

EXPLICATING BROKEN:

The slogan "Silence=Death" first appeared in 1986 on posters by a clandestine group of artists called the Silence=Death Project. The poster became synonymous with the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP).

Addressing an activist community as much as inciting responses to a political crisis, "Silence=Death" rang with outrage. In time, massive AIDS protests in North America receded from public memory. However, activists still fight AIDS profiteering, fight against political and religious moralizing, and the causes of poverty exacerbating the crisis.

Although the majority of North Americans living with HIV remain gay men, queer politics is more concerned with normalizing same-sex relations than fighting the health crisis in our midst. A recent CDC study revealed that 45% of black men having gay sex are HIV positive: of that number, 70% are unaware of the HIV status. One can't help but wonder how queer politics are determined in North America today?

Ultra-red asked fellow electronic musicians to commit to record thoughts on this question. For audio source material, the artists worked with sounds from a queer protest in LA during the 2000 Democratic National Convention.

What is an autonomous queer politics in 2006? Does it have any relation to today's AIDS crisis? In an era when dissent has been drowned in isolation, how can we organize the silence?

1' Hush Now (DJ Sprinkles Broken Record Mix) by Terre Thaemlitz.

By the mid nineties, "direct action" AIDS activism had run its course. Those who declared "Silence=Death" had for the most part fallen silent under a new hush of media visibility, bureaucratic cooperation, and institutionalization (including Community Based Organizations typically reliant upon large, non-community funding bases - in turn absorbing "expansionist" business models of outreach that remained unreconciled with notions of localization and the micro-social). Television media in particular helped mass culture co-opt the tactics, signs and patterns of AIDS activism - not only in news programs, but also in comedies and dramas. Weakened by exhaustion, desiring mass-cultural understanding of and sympathy for our various issues, and seduced by the reflection of our own strategies, an unfounded "public trust" was born. We forgot the alternative histories and struggles from which AIDS activism sprang, peacefully hushed by the hypnotic repetition of our reified Pop image. Clean. Formulaic. We still listen to this broken record comforted by knowing where the skips will occur, never lifting the needle out of fear of hearing the underlying silence in which we have lived for years, preferring to let the sound engineers apply an ever so gentle and unimaginative fadeout ... fading ... fading ... hush now and savor it fading ...

In the Hush, DJ Sprinkles is Terre Thaemlitz.

2' How To Explain Silence To A Dead Hare by PSBEUYS.

"All the brightest and the best trampled to death - surely even the Great War brought no more loss into one life in just twelve months, and all this as we made love not war." -- Derek Jarman

To explain Silence, PSBEUYS are Andrew Zealley and Robert Poteraj.

Produced by PSBEUYS, 2005.
www.andrewzealley.com



EXCAVATING BROKEN: First in Public Record's AIDS Uncanny Series. Time for the Dead to have a word with the living.

3' Death Rainbow #1 by Miau Miau TM.

There seems to be general disconnect in popular culture around the very basic, pedestrian principle of cause-and-effect. We as individuals and society tend to operate with the false assumption that we have the luxury to go about our business WITHOUT connecting the dots. More specifically, in terms of queer politics in particular; how can I, for example, as a (white, privileged) woman-who-enjoys-the-company-of-another-woman, go about my life feeling like my sexual orientation is such a non-issue (a right I can enjoy thanks to blood sweat and determination of my queer forefathers and mothers) and live under the illusion that the turmoil and adversity faced still by those stragglers left behind in the queer rainbow-spectrum have no bearing whatsoever on my life, and feel, even in spite of the legacy that's paved the way for my own freedom and relative social mobility, no obligation or duty to stand up for them and fight for THEIR rights? As these thoughts were going through the back of my mind, I tried really hard to figure out how to artfully and witty-ly reflect them through a number of different approaches in making a track out of the "Silence=Death" source material. In the end, I came up with a quick and dirty synth-rock-dance track featuring micro-samples of Dont from Ultra-red as a makeshift lead singer. This one was my favorite. What can I say? It's raw, and it's real.

On the Death Rainbow, Miau Miau TM are Isabelle Noël.

4' The Boy Who Cried Silence Equals Death by Soft Pink Truth.

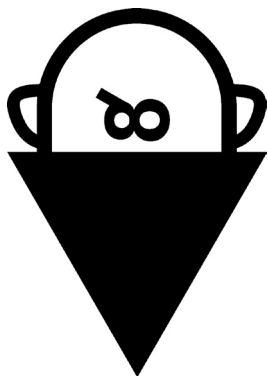
This track is dedicated to the painful memory of Douglas Racic, my first boyfriend. I was 18, he was 27, it was my first love. He was sick when we went out, and then we broke up, and then he got sicker, and sicker still. Years later he died of AIDS-related illness at his parents' house in Thunder Bay, in Canada. I called him on the phone there, but I never visited. I "meant to". I "was going to get around to it". Basically, I failed him. AIDS never went away, but we did: queers who got depressed, who got compassion fatigue, who got spooked, who got embarrassed, who looked out for number one, who moved on when others couldn't, or didn't. Now there're drug companies for the insured, and tough shit for the rest, and of course, as usual, it's always easier for we who are not infected to look the other way. You can't look away forever. The rest is silence. Good night, sweet prince.

Crying Silence=Death, Soft Pink Truth are Drew Daniel.

5' Can't Fake the Feeling (Jack's Bland Fury Mix) by Jack Tactic.

"If you're not feeling what I'm feeling when I'm feeling... If you're not feeling what I'm feeling when I'm feeling... If you're not feeling what I'm feeling when I'm feeling... If you're not feeling what I'm feeling when I'm feeling you... then you can't fake the feeling without feeling. Don't give me love if you really don't mean it. You can't fake the feeling without feeling. Don't give me love if you really don't mean it."

To jack the Feeling, Jack Tactic are Jack Tactic.



Organize the silence.

6' Don't_with the.aiff by Lezzies On X.

We approached this project the same way we tackle all of our mash-up-re-make-remixes. According to myspace.com, we're an electro-metal-jam band and sometimes that's true. And did I mention that we're gay? Or whatever. And we're not 20 years old which means we have army boots hidden in our closet and we didn't have to google "Silence=Death" to understand what it means. Or whatever. We replayed the samples we wanted to use and then we re-sampled ourselves replaying the sampled samples. Then we stole a riff from an obscure grind-core band in Lynne's 7" pile and hope to god we don't get caught. This time the riff we stole was from a song actually called "Silence=Death" by these Polish kids called Homomilitia. It's been at the top of the grind pile for a while now and it just seemed right.

Don't ... with Bernie, Veronique, Jackie "The Jack-Hammer," and Lynne T.

7' Repetition Compulsion (SED_v5a) by Death Drive.

Compulsively, Death Drive is Eddie Peel.

8' Break 'Dis (D2K/A15) by Ultra-red.

Sometimes we so deeply identify with an historical moment that dislocating our identification remains beyond our ability. In an epidemic, identification becomes more problematic. Do we manage the crisis to sustain our identification? Do we deny the crisis exists to purify our motives? The normalization of the pandemic raises the need for a shift toward dis-identification: to resist amidst. Only in and against the crisis can we recover our historical memory and mobilize that memory in the present. Here, Ultra-red recall another mass movement coincidental to the early years of ACT UP: "Money for AIDS not for war, US out of El Salvador." At the time, the US deployed a program for Central America that was one part military intervention, two parts psychological warfare. The means of the later was, according to Ignacio Martín-Baró, fundamentalist Christianity with its personal piety and acquiescence to power. Today the vice grip Fundamentalist ideologues have on US AIDS programs domestic and global reinvigorates the crisis. At the same time, those ideologues ply alliances with global-capital hit-men. The current ascendancy of Left politics in Latin America must be seen as the flower of decades of resistance to US domination. What flowers as sweet bloom from our struggles against AIDS? This we ask in our dis-identification: to resist amidst.

Ultra-red are Breakin' as Pablo Garcia + Dont Rhine.

EXTRAPOLATING BROKEN. Time for the living to get a word in edgewise.

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