Editor's Note

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contents

Kathleen Ferguson Common Senses: Sentient Ethics and the City ........ 7
Frank Miller Airin-Chó ................................................. 23
Bégin, Hanlon, and Hollis Interventions: disClosure interviews Steve Pile .... 31
Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani Guided Tour: Villa 31 ......................... 47
Benjamin Chesluk Times Square Ink.: Marginal Citizenship and Corporate Culture in the New Times Square ........... 63
Tom Lavazzi City Set .................................................. 84
Patrick Hebert Untitled, from the series Territories, 2000 ........ 95
Gilles Delalex Non-places: The Everyday Experience of Flows ... 101
Gilles Delalex Interzone .................................................. 116
Barbour and Fox Latin America, Globalization, Sexuality, and the City: disClosure interviews Partick O’Connor ........ 119
Frank Miller Passengers .................................................. 133
Sandy Feinstein Beirut .................................................... 164
book reviews Samuel Delaney's Times Square Red, Times Square Blue reviewed by Chad Barbour ...................... 167
Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift's City A-Z reviewed by James Hanlon ........ 169
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editor's note

I would like to thank the following for their respective roles in making this issue of disClosure possible: Drs. Virginia Blum, Sue Roberts, Rich Schein, and Chris Zurn for their helpful comments on article submissions; Mary Curran, Jessica Hollis, Paul Kingsbury, and Danny Mayer for their copyediting assistance; Drs. J.P. Jones, Wolfgang Natter, and Ted Schatzki, and past disClosure editors Carl Dahlman, Paul Kingsbury, and Chris Metzo for their advice and counsel; Lynn Hiler and Christine Wolcott for their administrative support; Dr. Dana Nelson, faculty advisor for the Spring 2001 collective, for her invaluable guidance; our authors and artists for their fine submissions; and the collective members for their tireless efforts. —James Hanlon

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