

Skol : 11

Skol was intended to be, according to Wikipedia (The Free Encyclopedia) a global beer brand, the collaborative product of British, Swedish, Belgian, and Canadian breweries. Through a series of acquisitions and mergers, Skol is now the most popular beer in Brazil, the country with the greatest number of uncontacted people. The American cartoon character Hagar the Horrible was once used in promotions: Hagar is a medieval Viking of great girth and dubious veracity. Skol is from the Scandinavian toast skål, meaning "good health." It came from "bowl," a reference to a drinking bowl, originally fashioned from the bowl of the skull, skoll, of a decapitated enemy, emptied and used to toast the fallen so they may enter Valhalla. Skol is the site/non-site of Steve Giasson's 11, therefore: Skol : 11.

The three arts of classical discourse are rhetoric, grammar, and logic; the five canons of classical rhetoric are invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. The three modes of rhetorical appeal, i.e., affective conversion, are logos, pathos, and ethos. Skol : 11 is an intoxicating exhibition of global conceptual artworks in 7 parts, parts as in pieces, pieces as in bits of rhetoric, which is the other way to pop the top of one's enemies and/or drink from their heads. One part, 11, has 30,000 pieces, or parts, of speech. Speech triggered by the event of September 11th, which was a rhetorical event, positing, as it did, a proposition and its predicate. The subject of which, those who are uncontacted as they are uncontactable, being reanimated via an ample comment stream. Another part, Love from New York, has innumerable pieces, or one, depending on whether a thing can be if it exists noumenally, an ontological question posed by Buddha of Bamiyan I and II, too. There is no difference, the latter suggest, at least not mathematically, as there is not even repetition, just puzzles upon which to puzzle. The parts of Skol : 11 are thus iterable bits of our mottled histories as they have been told, that is to say, as breath, or smell, or that which sticks to the skin like dust and light, or the frothy yet heady brew of collective memory and happy forgetting. There is an excess of both, proposes 11, which is by nature senti-mental, concludes Love from New York, and yet persists, adds Black Boxes, which are the things left after the silver planes go down, or up, as in boom! Just as the delivery systems displayed in 11 are explosively maximal, the Word as Event, the way the good Lord intended. Just as there is no style higher than the stylite, and the asceticism of the true believer. Are all tragedies uniform? Are all uniforms tragedies? These are rhetorical questions, not unlike terrorism, or war, or haute poesie, or good department store fashion. And so, Skol : 11 prompts not answers, but pointless and pointillist catechisms. For if we have come to somewhat understand that all tragedies are not enactments, but atomizations, and have disabused ourselves of the adolescent hope that human history has got nothing to do with human nature, we are getting nowhere, which is where we should be.

(Just as Skol is the purported site of Skol : 11, it must be noted that Steve Giasson is the purported artist behind Skol : 11, but Steve Giasson is a nominal act of authorship, for the true originators of these works are those who put them first in pieces, the Taliban, the U.S. Government, and all the people who made September 11th possible as a collaborative event with full video documentation. Giasson speaks of ghosts, or ghosts of ghosts, but ghosts are still traces, and traces are tracks that track back. There is no back here, just stevegiasson.com, a site of publication, of articulation, which, in the best Viking spirit, ruthlessly plunders these works and claims them as its own. Prosit!)

Vanessa Place

Author biography:

Vanessa Place n'est pas une femme banale. —Stephanie Hochet