Arrested Welcome

Aristarkhova, Irina

Published by University of Minnesota Press

Aristarkhova, Irina.
Arrested Welcome: Hospitality in Contemporary Art.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/75842.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/75842
NOTES

Introduction

1. Linda Hattendorf, *The Cats of Mirikitani* (2006; New York: Arts Alliance America, 2008), DVD. The title of the film references one of the most frequent subjects of Mirikitani’s artworks.


7. This particular logic that denies any motivations and intentions in hospitality relations other than personal gain is common among the responses to the works presented in this book; it will be explored further throughout. As we contemplate whether or not we would go out and welcome the homeless person, this “all or nothing” critical approach is seductive in its sophistication. As I make clear in the rest of this Introduction and throughout the book, I am mindful of the criticism that even in displaying generosity, or especially in doing so, a white middle-class privileged woman could be seen as reinforcing her sense of her own superiority and benevolence. At the same time, seeing only the gain for the woman in this example seems to justify discrediting the action presented here and rationalizing inaction. I do not dismiss the criticism, but my interest in this book is in exploring other potential readings of these artworks as I have found them useful for my own thinking about the limits and limitations of hospitality.


11. See Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix*.
15. Hush, “‘An Answered Prayer.’”
18. Quoted in Salam, “Man Who Sheltered Homeless People.”
23. In this paragraph I have purposefully chosen to tell one specific version of an art historical trope, developed through my own research interests. As for a contemporary example of a creative maker whose art practice connects deeply to personal activism, Carol Jacobsen serves my point. She is a video art maker and photographer whose practice focuses on incarcerated women who are serving life sentences for the murder of an abusive partner in the state of Michigan. To a viewer of Jacobsen’s gallery show, other parts of her practice—working to get the women in her photographs and video art pieces out of prison by collaborating with the American Civil Liberties Union and other activists and organizations—are not apparent; only those who seek out more information about the artist learn about the other parts of her practice and her activism. So far, thirteen of the women depicted in Jacobsen’s photographs and videos have been released in the course of her activist art practice. See Carol Jacobsen, *For Dear Life: Women’s Decriminalization and Human Rights in Focus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2019).


1. Reclaimed Civility: Ana Prvački


8. hooks, “A Place Where the Soul Can Rest,” 177–78.


10. The name of the latter exhibition has appeared in various written forms. From this point onward, I use the name documenta (no italics) to refer in general to the exhibition mounted in Kassel every five years by the organization of the same name. The individual iterations of the documenta exhibition are numbered, and I treat these as the exhibition names, italicizing both elements; thus, for example, *documenta 13* These are the forms most commonly used in publications mentioning the exhibitions (in quotations and citations, the forms of the names used by the sources are retained). I was involved with Prvački in conversations and worked on a joint publication about hospitality and art for *documenta 13* Ana Prvački and Irina Aristarkhova, *The Greeting Committee Reports . . .:* 100 Notes, 100 Thoughts (Documenta Series 043) (Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2012).


15. A well-known example in contemporary German literature that speaks to this concern is Jenny Erpenbeck’s novel *Go, Went, Gone*, trans. Susan Bernofsky (London: Granta Books, 2018). The novel describes how a German man is changed by his growing involvement in the plight of African refugees in Berlin. The discussion about hospitality extended to strangers in our times is a collective endeavor, and Prvački’s work contributes to the discussion about cultural identity in Germany and elsewhere. I thank an anonymous reviewer for the reference to Erpenbeck’s work.


17. Prvački and Aristarkhova, *The Greeting Committee Reports*.


2. Undoing Waiting: Faith Wilding


6. What became the poem of *Waiting*, collectively imagined by participants in the FAP and then edited by Wilding, reflects the experiences of the members of the faculty and the student body, with their specific social and educational backgrounds. The early feminist art movement mirrored the racial segregation of the world at large. Years later, Judy Chicago admitted that she had overlooked the fundamentally intersectional nature of patriarchal oppression: “We cast the dialogue incorrectly in the seventies. We cast it around gender, and we were also simplistic about the nature of identity. Identity is multiple. . . . But I’ve learned a lot in these years, that one is both a woman and a person of color; an American and of African descent, as well as a person of a particular class.” Judy Chicago, in Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, “Conversations with Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro,” in Broude and Garrard, *The Power of Feminist Art*, 72.

7. Rose Kreider and Diana Elliott, “Historical Changes in Stay-at-Home Mothers: 1969 to 2009” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Atlanta, Georgia, August 14, 2010), 10. I recognize the problem of equating a housewife with a stay-at-home mother. Wilding’s character certainly did, as she was waiting for a husband and children to appear in her life. In addition, taking into account housewife-targeted advertising and the fact that African Americans constituted less than 10 percent of the
American middle class at the time (1970), one assumption (or argument) I am making here is that, as far as a concept of the housewife was concerned, both the media and the public usually imagined a white middle-class woman.


13. Chicago, Through the Flower, 122.


20. This and subsequent quotations come from the Wait-With monologue come from Faith Wilding, e-mail message to author, August 20, 2007.


22. Saar, “Influences.”

23. Anna Riveloté, “The Woman Waits” [in Russian], available online at “Анна Ривелотэ,” Lirta (blog), December 31, 2011, https://lirta.livejournal.com/10916.html; translations are my own. Many Internet users “perform” this poem on YouTube, similar to how Wilding’s Waiting poem is performed. Since 2010 Riveloté has published three books and received an award for literature. “The Woman Waits” remains her most famous poem, and I present it here as a link to Wilding’s Waiting, which is her most famous work as well. These two works are connected by the intense feelings they evoke in audiences about the specific kind of waiting expected in women’s lives.


3. The Man Who Welcomes: Lee Mingwei

1. I have explored this in the Introduction and in more detail in my previous book on hospitality, *Hospitality of the Matrix*.

2. For Kant, the French nation is hospitable because “the language of ladies has become the language shared by all high society. It cannot be disputed at all that an inclination of such a nature must also have influence on the ready willingness in rendering services, helpful benevolence, and the gradual development of human kindness according to principle.” Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. Mary Gregor (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 228.


6. Artists who were part of the 1970s feminist art movement described in chapter 2 also engaged in the practices of cooking, serving, and hosting audience members as guests. See, for example, Broude and Garrard, *The Power of Feminist Art*. Since the 1970s, interaction with audiences and audience participation have become mainstream parts of the work of contemporary artists. One of the most widely known and frequently written-about examples relevant here is the work of the artist Rirkrit Tiravanija. Tiravanija cooked pad thai in New York’s Paula Allen Gallery in 1990 and since then has re-created that work in various other forms. Nicolas Bourriaud has used Tiravanija’s work, as well as that of others, to develop his notion of “relational aesthetics.” See Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*. For surveys of art that deals with hosting and community participation, which art critics have framed as “the art of social practice,” see Smith, *Feast*; Thompson, *Living as Form*; Purves, *What We Want Is Free*; Tallant and Domela, *The Unexpected Guest*; Doherty, *Contemporary Art*.

7. Mary [pseudonym], interview by author, September 19, 2013. All quotations from Mary are from this interview or from our electronic correspondence, June 21–23, 2018.


10. Aristarkhova, “Exotic Hospitality in the Land of Tolerance.”

11. See Finkelpearl, “The Seer Project”; *Lee Mingwei and His Relations*.


14. For divergent viewpoints on this topic, see Kester, *Conversation Pieces*; Kester, *The One and the Many*; Kwon, *One Place after Another*; Dohmen, *Encounters beyond the*
15. Furthermore, I would argue that Lee’s works challenge what galleries and museums have historically been and serve to push such art spaces to redefine themselves.


18. Larson, “To Take Part in the Art.”


22. There is a widespread interest now in hybrid art spaces that (more often than not) re-create “domestic” spaces of homely welcome in a public art context. For example, the Raqs Media Collective created such a space in 2012 during the group’s art residency at the Gardner Museum, in a work titled *The Great Bare Mat*. See *The Great Bare Mat*, in *Common Threads: Weaving Stories across Time*, 2012, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, https://www.gardnermuseum.org. A less common practice is the reverse: making a domestic space public, welcoming the public at one’s home as a gallery or a small museum. Some examples of such gestures are Lee Mingwei’s *The Dining Project* at Yale and Mithu Sen’s *It’s Good to Be Queen* (2006), which I discuss in detail in chapter 5.

23. Lee’s practice over the years has been framed in various terms that seem to fit such more welcoming definitions of the male artist. Two larger frameworks get mentioned the most: Buddhism and other “Eastern” traditions, and relational aesthetics or social practice in contemporary art. What I want to develop and emphasize here, based on my conversations with Lee, his published interviews with others, and especially his oeuvre over the years, is his unique and sustained, highly original, and independent practice of hospitality as a welcoming man, which does not fit neatly into any of the existing categories of art movements. This is not the only aspect of his work, certainly, but it is the most relevant one for this chapter. For further reading on this topic, see Dohmen, *Encounters beyond the Gallery*.

24. In conversations, some women artists have expressed to me their anxieties around hospitality, which arise from their not wanting to be associated with stereotypically perceived women’s qualities. I discuss this kind of fear of being forced to be “welcoming women” in chapter 2, in relation to Faith Wilding’s work and the feminist art movement.

25. See, for example, Long T. Bui, “Breaking into the Closet: Negotiating the Queer

26. Though it is not the focus of this book to compare the art of welcome with the hospitality industry, it would suffice to note here that as a business that is supposed to generate a profit, hospitality industry often exploits these and other cultural expectations. Feminist artists who have developed a unique form of “service art,” such as Maureen Connor, point out this cultural hypocrisy around the “labor of care.” For a philosophical approach to this topic, see Judith Still, *Derrida and Hospitality: Theory and Practice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

27. My argument that Lee’s work offers one model of a welcoming man complements and does not replace the feminist critique of associating women with “care” and “hospitality” or of not acknowledging their welcome as affective and physical effort. Thus, I share concerns expressed by Helena Reckitt that the praise of contemporary artworks involving relationality and hospitality as groundbreaking when they are made by men is often uninformed and may even work to silence those art historical precedents created by women and LGBTQ+ artists. Reckitt shows how many authors who write about relational aesthetics and social practice overlook feminist history and the complexity of gendered expectations as far as relationality is concerned. See Helena Reckitt, “Forgotten Relations: Feminist Artists and Relational Aesthetics,” in *Politics in a Glass Case: Feminism, Exhibition Cultures and Curatorial Transgressions*, ed. Angela Dimitrakaki and Lara Perry (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 131. That is why earlier in this chapter I mentioned that Lee often credits Suzanne Lacy as one of his mentors and inspirations, along with women in his family—his sister, mother, and grandmother.

4. Hosting the Animal: Kathy High

1. When I had an opportunity to follow up with Lee Mingwei on my experience in *The Living Room*, I asked him about the bird’s welfare. The artist was prepared for my question. He explained that the museum followed the advice of an ornithologist on how to take the best possible care of the bird. The bird is moved out of the installation at regular intervals so that it “can rest.” Interacting with guests in *The Living Room* takes a toll on the bird just as it does on the volunteer hosts during their two-hour hosting periods (as discussed in chapter 3).


18. Oliver, Animal Lessons, 228.
27. Amy Youngs, a bioartist, has written about her unease with the use of rabbits in bioart, based on her own childhood experience; see Amy Youngs, “Creating, Culling, and Caring,” in Catts, The Aesthetics of Care?, 68–73. In this case, the artist describes why she chose “nondoing,” a concept similar to Jainism’s nonharm. Another bioartist, the curator and director of Cultivamos Cultura Foundation in Portugal, Marta de Menezes, is currently looking for a biomedical research laboratory to partner with on a project that would seek to cure the hairless rats that are born without immune systems and hence are used as models for testing immune system responses to various potential drugs and genetic modifications. If the project is successful in curing the rats, they could then be released into the wild. Once cured, they would also be unusable for biomedical experimentation. The new technology de Menezes is considering is called CRISPR gene editing. As it becomes cheaper, researchers may have other options in the near future besides using transgenic rats. This project is an example of “lessening of harm,” as a cure will stop these animals from being so attractive to experimenters. The project is also somewhat ambivalent, as the
artist plans to “cure” animals from a natural mutation. Marta de Menezes, interview by author, July 8–9, 2016, São Luis, Portugal.

28. Biomedical scientist (who asked to remain anonymous), interview by author, July 8, 2016, São Luis, Portugal.

29. Jain principles have affinities with recent discussions in Europe about the dignity of plants. For example, Switzerland adopted the principle of plants’ dignity in its constitution. See Ariane Willemsen, ed., The Dignity of Living Beings with Regard to Plants: Moral Consideration of Plants for Their Own Sake (Geneva: Federal Ethics Committee on Non-Human Biotechnology, 2008).


5. Welcome Withdrawn: Mithu Sen

1. Mithu Sen, e-mail message to author, November 2, 2015.


3. Since then Bose Pacia has moved several times, and it now operates as a foundation; see its website at http://www.bosepacia.com.


5. Sen, It’s Good to Be Queen, 81.


7. Chatterjee, “What Does It Mean to Be a Postcolonial Feminist?,” 34, 35.


6. A Leap of Faith: Pippa Bacca and Silvia Moro


3. Povoledo, “Performance Artist Killed.”


5. “Sposa in Viaggio—Bride on Tour.”

6. One of the most recent tributes is Nathalie Léger’s La Robe blanche (Paris: Les Éditions P.O.L., 2018). I thank Joël Curtz for bringing this book to my attention.


12. Quoted in Povoledo, “Performance Artist Killed.”

13. For examples, see Aristarkhova, “Exotic Hospitality in the Land of Tolerance.”

14. For example, see Iris Veldwijk’s blog, Mind of a Hitchhiker, https://mindofahitchhiker.com.


21. In his study Men on Rape: What They Have to Say about Sexual Violence (New York:
St. Martin’s Press, 1982), Timothy Beneke demonstrates that many men who have been convicted of rape downplay their own violence as ordinary, and many claim to be fearful for the safety of women around the “real monsters” in public spaces (compared to them, one assumes).


23. “Sposa in Viaggio—Bride on Tour.”


26. I thank the anonymous reviewer for pointing out a long history of feminist literary scholars, including Ruth Bottigheimer, who have engaged with the Little Red Riding Hood fairy tale’s tropes. My interest here lies in how Connors refers to the fairy tale as one element in her socialization that resulted in her victim blaming herself. I find her point here relevant to my own analysis, which does not seek to offer a deeper critique of the fairy-tale canon.


28. See Bishop, Artificial Hells.

29. For an excellent analysis of Brides on Tour as situated in the history of radical performance art, see Antmen, “Performing and Dying.”


Conclusion. Hospitality Now: Ken Aptekar

1. The poem is from Gabeba Baderoon’s poetry collection *The Dream in the Next Body* (Cape Town: Kwela Books/Snailpress, 2005), 23. See also Gabeba Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims: From Slavery to Post-Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2015), in which, through cultural texts and artifacts, Baderoon discusses the history of inhospitality to a minority Cape Malay Muslim community in South Africa.


3. Ken Aptekar, e-mail message to author, January 14, 2016. Here is the Russian original version, which was also part of the exhibition:

   1941. Продовольственные пайки для семьи Симсона Карлебаха урезаны. Евреям запрещена покупка мяса, молока, сигарет, и белого хлеба, а магазины открыты для них только между 4 и 5 часами дня.

   С наступлением темноты соседи снабжают семьёй едой, тайком оставляя ее под садовыми воротами,—преступление, строго караемое нацистами.

   Узнав, что за ними скоро придут нацисты, семья Карлебахов привязывает свое кухонное полотенце с монограммой к садовым воротам, в знак последнего выражения благодарности и прощания.

   Почти пять десятилетий с тех пор, как большинство евреев Любека убиты нацистами в Бикерниекском лесу под Ригой, ганзейский город (Любек) радушно принимает Феликса, сына Симсона Карлебаха. Он спасся побегом в Англию в 1939 году.

   Жители Любека почитают Феликса Карлебаха с семьей в городской думе, недалеко от синагоги, в которой Саломон Карлебах служил раввином с 1870 до 1919 годов.


6. The Stolpersteine (stumbling stones) project, created by German artist Gunter Demnig, remembers “the victims of National Socialism by installing commemorative brass plaques in the pavement in front of their last address of choice,” before they were sent to a concentration camp or another location by Nazi officers. Residents in separate cities in Germany, Austria, Hungary, the Netherlands, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Norway, and Ukraine volunteer to raise funds and install plaques. A lot of research needs to be carried out to locate the victims’ former addresses. For more information, see “Home,” Stolpersteine, accessed April 5, 2019, http://www.stolpersteine.eu/en. On Lübeck’s participation in the project, see “Deutsch-jüdischer Geschichtspreis für Lübeckerin,” Initiative Stolpersteine für Lübeck, last modified January 26, 2010, https://www.stolpersteine-luebeck.de.
7. Aptekar, “NACHBARN/Neighbors in a German Town.”
10. “‘Our parents were neighbours. I brought something that belongs to you,’ she said, and handed the rabbi the kitchen towel. The scene is commemorated in the last painting.” Quoted from Stuart Jeffries, “What My Blond Jesus Could Teach Germany,” The Guardian, February 16, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com.