An installation by
Experimental Jetset
at Ca'Buccari, Venice

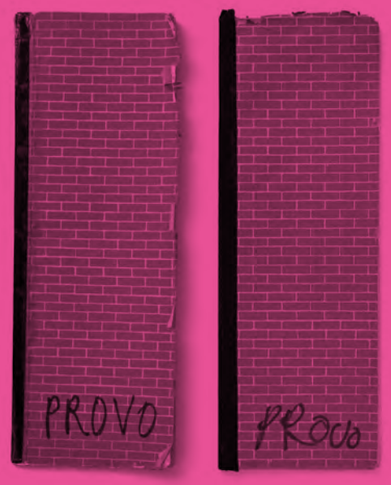
Calle Buccari 3
S. Elena, Venice, Italy
April 19–June 30, 2024
12:00–19:00 hours

BEYOND THE FRAGILE GEO–METRY OF SPACE BEYOND THE SPACE OF GEO–METRY

www.experimentaljetset.nl
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What defines Venice is not Venice but the lagoon separating it from the profane, utilitarian, interested outside world, a patch of water that performs the function of a "semiotic break".

– Régis Debray, 'Against Venice' (1995)



1.
Observing the bricked-up windows and blind walls of Venice, we couldn't help but think about the motif of the brick-wall-pattern, as used by Provo (the Amsterdam-based anarchist movement that existed between 1965–1967). The clearest example of this pattern can be found on the covers of the first few issues of their monthly magazine. These issues were wrapped in ready-made brick-patterned paper, on which the word 'Provo' was scribbled by hand, echoing the use of graffiti on walls.

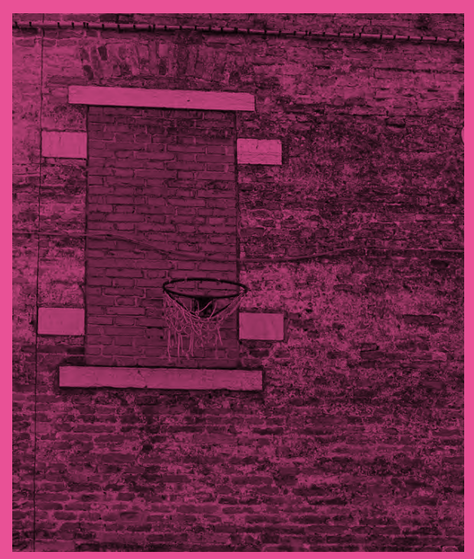
This simple graphic gesture, of turning a piece of paper into a brick wall, is a clear illustration of the way in which Provo managed to forge new connections between the sign and the city. While the city itself was turned into a graphic infrastructure (through the use of slogans, posters, and happenings), graphic signs were used to refer to the city. Walls were turned into pages, and pages were turned into walls.Within the methodology of Provo, the city (Amsterdam in particular) was an infrastructure for language.

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I am bored with symmetry, verticals and horizontals, the beauties of balance. I like it when time disturbs space, destabilises it, chops it through with diagonals and bleed lines.

– Régis Debray, 'Against Venice' (1995)



2.
Considering the notion of Venice as an infrastructure for language, we close-watched Nicolas Roeg's thriller 'Don't Look Now' (1973). What especially attracts us about this film is the way in which Roeg depicts Venice as a platform for signs. Not only are the walls filled with graffiti and posters – on a deeper level, the city is used as a device for communication as wel.

In fact, in 'Don't Look Now', Venice functions as a circuit for paranormal messages and occult signs. Brick walls make plenty of appearances in the movie as well. In fact, Venice is shown as a labyrinth-like mosaic of brick walls (echoing the religious mosaic that is being constructed in the narrative of the film). Within the movie, the tension between blindness and vision manifests itself as the tension between closed spaces and open spaces. In that sense, it might be the blind wall that sees the most.

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Constructed more by writers than masons, designed more by painters than architects, made more of words than bricks, it is a fabric woven of reminiscences.

– Régis Debray, 'Against Venice' (1995)

3.
This tension, between blind walls and open spaces, is also apparent in the UK movie poster from 1973 – showing the faces of the protagonists with a graphic depiction of space in-between them. The schematic (almost diagrammatic) representation of a narrow Venice corridor in the middle of the poster works almost hypnotic. It's a graphic motif that seems to counter the brick-wall-pattern of Provo. The open space as a mirror-image of the blind wall.



4.
A fascinating detail of the movie is a book cover that appears in a scene at the very start of the movie. Casually displayed in the living room setting, the title of the book is 'Beyond the Fragile Geometry of Space' and is written by John Baxter (one of the two main protagonists, played by Donald Sutherland). It's a fictional book, written by a fictional writer – which makes it all the more intriguing. It's a title that almost begs to be rearranged, like bricks in a wall:

Beyond the Fragile Geometry of Space
Beyond the Fragile Space of Geometry
Beyond the Space of Fragile Geometry
Beyond the Geometry of Fragile Space

And so we drift further and further – beyond the space of fragile geometry.