



# Good Time Travelers

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Terminal Project Report

*Laura B Hughes*  
2018

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- **December 22** – In Zimbabwe, the political parties **ZANU** and **ZAPU** reach an agreement that ends the violence in the Gukurahundi.
- **December 30** – Pope John Paul II issues the encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (*On Social Concern*).

### **Date unknown** [ edit ]

- Birth rates begin to fall in the **Soviet Union** as the country's government began to collapse.<sup>[3]</sup>
- The **Pendolino** train makes its debut in Italy.
- Tinker Hatfield designs the **Nike Air Max**.
- **Shoko Asahara** founds the **Aum Shinrikyo** cult.
- **Thomas Knoll** and **John Knoll** develop the first version of **Photoshop**.
- **Maglite** introduces the 2AAA Mini Maglite flashlight, targeted for medical and industrial applications.<sup>[importance?]</sup>
- **Barry Minkow**'s *ZZZZ Best* fraud unravels.
- ***Varroa destructor***, an invasive parasite of honeybees, is found in the U.S.
- The first **Starbucks Coffee** stores outside **Seattle** are opened in **Vancouver** and Chicago.
- **BiCE Ristorante** opens in New York, New York.<sup>[4]</sup>
- **Fluoxetine**, marketed as Prozac, is approved for use as an **antidepressant** in the USA by the **Food and Drug Administration**.

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Fig. 1  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1987>  
as of June, 12, 2018

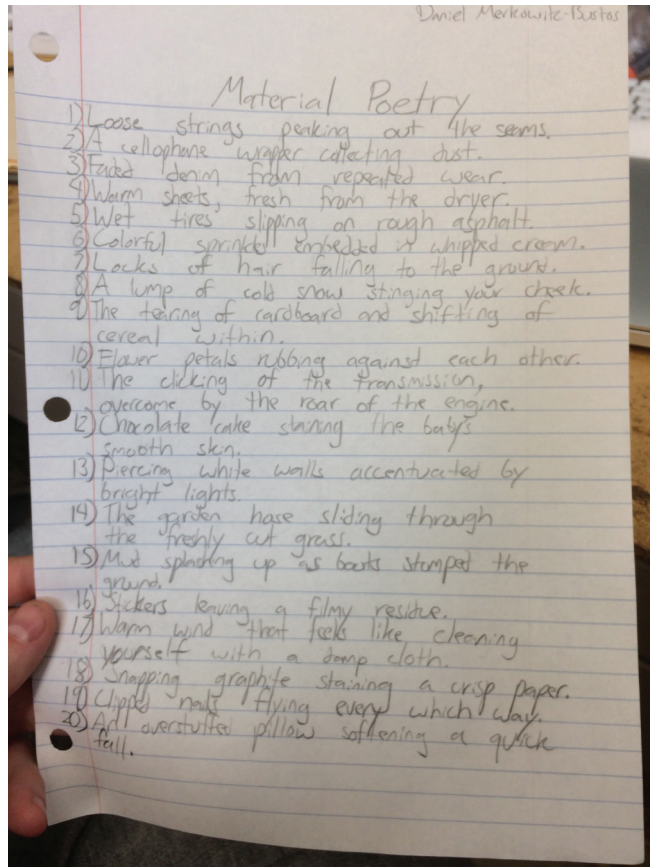
bricks,  
concrete,  
glass,  
our table manners,  
our utensils,  
our tools,  
the way we spend our time,  
our rhythms<sup>1</sup>

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one large men's black plastic work glove,  
one dense mat of oak pollen,  
one unblemished dead rat,  
one white plastic bottle cap,  
one smooth stick of wood,<sup>2</sup>



Fig. 2  
Untitled, 2016  
Scott Reeder  
Ceramic and Acrylic on Canvas



one arrangement creates a storeroom,  
another resembles a stage set,  
another a game board,  
a monument,  
a graveyard,  
a tradeshow,  
museum,  
studio,  
retail store,  
classroom,  
factory,  
dictagraph,  
architectural model,  
sign,  
shop,  
storage room<sup>3</sup>

Fig.3  
Image courtesy of Beki Basch, 2017

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plywood,  
medium density fiberboard,  
one case Umpqua dairy unsalted butter,  
white rotating display stand,  
directional speaker,  
1980 KMart in-store soundtrack, (edited)  
extension cord,  
roughly 600 hours,  
silicone,  
Truman by David McCullough  
Europe by Flora Lewis  
Last Stories and Other Stories, Willaim T. Vollmann  
Helen and Teacher, Joseph P Lash  
The Stillwells: A family's biography, John Pearson  
Heloise's Housekeeping  
Eagles, Lewis Orde  
Involved, Kate O'Riordan  
Coming of Age, Studs Terkel  
FREE 2in1" Cookbook  
Certified Flight Instructor Test Prep, 2006  
duration,  
food,  
human bodies,  
Buffalo, NY

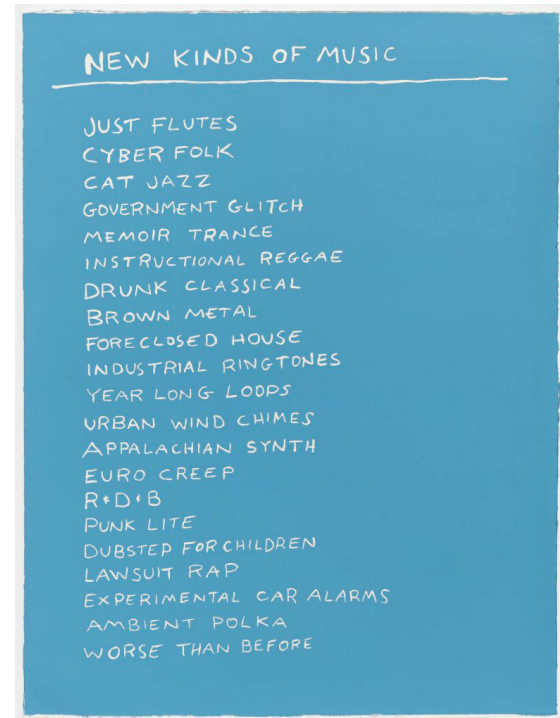


Fig. 4  
New Kinds of Music, 2015  
Scott Reeder  
Archival Print



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“There is something at once uplifting  
and terrifying about the idea that nothing in the  
world is so unique that it can’t be entered on a list.”

Georges Perec, *The ineffable joys of enumeration*<sup>4</sup>

Pg 6-7 The section of the Wikipedia page for the year 1987 where events that cannot be tied to one date are listed. Presumably this list is created when someone cross-edits the 1987 page when editing elsewhere in Wikipedia. This list is crowd-sourced, conforms to some standards of best-practices for editing, but are subtly diverse in length, type, and style.

Created October, 15, 2001 - updates ongoing

Pg 9 From Georges Perec’s *Infra-Ordinary*, which reads as a sort of manifesto for re-routing attention away from the extraordinary, to the ‘commonplace’. A call to “question that which seems to have ceased forever to astonish us.” - 1973

Pg 10 One of many lists Jane Bennett refers to as ‘assemblages’ in her influential New Materialist text *Vibrant Matter*. She came across this particular assemblage “on a sunny Tuesday morning on 4 June in the grate over the storm drain to the Chesapeake Bay in front of Sam’s Bagels on Cold Spring Lane in Baltimore,” to which she returns in the text over and over. 2010

Pg 12 Student submission to an assignment given by Beki Basch in her introduction to sculpture class at University of Maryland. Without the task of fabricating anything physical, students are told to write evocative “material list poetry”. - 2017

Pg 13 Artist Daniel Lefcourt giving a talk at the Dia foundation about Imi Knoebel’s *Raum 19*: a sculpture consisting of 77 objects to be reconfigured in space each time it is installed. Lefcourt’s work shares some commonality with Knoebel’s 30ish years on. He lists the many potential forms *Raum 19* could take on with each installation.

Monday, September 13, 2010, 6:30pm

Pg 14 An expanded material list for a rotating butter sculpture on view in this iteration of *Good Time Travelers: the exhibition*. 2018





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## Good Time Travelers: the exhibition

Inserting a list in the right place can add velocity to a piece of writing. Single word staccato or short lines punctuated by commas; various examples to flesh out a diverse whole. The Apollonian dream-sense-making to the Dionysian wonder/horror impulse.<sup>5</sup> The comma in a list presents an opportunity to make an associative leap; Georges Perec writes,

“In every enumeration there are two contradictory temptations. The first is to list everything, the second is to forget something. The first would like to close off the question once and for all, the second is to leave it open. Thus between the exhaustive and the incomplete, enumeration seems to me to be, before all thought (and before classification), the very proof of that need to name and to bring together without which the world (‘life’) would lack any points of reference for us. There are things that are different yet also have a certain similarity; they can be brought together in series within which it will be possible

I have a begun a project at the exact scale of a human life, which is not too unique or large to be enumerated in its own way. I’m establishing a genealogy in multiple forms that addresses my location in time, creative practice, identity, and background. In his lecture “Live Through This” at the Portland Art Museum on November 9, 2017, Jan Verwoert talked about what it means to live and die together in time.<sup>7</sup> If we have nothing else in common with each other, it is that we all live together now. Having the privilege to spend time making art brings a responsibility to come correct.

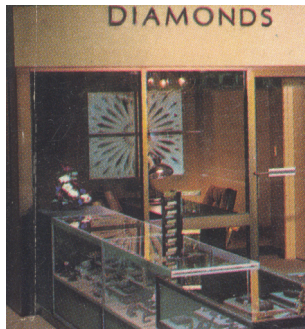


Fig. 5  
Good Time Travelers: The Exhibition, 2018  
Laura B Hughes

Fig. 6  
Century Housewares Catalog, 1979

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My terminal project is the beginning of a larger developing practice, *Good Time Travelers*, it begins with a comprehensive investigation of the years between 1977-97, ten years before and after I was born, a blind spot in my memory, too recent to have been included in high school history class. But I do have a lizard-brain material sense for the world that existed when I arrived. In 1977 my mom is seventeen and dad is twenty-six, they hadn't met. I was ten years old in 1997, my dad was managing a closeout store in Hamburg, NY, my mom was traveling around the world with a huge amount of floppy disks introducing Citibank regional offices to banking on the internet. I will never get tired of imagining my parents at my age, what held their attention, how they felt, what their cars smelled like, how the light was, what they liked, what made them anxious when they listened to the news.

It is important that biography is given equal weight as newsworthy events and the perceptual world. Work in a range of fields prioritizes horizontal-ity, redirecting attention toward the periphery, everyday, and material as a means for understanding. This is especially urgent in developing awareness outside dominant narratives and empathy for those outside ourselves. So, my parents' biographies find level with the biographies of their contemporaries. The late 20th century is peripheral to, but vital in understanding the time we are living together now. My parents' peers, who were in their 30's roughly 30 years ago, are the age of the majority of people holding positions of power today. Through a series of frameworks, *Good Time Travelers* boomerangs between this span of '77-'97 and right now.

New Materialists, like political scientist Jane Bennett, position the substance of human bodies on a horizontal axis with the materiality of non-humans. For Feminist Materialists in particular, this is not an attempt to erase identity but to extend our definitions of 'self' and 'identity' to be-

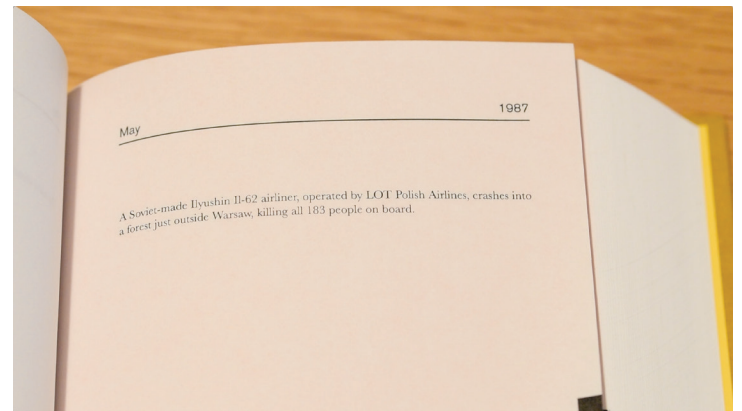
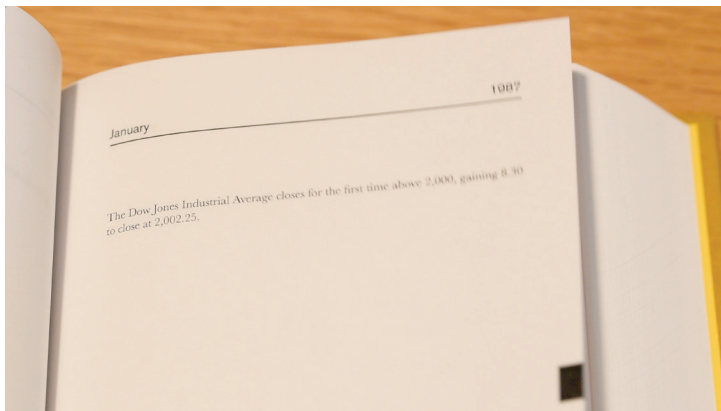
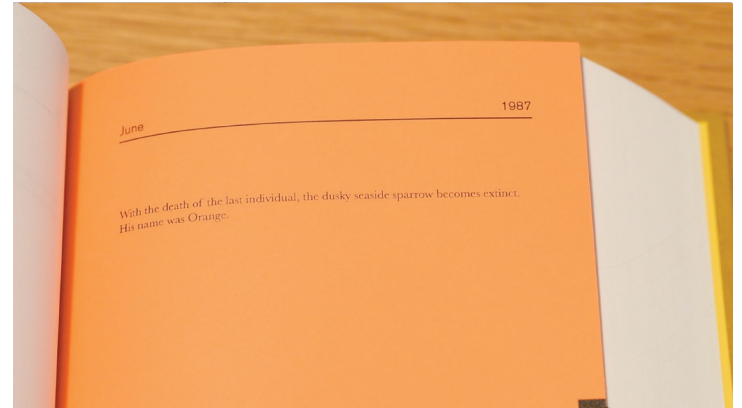
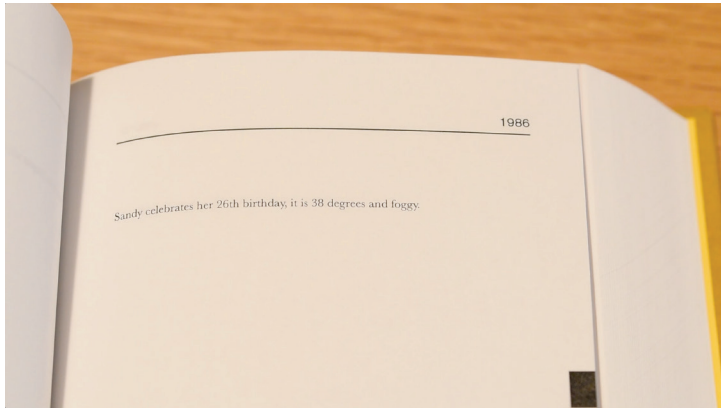
come more nuanced and inclusive. "The ethical aim becomes to distribute values more generously . . . in a knotted world of vibrant matter, to harm one section of the web may very well be to harm oneself."<sup>8</sup> In the second half of the 20th century "cultural studies" emerges as an academic discipline, and in particular studies of everyday life, or the quotidian which (similarly to New Materialism today) take an interdisciplinary approach.<sup>9</sup> Georges Perec is a literary reference, though Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, and Roland Barthes are other primary examples.<sup>10</sup> Writing on the everyday runs parallel, inspires, and is inspired by Minimalism, Pop, and Postmodern artistic sensibilities, just as the New Materialists (Feminist Materialists, Object Oriented Ontologists, Speculative Realists, and other Post-Humanities) are particularly relevant to discourse in sculpture and new media as of the 2010s.

My parents met in a catalog showroom in a suburb of Buffalo, NY in the early 1980s. My dad was managing and mom worked behind the jewelry counter while she was going to college. The language of display has always been close at hand. My dad collected cast-off display cases as he shut down locations of the regional department store chain to show his collection of model cars in our basement. Throughout *Good Time Travelers* various means of display are represented: video of butter melting plays on Sony Trinitron televisions, specially made reference books are an indexical display of events over time, the books sit on a square-ish laminate table. Display cases contain colored light, scratches, dust, cracks, remnants of where butter had melted on a stack of manilla paper, and occasionally a ceramic vessel. The showroom floor is a link between my present day creative practice, my father's model building, and the intersection of our day jobs in support of this work.



Fig. 7  
Good Time Travelers: videos, 2018  
Sony Trinitron Monitors, Video (2hrs15mn)

Fig. 8-12  
Good Time Travelers: books, 2018



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*Good Time Travelers: the exhibition* features a set of reference books: “*Good Time Travelers: the books*”. There are four, each between one to two thousand pages and the size of a desk reference dictionary. Each span 1977-1997, a section for each year and an event for each page. In the center (on the date of my birth) there is an orange insert “With the death of the last individual, the dusky seaside sparrow goes extinct.” The books are unique and present this span of time through different lenses (mom, dad, the studio), they essentially read as very long lists, the turn of a page takes the place of the comma.

The list is deployed as a point of reference in writing on the everyday and New Materialism, bringing the reader from concept to example. “[The] composite of glass, skin cells, glue, words, laws, metals, and human emotions...”<sup>11</sup> These lists speed up the text by way of their surprise elements, non-sequiturs, or what Georges Bataille refers to as a “quacks” in his essay “The Language of Flowers”.<sup>12</sup> Something that appears to be an outlier in a text to snap the reader to. Yve-Alain Bois expands on Bataille’s quacks as “rude belches, the virulence of which owes much to irony ... ‘bunch of radishes,’ ‘the tooth deadened by Novocain.’”<sup>13</sup>

As a first gesture each entry in *Good Time Travelers: the books* are very brief. Their format is borrowed from Wikipedia entries for entire years (fig.1). Though not belonging to any one author with one agenda, but a composite of many Wiki-editors, ‘quacks’ do emerge. In a long list of internationally newsworthy events described as concisely as possible, will appear (say) a lengthy entry for major plot points of the soap opera *World of Tomorrow*, or the extremely concise “Pepsi enters China”.<sup>14</sup> Though what is deemed newsworthy is obviously up for interpretation. This approach to an exhaustive reference book made up of surface level internet browsing seems like an appropriate way to begin this project, which is about parallel to the

amount I know about my parents in 1977-’97. Wikipedia as analog for my memory: shifting, questionably reliable, fragmented. As the written components of this project evolve I expect to find more depth in some areas, and develop a more obvious relationship to fiction in others.



Fig. 13  
Good Time Travelers: butter, 2018



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On pg. 14 is an expanded material list for a rotating butter sculpture: a MDF cube coated in butter that rotates 360 degrees, displaying cast butter in the shape of a stack of books. In sculpture simultaneity is possible, that is not in verbal expression. While language may provide some resolution and clarity, a visual quack can be more evocative like the lizard-brain familiarity with the perceptual world. Unavailable to reference books is any sense of the corporeal, the dumb material, the sensory. The sculpture exists in real time and space, a one-to-one relationship to the actual books sitting on a similarly cube-shaped table a few yards away. The butter version of the cube and books not only rotates but also sits at room temperature in the gallery to crack and melt and age and become transparent and fall apart over the month it sits in the gallery.

In this work's lineage is Imi Knoebel's *Raum 19*, made in 1968 when he had been a graduate student. It is simultaneously painting, object, and event; specific and stand-in; representative of denial and potential. It is not only visually reminiscent of the display cases present in *Good Time Travelers* but, has a similar modularity as the central installation. While the cases are themselves sculptural objects they are also containers and markers of display. As Knoebel's masonite structures are both sculptural objects as well as in reference to blank substrates intended for painting or surfacing. In both sets of objects, time is made present. *Raum 19*'s masonite and glue has weathered, traces of their construction (done by hand by Knoebel) have been laid bare in pencil marks and nail holes. The display cases are water damaged, spider webbed, and dusty. *Raum 19* is durational in the sense that it has been acted out periodically when it is rearranged since 1968, moreover it is simultaneous because three versions of it exist, latent because with each arrangement some portions of the work become hidden.

“...defined by their structure-as-stored, not by their structure-as-shown. Showing is treated as the exception; something that happens to the work from time to time. Most of the time, it is defined by its existence in store, dominated by the state of lying/leaning/being stacked/being packed. In a catalogue text for Knoebel, Franz Dahlem called for museums and exhibitions to be kept open twenty-four hours a day, or at least for the works to be routinely lit every night.”<sup>15</sup>

I do not know the provenance of the *Good Time Traveler* display cases, how old they are, how much they contained before I acquired them though their obvious wear and generic design suggest a history. I like seeing them empty but lit.







Fig. 14-16  
Raum 19, 1968  
Imi Knoebel

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In two of the *Good Time Traveler* books, S and K, my parents are the lens through which I have organized information. In a third, I/M, it is my studio practice is this optic. Biographical information about Imi Knoebel is included in that third book. It would be putting it mildly to say that I have developed a fixation with his work, I think we share some kind of kinship in personality and tendencies in the studio. His durational work *250,000 Drawings* has some elements in common with *Good Time Travelers* and the way I have maintained drawing practice in the past. This work, made in the “intermediary” period after leaving school, is steady, daily, patient, it passes or marks time.

Over the next few years, he made a total of 250,000 drawings, executed on sheets of A4 paper, which were systematically grouped into series and stored in black cardboard boxes known as >>books<<. These works went on to show in 1975 at Kunsthalle in Dusseldorf, where they were displayed in six tall black cabinets which were normally closed but could be opened at the viewer’s request. The process of making the drawings required the discipline of the assembly-line worker, and to an outsider, the project might have seemed bizarrely obsessive, but Knoebel saw it as offering the benefit of long-term continuity, giving him a necessary breathing space to reassess everything he had done before.<sup>16</sup>

I have already begun a drawing practice within *Good Time Travelers* that focuses on color, arrangement, and abstraction from the visual sources culled from my research (though not represented in the exhibition). This work has some of the most visual similarity with the ceramics work arranged among the display cases. The drawings, made with gouache and flashe, share a more fixed nature with fired clay. Ceramic will break down more

slowly than any other material in the exhibition though the construction is provisional and slouching. They seem to be barely held together, made quickly with squishy finger marks then partially dabbed with glaze in a butter-colored variety of yellows. There is an impatience in the making of this work that is unlike the the more fussy drawings. The decision to butt up two ends of my practice: the found display cases with the ceramic objects are a real-space non-sequitur.



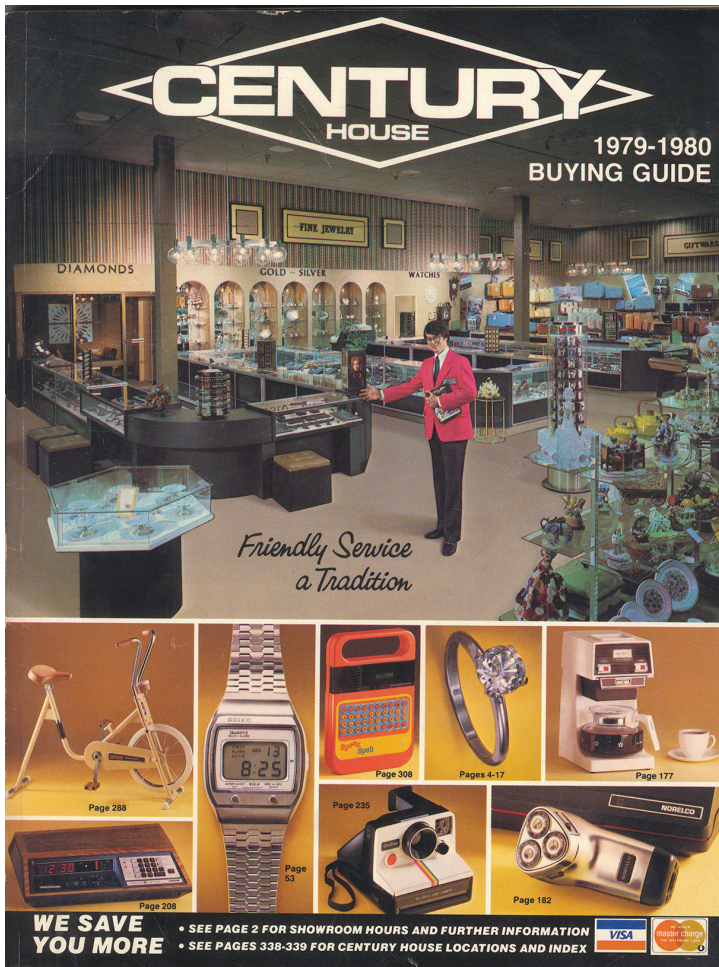


Fig. 17  
Good Time Travelers: ceramics, 2018

Fig. 18  
Screenshot, 2018  
Scott Reeded (Instagram)

I have already mentioned Nietzsche's Apollonian/Dionysian dichotomy, the balance between rationality, sense, and order with impulse and irrationality. There is an intensity even bordering on manic desire to feel and hold time — the impulse to catalog can move way beyond what is logical. What is particular about the way Nietzsche introduces the Apollonian task in *The Birth of Tragedy* is not of the archivist or analyst but of the dream-state and of the sculptor to give form to wildness.<sup>17</sup> As *Good Time Travelers* progresses I would like to let loose to more of the Dionysian wildness that motivates the work, committing to the scale of a human life. This will inevitably dictate the forms and frameworks that will continue to stretch to become even more strange and particular.

When looking through my dad's Century Housewares catalog or the Good Time Travelers books it is fascinating to see what relationship, depending on age, the viewer has to the images and information at hand. Others who are exactly my age might have a very similar, uncanny feeling. In older viewers there may be a personal spark of recognition. Younger might have a more distant relationship and wonder about the authenticity. I feel an urgency in this project not only to understand my place, but our place. As the gap between the late 20th century and the present day becomes wider and we all become a little older. Everyday, slowly, we hurtle through time.



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Fig. 19  
Century Housewares Catalog, 1979

Fig. 20  
Installation images courtesy of Mario Gallucci

