Baconing

Impulsively, amidst the after-party chaos of their eulogistic bash, the surviving Bettys began redesigning their studio space after Francis Bacon’s catastrophe-style atelier. Creating a material shitstorm felt like the right thing to do. There was no discussion. This was a moment when years of embattled collective negotiation paid dividends in collective intuition. Spontaneously fastidious, they began fashioning their workspace from hoarder photos of garbage heap rooms. “Shock inertia before it grabs a stranglehold,” YB kept muttering.

Following the dead painter’s lead, they played with a cacophony of perceptual triggers and dissociation mechanisms. This technique would surely horse-jump them towards an indeterminate creative intensity, help to alleviate their alarming sense of loss and despair, the affective noise of hyper-stimulated precarity. Orange Betty pointed out that wading through mountains of accumulated debris could backfire on their delicate emotional states but her listless argument was overruled.

They went wild. Playing in a vibrational field of non-attachment, flush with the simultaneity of destruction and creation, they wrestled tumult to a fever pitch. “Immediate!” White Betty chanted. “Diagram goddamn
it!” “Bacon it!” “Or Vega-bacon it!” A tactical pro by now at whipping vitality into motion, VB enthusiastically shouted motivational aphorisms through a hand rolled cardboard megaphone. “Infinite entanglement!” she shouted as she slipped on a slime heap of newsprint, vinyl shards, and coffee grounds majestically laid out in a logarithmic spiral by VB. Her hipbone flinched in surprise as she hit the concrete floor. Blacks, blues, and yellows colonized her haunches.

Soon they were knee-deep in debris and images: images of images, junk, tools, objets trouvés, boxes, and assorted detritus. The central convivial table in the 200 sq.m. warehouse loft was strewn with books, magazines, poster scraps, tools (markers, pens, brushes, tablets, tweezers, screwdrivers, spray paint cans, tape, glue, arduino boards, raspberry pis, wires, transistors, alligator clips) potato chips, donut holes, kale crackers, and displaced dust. Every bare centimeter in the high-ceilinged drafty workspace was soon covered with things and representations of things. Articulated gibberish. One had to wade through an assault on the senses to carve out a still point in the mess. “Do you feel satisfied yet?” CB tentatively whispered to VB as they watched Infrared Betty swipe snow angels in a pile of shredded Cosmology magazine pages mingled with copious clippings from Anne Carson’s Autobiography of Red and Maggie Nelson’s Bluets. Forging a butterfly pattern in a riot of spectral effervescence technically unavailable to human perception, this mélange of language and Hubble photos, of chaosmos and chiasmus, rendered an invisible universe carnivalesque, a Fellini cosmos in a Wes Anderson palette. IRB sang “Come fly with me through The Verse, through The Verse” to no one in particular.

Attuned to a sighing collective exhaustion, The Bettys caught their breath as they surveyed the scene. The words
“Impressive” and “OMG” filled thought bubbles floating over the silence. Even by their own rigorous standards, they’d outdone themselves. For a kairotic moment they felt relieved, marginally content. And then, as if on cue, an unmistakable twinge, an undeniable tendency towards conceptual catharsis infected the semblance of closure. Slowly, they reassembled around the kitchen table. Philosophical conversation usually worked on their metabolisms like a psychedelic drug. “Let’s talk Color girls,” White Betty slurred as she massaged the ache in her hip. “How bout we sleep on it first,” whined MB.