

GROUP LEARNING LOS ANGELES

DIVINE VIOLENCE (An Object Lesson)

lead by: *Edward Morris and Susannah Sayler
from The Canary Project (NYC)*

HUMAN RESOURCES
995 North Hill Street, L.A. 90012

DIVINE VIOLENCE (An Object Lesson) is an experiment in group learning and art-making. Together we will read and consider excerpts from seminal texts on violence (see below) and collect artifacts to incorporate into an installation at Human Resources Gallery. **We are looking for 5-8 collaborators.** All participants will be credited as collaborators.

The readings and discussions will explore the following:

- *Why are we attracted to violence? Why are we repulsed by it?*
- *Can we find representations of the sort of invisible, systemic, “objective” violence that Zizek articulates in his book *Violence*? Does that help anything? Is the “dialectic of concealment and revelation,” as Maggie Nelson writes, crucial to our understanding (and mitigation) of violence?*
- *Is some form of violence helpful or even necessary to achieve social or political change? In other words, can violence ever be justified (something Walter Benjamin does under the aegis of *Divine Violence*)?*

SESSION ONE: JANUARY 5

Introduction of the readings and “homework,” (which involves collecting objects that had formerly seemed benign, but that now, under scrutiny, seem violent — the manifestation of some, larger insinuating force).

SESSION TWO: JANUARY 12

Discussion of reading and selection of objects for the installation at Human Resources.

READINGS (excerpts will be provided)

On Violence (Hannah Arendt), *Critique of Violence* (Walter Benjamin), *Concerning Violence: The Wretched of the Earth* (Franz Fanon), *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (Sigmund Freud), *The Art of Cruelty* (Maggie Nelson, pre publication), *The Iliad, or the Poem of Force* (Simone Weil), *Violence* (Slavoj Zizek)

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP LEADERS

Susannah Sayler and Edward Morris are collaborators working with photography, video, writing and installation. Their work is primarily concerned with contemporary efforts to develop ecological consciousness; the possibilities for art as research; and making art within a social activist praxis. In 2006 they co-founded The Canary Project. Sayler / Morris have been Loeb Fellows at Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design; visiting artists at Indiana University; and artists-in-residence at Columbus State University. They are currently teaching in the Transmedia Department at Syracuse University.

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