

Pierre Huyghe

The Third Memory

March 23, 2000
NEW DATE:
April 2 - April 30
 Reception: Sunday, April 2 from 4 to 7 pm
 featuring an artist talk from 5 to 6 pm

The Renaissance Society at The University of Chicago
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Museum Hours:
 Tuesday - Friday: 10 am - 5 pm
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The Renaissance Society

Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?

John Wojtowicz. That's who. One hot August afternoon in 1972 he even attempted to rob a Brooklyn branch of the Chase Manhattan bank. Wojtowicz's stick-up was not simply a foiled heist. It was a protracted farce. An unexpectedly rapid police response prompted Wojtowicz and his cohort, Salvatore Naturale to take eight hostages. The police drew crowds which in turn drew media. Once Wojtowicz revealed that he committed the robbery to finance the sex change operation of a lover by whom he had recently been spurned, there was no turning back. In Wojtowicz, the press found neither a panic stricken thug nor an inarticulate loser but a queer and charming personality whose predicament demanded that he play to Flatbush residents which the media reduced to a studio audience. There were several dynamics at work, not the least of which was a genuine sympathy for Wojtowicz expressed by the hostages inside, and the crowds outside, the bank. The crime scene quickly became a theater of confession tawdry even by today's standards. A 10 minute robbery degenerated into a 14 hour stand-off as the cast of characters that made up Wojtowicz's private life — lover, priest, mother, psychiatrist, wife — offered a parade of pleas. Cops, crowds and cameras, the robbery was a spectacle that eventually served as the basis for Sydney Lumet's 1975 film *Dog Day Afternoon*.

Cinema's veracity can be the product of wishful thinking as much as the quest for objectivity. As for *Dog Day Afternoon*, its veracity seemed to have been a matter of narrative convenience. Of all the accounts as to what took place during those 14 hours, Wojtowicz's testimonial is the only one missing. He rejected a deal from Warner Brothers, refusing to meet with screenwriters. After serving six and a half years in prison, Wojtowicz was released, taking up residence with his parents several blocks from the bank, quietly leading his life in the illuminated shadow of cinematic memories that were not his own. Pierre Huyghe's *The Third Memory* revisits that particular August afternoon not only using Wojtowicz's account but starring Wojtowicz himself. Filmed on an austere set, it features reenactments of several scenes from the robbery. As an artist, Huyghe's role was that of an externalized consciousness, allowing Wojtowicz to star in his own memories.

Huyghe was born in Paris in 1962. His recent work has taken many forms — pamphlets, public interventions, film, video, photography — suitable to his interest in public space, architecture and last but not least, the movie industry. These reveal him to be something of a progeny of the Situationist Internationale, a pan European artistic movement that dates from 1957 to 1972. Like them, Huyghe's primary interest is the spectacle — an image or event that mediates human relations. The works for which he first gained attention were a series of illegally executed billboards featuring images taken at the site of the billboard's location. Decidedly anti-spectacular, these images stood in direct contrast to the false promise of advertising. Huyghe's most ambitious works deconstruct narrative cinematic conventions. By scrutinizing conditions under which comedy, romance, drama, horror, action and tragedy are constructed, Huyghe exposes the ways in which culture

is handled as a discreet material substance subject to the regulation and manipulation of an industry. In works such as *Dubbing*, in which Huyghe documents the dubbing of the horror film *Poltergeist*, and *Blanche-Neige Lucie*, where he conducts an interview with Lucie Dolene, the French Snow White who successfully sued Disney to win back the rights to her voice, Huyghe submits film to a reflection upon its treatment of content as simply another product.

Commenting on the history of cinema, Guy Debord, author of *Society of the Spectacle* and the figure most closely associated with the Situationists, stated that cinema could have been any number of things, "historical examination, theory, essay, memories." Huyghe obviously has all of these in mind. *The Third Memory* belongs to Huyghe's recent video works (*Sleeptalking* with John Giorno and *L'ellipse* with Bruno Ganz both from 1998) in which a film is supplemented with the memories of its principal character. The historical context surrounding the Wojtowicz fiasco, however, lends *The Third Memory* a socio-political significance outside the history of cinema. Lumet's film rightfully portrayed Wojtowicz as the quintessential 1970s anti-hero, a cross between a character in Lou Reed's song *Walk On The Wild Side* and a member of the Symbionese Liberation Army. Wojtowicz's robbery attempt was an event tailored to a mass media whose appetite for sensationalism had been fed by several assassinations, the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Movement. With the 1970 documentary of the Loud family as a seminal precedent, the media had constructed an audience eager to watch lives disintegrate over real time. In this respect, both Wojtowicz and the audience were well aware of their respective and mutually supportive roles in crafting the spectacle. The event was a conscious acknowledgment of human tragedy as fodder for entertainment. For a more recent example one need only look to the O.J. Simpson car chase. At a moment when the vulgar use of real-life footage, dramatizations, and the talk show confessional blur the boundary between fact and fiction, between documentary and entertainment, all in an effort to narrate human drama, it is obvious "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire." It is those behind the camera as well as those before the camera, those who are striving and those who are actually succeeding by hook, by crook and by arranged marriages courtesy of the Fox Network.

Pierre Huyghe: The Third Memory is a coproduction of the Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée National D'Art Moderne, Service Nouveaux Médias, Christine van Assche, and The Renaissance Society with The Bohem Foundation. Special thanks to Corinne Castel, Xavier Douroux and Sophie Rousset.

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NIXON ASKS SUPPORT FOR A '... AFTER AGNEW IS RENAMED

Bank Bandit Slain, 2d Seized at Kennedy, Ending 14-Hour Ordeal for 7 Hostages



John Wojtowicz, foreground, one of two gunmen who held hostages in a Brooklyn bank robbery attempt, being taken for arraignment in Federal Court.

Code Word Is Signal for Shot by F.B.I. Agent

By ROBERT HANLEY
 A 14-hour ordeal for seven bank employees held hostage by a distraught homosexual and his 18-year-old accomplice ended just before sunrise yesterday when a Federal agent shot and killed the accomplice at Kennedy International Airport.

Just after the youth, identified by the Federal Bureau of Investigation as Salvatore Naturale, was hit with the single bullet in the chest, the other alleged robber, John Wojtowicz, was overpowered and captured.

The seven hostages then walked out onto the tip of a remote runway from a 14-passenger limousine that the gunman had ordered driven to Kennedy from the scene of the holding Tuesday afternoon at a Chase Manhattan Bank branch in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn.

The agent who fired the shot drove the vehicle. He was part of a strategy that included a code word from another agent, during an apparently innocuous conversation about the small jet plane the gunmen had demanded be brought to Kennedy.

The moment the code word was spoken, the driver, who was not identified, grabbed a shotgun Naturale had aimed at his head. Then he whirled in his seat, pulled out a concealed .38-caliber revolver and shot Naturale.

The youth was two weeks behind the agent and was flanked by two hostages. There was an empty row in between. Wojtowicz, whose rifle was seized through an open window by the agent in charge of the operation, was also captured.

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President Nixon and Vice President Agnew on Tuesday.

ASIAN HEROIN RING UNCOVERED HERE

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23 (AP) — A unanimous House committee proposed today changes for the security industry, including the phases of fixed contracts for securities transactions.

The panel also recommended that they had uncovered a "joke-knit" narcotics ring in New York City that had been attempting to move into the distribution system for heroin here and capitalize on shifts in the international market for the drug.

The announcement by Dan-iel F. Casey, regional director of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, came as he disclosed the arrests on Tuesday night of four Chinese with 30 pounds of Asian heroin. The suspects had allegedly "sold" the drug to two undercover agents for a wholesale price of \$200,000 in cash.

Displaying the heroin and the briefcase laden with \$200,000 and \$100 bills, Mr. Casey called the arrests the climax of a three-month investigation of the United States and of the "Asian connection."

Mr. Casey noted that the gradual reduction of Turkish opium cultivation and increasing pressure on French-based heroin refineries had spurred today's regional heroin market.

The 170-page report contained numerous justifications for legislative changes, such as the fixed commission subcommittee through the Exchange Committee's various stock exchange legislation.

According to the sources, though bills already in the stage of Congressional action may be a sign of the region's heroin market.

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Wojtowicz, carrying a rifle, inspecting a Remington brought to the bank to take hostages at Kennedy Airport. A Federal agent driving the vehicle fatally wounded Wojtowicz's companion, Salvatore Naturale, on an airport runway.

Expense-Account Padding Vexes Soviet

By HERBERT SMITH
 MOSCOW, Aug. 23 — Sum-mer in the Soviet Union brings not only sun to Siberia and near-tropical heat to Moscow but a surge of con-temption freeloading and ex-pense-account hoodlumery that worries the protectors of the state purse and Communist morality.

So frequent are the special summer conferences at Black Sea resorts, so pervasive the expense-account padding, and so common the practice of taking along wives, relatives, friends and even relatives to resort hotels at state expense that the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* commented sarcastically that the sums had come "to reserve a special beach area in Sochi for business travelers."

In a long article that provided a rare glimpse of ex-pense-account practices in a state-managed economy, the paper cited the case of a company from Kazan in the northern Caucasus that held a three-day seminar at Sochi on a bill for 4,000 rubles (nearly \$5,000), and left no trace of having held any actual business meetings. There were restaurant bills, a charge for a sight-seeing excursion, items for a typist and a scribe, and other programs or records.

By American standards, the per diem allowance paid to Soviet scholars, state officials, technicians, teachers or workers sent on out-of-town assignments is paltry. Low-level and middle-level employees often get no more than a ruble or two for their hotel beds (which is what most Soviet hotels charge Russians, though foreigners pay five to ten times the price for the same rooms), and two or three rubles for meals. Allowances for higher officials, though

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City Picks New Litter Cont

By DAVID BIRD
 After a two-year search, the city's Environmental Protection Administration has finally decided on a new litter container to replace the current wire-mesh model that has been disappearing at the rate of more than 6,000 a year through theft, vandalism and normal wear.

The new container is a 470-pound hexagonal concrete receptacle that will carry advertising on three of its six sides. To empty the new containers, a sanitationman unlinks and lifts a plastic lid to remove a plastic bag liner.

Because of the advertising feature, officials say, the containers will not only be provided free to the city but will also be an added source of revenue as well.

A Florida-based company has agreed to provide and maintain the new containers and to give the city a share of the profits from the advertising.

A contract to put 60,000 of the containers throughout the city within the next five years is awaiting approval of the Corporation Council. The contract also requires action by the City Council and the Board of Estimates.

Payments to the city would

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