Editorial

NOSTALGIA IS A UBIQUITOUS PRESENCE IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE. Images and fantasies of the past permeate cultural and political discourses: from the mediated recycling of retro culture (witness the 2016 reboot of *Ghostbusters*) and popular history (Ken Loach's *The Spirit of '45*, 2013), to nostalgia as a method of political renewal: 'Make America Great Again!' (Donald Trump, 2016).

Nostalgia is also readily apparent in the official channels of remembrance that celebrate our national past while self-styled 'progressive' cultural institutions are increasingly turning to past events in order to better understand a contemporary moment from which a feeling for the future has waned. Significantly, nostalgia for a pre-globalised age, however fanciful, is resurgent across the political spectrum in 'Brexit Britain'. The exhaustion of the neoliberal economic project has revealed a deeply felt desire to revisit and re-examine, but also to reject. This latest issue of *Dandelion* represents a collaboration that extends far beyond Britain's borders, however, with diverse contributions elicited from across Europe, the United Kingdom included, and North America. Each one offers a sharp response to this issue's leading question: why the resurgence of nostalgia today?

This issue of *Dandelion* begins with an article by Matthew Holman, '"Je suis las de vivre au pays natal": At Home and at Sea with Frank O'Hara,' which explores the way O'Hara addresses ideas of 'home' and 'return' in his poetry. Drawing attention to the crucial influence of James Joyce's Ulysses and his 'revivification of the *nostos* narrative' on O'Hara, Holman argues for the critical significance of nostalgia, which is to be understood both in terms of its multi-directionality as well as a longing, perhaps paradoxically, for places or times that are unknown.

Loretta Ramirez's article explores the restaging of past art exhibitions by the contemporary Argentinian artist David Lamelas, for whom an exhibition is sensitive to different historical moments, geographical locations and audiences. Ramirez argues that Lamelas's restagings point towards the constant potential for 'newness' in modern art and offer a celebration of future-oriented nostalgia. Writer and organizer Theodore Kerr reviews 'AIDS – Based on a True Story' (September 5–February 21, 2016), an exhibition curated by Vladimir Čajkovac for the German Hygiene Museum in Dresden and based around the Museum's collection of early informational posters about HIV and AIDS. Kerr theorises the 'Aids Crisis Revisitation' to expose the role nostalgia plays in contemporary cultural responses to the on-going global pandemic.

Asami Nakamura's essay marks an important contribution to Dystopian Studies and to scholarly understandings of nostalgia itself. Challenging the binary oppositions that constrain much of the field, Nakamura refashions nostalgia as a mood or entanglement of self in the world, and uses this phenomenological proposition to read the effacement and fantasy projections of the past in seminal fiction by George Orwell, Margaret Atwood, and Kazuo Ishiguro.

In his recent intervention in austerity politics, *The Ministry of Nostalgia* (2016), reviewed in this issue by Patricia Sequeira Brás, Owen Hatherley describes the recent developments in London architecture as 'austerity nostalgia'. Artist Emily Richardson offers a different perspective on Britain's architectural 'ruins' with a creative response to this issue's theme. *3 Church Walk* (2014) is a ruminative film about the modernist architect H.T. (Jim) Cadbury-Brown's Suffolk house that he and his wife Betty Dale designed and built in 1962. Richardson's film journeys through the semi-abandoned building, untouched since Cadbury-Brown's death in 2009, to uncover a modern 'ruin' suspended in time: 'a film set waiting to be reactivated'. Also included in this issue's Short Circuits section is Pavel Romaniko's series of photographs, titled *Nostalgia*, which capture miniature paper versions of Russian interior spaces, and form, as the artist states, a 'reflection on the topic of exile, home and the relationship with one's past and belonging.'

Across an assemblage of visual material, artistic statements, and improvised free-form theses, Tom Pazderka tests the idea of nostalgia as a form of orientation amidst the maelstrom of 24/7 capitalism. Pazderka's art appropriates ordinary and often overlooked objects—here, crates or pallets—and recodes or invests them with potential symbolic meaning, perhaps holding the fragments together. Relatedly, by taking a survey of contemporary visual culture, Martina Massarente spotlights the continued afterimage of Neo-Gothic aesthetic forms on cultural production. Massarente argues that it is in this nostalgic impulse to remake previous art forms that a reconciliation of art and everyday life can be achieved today.

Finally, S.D. Chrostowska's contribution considers the critical function of nostalgia in the modern period as part of her wider investigation into the relationship between critique and nostalgic affect. Chrostowska's scrutiny of critical theory's nostalgic roots – 'critical longing' – powerfully reveals nostalgia's continuing potential as a method of critique today.

If it is the waning of the future that offers the stimulus for nostalgia's resurgence today, then we believe it is worth asking whether nostalgia can be a redemptive force that provides, both for the self and society, insights into our present. If we cannot dismiss nostalgia as merely a displacement strategy for a world convulsed by social, political, economic, and environmental crisis, is there instead something salvageable in nostalgia's longing for a prior

wholeness, in its desire to seek out a moment when the new was still possible?

As the RetroDada manifesto declares, 'why shouldn't a .gif run backwards as well as forwards?'

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Cover Image
Emily Richardson, *3 Church Walk*, 2014, still frame.