Editor's Note

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from top
Frank Miller, Pi-Chan, 2000.

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Kathleen Ferguson completed her Ph.D. at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia in 2000, and her dissertation was examined by Professors Constance Classen and Alphonso Lingis. She is currently undertaking post-doctoral research at the Geography Department of Durham University, U.K., on a Leverhulme Foundation scholarship, and she is working on a project that seeks to recuperate phenomenology in terms of specific issues of globalization and urban planning.

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Patrick “Pato” Hébert is a Los Angeles based artist-educator. He is a Visiting Assistant Professor in Art at Scripps College where he teaches courses in photography and art theory. He also conducts creative arts workshops with high school students as part of “No Haters Here”, an anti-hate crime media campaign sponsored by the L.A. County Commission on Human Relations.

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Little Magazine, and Postmodern Culture, among others. He has also published two books of poetry, Crossing Borders and Stirr’d Up Everywhere (a collage poem/artist’s book), and he is editor of Estuary, a journal of art and literature. He is currently Assistant Professor of English at CUNY-Kingsborough.

Frank Miller is a freelance photographer living in Eugene, Oregon. He has been exhibiting his work since 1998 and has had several solo shows. He is currently finishing a project examining the decline of tourism at Niagara Falls.

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Steve Pile is Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Open University (UK). He is author of The Body and the City (Routledge, 1996) and co-editor of many books, including Place and the Politics of Identity with Michael Keith (Routledge, 1993) and City A-Z with Nigel Thrift (Routledge, 2000). He is currently working on a book that explores the relationship between the city, fantasy, and the production of space.

editor’s note

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Kathleen Ferguson

Common Senses:
Sentient Ethics in the City

The industrial revolution has encroached on the realm of the spirit, and is transforming the global city into an intellectual cloister. Once words come to dominate and occupy flesh and matter... all we have left is to dream of the paradisiacal times in which the body was free, and could run and enjoy sensations at leisure. If a revolt is to come, it will have to come from the five senses. (Serres 71)

To walk through a city is to be vulnerable to the articulations of those around us and to become aware of the permeability of our own personal space. The walker is confronted with the presence of other bodies at every step. The gamut of sensory perception reaches out to our sentience and casts the city as an aggregate of smells, tastes, tactile impressions, sights, and sounds. There is a wealth of bodily material to draw upon in urban places; sensory phenomena emanate from us, from passers-by, and from the city itself. It may be possible to think of this storehouse of incarnate experiences as something more than simply the material conditions that make urban wandering pleasurable. Perhaps the work of the senses may provide a starting point for an ethics that is dynamic in its insistence upon embodiment, that challenges the boundaries of mind and body, and that has political pertinence in terms of social affect. With this possibility in mind, the figurative call to “revolution through the senses” is evocative, but it is an appeal that is measured against an intellectual climate in which the actual pre-discursive experiences of our bodies count for