

Essay - Acts of Desire by Xiaowei R. Wang

Desire is never simple. Desire can be a verb and desire can be an ideology. And it is desire, as Xiaowei R. Wang discovers, that "informs our politics, with the potential to make resistance or spaces of refusal possible." In their essay Acts of Desire, Xiaowei R. Wang draws connections between American counterculture and land-resource relations, tracing how the environmental movements of the 1960s gave rise to a libertarian political consciousness in Bolinas, a small coastal community in California. An act of creative non-fiction, Wang's text is the story of their time in the coastal community of Bolinas, California, during the ongoing pandemic. It is also the story of how the environmental movements of the 1960s gave rise to a libertarian political movement that still persists today. These two threads of history help us to read desire as 'a full act'; one that can "move us beyond our habits", and in so doing, "unveil new spaces of refusal".

Xiaowei R. Wang is a designer, writer, educator, and coder. The creative director at Logic Magazine, their work encompasses community art projects, education, and research on technology and ecology.

About transmediale

For over thirty years transmediale has been one of the key leading international events for discourse and critical reflection on post-digital theory and practice. As Germany's premier media art festival, the festival has become an influential event in the calendar of theorists, artists, activists and makers and attracts a diverse audience interested in art and culture. The festival is renowned for generating diverse, urgent and necessary debate around how digital technologies affect the lived human experience of the contemporary now. It has an extensive international network of partners including CTM, Winchester School of Art, Aarhus University and the Vilém Flusser Archive at the Universität der Künste Berlin. The festival is committed to continuous reflection on socio-political discourse and experimentation with structure and formats that challenge the conventions of how culture is experienced and understood. This has resulted in the creation of strong programming in various formats and models that build an understanding of the many intersecting fields that coalesce in the field of media arts. This has built transmediale into a dynamic festival that engages with experimentation and takes interdisciplinary artistic risks. At the core of the festival is a philosophy that continuously rethinks what culture is, where it takes place and what modes of engagement we offer for audiences.

PRE-RECORDED ARTISTIC CONTRIBUTIONS:

These pre-recorded artistic and discursive contributions explore individual and collective forms of refusal that relate to institutional practices of labour, knowledge and values. The contributions explore how tactics of refusal open up possibilities for rethinking the values embedded within public and private institutions.