

A sketchbook for Analytic Action

2.18.1

Hattie Myers

# THE ANNIVERSARY

Anniversaries exist as a demand to remember and, as such, they have a great deal in common with the work of psychoanalysis. Looking back from the vantage of *ROOM*'s first anniversary, it is amazing to recall that *ROOM* might not have happened at all but for a fortuitous accident.

Twenty days after the 2016 elections I received an email that had not been intended for me to read.

“Hello from (Trumpland) The heartland,  
I am so fucking pissed I can barely  
see straight right now and I wanted  
to share with you the editor's response to my piece...  
She butchered it!!!  
I'm thinking if they don't publish it  
I'm going to publish it myself  
and send it out to the entire community anyway.  
I need some helpful validation right now SOS!  
And if this is a sign of things to come  
and it's happening in an analytic community, OMG!!  
Peace and love and more peace and love...  
We need it or maybe I should say I need it!  
XO Margaret”

Margaret Fulton, a psychoanalyst practicing in Minnesota, wrote this e-mail to a few of her close friends but inadvertently sent it to hundreds of mental health professional on a national listserv.

Intrigued, I asked Margaret for the back story. It turned out that she had been invited by her local analytic society to write a short essay on the subject of ‘play’ in psychoanalysis,

and they had just rejected the essay saying it was “too political during a time when it was important to strike a balance.” She was furious.

The essay had begun non-controversially enough with a quote from the British psychoanalyst, Winnicott: “Psychotherapy takes place in the overlap of two areas of playing, that of the patient and that of the therapist. Psychotherapy has to do with two people playing together. The corollary of this is that where playing is not possible then the work done by the therapist is directed towards bringing the patient from a state of not being able to play into a state of being able to play.” D.W. Winnicott (1971).

But after the election, Margaret’s interest took a turn and she had begun to wonder, “What’s at play when both patient and therapist are unwilling or unable to play?”

“November,” she wrote, “has been a somber month; the cacophony of laments, tirades, raw images, disjointed thoughts, and emotional turbulence surrounding the election has taken a toll on the psychoanalytic playground, stressing the capacities of the ‘holding environment,’ rupturing potential space, and foreclosing on the mind’s capacity to process and ‘contain’ the complexities at play internally and externally.”

Margaret is from a purple state but her words fit well the feelings of my

blue state colleagues. Were we seeing red in the light of fascism? A frozen state of play transcended color that month in this country.

Margaret gave me permission to post her essay on my analytic society's listserv, where an editor on *The Candidate's Journal* read it and asked permission to print it. And so, with the addition of a few paragraphs referencing Freud and Lacan, Margaret's essay was formally published. Her essay's plea for the importance of finding analytically informed ways to keep play alive in times of trauma became the spring board for our first issue of *ROOM: A Sketchbook for Analytic Action*.

*ROOM* was designed to be a space devoted to diversity of experience, depth of feeling, and complexity of thought. True to the root of the word 'essay' ('essai' means trial or attempt in French), we envisioned that IPTAR's newsletter might be a place in which contributors would have room just to try things out. A year ago it felt to us that reading essays like Margaret's, about the personal and collective meaning of our experiences, could help support our destabilized and bewildered analytic community.

We did not anticipate the extent to which *ROOM* would travel over the course of its first year nor did we envision that it would break new analytic ground. Over the course of *ROOM*'s first year we have had well over two dozen contributors and thousands of hits in over twenty countries. Three weeks ago we launched a website to help our readers access us more easily. *ROOM*

is now being read by non-mental health professionals. But perhaps we shouldn't have been surprised. As Margaret wrote toward the end of her essay, "In the wake of the election and with increasing tensions, everything becomes political and the political becomes personal, including the choice to be thoughtful and to speak truthfully from one's emotional core." The ideas and experiences *ROOM* was "playing" with were hardly just local issues — nor were they issues that only concerned psychoanalysts. Speaking "truthfully and thoughtfully from an emotional core" is not just at the heart of psychoanalytic practice; it is at the heart of being human.

The art of psychoanalytic practice has historically been a private experience — existing between one patient and one therapist, or, in our professional literature between one analyst and the creation of a new theoretical construct. This private space that psychoanalysis inhabited may well have protected the development of our field during its formative decades. Psychoanalysis has come to the public party late in the game.

*ROOM* is a psychoanalytic space responding to our times — and the interplay between the public and private spheres is fully apparent in this anniversary issue. Along with Margaret Fulton's seminal essay, here is a taste of "what's at play" in *ROOM 2.18*: Betty Teng evokes a collective experience of trauma through the generalizations she draws from her clinical work with trauma victims and through the cultural artifacts she uses in her art. Natalie Korytnyk Forrester's deeply private pain finds universal resonance in integrative work resulting in powerful and heartbreaking sculptures. Stefanie Hofer writes of the singular knowledge she carries as a mother unable to protect her small child from the ubiquitous violence that exists undigested and unabated in American culture. Ann Kaplan, a child of activist psychoanalysts, turns back to pick up the pieces her parents left undone. Young-Ran Kim

poetically and musically illustrates the analytic paradox of discovering universal truths through the deep recognition of individual difference from her perspective as a patient and a therapist. Sara Taber's "Camus for Fractured Times" and Diane Seuss's "Still Life With Dictator" push beyond prose to touch the edge of an abyss. These poets recall the work of other poets and, for one of *ROOM*'s editors, Rick Grose, the work of Osip Mandelstam during the years of Stalin. Diving into the abyss, Joanna Goodman's ink and alcohol rendering, *Political* and Francesca Schwartz's bone sculptures, *The Space Between*, interrogate two kinds of abject interiorities.

Psychoanalysis is in a particularly advantageous position to see how the interface between the public and the private, and between the political and the personal, have much in common with the transitional space between self and other and between the past and the future. This mediating space has historically been the stomping ground of our psychoanalytic work. Psychoanalysts have much to offer about the contours of this crucial space that exists between the private and the public domains.

Margaret ended her essay as it began, by quoting Winnicott: "In doing psychoanalysis, I aim at: Keeping alive. Keeping well. Keeping awake."

In keeping with this aim, *ROOM*'s public mission is to remain a space that furthers our capacity to keep alive, keep well, and, in these terrifying and sometimes mind-numbing times, keep awake. —

## DUTY TO SPEAK

Betty Teng

The folks in the images appearing with this essay hold the traumas of racism, immigration, natural disaster and genocide. I show these faces because they reflect experiences of trauma so many of us Americans contain, directly or intergenerationally. I point to these images also to reflect on the ongoing fact that Donald Trump and his supporters' aggressive words, policies and actions against these already vulnerable people — against what is vulnerable in us all — has been traumatizing or re traumatizing for far too many.

This is unacceptable.

To consider more specifically who holds the burdens of trauma, I reference Harvard University trauma expert Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, who said in his 2014 book, *The Body Keeps the Score*:

**Research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has shown that one in five Americans was sexually molested as a child; one in four was beaten by a parent to the point of a mark being left on their body; and one in three couples engages in physical violence. A quarter of us grew up with alcoholic relatives, and one out of eight witnessed their mother being beaten or hit.**

If we add to these statistics the many Americans who experience — personally or intergenerationally — the traumas of racism, slavery, immigration, war, natural disaster, sexual violence and genocide, we start to understand on another level how Donald Trump is traumatogenic. As an alleged perpetrator of sexual assault who underscores his lack of concern about the heavy responsibilities of his role by neglecting history, highlighting divisions, bullying critics and making impulsive decisions, it makes sense that he would, as President of the United States, traumatize us all.

As you read, please imagine the patients I hold in my mind as I write: they are the fifteen or so survivors of trauma I have sat with in the last two years. They are women and men. Six of them come from different countries. They are of all classes, races, religions and ethnicities. Their degrees range from high school diploma to PhD. One of them is deaf. Each of them has been subjugated in ways that have shamed, silenced and isolated them.

I treat adult survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence and childhood sexual abuse. It is they and their responses to the incessant volatility and instability Trump has wrought in the twelve *exhausting* months since his inauguration, who have prompted me to step out of my comfort zone to speak.

To show what they grapple with, I share some of their quotes:

"I went into my interview and immediately noticed who was white and who wasn't. I wouldn't have before...I think it's because Trump highlights these divisions and I'm now more wary."

"I have been obsessed with the health care situation. I'm really scared. Because I now have a pre existing condition, you know?"

"After Charlottesville, I'm more afraid to walk down the street. I feel like my being Asian American is highlighted — and not in a good way."

"We elected a rapist to the presidency. Really? Really?"

"Now that he's president, How could reporting matter anymore? No one would believe me now."





A hallmark of suffering from trauma is silence. The impact of what happens to a survivor is so overwhelming they are challenged to speak. Neurobiologically, trauma can literally shut down the speech centers of the brain. The work of trauma treatment is to help those traumatized create a contained and safe space (like this one in ROOM) to encourage talking about what might seem to be too shameful to share. This opens emotional wounds to healing so that they don't fester and find outlets in maladaptive addictive or obsessive behaviors like alcoholism, cutting, skin picking, drug abuse, eating disorders and hyper sexual activity, to name a few.

Hearing my patients and their struggles with silence and isolation made worse by this aggressive, belligerent, volatile and subjugating president, it was intolerable for me *not* to speak.

Yet there is now a debate raging about how appropriate it is for mental health professionals to express themselves about a public figure's fitness as a leader. The Goldwater Rule says American mental health experts must not comment on the mental status of a political leader we have not thoroughly examined in person. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) has recently reemphasized their adoption of Goldwater as one of their ethical guidelines. These guidelines are also incorporated as legal rules by the licensing boards of many states. While no psychiatrist has yet had their license removed on the grounds of violating the Goldwater Rule, the fact that this 1973 ruling is being held over clinicians' heads as a threat silences skilled experts who have the tools to recognize dangerous behavior and its entrenchment in a psyche. The message of the Goldwater Rule and the current debate surrounding it is that mental health professionals should not overstep and intrude upon the realm of politics.

This obscures the urgency of our times. We are in an unprecedented and unnerving circumstance where it is not mental health which intrudes upon the realm of politics, but politics which invades our realm of mental health. Aside from Nixon, no other American president has incurred the widespread concern of all — from world leaders, to politicians, to military experts, to human rights advocates, to mental health experts — about his mental fitness and dangerousness to the people he was elected to serve and not subjugate.

Thus we are traumatized and we are vulnerable and we have in Donald Trump a person in the White House who is particularly triggering for anyone who has endured sexual assault, bullying, or who has faced an abusive partner or authority figure. With our increased dependency on mobile devices and social media, we are perpetually exposed to Trump's toxicity via an ever spinning 24-hour news cycle. This is not healthy on a societal level.

While resisting might imply fighting or aggression, I believe it means speaking and revealing vulnerabilities where it is safe to do so, to truly connect with oneself and others. For it is in our tender selves that we find truth and personal integrity. Connecting with our vulnerable selves is the way we can discover our own resilience and impregnable strength.

From my tender and most vulnerable feelings for my patients, I speak and say we clinicians do have a duty to our patients, to our society, and to ourselves — a duty to not only to warn of the imminent and serious dangerousness of Donald Trump but also a duty to speak so that we can share our deepest concerns with one another, and keep each other safe. —

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<sup>[1a][b]</sup> "We are all immigrants", Lafayette Square. Photo by Lorie Shaull. Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:We\\_Are\\_All\\_Immigrants\\_Lafayette\\_Square\\_1324562192321.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:We_Are_All_Immigrants_Lafayette_Square_1324562192321.jpg)

<sup>[2]</sup> Photo by Andrew Tauber. His Father.

<sup>[3]</sup> A Puerto Rico National Guard Soldier helps a couple getting away from the flooded areas in Condado, San Juan, Puerto Rico after the path

of Hurricane Maria. Photo by Sgt. Jose Ahiram Diaz-Ramos/PRNG-PAO. Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Puerto\\_Rico\\_National\\_Guard\\_1372654281321.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Puerto_Rico_National_Guard_1372654281321.jpg)

<sup>[4]</sup> Some members of the San Francisco 49ers kneel during the National Anthem before a game against the Washington Redskins at FedEx Field on October 15, 2017 in Landover, Maryland. Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:San\\_Francisco\\_49ers\\_National\\_Anthem\\_Kneeling\\_1377210415811.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:San_Francisco_49ers_National_Anthem_Kneeling_1377210415811.jpg)



NO PLACE LIKE HOME, Betty Teng

This collage was made as I was transitioning, from film making to psychoanalysis. It is torn up road maps of everywhere I have ever lived. The letters of "No Place Like Home" are strewn with the flying items of Dorothy's Home, and the ground is *New York Times* newsprint images, and copies of stories from the Iraq war.

2.18.4

## PLAYING WITH GUNS

Stefanie Hofer

I attended “Shine Children's Festival” at Blacksburg Christian Fellowship in Blacksburg, Virginia, with my four-year-old daughter dressed up as a butterfly on October 28, 2017. As soon as we left our car we ran into two pre-teenage boys with toy guns aimed at a girl who was falling down pretending that she was shot.

My daughter and I were disturbed. I quickly explained to my daughter that in our family we don't play games where people are killed.

Then we walked through a line-up of activities for children.

We came across a booth where children were handed plastic guns, looking like semi-automatic weapons, for shooting at bottles to receive candy as award. I was shocked. I didn't expect such activities at an event for children organized by a church. Immediately, I pulled my “little butterfly” to a different activity, hoping she hadn't noticed the toy machine guns.

On the way out, my daughter discovered the playground. While crossing the lawn to reach it we ran into an elderly lady overseeing a different booth. She was struggling to get one of the toy machine guns to work. Accidentally, she was aiming a gun at my daughter and me. We were less than a foot away.

My heartbeat rose.

When we reached the playground, to my horror, there was another ‘tween running around with a plastic gun aimed at the little children playing there. I asked a member of the congregation

who was in charge if the boy could be told not to target little children.

She responded that “this” does not interfere with the event. The boy was allowed to continue his game of killing. I am puzzled why a church, meant to be a symbol for peace, promotes gun violence against our children.

I wrote these lines to the church and to our local newspaper, *The Roanoke Times*. I received no response.

At first, their silence made me wonder if I had overreacted to the presence of toy guns at the church event due to my experience with gun violence.

My husband, Jamie Bishop, was murdered during the Virginia Tech massacre on April 16, 2007, the deadliest school shooting in US history.

I came to the conclusion that I was not overreacting.

I decided that my loss and trauma might just give the incidence at the church more urgency.

I was born and raised in Germany where it is considered common sense that children should not be exposed to violence, not in games and not on screen. When I moved to the US, I was in shock how no one, not even children, can avoid the reenactment of violence. It is on TV screens in restaurants, in airports, and even in doctors' waiting rooms. It is in commercials on the internet, and on toy boxes in stores. In supermarkets, life-size *Star Wars* figurines with guns are displayed in the aisles while DVDs covered with cruel scenes are stacked on the shelves. Why

is there such a fascination with violence in the US society? I have never found an answer to this question.

Of course, the omnipresence of, and fascination with, violence spills over to the playgrounds. I believe that by exposing children to violence from such an early age, they become desensitized to it. Violence is an acceptable part of the society.

Seven days after my experience at the Blacksburg Christian Fellowship, there was more violence. Eight people were hit by a pick-up truck on a bike path in New York City and twenty six people were shot at a church in Sutherland Springs, Texas.

When the Halloween parade took place in New York City it was considered a sign of resilience. I wondered if it was another sign of being desensitized. Ultimately, this society is avoiding the uncomfortable question: Why do so many mass shootings take place in the US compared to other Western nations?

We need to prevent mass violence, not get resilient to it. —

**\*Four days before this issue of ROOM was to be published, fourteen children and three adults were killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.**

**The editors will update 'Playing With Guns' on ROOM's website every time there is a mass shooting until the US government moves to restrict access to firearms.**

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2.18.6

## SCULPTING GRIEF

Natalie Korytnyk Forrester

I wish I knew exactly what drew me in. I do recall what I brought: a bullet and my late husband's dried wedding boutonniere. Melissa Ichiuji, the workshop teacher, was afraid the bullet could explode easily. I reassured her it wouldn't. I just never imagined something solid could explode without impact.

The workshop was on figurative sculpture, something I knew nothing about, never having had an art class. But here I was. Boom!

The theme of the workshop was *Home*. The assignment was to bring in two objects associated with home. One object would represent the comfort or "ease" of home and the other the "dis-ease." The objects

had to fit in your hand and become part of the sculpture. Daunting. Due to my eleventh hour registration, I had little time to find the objects. The stray bullet I discovered on a shelf in a large safe. The dried boutonniere, which I never knew my husband had preserved, I found in his medicine cabinet.

Initially, we created the bodies. Using wire to form an armature, we wrapped cotton batting around it to fill in a human form. We then sewed fabric onto it to finish and define it. Picking the right fabric for my female sculpture was key. Initially drawn to a "wonder woman" cloth, I discarded it for a black velvet piece with traces of deep floral color. "Elegant and sensual," I thought.

The workshop felt to me like *Project Runway*. I was determined to finish the piece by the end of the weekend, so I worked like mad. My work area was a complete mess, and my

late husband's boutonniere, which he had lovingly kept for years, was crushed into pieces by my driven industriousness. I brought it home - quietly devastated.

That evening I decided to stuff the boutonniere into the sculpture behind the fabric and next to the heart. Laid to rest. A hidden secret - only I knew.

The next morning with 6 hours to go in the workshop, we discussed how to incorporate the item of "dis-ease." This was the bullet. I considered all kinds of creative images - like having it pooped out of the body - the perfect metaphor for eliminating toxicity. "Not attractive" kept going through my mind and the brilliance of the concept faded.

Melissa suggested the bullet could go through the body, and that intrigued me. Yes, like an action figure. I would send it through the stomach. That meant I would need to perform major surgery on the figure by stabbing scissors through its center to create a hole. The idea was painful after all that sewing. The tunnel of a hole I shaped and covered by cardboard concealed in red fabric - the entrance and exit defined with gold rhinestones. The bullet I suspended in the hole with black fishnet from stockings. Glamorous.

An action figure needed a cape. With red velvet fabric I covered the head and with red tulle, I crafted a cape so it was flying in the breeze. Posing the figure with a confident stride, I wanted to convey "faster than a speeding bullet" strength.

At the very end, I realized I forgot to give my figure breasts. Quickly I found two small brass tacks and stuck them on like nipples. To my surprise with these two tacks and the gaping stomach hole below like a mouth, I suddenly saw Edvard Munch's *The Scream*. Scary. I liked it.

When the workshop ended, we were asked to discuss our sculptures and the objects we had incorporated. I froze. Would I tell these strangers and Melissa that my husband died - and that he took his own life with a bullet?

When my turn came, I was shaking. But I looked at *Belly Bullet Woman* as I called her - strong, invincible, and unfazed by the bullet passing through her stomach - and told the story. And then I remembered something I had completely forgotten until that moment.

My older stepson and I had written good-bye letters to my late husband, which were cremated with his body. My younger stepson had not been able to write that letter. I wanted something to represent him, too. Frantically searching his room, I found a small red Superman cape from an old Halloween costume. I took the cape to the crematorium and spread it over the sheet that covered my late husband's body, next to the letters.

Maybe I wished he had been Superman. Or maybe that we would gain Superman's strength to survive this. And maybe that's how the action figure idea began.

Creating sculptures was an antidote for my trauma and grief. With wire, velvet, rhinestones, fishnet stockings and a bullet I digested and made visible the unseen and the unspeakable. The figures impacted others and exploded something in me. I found an artist within -and a silver lining.

The second sculpture I created was *Baby Love... Lead Role in a Cage...* The sculpture was inspired by a discussion

in the class about children. Having had no children, I felt the loss and created this sculpture around this pain. I gave the figure pacifiers as nipples, and eggs in a glass tube near her belly. Attached to her with a diaphanous umbilical cord is a baby in a red cage. She is looking back at the baby with a black face and veil like a widow. Unconsciously, I think this sculpture is also about losing my husband, "my baby", and my grief around it. The gravel on the bottom is from a property my late husband I shared in the country. The crunching of it beneath my car was the last sound I heard before hearing of his death.

*Sin City Bride*, the third sculpture was inspired by my wedding in Las Vegas. It was glittery, glamorous, and, yes, a bit cheesy. This sculpture touches on reflection and the past, symbolized by the figure posed from the back, looking into a mirror with a timepiece attached to her back. It is also about the unknowing uncertainty of dreams and wishes. There are dice scattered around her - reminding us that how life unfolds can be a bit of a crapshoot.

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*Love Shack Baby*, my fourth sculpture, was created around my wish for the future - for a new life and love. Symbolized by the ancient biblical story of Adam and Eve and the original sin. She is wearing a crystal heart with shattered glass beneath it. Falling in love you risk a broken heart.

My most recent sculpture is called *Against the Wind*. It was inspired by my wish to emerge from the darkness strong and triumphant. —



\*Forrester's sculptures can be viewed in [ROOM's online](#).



2.18.8

## FOUND IN TRANSLATION: A KOREAN THERAPIST TRAINS IN AMERICA

Young-Ran Kim

For a while after I came to the U.S. in August 2016, I continued to have dreams which seemed to show that although I had physically moved to the U.S., my mind still needed time to catch up to that move. In those dreams, I missed my flight to New York because I arrived late to the airport, or I didn't get ready to leave for the airport because I didn't finish packing my huge luggage, or I couldn't bypass someone who was seeking my help, which ultimately made me miss my flight to New York. It seemed as though my mind was gasping for breath while running to New York. Considering all the new and different things surrounding me, it is understandable that my mind needed more time to come to terms with the new physical settlement. The most unfamiliar and different thing that came with my move was my analysis. I started working with my analyst, whose language, race, and culture were all different from my own.

Since I started my psychoanalysis, many people have asked me, "How is it possible?" I am not sure what they mean by this question. Are they asking whether smooth verbal communication between my analyst and me is possible because my mother tongue is Korean and my analyst's is English? Are they asking me how my analyst, who most likely does not know a lot about Korean culture, can really understand me? Or, are they asking whether our racial difference poses an obstacle to entering the unique relationship between patient and analyst? I have not gotten answers to these questions yet, at least none that would satisfy me or those asking them. Probably I need more time to truly be ready to face those questions because I have only been going to

my analyst for a little over a year. However, I decided to write this piece, partly because I thought that writing about my experiences would help me organize my thoughts and feelings, and I believe that one day I will be able to look back at this documentation of my thoughts and feelings and learn from this experience. I also hoped that sharing my personal experiences with our community would give rise to fruitful conversations. Here, I will share one moment with my analyst and another moment with my patient, which started to pave the path towards answering those questions.

One night I had a dream, where my favorite lullaby, that I thought I had forgotten, came to me. The lullaby was "Oh My Darling Clementine." In the dream, I was a little girl, staying with my mom in a cottage on the tranquil seashore. The little girl in my dream was humming the song softly to herself. I am not sure if my mom could hear me singing that lullaby in the dream or not. In Korea, we have our own version of this song, and it is well-known as a children's song and a lullaby or cradle song, which is sung to lull a baby to sleep. The lyrics to the Korean version are different from that of the original American song. In the Korean version of the song, there is a little girl who lives alone with her old dad in a cottage at the seashore, and her dad is depicted as a fisherman, not a miner as in the original. As soon as the song paints in our imagination the scene of the little girl and her old dad living together in a cabin on the broad ocean, the chorus commences with, "Oh, my darling, Oh, my darling, Clementine, where did you go, leaving your old dad alone, forever?" which alludes to the loss of the little girl in the ocean. In the second verse the loss

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**My first thought about these feelings was that they might come from my poor English. I thought I became frustrated, desolate, and sad because of my English. In fact, blaming my English and subsequent frustration was a familiar and ugly artwork created by my merciless super-ego.**

becomes clear by stating that, “One windy day the little girl, who had gone to the ocean to meet her dad, did not come back even after dark.”

The following day, I was trying to tell my analyst about my dream, and I gradually found myself feeling more and more frustrated, and as my frustration elevated it began to give me a disturbing feeling. Even though I was able to convey the Korean lyrics of the song and we were able to share some of the underlying meanings of my dream, I couldn’t shake off the feeling that something was not enough and something was missing. My frustration was getting so deep that it even led to desolation and sadness.

My first thought about these feelings was that they might come from my poor English. I thought I became frustrated, desolate, and sad because of my English. In fact, blaming my English and subsequent frustration was a familiar and ugly artwork created by my merciless super-ego. Then, as the force of my super-ego subsided, I began to think that the source of my feelings might be related to a disappointment with the innate limitation of translating languages. I thought I was disappointed by the fact that English, which mediated a verbal communication between me and my analyst, couldn’t transfer the poetic air or subtle nuances expressed by the Korean song. Then, my next thought went to the following question: “What if I had worked with a Korean analyst? What if I had talked about this dream to a Korean analyst, whose language and culture were the same as mine?”

At that moment, I came up with another reason for those feelings, that was neither language nor translation weaknesses. The origin of my feelings during the session, I came to think, originated from my desire for a relationship with my analyst coupled with the fear that accompanied that relationship. I had a deep desire to share with my analyst what I had cherished for such a long time, but at the same time, I was afraid that this wish would not be fulfilled. Besides that, I felt ambivalent: on the one hand, I was wanting someone with whom I could share what I had cherished, but on the one hand, I

was reluctant to share my little secret bright light with anyone, for fear that contact with the outside world would make it lose its brightness. My longing, fear, and ambivalence seemed to evolve into sadness and desolation inside me.

Through this experience, I came to understand that differences between myself and my analyst were not so much a barrier that blocked the interaction between us, as a door guiding us to reach deeper inside myself. If I had been working with a Korean analyst and talked to him or her about my “Oh, my darling, Clementine” dream, I might have assumed that he or she would know what I wanted to share, and our work would not have shed light on these feelings. The difference between us led me to explore and reach more deeply into myself. At that moment, our differences allowed us to move beyond the limits of our assumptions, and the unknown of each other’s worlds became our greatest strength.

My experience with one of my patients offered me glimpses into another aspect of these differences. He was my first child patient, a 9-year-old biracial boy; his mother was white and his father, black. The boy had white skin and light brown “afro” hair. I remember the resonant moment when I first met him in the play therapy room. He was brought to the therapy room by the principal’s assistant because I was supposed to work with him at his school. When he was left alone with me, he appeared very shy initially, avoiding eye contact, sporadically giving a shy smile and a little twist of his head. Introducing myself to him, I told him my name, “Young Kim,” and he looked straight at me, murmuring my name to himself with curiosity in his eyes, as if he were saying, “I’ve never heard that kind of name,” or asking, “Is there that kind of name in the world?” I saw a light of wonder in his eyes, and asked him, “Does it sound strange?” With a soft voice, he said, “Yes.” “That’s probably because I’m from Korea. It is a Korean name,” I said to him. And then, when I pronounced his name, which I had never heard before—his name, I later learned, was a very unusual name, to the extent that only 0.013 percent of

넓고 넓은 바닷가에  
오막살이 집 한 채  
고기 잡는 아버지와  
철모르는 딸 있네

내 사랑아 내 사랑아  
나의 사랑 클레멘타인  
늙은 애비 혼자 두고  
영영 어딜 갔느냐

바람 부는 하루 날에  
아버지를 찾으러  
바닷가에 나가더니  
해가져도 안오네

내 사랑아 내 사랑아  
나의 사랑 클레멘타인  
늙은 애비 혼자 두고  
영영 어딜 갔느냐

넓고 넓은 바닷가에  
꿈을 잃은 조각배  
철썩이던 파도마저  
소리 없이 잠드네

내 사랑아 내 사랑아  
나의 사랑 클레멘타인  
늙은 애비 혼자 두고  
영영 어딜 갔느냐

늙은 애비 혼자 두고  
영영 어딜 갔느냐

To listen to the Korean version of Clementine [click here](#)

the population in the US have this name, he corrected my pronunciation and said, "It's a little strange because it's not like Alex or Fred." "Do you mean your name is unusual?" I asked, and he said, "Yes."

I do not know yet what he means by the unusual, and what has made him think of himself as an unusual boy. However, that moment is echoing inside me because it enabled me to see how our very different names—his unusual name and my unusual name—allowed us to build a connection, and helped this special connectedness unfold in the consulting room. The differences between myself and the little boy opened the door to a special bond between us, whereas the differences between myself and my analyst, and our experience surrounding the lullaby in my dream, gave me the window to look into myself more deeply.

When people originally asked me how it could be possible to work with an analyst and a patient whose language, culture, and race were so different from mine, I was inclined to tell them that there might be something beyond cultures in the human mind and human relationships, but I hesitated, because I didn't want to give them a wrong and risky impression that psychoanalysis pursues one universal value. We all know how violent and brutal universalism, or the attempt to seek one universal value, whatever it is, has been in our history and the present era. Now if people were to ask me how it is possible to work with my analyst (white, American, and English-speaking) and with my patient (biracial, American, and English-speaking), I would talk to them about the place I have reached so far. I would tell them there is a difference beyond cultures, languages, and races. Beyond the difference, I do not think there exists one universal truth. Although we cannot avoid the shivering doubt and anxiety behind the difference, the differences between us open a door for deeper self-understanding and a very special connectedness. The differences between us, I would tell them, are not a loss but an enrichment. —

—  
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2.18.9

**STILL LIFE  
WITH DICTATOR**

Diane Seuss

Anyone can look at a bowl filled with plums.  
Even the ones trampled beneath the hooves  
of the general's white horse—the peons,

the threshers, the nobodies. Food, the great  
leveler. The nobodies must eat, even if  
they resort to coffee grounds,

or sandwiches airlifted and dropped  
into the jungle, teeming with maggots.  
Food is food. Even the general must eat.

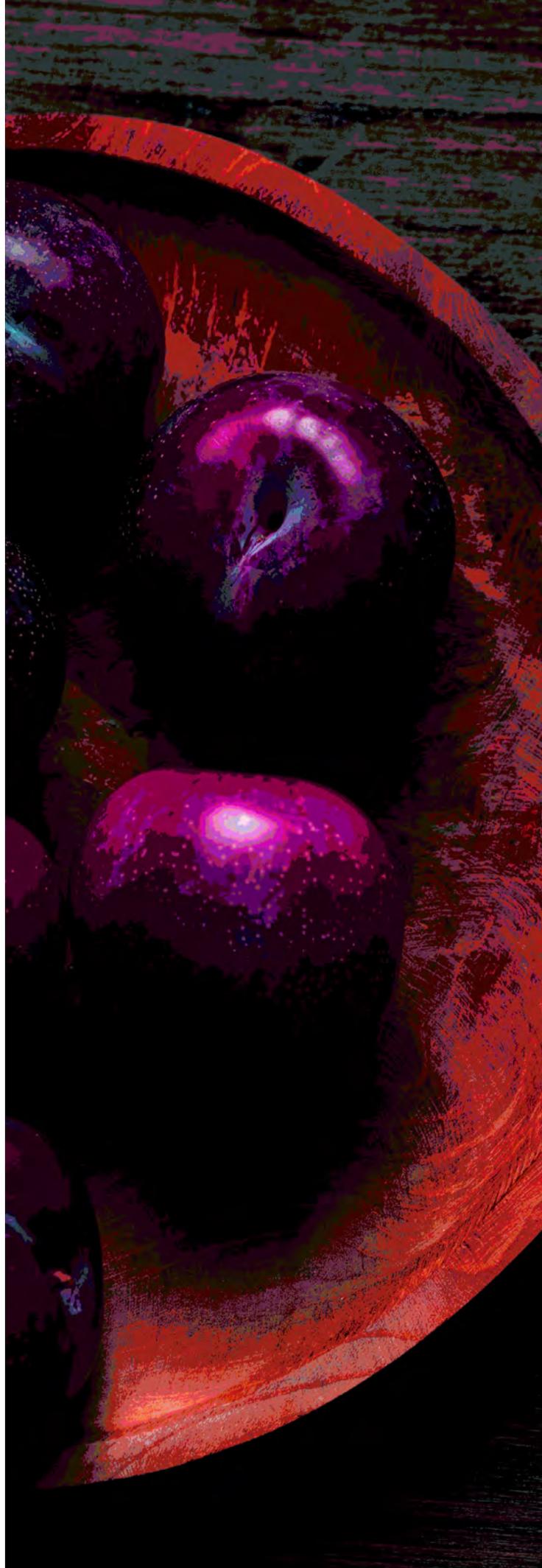
Even presidents, dictators. Hitler himself  
would walk along the cliff's edge from his  
compound in Berchtesgaden to the round

teahouse in the trees. He'd settle himself  
into the cushioned chair some nobody pulled  
out for him, and into the nose positioned

over that cowcatcher mustache came  
the scintillating fragrance of tea roses.  
'There must be fresh flowers!' he'd barked

at the peons. As the steam from his tea  
dampened his cowcatcher, his eyes lit  
on the white bowl impassively holding

ten plums. He wanted to upend them, send the white bowl spinning until it hit the curved wall and broke into splinters the size of baby teeth. 'Who cares?' he wanted to say to the plums, but they wouldn't listen. Such an ordinary fruit; he'd seen the nobodies wolfing them down and spitting the pits in the air. Braying like donkeys, like schoolboys. The plums mocked him with their stillness. The sugar bowl mocked him, the sugar spoon engraved with the fat head of a thistle. Fruit sickened him, with its worms and scars, its fermentation. Its plainness, its roundness, its calm. It stared at him like one of those nobodies who didn't care how many times it was whipped. One of those who claimed to be beyond pain, one with a glint of what the churches would call holy light in their eyes. Plums, taunting him until he grabbed one and bit down and let the gold flesh fill his mouth with its revolting sweetness.



2.18.10

HOW MUCH  
CAN YOU BEAR?  
**THE CASE OF OSIP  
MANDELSTAM**

Richard B. Grose



The publication of Diane Seuss's poem, "Still Life with Dictator", in this issue of *ROOM* made me think of another poem about another dictator which appeared in circumstances very different from these. I refer to the poem on Stalin which was composed and read in a small circle by the Russian poet Osip Mandelstam (1891-1938) in Moscow in November 1933.

In the fall of 1933 the Soviet Union had experienced five years of tremendous social convulsion wrought by the Soviet Government in implementing the first five-year plan. With no preparation or concern for the consequences, every sector of the economy was industrialized, the peasants in their many tens of millions were forced onto collective farms, the arts and media were expected to confine themselves to celebrating these changes, and in place of the collective leadership prior to 1928, everyone was now expected to express a deep love and admiration for Joseph Stalin as the demiurge of the changes.

These forced changes brought terrible suffering. Collectivization ruined harvests and people starved. Furious peasants sabotaged their farms. A whole section of the country, the Ukraine, was deliberately deprived of grain in 1932 for political reasons, resulting in five million deaths or more. If you were alive in the Soviet Union in late 1933 you would have seen starving people everywhere even as you read in newspapers and novels about the glorious Communist future that was being built. Some believed what they read and thought no further; others saw with their own eyes what was happening. For the latter it could be an agonizing situation because the changes that created such terrible suffering were also being done in the name of the Revolution and the people, words which for many in the Russian intelligentsia still had great meaning. Mandelstam, who grew up in the last decade of czarist rule, was among these.

But he found he could not bear the suffering he witnessed and the mounting level of falsification and dishonesty that politics and culture were requiring. In November 1933 he could be silent no longer. He invited 11 people to his apartment who included his wife, some relatives, some good friends, and some acquaintances, to hear the following poem about Stalin.

We live, deaf to the land beneath us,  
Ten steps away no one hears our speeches,  
All we hear is the Kremlin mountaineer,  
The murderer and peasant-slayer.  
His fingers are fat as grubs  
And the words, final as lead weights, fall from his lips,  
His cockroach whiskers leer  
And his boot tops gleam.

Around him a rabble of thin-necked leaders -  
fawning half-men for him to play with.  
They whinny, purr or whine  
As he prates and points a finger,  
One by one forging his laws, to be flung  
Like horseshoes at the head, to the eye or the groin.  
And every killing is a treat  
For the broad-chested Ossete.

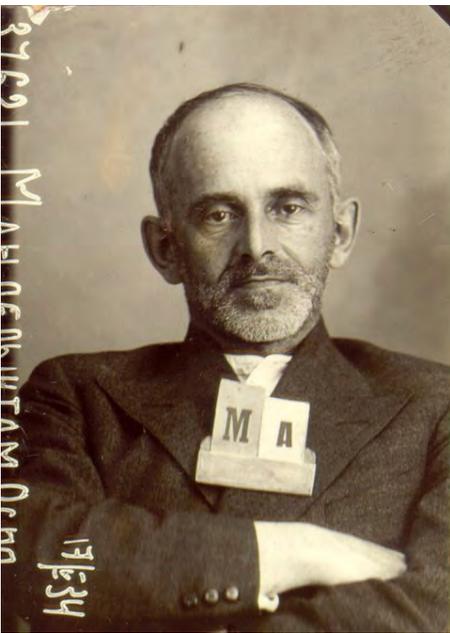
<sup>111</sup> Osip Mandelstam, Russian writer, 1914. Detail. Photo by Karl Bulla. Public Domain.



<sup>[2]</sup> From left to right: Osip Mandelstam, Korney Chukovsky, Benedikt Livshitz, Yuri Annenkov, 1914. Photo by Karl Bulla. Public Domain.

In 1933 it was already impossible to publish such a poem, and Mandelstam knew that if the poem came to the attention of OGPU, the secret police of the time, the punishment would be severe. His act of protest, therefore, was less in writing the poem than it was in reading it in a circle that was made up not only of relatives but also of people who were not so close. There are at least two ways of viewing this act. It can be seen as heroic, a poet's defiant assertion of his freedom as more precious than his life. It can also be seen as suicidal. The fact that some people present did not know everyone else well enough to be sure that not one of them would denounce the poet made the pressure great to be the first to denounce lest someone else be first and they then be viewed as a co-conspirator. Thus Mandelstam knowingly made himself the canary in the coal mine, to see how bad things had become.

He found out. Four months later he was arrested and subjected to an interrogation that made him temporarily psychotic. He and his wife were then exiled to a small city in the south of Russia, where they lived for three years. Mandelstam was re-arrested in May, 1938, during the Great Terror, and died in a Siberian transit camp in December of that year. He has no grave.



<sup>[3]</sup> Scanned from Russian edition of Mandelstam's collected work. Mugshot by the en: NKVD after Mandelstam's first arrest, 1934. Public Domain.

The Soviet Union in 1933 was a society well on its way to becoming totalitarian. Indeed one of the many changes in the country since 1928 had been the idea that any deviation from the expected admiration for Comrade Stalin was tantamount to counterrevolution and therefore punishable by death.

Today the head of the American government has given overwhelming evidence that he would like to rule as a dictator. He would like to receive as much praise and admiration as Stalin did. What our leader does not have in February, 2018, is a society and an historical situation which could allow him to expect universal praise.

As we move into the future with our would-be dictator, one parallel with the Soviet situation jumps out. Stalin plunged his country into chaos in part because to have allowed the then existing economic and social freedoms to continue would have threatened the very idea of the Revolution, i.e., the "glorious Communist future" that it was supposed to bring about. Creating terrible suffering was preferable to endangering the idea in the name of which they had taken power.

The Republican Party under Donald Trump seems to be in a somewhat similar situation. The conservative and libertarian philosophy on which Republicans have run and been elected says that we're all better off if government is reduced. It is reported that the Republicans are considering drastic cuts in government provisions, which if enacted would create great suffering. Will they have as much stomach as the Soviets did for causing great suffering in order to preserve their ideology? Will American institutions function well enough to avoid that suffering?

We will find out. —



<sup>[4]</sup> Photo of Osip Mandelstam made by the NKVD after his arrest, 1938. By NKVD. Public Domain.



## NOTES ON BECOMING AN ACTIVIST

Ann Kaplan

On October 14, 2017, I moderated an event called “Duty to Warn” in New York City. The event was one of several held nationally on that day. The topic was on the psychological fitness of Donald Trump to hold the office of president of the United States. The proximate reason for my being the organizer of this symposium and subsequent march to City Hall was that I went to high school with Dr. John Gartner, whose petition on [change.org](#), urging the removal of the president under the 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment, went viral. When John asked me if I would host the Duty to Warn event, I said, simply and without thinking, “Sure.”

Another force driving my personal connection to this movement was that, while I’m not a mental health professional, I am the daughter of two New York City-based Freudian psychoanalysts, Louise and Donald Kaplan. My uncle and one of my aunts are also therapists. In addition to being psychoanalysts, my parents were political activists. In 1961, when my younger brother was born, my mother was so distressed at the state of the nation that she wanted to leave the country and take us with her to a safe haven outside the United States.

Instead, we stayed. My parents resisted in part by creating, along with their poet friend, Armand Schwerner, a book titled *The Domesday Dictionary*<sup>1</sup>. Here are two entries:

### D is for Dust Bowl:

*“The migration was toward California, a land lush with the green of farms and fruit orchards. On the way, the families of the American Dust Bowl found themselves dissolving in the larger migratory confusion of families unhoused by the economic upheavals of the farmlands of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi.*

*Californians became aware of the increasing influx into their state of these shiftless aliens, filthy eyesores who glutted the labor market, who were prey to “red” agitation, whose hopeless laziness sponged the wealth that Californians had toiled to create. Roadblocks at the California border went up to regulate the traffic. Californians passed ordinances regulating the political and social activities of the new arrivals. They deputized armed guards to supervise and drive on the outlanders. Even vigilantes and night raiders were employed. To Californians in a time of peace, idealism, and economic growth, these migrants, arriving empty-handed from the disaster-stricken heart of America, seemed entirely wrong.”*

California, today considered a state of inclusion and liberal politics, shut its borders to our own citizens in the time of fear and perceived scarcity that followed the Great Depression.

### Z is for Zero-Zero:

*“Zero-Zero is a definitive plan for atomic disarmament based on an absolute atomic-energy moratorium...Zero-Zero is opposed by the Soviet Union as a plot by capitalist monopolists to impede the industrial development of the socialist states. As for the United States, the plan is an affront to that nation’s industrial philosophy: a technology that exists must be used.”*

This passage seems to echo in the words of Donald J. Trump, “What’s the point of having nuclear weapons if you can’t use them?”

The main purpose of the book was to prevent a nuclear holocaust, and here we are again. In my mind, this is the front-burner reason for containing, disarming, and evaluating this president. A similar climate after a similar sequence of historical events compels me to continue my parents’ work.

Following the screening of a video that was shown at every demonstration across the country, the speakers at the New York City event addressed four topics: the nature of the president’s disorder; the danger President Trump presents to our country and the world; the symptoms of trauma that we, as a country, are exhibiting under the Trump administration; and how to empower



<sup>[Ref. 1]</sup> Photo by Andrew Vickers. Members of One Resistance, an alliance of Progressive groups in Austin, Texas, march across the 1st Street Bridge in protest of the inauguration of Donald Trump as 45th President of the United States.



<sup>[Ref. 2]</sup> Photo by Rochelle Brown. Fight Like A Girl, United States.

Congress and the cabinet to employ the 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

The question and answer period that followed was so emotional that it was hard to end it in time to meet the scheduled start of our police-protected march. I heard from organizers in other cities that some events went on for six or more hours as participants broke into discussion and debate.

Our event was forming right on the heels of Charlottesville. Many participants expressed their fear of marching, but after the completely peaceful event people came up to me and said, “I was so scared to come out and march. I feel so empowered.” The officer in charge of the police who walked with us said, “If you ever have another demonstration in another precinct, call me, and I’ll put you directly in touch with the officer there. It was a pleasure to assist you.”

Unbeknownst to me, however, a rift within the Duty to Warn leadership had formed. It widened when the best-selling book *The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump*, edited by Dr. Bandy X. Lee, was published. ([DangerousCase.org](http://DangerousCase.org).) The rift comes down to the question of how mental-health professionals should respond to the crisis of leadership posed

by Mr. Trump’s presidency. Dr. Lee asserts that it is unprofessional to lobby for specific bills or laws or to engage in partisan political activity. In keeping with the old Goldwater rule, Dr. Lee’s group, “Duty to Protect,” does not diagnose the president. Rather, it urges congress to do what would be done with any citizen acting the way the president is acting: Contain. Disarm. Evaluate. [Mental Health Experts on Donald Trump • BRAVE NEW FILMS](#)

With this in mind, Duty to Protect delivered Lee’s book to members of Congress. Dr. Lee and other representatives of the group offered their professional perspective on why the president must be evaluated.

Meanwhile, Duty to Warn, led by Dr. Gartner, is clearly in the political advocacy arena, working hard to flip the house in 2018 by making a series of videos it hopes will go viral. Dr. Gartner asked me, “If the Russians who interfered in the 2016 election didn’t spend all that much money on their messages, why can’t the left do the same thing?”

Besides creating videos and facilitating demonstrations, Duty to Warn’s activi-

ties include forming a 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment PAC and Super PAC, which support candidates who run on a platform that includes a promise to pursue invocation of that amendment. [adutytowarn.org](http://adutytowarn.org)

So. We have two mental-health professionals with distinct ideas about how it is appropriate to act in a professional capacity. And we have one economist (me) who is now mostly an observer deciding what to do next. Whatever the “right” response, one moment during the Duty to Warn event stays with me. It was when someone stood up during the Q&A and said, “You should be out there saying this every fucking day.” —

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<sup>[1]</sup> The Domesday Dictionary Being an Inventory of the Artifacts and Conceits of a Civilization. Donald Kaplan and Armand Schwerner, 1963.

Dear Albert

If, as you say,

We are anointed by the Absurd

When

The world cracks,

The "chain of daily gestures" breaks,

And the "cruel mathematics" of the world click home cold and true--

That moment when

We cannot but see

The collision between

Our yearning for the absolute and reason's limitations,

That clash between

"the heart's wild longing for clarity" and

"the unreasonable silence of the world"

Then,

Between

Bankers who steal their clients' trust

Companies that decapitate mountains

Politicians who flout all reason and threaten to jail the opposition

Fishermen that, for fish bladders, drown porpoises

Shooters of the brown, the strange, and hooded children

and

The dark slaughterers of Aleppo

We are *there*,

Inducted into your hope-free league

2.18.12

**CAMUS**  
FOR FRACTURED TIMES,  
AUTUMN 2016

Sara Taber

And

If, as you propose,

In the face of this chaos,

This impossibility of adding up the world,

The only integrity is

To live solely on our eyes' stark evidence,

To accept "without appeal," the "difficult wisdom,"

To plant our stakes

At the "dizzying crest of nostalgia for unity and a fractured universe,"

And cradle in our arms forever these squirming twins,

Never putting one down to feed the other

Then

Grateful for your *Myth*, perhaps we may seize,

As a kind of un-solacing guide,

Your offered "style of life"—

What you call "the heart-rending, magnificent wager of the Absurd":

Embrace lucidity as the sole surety,

and, masking nothing, refusing consolation,

attempt to shine intelligence's light on all we cross

Accept "a universe in which nothing is possible"

but live always "as if"

we human beings may be re-formed

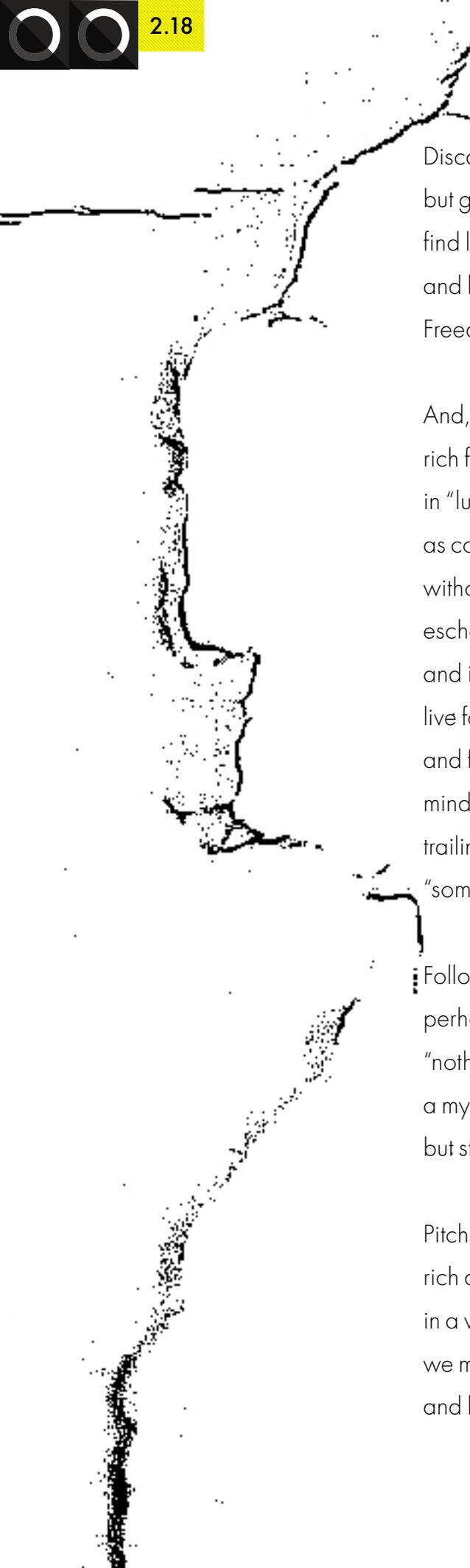
Exist on what we have

and, with a return to "daily acts,"

offer the world our "passionate attention"

and "live everything"—

feast on the vast bounty and diversity that are given



Discard hope  
but greet the species' condition in a spirit of defiance,  
find liberation in futility,  
and hold forever in treasured, taut tension your elegant trio:  
Freedom, Passion, Revolt

And,  
rich for our face-to-face struggle,  
in "lucid despair,"  
as condemned ones transfixed by "the pure flame of life"  
without expectation of fruit,  
eschewing reprieve,  
and in pursuit of a truer happiness:  
live for friendship "strong and chaste,"  
and for the resilient, ancient joys--  
mind, virtue, beauty, creation,  
trailing after, as you suggest,  
"something that transfigures, something delicate, mad or divine"

Following your tracks into Oran,  
perhaps we may learn to desire  
"nothing on which to hang  
a mythology, a literature, an ethic, or a religion,  
but stones, flesh, stars, and those truths the hand can touch"

Pitching our tents,  
rich as any God,  
in a vast barren among the rocks,  
we may gaze up to "a sky dripping with stars"  
and listen for "the myriad wondering little voices of the earth"

After being commissioned by the author's local psychoanalytic institute, this essay was rejected in November 2016 for being "too political".

Photography by Alexa Mazzeo



Trump had captured center stage with a new brand of incendiary rhetoric that not only promoted his own self-aggrandizement amidst a whirlwind of lies and contradictions, but substituted a smorgasbord of evasions, disavowals, contradictions, racial epithets, xenophobic commentaries and misogynistic declarations for substantive discussion and debate of critical issues.

When I was asked to write a piece for this newsletter on the subject of play, work/life balance or the analyst at play, I began gathering materials as I usually do in my writing process, and then I wait and see what thoughts begin to germinate along the subject matter lines as time moves forward. By Halloween, I had amassed quite a bit of material culled from PepWeb, my home library and the "Harvard Business Review." My preliminary percolations revolved around exploring what it means to "play" in psychotherapy or analysis, and what that involves for a therapist or analyst at play. Winnicott's theoretical statement on playing seemed like a fruitful point of departure towards this effort:

2.18.13

## WHAT'S AT PLAY?

Margaret Fulton

*Psychotherapy takes place in the overlap of two areas of playing, that of the patient and that of the therapist. Psychotherapy has to do with two people playing together. The corollary of this is that where playing is not possible then the work done by the therapist is directed towards bringing the patient from a state of not being able to play into a state of being able to play.*

D.W. Winnicott (1971)

Dreams and play are universal and both belong to states of well-being and mental health. On the other hand, nightmares, terrors and dreads lead to states of stasis, entropy and non-representation. Both dreams and play occupy central roles in the process of working through emotional experience. The ability to dream and to play helps transform our raw sensory experience and proto-emotions into thoughts and representations associated with thinking, emotional regulation, and symbolization. So when trauma and disorganizing experience wreak havoc on us individually and collectively, the analytic holding environment and potential space needed for growth suffers. When either the "work of play" or the dream-work fails to perform its function, the capacity of both patient and therapist to think, to represent and to form symbols can be compromised resulting in an unwillingness or inability to play, thus jeopardizing the therapeutic endeavor.

But what's at play when both patient and therapist are unwilling or unable to play?

On Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup> after an unprecedented venomous and sullied presidential campaign by Donald Trump, he was declared the President-elect of the United States. During his eighteen-month campaign, Trump had captured center stage with a new brand of incendiary rhetoric that not only promoted his own self-aggrandizement amidst a whirlwind of lies and contradictions, but substituted a smorgasbord of evasions, disavowals, contradictions, racial epithets, xenophobic commentaries and misogynistic declarations for substantive discussion and debate of critical issues.

Trump's rabid prejudicial and tyrannical rants throughout his 18-month campaign incited and stoked flames of hatred and hateful action throughout the country. He repeatedly accused and slammed Hillary Clinton for alleged wrongdoing, conflicts of interest, defiance of law, ineptness, all of which could easily be viewed as his own rage-filled projections. Trump's stalking and bullying behavior of Clinton during the televised debates hauntingly cast a metaphoric pall of "domestic assault" and powerful asymmetries over viewers. In sum, Trump's platform "To Make America Great Again" rested on a panoply of ongoing threats to prosecute Hillary Clinton, deport millions of immigrants, register all Muslims, withdraw from climate change accords, obliterate legal sanctions afforded to LGBT communities, women, same-sex marriages and Dreamers, and to bomb the \*#@\* out of enemy nations.

It hardly required the medical or mental health communities to offer diagnoses of Trump as narcissistic, sociopathic, unethical and unfit for presidential duty. As alarm bells went off, the media repeatedly sent out the hue and cry that Trump's manifest behavior and such unprecedented conditions were far beyond normal. In fact, they were pathological, not only in terms of party and policy, but more so in terms of his emboldened perversion of common decency, civil discourse, self-evident truths, inalienable rights, moral consciousness and the essential underpinnings of our constitutional democracy. How can one continue to play

It is probably true that many of us have had some experience of discrimination, exclusion, or dehumanization, and while we have also advocated for the marginalized, it is now painfully difficult to identify as more marginal or “Other” by standing in opposition to both a president and government-elect. Knowingly or not, we are all teetering on a slippery slope of domestic extremism with further potential for social, political and religious sanctions and exclusions. We will have to think and choose to act wisely.

amidst such crises of destructiveness?

I did not vote for Trump, nor did most of my patients. On the day after the election, awakening to the shocking and stunning victory of Donald Trump many of us were shaken to the core. In the solemn aftermath of the election, the previously unimaginable and unthinkable had become perhaps “too real” rupturing the boundary and space of our continuity of being, of our sense of self, our communal identities and our sense of “I-ness” in the world. Similar ruptures were felt in the boundaries between inner and outer realities, between the personal and the political and between predictability and uncertainty. As my first patient stated on November 9<sup>th</sup>, “There is a dark cloud on my soul today and I just want to crawl into the underworld and sleep through this nightmare.” I too resonated with his sense of despair, trauma and wish to turn away from a shared political and personal nightmare.

I couldn’t help but wonder, “What’s at play when both patient and therapist are unwilling or unable to play?”

November has been a somber month; the cacophony of laments, tirades, raw images, disjointed thoughts and emotional turbulence surrounding the election has taken a toll on the psychoanalytic playground, stressing the capacities of the “holding environment,” rupturing potential space, and foreclosing on the mind’s capacity to process and “contain” the complexities at play internally and externally. I have used my own experience and that of my patients to begin thinking about the disorganizing impact of this election, which I believe has been a trauma of both holding and containing, in which both personal and collective meaning has been shattered. I have questioned what forces are at play in determining who is an “I” and who is an “it” in the public and private spheres, and what does anyone do with all this?

Thinking analytically and observing my reactions has involved a rigorous ongoing process of self-scrutiny both in the consulting room and beyond, regarding the dynamics of both the visible and unconscious processes of power, perversion, and pleasure-seeking over symbolic representation. It is probably true that many of us have had some experience of discrimination, exclusion, or dehumanization, and while we have also advocated for the marginalized, it is now painfully difficult to identify as more marginal or “Other” by standing in opposition to

both a president and government-elect. Knowingly or not, we are all teetering on a slippery slope of domestic extremism with further potential for social, political and religious sanctions and exclusions. We will have to think and choose to act wisely.

I have found it tough to discuss “play” in psychotherapy or analysis. Instead, I have chosen to speak briefly about what is at play in the broader political realm and its fracking-like effects on ourselves and on our patients. In the wake of the election and with increasing tensions, everything becomes political and the political becomes personal, including the choice to be thoughtful and to speak truthfully from one’s emotional core. As to the analyst at play and the aims of psychoanalytic treatment, I believe Winnicott nailed it for all of us:

*In doing psychoanalysis I aim at: Keeping alive. Keeping well. Keeping awake. —*

—  
Email: [maralyssa@mac.com](mailto:maralyssa@mac.com)



Photography by Mirrah Curzer





## ARTIST STATEMENT

# THE SPACE BETWEEN

Francesca Schwartz

THIS BODY OF WORK EMERGES following the death of my mother. Driven to find what is within, as an artist and psychoanalyst, and now as a motherless child, I become aware that the very effort is based on questions without answers. No amount of digging, desire or toil will let me penetrate what is inside (the Unconscious, the Body, Death). I listen as a psychoanalyst, dig and mold and craft as an artist. I am in the presence of what is no longer living, yet that which still seems to be animated, undergoing transformation.

As an artist and as a handler of the bone, I look to the interiority of things.

The bones interrogate the same questions over and over; when does life start, when does it finish? Are we destined to decay and finally, disappear?

When we try to face the body after life has left it, we see that something is lacking. It is beyond our imagination, beyond our grasp. The sense that something is now absent calls for closure but instead we encounter space, perhaps an opening.

The body lays inert after and yet the bones continue to change, as if now another kind of party is getting started. I hold the bones to the

light, wondering what else will emerge to make them more beautiful, more white or blackened and rancid, godlike or unholy. I am compelled to examine their stillness and their unstoppable transformations.

The work is a suffering, for it engages what I hate. The smell alone is a warning. The cutting and cleansing a grotesque labor. The connecting tissue, resistant. Repulsed by what I see as I encounter the marrow and interior of the bones, I am equally in awe of the whiteness and clarity that can unexpectedly arise. What is surfacing, and is it giving access to life or death? I rummage through the contents of the body — my mother's body — hoping to gain access to understanding.

The bones are transgressive, for they refuse to yield to the notion of a life finished. But it is also transgressive to search for answers, to question the bridge between life and after(life). I cannot seem to settle the bones down to their final resting state.

The bones mediate between two worlds, between the living and the dead, between the spirit and the material world.

I am caught in between.



ARTIST STATEMENT

## SCULPTING GRIEF

Natalie Korytnyk Forrester

My figurative sculptures are about the difficult, often unspeakable feelings related to death and loss and the unknowing uncertainty of dreams and wishes. They are also about strength, dignity, femininity, sensuality, and sexuality - the life forces that pull us forward in the midst of adversity.



## ARTIST STATEMENT

## POLITICAL

Joanna Goodman

“Political” is part of a series of experimental paintings which are mediations on the concepts of transience and impermanence. Specifically, I am interested in the “mono\_no\_aware” state. The bittersweet appreciation of a moment or as some say the ahh-ness of the experience. It is with this mental state that I begin each piece. This experimental attitude allows for nonjudgmental playing with chemicals and paint to allow the creation of expressive visions.

The creation of such art has historical roots in Surrealism and Dadaism. These art movements coincided with the public’s interest in the unconscious.

My art making project is a two-part process. The first process is creating mixtures of paint and solvents that interact with one another and form a chemical mixture that can be poured, dripped, and cut when dry.

Like an alchemist, I use acrylic paint, ink, water color, household chemicals, and oil paint to create mixtures which have the property of attracting and repelling other paints. The resulting effects are psychically stimulating. The process invites me to observe the transient nature of the forms and colors as they ebb and fade into one another. It is a practice in learning to observe and allow the material to dictate to me rather than my trying to make something out of the moving paint.

The longer I can observe the change and flow of poured paint, without the need or desire to control or direct the forms appearing on the substrate, the more I can meditate on the transience of thought and the need to live in the experience of change. Ultimately, the paint will dry and stop interacting with itself. It is at that time I can begin my projective process of looking for parts of the picture that I want to bring to fruition. To use painterly techniques to make visible to others what I imagine seeing in the picture.

The face in “Political” is the result of such an experiment. I recognized those eyes as my own and their expression portrayed the way as way I feel after watching the news hour upon hour. The sense of fragmented hopelessness about the future of our current political situation and the feeling there is a tyrant behind a tyrant that is running the show.



# SWING STATES

## HELP FLIP THE HOUSE

Following Donald Trump's election, the loss of the House and Senate to the Republicans, and the dangers to our democracy, it became clear to me that passive anguishing was not an option.

The Swing Left ([swingleft.org](http://swingleft.org)) immediately started to organize to take back the House of Representatives in the Nov. 2108.

Did you know Democrats only need to turn twenty four house seats, out of the seventy Congressional Districts that are considered flippable. These are the districts that voted for Hillary but elected a Republican as congressperson. Mostly, these Congress people were incumbents, and no one knew much about them.

Those of us living in blue bubbles can be paired with a nearby 'flippable' district to canvas, register voters, and raise funds for the winner of the Democratic primary. I have been working with a group from the Upper West Side of Manhattan that is paired with New Jersey district seven. There are six Democrats running in the primary, which is amazing. We are currently working to create a war chest so that the winner of the Democratic Primary will have money from day one to jumpstart the campaign.

**It is hard to be deluged with requests to donate between now and Nov. 2018. But it's so important. We are asking for donations of ten dollars.**

**TO DONATE CLICK HERE:**  
[SWING NJ-07 LEFT](#)

If you are interested in helping register voters in the coming months, please contact me:

LENI WINN ACSW  
Lenword2@gmail.com



# IPTAR: THE GOULD CENTER FOR PSYCHOANALYTIC ORGANIZATIONAL STUDY AND CONSULTATION

## Citizen Forum One Year Later

### A Facilitated Group Event

Convenors: Andrea Greenman, PhD,  
and Susan S. Berger, Psy.D. | Facilitators: Members  
of The LJGould Center Steering Committee\*

The social and political partisanship that characterized the 2016 election has continued. As citizens, we have been subjected to a cascade of actions and pronouncements that has differed dramatically in tone and substance from anything we have experienced before. After a chaotic and fragmented beginning that led to failure in executing goals, those in power have coalesced to carry out their agenda in a manner that has been shocking even to many of those who are members of the same political party. While there has been some movement within our governmental system to assert checks and balances on what is feared to be moral corruption and emotional instability at the highest level, those whose side lost the 2016 election have been rendered powerless as major changes are taking place. However, there are also signs that the opposition is mobilizing with some initial success. Join us for a Citizen Forum to take the pulse of our polity. What are the issues of greatest salience and impact as we experience them? Race? Economic disparity? Women's rights? Sexual harassment in the workplace? Gun control? Climate change? Our standing among and relationships with other nations? How great is the danger of a nuclear attack? How secure is our democracy? How do these issues influence decision-making in the public domain? How do we understand the change that has swept aside the familiar social conventions and ethical norms of our governmental processes and its impact? As we enter 2018 —another critical election year— our group discussion about these and other issues will enable us to identify common themes. We will then move to a deeper level of work to discover shared unconscious beliefs and currents influencing society and the body politic.

**MARCH, 5, 2018**  
**NEW YORK**

*IPTAR Conference Room: 1651 3rd Avenue, Suite 101*  
**7:30 to 9:30 pm**

*\$25 General Admission*

*\$15 Students and Psychoanalytic Candidates*

*Questions? [joecancelmo@gmail.com](mailto:joecancelmo@gmail.com)*

Seating for this group will be limited to the first 25 rsvps,  
so register early to secure a place.

RSVP: <https://iptar.org/event/citizen-forum-2018/>

#### Components of the L.J. Gould Center:

##### Co-Chairs:

Joseph A. Cancelmo, Psy.D., FIPA  
Dahlia Radley-Kingsley, MBA, MA

##### Steering Committee and Additional Faculty:

Susan Berger, Psy.D., FIPA.  
Michael A. Diamond, Ph.D.  
Andrea Greenman, Ph.D., FIPA.  
Michael Moskowitz, Ph.D., FIPA.  
Ferne Traeger, LCSW, MBA, FIPA.

## DISPATCHES

We are pleased to invite you to the third

## ROOM ROUNDTABLE

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We will discuss with authors various topics arising from their pieces published in **ROOM 2.18**

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**MARCH 11th, 2018**  
IPTAR - 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

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The next Room Roundtable will be held at:  
THE INSTITUTE FOR PSYCHOANALYTIC  
TRAINING AND RESEARCH (IPTAR)

### **Conference Room**

1651 3rd Avenue suite 205  
New York City, NY 10128

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*Facilitated by Richard Grose and Janet Fisher*

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We'll be streaming live through Facebook  
<https://www.facebook.com/analyticroom/>



**ROOM 6.18**

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**Richard B. Grose** has a PhD in Russian Studies from University of Chicago. He is an advanced candidate at IPTAR, an editor on ROOM's editorial board and co-chair of the ROOM Roundtable. He has a private practice in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis in Manhattan.

**Stefanie Hofer** is an Assistant Professor of German in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures at Virginia Tech. She has published on contemporary German literature and cinematic depictions of Germany's struggle

to come to term with Nazi atrocities and left-wing terrorism. Her current research focuses on the role of autobiographical narratives in post-traumatic healing.

**Ann E. Kaplan**, MA is an economist and writer. She is a vice president at the Council for Aid to Education (CAE), a New York City based nonprofit that measures education outcomes. She has studied charitable giving for 25 years.

**Young-Ran Kim** PhD is a Korean Candidate at IPTAR in the Adult Psychoanalytic Program and the Child Adolescent Psychotherapy Program (CAP). She received an MA in philosophy from Ewha Woman's University, and a MA in clinical psychology from the Catholic University of Korea. She holds a doctorate in psychology from the Catholic University of Korea in Seoul and has lectured and researched on abnormal psychology, DSM-5 revisions, dimensional and categorical diagnostic system, and classification of personality disorders.

**Betty Teng**, MFA, LMSW is a trauma therapist who is in psychoanalytic training and practices at the Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy (ICP) in Manhattan. She is a contributor to the recent book *The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump* and a screenwriter and editor whose credits include films by Ang Lee, Robert Altman and Mike Nichols.

**Sara Mansfield Taber** is the author of *Born Under an Assumed Name: The Memoir of a Cold War Spy's Daughter*, as well as essays, social commentary, and literary journalism. A psychologist and social worker, she has taught creative nonfiction writing for twenty years. *Chance Particulars: A Writers Field Notebook for Travelers, Bloggers, Essayists, Memoirists, Novelists, Journalists, Adventurers, Naturalists, Sketchers, and other Note-takers and Recorders of Life* will be published May 2018. More about her at: [www.sarataber.com](http://www.sarataber.com)  
[www.sarataberwritingservices.com](http://www.sarataberwritingservices.com)

**Diane Seuss's** most recent collection, *Four-Legged Girl*, was published in 2015 by Graywolf Press and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. *Wolf Lake, White Gown Blown Open* (2010) won the Juniper Prize and was published in 2010. Her fourth collection, *Still Life with Two Dead Peacocks and a Girl*, is forthcoming from Graywolf Press in May 2018. Recent poems have appeared in Virginia Quarterly Review, American Poetry Review, The Kenyon Review, and The New Yorker. Seuss was raised in rural southwest Michigan. 'Still Life With Dictator' originally appeared in Crab Creek Review.

**Francesca Schwartz**, PhD merges psychoanalysis with her background in the performing and fine arts. She is on faculty at IPTAR and has private practice in New York where she specializes in treating emerging artists. Pieces from her *Series 1* will appear in the CLIO Art Fair, NYC, March 2018.

**Mafe Izaguirre** is a Venezuelan visual artist interested in visual representations of 'mind concepts'. Her professional studies include semiotics, photography, and digital media. After dedicating 12 years of her life to teaching design in PROdiseño School of Visual Communication in Caracas, Mafe has joined us in New York (thanks to an artists' visa) where she is creating an sculptural robot based on concepts of Marvin Minsky's emotion machine. Her work includes a limited mix-media edition of visual schemas of 'mind concepts' from Kant, Hegel, Benjamin, Adorno, Levinas, Merleau-Ponty, Elaine Scarry and Sianne Ngai. The contributors to ROOM have been honored to work with her and IPTAR is grateful for her generous contribution to our analytic community. Website: [www.mafeizaguirre.com](http://www.mafeizaguirre.com)  
 Email: [mafelandia@gmail.com](mailto:mafelandia@gmail.com)

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**ROOM** was founded by IPTAR in response to a new bewildering and frightening political reality.

This virtual analytic space is dedicated to provide on-going room for authentic and diverse thought. ROOM welcomes all clinical, theoretical, political and philosophical essays, poetry, stories, artwork, photography and announcements.

Add your voice to ROOM:  
*A Sketchbook for Analytic Action*

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## 6.18 Open Call Submission Deadline: May 1st, 2018

Essays\* | Poems | Art | Photographs

Mail your contribution directly to:

[ROOMinIPTAR@gmail.com](mailto:ROOMinIPTAR@gmail.com)

\*Length: Max 2000 words

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## NEW YORK, USA

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