rage at the power of real estate to ruin homes. But because the project brought so much joy, and I was so over the rainbow and out of the prison happy while I was working on this project, the clay held onto those feelings and I was never able to smash the powerful or eat the rich with it.

Utopian Visioning in Small Clay Figures

ANN SCHNAKE

It's hard for me to describe an original use of clay as I have been, like a nervous midwife, watching this material's gestation for many years: from plastic bag to plastic bin to plastic bucket. From San Francisco to Oakland, with oh-so-many conversations and flights of imagination along the way. When we finally came to the moment of putting the clay out in the world, our first work was to stencil it on the walls of Dream Farm Commons. My conscientious co-worker said "I am not breathing, touching or living with that clay, if it is toxic." This provided a deep provocation for asking "what is in this material?"

Next came a chapter of presumed radioactivity, as I took the clay to a lab in Concord and wondered if my truck was now a superfund site. But the clay was not toxic: it held copper, trace nickel, and arsenic, all the metals we might expect to find on a planet but was, as the toxicologist said, "virgin soil"... and I was reminded that we live on a planet, a globe with a crust and many layers. We live on the crust and the clay came from down below. The report did not tell us if there were hauntings, tears, sadness or bones in the soil; those elements are often excluded from contemporary computations.

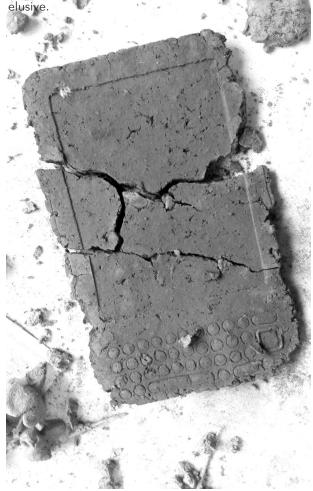
The clay was a highly successful material for careful and precise stencils, a perfect wallpaper of a deathly flower.

The clay was also extremely cooperative for making pearls, small blossoms, for the soaking of a bathrobe, creation of a crumbling city within a plastic globe but sometimes it told me what I was making was immaterial or stupid. I think it worked best in the realm of painful contradictions and provocations, which sometimes included the immaterial and stupid. For example, I used the clay for people to make dream houses & this was amusing ("Oh your little house can move, now it has a view of the ocean!"). Ultimately this workshop offering was rather painful and rude; to reopen the wounds of what we were actually trying to step away from—oppression by states of envy, desires of yesteryear, guilt.

I had one pleasant afternoon of creating a utopian village in clay with a sister and a brother from Kansas who seemed to carry some far away utopia in their pockets—but I do not think that was the general power of the clay.

My best day with the clay was when we talked about holograms, models of caring for each other and divided into pairs painting clay on each others faces and telling deep secrets.

I think the clay had the ability to provoke bones, tears, poetics at times—but it was erratic and elusive. Or perhaps we were, as we traveled on the crust of the earth in a process of discovery that included the erratic and



Desperate Holdings (un) Real Estate

Clay is + Holds



Is (a thing) + holds (things).

Water floors heat oil roofs laws masks antipropulsives

vessels cat litter astronaut vitamins urns -

& other ashtrays blebs grog Adam golem

mortar mimic Pandora and her pithos plaster shapeshifter.

Pinched, punched, rolled out, clay coils in the fetal position, conformed to the shape force makes of it.

If it's slippery and can hold a position really well then it's clay, a student writes, himself a slab on a sweaty chair.

Clay is thirsty. Wants water. Responds to weather. Slurs, and is mummy.

We build ourselves up with it, tear it down with us, poke holes through it, unable to figure out its ideal form.

We lift it with one finger, sign of ownership.

What's yours is mine, we say, lifting and squeezing it by the throat to our faces.

Leaving pots open on top, forcing clay to repay us what we loan it. It rents, we own.

It stands and holds for us, making us think our time is more valuable, believe we have more time.

But clay rules us from the bottom up.

Clay is the "thing." Original "stuff."

(It's just stuff, we say, holding onto everything.)

We make, scrape, scrap, break it off.

(You're dust, we say, meaning ourselves.)

We make dumb bricks to shade ourselves. We eat and shit bricks, leeching our guts inside out with clay.

Endlessly revising physical forms from it. Unable to settle on what clay uses us best for.

Clay is our saga. Primordial colonists sought clay so that we might breed on land.

The earth-diver scours the water-world for mud, then fans it dry with its wings, so that others might land and build on it. Meaning us.

Xirang (hsi-jang): Endlessly expressive mass. Absorbent, binding earthpaste. Elastic proto-plastic.

Plants in clay soils survive floods, wild prairies, outfox menopause. Echinacea, black cohosh: spiked from crust and sludge, one overlooked medicine inside another.

A kill-hole in the bottom of a bowl suggests a way for the spirit to exit the body. But the looter's patch traps the soul and damages the artifact, hijacking immortality.

Shotguns slayed clay pigeons before lasers. Now speakers play simulated sounds of shotgun fire and clay shatter to keep customers pumped between electronic signals.

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, we hate to beat you, but we must we must, we chant as the referee blows her whistle and our cleats drive into wet clay.

After two hundred pounds, clay ships at heavyweight rates. To think about clay is to think in empires, kilos, and wheels.

I meant to write about potholes, erosion, the internal collapse of structures which cave-in when continual force is applied and care divested. But I got stuck on my way to work.

I found potholes all over Oakland, ruining the chassis of my car, testing rubber's ability to ferry metal over uneven ground, bouncing like amphorae strapped to ox-carts en route to market.

I was driving myself to the marketplace to sell my muscles, my hours, and cleaning abilities. No one likes cleaning up after themselves except neurotics, so I am always in demand.

I fill potholes with my tires, worry about breakdowns.

It's okay to cry when your transit fails you. You will lose work, car repair will eat up your savings, but you love your mechanic, he's one of a kind, and no one will replace him when he retires.

You and your car are no longer young. These are facts.

When dust becomes clay on my windshield, I push coins into the self-service carwash and play stable-boy. I work to sleep someplace other than my car.

We squatted over potholes. We peered and poked into them, measuring their empty volumes.

Negative street, prequel and foretelling the world without us.

Rain enters and loosens the city. A hole's job is swallow and grow. Join and widen other holes.

Potholes are thirsty. Want water. Respond to weather.



Dear Corrina, Ines, Kiran:

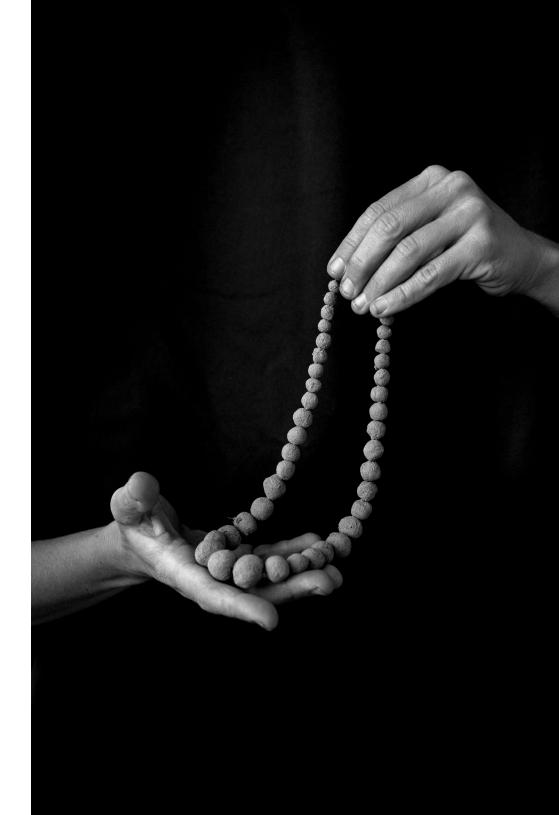
Thank you for taking the time to share your feelings with me, through Kiran, about Desperate Holdings. When Kiran told me that my words had a negative impact on you, I realized that I would rather cancel the project than do work that does not support your work and your goals. To be clear, if I don't have your support, I don't want to continue with this exhibit. On a dying planet, your work is some of the brightest for me. To work out of sync with you, or against the spirit of your work, is not an option for me.

Allow me to take a moment to introduce myself. I'm a person who has worked on collective rebellion against the soul-deadening power of of debt and financialization for most of my adult life, as an organizer and artist. My motivation as an artist is to create spaces where people can make contact with their desires that exist below and will exist beyond capitalism - I use art as a vehicle for a kind of activism that can't exist anywhere else in our society. After being displaced from every city I've lived in because of land speculation, I have moved to a small city in Canada. As an organizer in my community (in Thunder Bay, Canada) I develop and facilitate transformative workshops, events, and long term processes for settlers in the racism and murder capital of Canada. I also work in many capacities for Indigenous women (our group is called Wiindo Debwe Mosewin, formerly the Bear Clan of Thunder Bay) who are fighting against what is known to be (currently) the worst and most brutal genocide in Canada. We find missing people and we rescue people from the police every week. This experience of working under Indigenous Governance, and engaging with a Moccasin Telegram has changed my perspective about life and land forever.

I'm writing to apologize for the parts of my project that felt negligent, or uncaring towards your ancestors, their labour and land stewardship, and your relationship with them and the land. The promo material I have developed, which you read, was meant to accentuate the nightmare of capitalism and settler colonialism. It aimed to make that nightmare, and many of our investments in that nightmare, so stark that it could trigger a desire for a new possibility. I was targeting the settler colonial/capitalist unconscious. This blurring of language (sacred with capitalist) is a long-term technique of mine to create something that both attracts and repels an audience who exists in these contradictions, but my underlying desire is to create an opening for people who don't know they want or need a transformation away from their hazardous colonial and capitalist ways of thinking and living.

My experience of hosting the clay since it was given to me by a construction worker at the Salesforce Tower excavation site has been very transformative for me. In the time that I've held it, for about four years, I have learned something about its sacredness. Sharing the possibility of a right relationship with land is at the heart of the project. I recently was requested (by the gallery I am working with) to have the clay tested. As you may know it was located underneath the transit centre for 80 years. I had a strong feeling after spending a lot of time with it that it had no chemicals, and sure enough, it is not at all contaminated. I think it is resilient and powerful. I want to make the clay that I have been taking care of available to you. As you (Corrina) said, your ancestors are in the clay. From my friends and allies in Thunder Bay I have learned that the only way to begin decolonization, which I think is crucial for all our futures, is through rematriation of the land. I have very little power in general, but in this case, I want to take the opportunity to return the land back to its family. I have about 10 buckets of clay, some of it has been turned into jewelry. I would be happy to give it to you, or to use it in a way that honoured your work. Maybe this is gestural, but I want you to choose your relationship with this land.

If this offer can become part of the artwork, I think it will help many of us better understand all that's at



stake. If the show must be cancelled or dramatically changed, that too is an important educational experience. I have already transformed the language on the website, and will change all of the language for the project asap. I took out everything that I felt related to your concerns, as explained by Kiran. If you would benefit from receiving Shuumi Land Tax through the exhibition of the project (whether you want the clay or not), I can expand the exhibit's ability to gather funding for you, without ever selling the clay. I'm sorry that offer wasn't clear enough from the beginning. I can promise that if we go through with the sharing of the clay in the exhibit, there will be no buying or selling of the land. I had hoped to offer my friends who are participating in the exhibition the jewelry I created as a gift to honour their contributions. Almost all these artists are housing-insecure. In addition to highlighting and challenging the capitalist/colonial nightmare that turns land into property, I wanted this gift to be something to help us overcome our own attraction to that nightmare and our sabotaged desire for the short-sighted stability, privilege and false security that "ownership" of land offers, but that will be denied to most of us. The project is an experiment in a new and careful distribution of land, inviting people to experience receiving, giving and sharing land like we might in the future (after Indigenous Governance systems are strong and in place!).

Thank you for all you all do.



Dear Marc Benioff,

I'm an artist, formerly a resident of the Bay Area. You may not know this, but in 2015, I visited the construction site for the Salesforce Tower. The visit was strangely fruitful, because I was awarded about 10 gallons of old bay clay by the construction workers. The clay which the construction workers were digging up was rich, dark grey, clean and was coming from about 150 feet below the surface. The morning after collecting this clay, my father died.

For the past few years, I've been obsessing overits meaning, use and value. Four years into my fussing, I learned about Transbay Man, who was buried beneath the Salesforce Transit Center, just next door—one of the oldest skeletons ever found in North America. Looking at old maps, the location of these Salesforce properties was originally located on a beautiful waterfront area, open to the Pacific. No doubt, a beautiful and sacred place for tens of thousands of years. The excavation of the buildings which are now called by the name you chose and paid for revealed the site to be a sacred indigenous burial ground. None of the buildings in that area are standing very straight, or are without fractures in their foundations.

It's no secret that you have a fondness for ancient practices and non-western (western being colonial, hegemonic, global ruling class) spiritual protocol. My judgements aside, I wonder if you've had the chance to consider the relationship between your business and the land it replaces? To be more specific, I wonder if you knew then what you know now regarding the placement of these towers on ancient sacred burial grounds, how would you have acted differently? And in that spirit, of considering the present moment as connected to and interwoven with the spirits of the past and future, how can you ensure that your corporate projects are in some sort of authentic harmony with a long history of land and people surviving colonialism and with the needs of future generations to be able to live together and cooperate on a planet with limited resources?

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When I received the land I mentioned, which I refer to as my 'liquid real estate' (the last San Francisco Real Estate a non-millionaire can touch), I sincerely offered it to a few local indigenous people, asking if they would like to have it, use it or have a say over its use. No one who I asked wanted it, and I fear that is because its powers are already weakened by having been removed from itself and its location. For the first few years of caring for the clay, I felt like I was doing something benign, or even sweet. Handling and exhibiting the clay seemed like a simple and good gesture, because it was my understanding that the rest of the body of clay that had been cleared for the tower's foundation had been saved from going to the toxic dump to be sanitized. I saved the clay from the experience I was having, of being a body that contained no value for a city that was being turned into a theme park for money itself to play in.

As a gesture of deep, careful, and messy grappling with what it means to be a settler on indigenous land, witnessing dispossession and dislocation separately and together, I wondered if you could help me to do what I should have done all along. Please help me find a way to place the small amount of remaining clay I have left back in the ground where it was found. This humble but complicated act, and whatever sacrificial bureaucracy that you might do to make this possible must remain clear of the will to do this for PR. I want your help to locate a place down in the bowels of the building where we can somehow give the clay a home back inside itself, which is the land, a sacred burial ground, a city, and a planet.

I hear, that when things feel impossible for you, you go to the tunnels that the BART passes through. You get strength from going underground and remembering the work of your ancestors. But what if the ancestors you are really visiting, the ones who have really given you the materials that you are working with, are all around and underneath you. What would it mean to expose their power and to do right bu them?

Thanks!

IT'S NOT WORTH ANYTHING UNTIL SOMEONE BUYS IT

Interview with Liz Rossof, Real Estate Agent and Conceptual Artist

Bio A: Here to get you home! I come to real estate after a 28 year career in Art, Design and Technology. I am obsessed with what's new and trending, but most importantly what is quality in design and aesthetically timeless. I will work to find you the best homes within your price range, and help you see the possibilities in each. I have lived on both coasts and love to help people moving to Denver feel more at home. Denver has the best bagels this side of the Mississippi (hands down!) and really great Dim Sum, Chaat, Sushi and Chowder if you know where to look! I'm still searching for a great burrito, I'll let you know when I find it.;).

Bio B: Lizabeth Eva Rossof's (b 1973, USA) work examines the dissemination of personal, political, economic, and sexual power and freedom in the digital age. Her artworks are experiments; they are projects and investigations. The outcomes of her research are most often objects that have been rendered using common commercial media (i.e. photography, poster-printing, video) and not-so-common 'outsourced' fabrication (i.e. police drawing and 'professional painting from photos' by overseas craftspeople). Lizabeth's art, however, can be discussed as public happenings, performance, intervention, and satirical espionage.

Liz: I recommend that you try a block and lot assessment of the actual piece of land based on what the size of the property is. Calculate a value for the clay based on a comparison to what the entire lot that was purchased to build the tower. Then use the value to assess the value of the cube of clay. One cube or smaller is probably worth a pretty large price. A sq foot of sf real estate nears \$1000 or more these days.

New 2019 assessments of the Tower's value estimate its value at 2.1 billion. With 1.4 million square feet, the value of the real estate is 1500 per square foot.

First you should consider the 1% for Art program. I am sure they overspent on that incredible Jim Campbell piece on top.

From the 1% for Arts contract with the city: "The sponsor is required to provide public art valued at 1% of the construction cost of the building. The Site Permit indicated a construction cost of \$336,200,000, so the sponsor must spend at least \$3,362,000 on the art program. Both the tower and the art are currently under construction. To date, the sponsor has spent approximately \$4.5 million on the art installation, which equals approximately 1.35% of the total construction cost. The sponsor has also allocated an additional allowance of approximately \$1 million to complete installation, which would result in a contribution of approximately 1.66% of the total construction cost."

Cassie: You remind me of something you had mentioned earlier, before the call cut out. In the same way that real estate works, if this artwork is in proximity to other very expensive art works, it might be worth more.

Liz: Right, because even if you have a shitty house, but it is between a bunch of fancy houses it would be more valuable than if the shitty house was next to other shitty houses. By association and by location it could be considered more valuable. But in this case it is more somehow, because the stuff in question is from the earth, that is sustaining and supporting and allowing all this to even happen.

And then you fold into it the opportunity that [Marc] Benioff has had to start Salesforce. He would not have been able to do that if he didn't grow up in the Bay Area. I believe his grandfather was instrumental in the building of the Bart System. This is a person who has built an incredible company, very powerful, but is certainly the result of privileged circumstances which we can't ig-

nore. He does a fine job giving back to the community but not enough for anyone to freak out about.

Benioff's networth is 6.1 Billion, and based on what I could find, he has recently given 394 million or 6.45% of his networth to charity.

Everyone gets so excited when super rich people give 10 million dollars to something but I'm not ready to call him a hero. He should do that, and could do a bit more than write a ten million dollar check for an emergency situation.

Cassie: Ten Million Dollars is probably his socks budget!

Liz: I've never met the man but I don't he spends 10 million dollars on socks.

Something I learned from working in the garment industry: you are not supposed to dry your socks. It's the dryer that kills the socks, not the washing of the socks.

The 1% for Art policy is really where real estate development and art are conjoined. Many cities have the 1% for Art policy, including San Francisco. This means new developers have to spend a certain amount of their overall budget on publicly accessible art. This work is made of land that the building was built and developed on. I think the pricing and appraising of this work and how much it should be valued is the core of the piece. You are asking a lot of really great questions and somehow the economics of the clay justifies the concept. How do we acknowledge the significance of this material, the spiritual and artistic significance? We are asking for an appraisal, as if we are going to find a cash value. We have a hard time expressing our emotions [around value]. We look to monetize (the things we value) that are not, cannot or should not be monetized. It's an interesting default we live with, that we can't seem to find non-economic ways to express value.

Cassie: If you were to take actual steps towards appraising something, which is totally an art piece and totally land, where do you start? There's the question of its proximity to other art and proximity to other land. But all the other land like this got brought to the toxic dump to be sanitized. So it's more rare but it's also more garbage.

Liz: How toxic is it?

Cassie: We got it tested and it is fairly non-toxic by EPA standards. It has no petroleum and no arsenic... it is pure earth, from too far in the ground to be contaminated directly from above. But it is also being measured by 'EPA' standards, which are questionable. But it tells a great story: they dig up the planet to build these sky-scrapers and send all the earth to the toxic dump to be sanitized.

Liz: How do they sanitize it?

Cassie: I'm not sure, but I assume they burn it. I imagined that they want to neutralize microbes and anything alive in it.

Liz: Maybe it tested non-toxic, but just in case it needs to be sealed. Perhaps if you display it, it should be pedastal-ized, so it can't be touched?

Cassie: I guess that's one way to see it. The poetry of it for me is that just as the land is removed from under the city and sanitized, so is everyone else that makes the Bay what it is! All the people who create value in the city, the indigenous people, the workers, the culture makers, they all need to be sent away and sanitized before they can come back. They can come back when they have a degree and shiny clothes and want to self exploit on behalf of impossible economic survival like everyone else who is 'successful' in a cosmopolitan city. But if we bring them back, do we have to put them in display cases? What would it mean to bring it back, to bring the body back to the place where it belongs, so it could actually thrive?

If this was your project, how would you go about trying to figure out where the value exists?

Liz: I would look at this artwork as a ruin. It is the unseen 'OG' (original gangster) piece of this plot, of this land. It holds the history of the other developments that have existed on top of it. That land was not wild land before the Salesforce Tower was built. It is a historical artifact that holds the memory of the evolution and the geology of that space. It is a tie back to prehistory. I think the idea of archiving it, and having it on public display is artful and also important.

So, the value in it is there if someone is ready to fund it by way of purchase or grant. Just like in real estate it is

not worth anything until someone buys it. Same thing with art. And then it is worth the highest price someone is willing to pay for it. That's what it is. That's the value. If it is just sitting there, it isn't worth anything. So you can say what it is worth all you want, because it would cost however much to replace it if it was lost, or fix it if it was broken... but until someone buys it the value is nothing. In speculation I think there is some equations and combinations of equations that would make sense. You could look at the total art budget that has been spent on the building. You are talking about clay which is mass and volume. The significance is its mass. Maybe finding out what the total art budget is and calculating the space that all the art takes up and comparing it to the amount of mass you have in clay, and finding it that way. Or find the average price of the artworks in the building. Obviously the crown jewel, probably the most expensive piece that they commissioned is the one by Jim Campbell, so how would the clay be valued in comparison?

Something I find interesting in the 1% for Art program is that developers now get artists to decorate their developments. They aren't spending money to support artists to continue to make their own work, they are commissioning artists to create specific designs for their properties which will add to the value of the buildings. It is a really interesting shift wherein residential developments invite muralists or sculptors to come in and work directly with the space, to paint the wall by the pool for example. These permanent spatial elements become an investment in the appreciation of the building more than it is an investment in these artists. The developer controls the art.

That's neither here nor there but I would find out what has been paid for the work that exists already and maybe somewhere between the price of the art and the price of the land you find the right price for the piece. And you also have to deal with what you do with the money as the artist.

Cassie: Now I will tell you more about what I learned about the land, which makes such a challenging situation. Have you ever worked with or around stigmatized properties?

Liz: The laws are different state to state. In California you



a beautiful piece of land that one can really get their hands on.

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Feminist Economics Department, This locally sourced Estate Division material comes directly from the underbelly of the Salesforce Tower. - Clay LOCALLY SOURCED @ the Salesforce Tower

- Pure Potential YOU CAN TOUCH!
- Why Rent?
- 1 sq ft of Real Estate you can bring anywhere

Whether you are a multi-millionaire or living in a pit, this handful of heaven exists as pure potential just the way land did before it was successfully evicted from the city of San Francisco. In its heyday, this material was the stuff that you could stand on, and it was underneath all types of development. But, in order to make room for its new bold future as a training hub and terrorist cell for the formerly decentralized/itinerant elite luxury community, the Bay has been cleaning itself up, removing distractions from landscape, including the landscape itself. This one time moment in history is not to be missed-when land value is so low that even a person could touch it.

Land Value?

have to disclose certain information about stigmatized properties. It is something like 8 years after a homicide or suicide that you have to report to interested buyers if you are trying to sell a property. In Colorado you are not allowed to disclose anything like that, if it is not a materialized fact. I'm just realizing how enormous my nose looks. I need a mustache and a cigar. It's like a flesh colored clown nose. The light is pouring on it.

Cassie: At a site directly next to the Salesforce Tower, called Salesforce Transit Center I've been learning that they dug up one of the oldest skeletons they have ever found in California. I learned about it because I had contacted the Sogorea Te' Land Trust, to find out what they would do with the clay. One person from the group was frustrated with me for writing about the clay as holding dead labor and ancestors, because the clay was literally her ancestors. At first I didn't understand what she meant. I started to put together that what she meant when I learned that there was a skeleton that was buried near to the place where the clay was found. The man who was buried there was carefully dressed and placed there thousands of years ago, very well preserved. His body could have been one of many, and it is a site that is not so far from other ancient burial sites, like they found at the Moscone Center in the 1980s. It is not impossible that the land near or underneath the Salesforce Tower was a sacred burial. That's the turning point of the project, because it is a sacred burial site that is potentially 15k years old, the ultimate in stigmatized property.

Liz: But 15,000 years definitely surpasses the statute of limitations in California law for a stigmatized property, just to be an asshole! I definitely hear what you are saying. There's the shellmound that is a shopping mall in Emeryville now, where there is one little designated area that makes that clear.

Well, this clay becomes an even deeper symbol. So is the appropriate place for it to be inside the tower, to educate people about the land, or does it need to go somewhere else?

Cassie: I just wrote to Benioff, who is really into appropriating indigenous culture. I wrote to him and in a nice way I said: 'I am not sure if you know that your company may be located on a sacred burial site.' If he knew that would he have located his company in those buildings?

He constantly refers to indigenous practices and non western traditions, so I asked him if he would help me get the clay back in the ground underneath the building. I haven't sent it. I've been waiting.

Liz: Do you have a direct contact to him? Do you think it might be something that gets lost?

Cassie: Maybe I should dig for it.

Liz: You think the more appropriate place would be to put it back in the ground?

Cassie: The Sogorea Te' Land Trust say that it can never be bought or sold. The fact that they didn't want the clay, and didn't want to have anything to do with it, has meant to me that perhaps it lost its power or meaning when it was removed from its original site. It might have value as an educational material for settlers, but that education might be against the will of Sogorea Te'.

Liz: If it's what they would prefer to do, would you put it there with no price? Would you place it in the lobby to acknowledge the land? Would you set that up with no charge and no sale price?

Cassie: Yes it could never have a sale price.

Liz: Did you pay the guy to give it to you?

Cassie: No I just brought \$26 of McDonalds for the workers and the workers filled our car up with it.

Liz: I think the appropriate thing is just to find out if they want it back in the ground or if they want it as an educational piece. If they want it as an educational piece, you find a way to make that happen and obviously part of the piece. It is conceptually correct not to have money exchange hands in the process of the piece. I would go to the Landtrust and ask what they want done with that. I don't know how you would get it back under the tower, but there has got to be a way. There's still dirt under there.

Cassie: We could install it in the bottom of the tower. It is not going to go below the concrete, but maybe in the basement of the basement or something.

Liz: If the landtrust decides they do not want it to be an

educational piece, then do you delete all your files and is the project gone? Even just the documentation of it becomes an educational piece, so is it the soil that they are concerned with, or is it the story? If they say "we just want to get it as close to the earth's core as we can"-- it's like, great-- then what do you do with your project? Do you shred all the files?

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Cassie: It's been a long (at times one sided) conversation with them and they have been unhappy with parts of the project. In some way they seem most concerned with the language that surrounds the project, rather than control over the clay itself. They have never mentioned the clay, only the way I speak about it.

Liz: Stigmatized property law varies state by state. Are first nations burial sites a federal law, with federal protections?

Cassie: Most of the time we don't know where burial sites are. We have been and maybe will always be discovering them when we dig foundations for new constructions. There's some irony that California is doomed to experience big earthquakes, making California a place that is always digging deeper and deeper foundations.

"The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) establishes procedures for the inadvertent discovery or planned excavation of Native American cultural items on federal or tribal lands. If burials are discovered during construction they must consult with potential lineal descendants or American Indian tribal officials as part of their compliance responsibilities."

Liz: Let's say that they are cool with the educational part, do they want you to try to sell the project and donate a chunk of money to them? It's easy for us to say that it is conceptually more solid, but the reality is that they may be really excited if you can sell the project and get them the money. It's a very big point of privilege to say that no one needs the money, but maybe they could use 30k or 50k. I think that is something for the landtrust to decide.

Cassie: I've asked them a few times if and when they would like to receive some sort of support through this project. In order to plan something like that, we would need time together and trust, and I don't know if they have that to spare on a project that may or may not result in a useful sized payment. I feel nervous about taking

more of their time when I can't promise that I will be able to get money for them from this project. I have never received much money or support for my work, and producing a situation wherein something with non-monetary value becomes money seems like an alchemy that I have been avoiding my whole life. But/and, because I have no practice doing this alchemy, I also can't imagine how it would work.

The way I have rationalized this work so far is that I am a settler doing work that will make sense to other settlers. To increase the number of people who remember that there were many thousands of years of people before cities and empire, who were taking care of the land, might begin the psychic shift that is necessary to transition out of a market that determines who belongs where. If regular people remembered that land is made out of the bodies of ancestors of other living people, buying and selling real estate changes. The experience and idea of 'home' changes when the idea of land is not an abstract dead commodity and you are a part of a living history. There are so many ideas that I learned from sitting with this clay, and trying to figure out what to do with it. Sharing these ideas is not insignificant, and the transformation of people's ideas of the real estate market, of home and of land is possible. I'm not sure if a transformation from clay to cash is the answer.



LIZ EDIT OF LETTER

Dear Marc,

I am Cassie Thornton, an artist, and former resident of the Bay Area. In 2015, I visited the construction site of the Salesforce Tower. During that visit construction workers gave me 10 gallons of old bay clay from 200 feet below the surface. I had thought of my collection of the material as my one chance to touch, feel, and own 'San Francisco Real Estate". Over the past several years I've been grappling with its significance. Its value to me, and as a work of art, has morphed many times—as the construction of the tower has been completed—and as I have developed a much deeper understanding of the social and historical significance of this small piece of land.

Conversations around this clay have taught me so much. For the Chochenyo and Karkin Ohlone woman, Corrina Gould, (Co-Founder of Indian People Organizing for Change and the Sogorea Te' Landtrust), the clay holds her ancestors. For some of the current residents of the Bay Area it represents a promise of access to land outside of the market. For an art collector, it is simply too big a problem to display it, and its authorship is too messy. For a realtor, to list it as a property risks their real estate license, and so it acts only as a useless logic problem.

I would like to explore with you how this clay might live on and continue to spark a dialogue that honors and includes the history of the site where it was found. One option is for it to go back into the ground, or on top of the ground, where it was originally found. This might involve somehow placing it in or around the Salesforce Tower. I also think there could be a way to carefully display this clay in a way that allows people to understand and feel their location on land, and in history. I know you are not the owner of the building, but I thought you might be more fun to talk to than Boston Properties. If you find this proposition to be interesting or if you would be open to a conversation about this, I'd love to talk.

THANKS!

MAMES WALKER, IN FACT THE PERSON

Found in "Remains of the Day: A Native American Burial Discovered in San Francisco Is Shrouded in a Fog of Acrimony" on anthronow.com:

Posted on April 26, 2016 by Peter W. Colby, James k. walker comments:

August 30, 2016 at 4:31 pm I am in fact the person who solely uncovered the remains at the translation site! I was the superintendent on the project at the time and I have a story, the true story to tell and that needs to be heard and reported! I have waited a long time for this opportunity and you are my source! Thank you for your article and I am very anxious to discuss this with you! My life has been greatly affected by my discovery of the remains, and I assure you, not in the ways one would assume!



copied from precisiondooreastbay.com

"I was born and raised in Medford, Oregon, where I created numorous tales, involving my two younger brothers, one sister and later, the addition of several step-siblings! I came to northern California around 2006, working in underground construction and pipeline projects. It was here on a job project that I met, Kelle, now, my wife. After traveling back and forth for several years, I made the move to Novato, Ca and we were married in 2013, we now live in Vallejo. I had a long and rewarding career in construction and spent nearly 30 years moving earth and equipment prior to my discovery of garage doors. I also ended that career with a discovery, not known to many but deffinately a highlight to close one door and open another. I was working in San Francisco, as a superindendant on the trans Bay

terminal project, when I uncovered, what has been carbon dated to be over 15000 years old, the oldest known human remains ever discovered in northern America. That discovery and the halt in the project caused me to evaluate what career would be satisfying after all that. It wasn't long working in garage doors that I realized it couldn't get much better than spending the day in a garage, a bunch of tools and meeting lots of great people every day! When I am not fixing your garage doors, I like all the things that come out of the garage! Race cars and go carts are quick seconds to riding dirt bikes and mountain bikes. I also like to hit the golf ball, straight and far. I have worked for other garage door service companies but it is the integrity of the owners, here at percision that keeps me here. I am proud to be part of a company that demands the delivery of the services we provide, be the highest quality in an efficient, safe and professional manner. As a leader for percision, I have the opportunity to, not only satisfy my customers every day, but also provide guidance and coaching to new technicians who are eager to succeed in a growing and successful industry. I look forward to opening and closing a door for you!"



I called my friend Dawn, an anti-debt activist and medium, because he would not answer my phonecalls.

Can we look at the energy of someone named James Walker who lives in Vallejo?

I get a yes. What's the question? Lemme get an energy color. It's a greenish blue.

This person was working at the Salesforce Transit Center construction site when they found a very old skeleton. This person James claims to have been the person who first saw the skeleton in the ground. I found him commenting online all over about how much it changed his life, but he hangs up on me when I call. And the two times I have contacted him, he has rewritten his online biography immediately after, seemingly to cover up his story of finding this skeleton. So I guess I want to know what happened to him. Is he ok? What is surrounding his

experience of finding this body?

This body feels like an ancient burial? So this could be a sacred ancestor. There is a lot happening here politically around this. I get the sense that he is fed the sense that he is being looped into quote on quote research but there are actual groups who are kind of overpowering who gets to do what research, there are going to be some power struggles that are happening between groups.



For seven years I have been trying to squeeze water out of rocks, or, I've been in training. To get the water out, I don't think squeezing works in such a literal way. Crushing is amateur, I think you have to find a way to melt it from the inside. Experts (such as some findoms I follow online) say they can look at a rock and turn it into a lava flow with their will.

My senses are highly attuned to how hard the landscape is around me. I know that even when it isn't that hard for me, it is hard for someone else. The hardness is not equally distributed. In Thunder Bay, where I live now, it feels extra hard but the qualities and causes of hardness vary from place to place, so no it is not as hard as Oakland but it is also harder. Whichever place I call home, I usually find the hardest. Home is where the hardness is.

Where things are hard here, they are very deeply hard, also cold and dull. If you fall your body bounces and rolls off, and the rock doesn't give at all. This isn't some porous lava, a thousand years fresh. This is old hard colonial shit. When you fall flat on your face you don't get a cut but the inside of your body turns to mush. This is why I spend my extra money at thrift stores on extremely soft textiles (EST), listed here in order of priority:

- Handmade blankets in psychedelic colors, like someone was laughing when making something that they knew none of their friends would like
- 2. Crocheted or personalized pillows, especially ones with animals and psychedelic patterns
- 3. Fluffy rugs of all kinds
- Huge sweaters and dresses with strange pockets, no body contours, and extreme textures

I spend a lot of time recovering from the moments when I touch very hard things, here or anywhere. Thankfully Thunder Bay provides plenty of the EST I need, almost enough to counter the extremely cold racist, violent and antisocial hardness that characterizes the city.



At a certain point in the not so distant history, I realized that I am a bit hard myself. If there is anything I have taught myself through studying the psychic impact of economics, it is that we reproduce the conditions we experience. If you live in a bouncy ball pit, you might become animated and spright. But/and you might also come with some really gross unacknowledged stuff hidden underneath the enthusiasm that is made of old accumulations of drool and lint, in places no one can really see or clean without taking you apart. If you perceive that you live in a very hard and impenetrable landscape, it can be difficult not to become hard, sharp, reflective at moments but never soft. To be specific, I feel like the slate that lines the Kaministiquia River before it pours itself into the Kakabeka Falls, about a 20 minute drive north of my house. The slate that I feel like displays a property called fissility. It forms smooth flat sheets of stone which you can pull out of the larger structure with your hand. The ones I am thinking of are dark grey and about 1 centimeter thick. When you pull one out, you get a sense that it is made of many thinner sheets all compressed together, which could be taken apart like a book with about the same results as if you had taken a book and dipped it in a flour water mix, and then it dried for 5000 years. These pieces are quite sharp on the edges, and if you drop it, it will shatter. The rock formations made of all these stacks of slate remind me of a very fragile, yet very strong library, which took forever to make but could be taken apart by a relatively small child. Sometimes between the sheets of stone there are entire ecosystems, which at times are populated with water, insects, moss, and lots of living motion.

This summer, I wrote a note on my bottle of probiotics in sharpie: Remember to have a spirit. I think that we could translate that to 'remember that there is water inside of rocks'. As an aging materialist I think the microbiome and its relationship to the macrobiome may be my only hope of having a spirit that exists individually and collectively, the way I think it should. At least I know there is something chemically out there connecting me to everyone else. But sometimes I just feel like the hardness I have touched severs my memory or awareness of this foundational and rational scientific framework, which is actually within the formation of every rock.

On my mind now are Blackrock, Blackstone, Rock Ventures and Bedrock Development, or the way Alcatraz Prison was called 'the rock'. These entities that call themselves rock are things made by men, which make things very hard for most people who are not rich and white. I hate these men, from a distance. I wonder how I could become hard enough to destroy them. What would it mean to destroy their hardness. I want to ruin them and drink their spirit so they can't multiply.

When I look at rocks I see so much unknown. The cracks and colors are beyond my comprehension. How could anything come to be this way? Plus, they have existed for so long. There are an infinite amount of rocks on the earth, a million millions. Like tiny little dead men. How do you look at something complex and terrible with total awe, care, and empathy, and throw a rock at it anyway?



What happens when you throw something hard at something, but this something you were expecting to be extremely hard turns out to be so mundane and soft? And you hurt it. I think I am not alone in saying that softness can be a threat to the plan.

Softness is a threat to the plan because:

- 1. It is not expected or imagined to be anything but hardness, so we can't rely on our plans to crush it.
- 2. It creates connection between the secret softness in all of us, so...
- 3. It is sticky.

I'm not sure what to do with the clay, partially because it is more soft and wet than hard and dry. It is not there to be confronted or solved. It feels more like a complex subject than an object like those white men who are becoming little rocks. In some way all I've learned is how little I understand about how to interact with soft things. I've been getting ready for war for so long.

One day I was collecting sage with my friend Ivory so we could do a #smudge-the-city campaign with our group. She reminded me to thank the sage before I cut it. I asked if she meant that literally. She seemed impatient and almost annoyed with my question, so I told her that I don't usually talk to plants. Surprised and bemused, Ivory said that I should tell the plant my plans for it as if it was a person in a different form. I imagined the way my acupuncturist carefully explains where she is going to put the needles in me and then waits for a kind of nonverbal consent before she places the needles, so I thought I could try that harm reduction language on it. Ivory gave me an example, I could tell the sage that I was going to use fire to turn it into a new form, smoke. So I silently spoke to the disparate audience of sage plants, and I tried to explain something to them about how we were going to first let them dry out, but not in a callous way. Then once they are almost crispy, we will put them in a shell just a little at a time and light it with a match or lighter. They would always be held as they changed to smoke, but passed around amongst a bunch of people in the back of a truck, while they drove around something called a city.

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg) says that the opposite of dispossession is attachment. I don't think that is something that can be taken out of direct experience. One of the first times I learned attachment is through my first clay in the hand experience, when my dad died. The clay is not some dead sludge. It was most definitely once a person. In so many ways. I will turn into a substance like this one day, and so will you. I think that is why it is all so actually hard.

When you look at something long enough, you can see it breathing and you know that the other thing is you.

