

Reality Demands a Theory

[Statement which goes together with the first image: Times Square]

The excellent news is that the United States is increasingly exposed and weakened on the financial markets. The current economic crisis acts as capitalism's moment of truth: it suddenly unveils the ordinary fetishezied real structure of society. The bad news is that both the Left and the Right in our 21st century have no theory left. Reality as found is now all that counts, and functions as the perfect alibi to get away with murder. This addiction to extreme realism, both on the Left and Right, demands a new theory.

[Statement which goes together with the second image]

Excavating the real is no longer enough. Merely having all the resources and facts available doesn't mean, of itself, that they produce interesting answers. Intellectuals, artists, architects and other producers of cultural capital can no longer live the permanent myth of rhetorical and aesthetic poetry without being able to relate to the social and political problems of the world. What we need is a theory able to pose urgent questions for the future. Speculative models need to be developed; asking what it means to be Modern today, which can be grasped within the very domain of praxis, able to renew from within.

Caption photo 1:

Times Square, New York City, 2007

Caption photo 2:

Apple Store, New York City, Manhattan, 2001

Once upon a time Martin Luther King had a dream. For a brief moment in history the market did ensue a season of incredible freedom, but today Martin's brother works for a brand. Slowly the market resumed its control of aesthetic production (as of everything else).

Photos and text Roemer van Toorn