



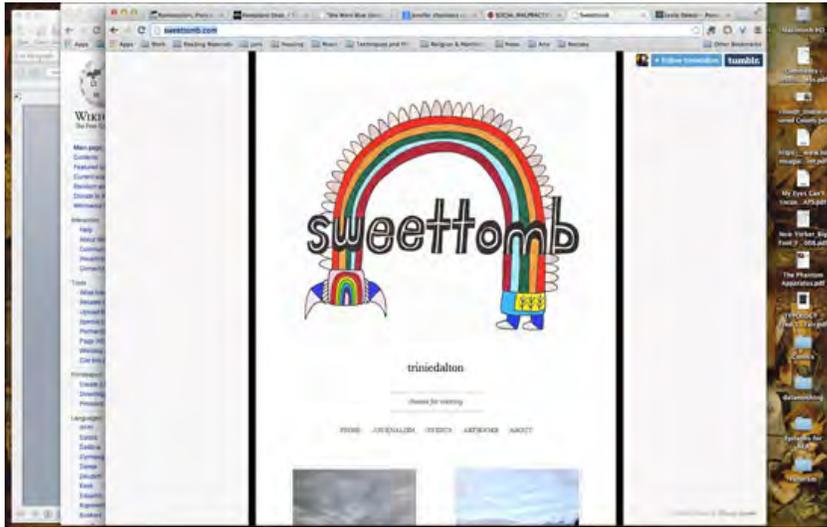
FEATURES ► BOOKMARKED

Friday, August 22nd, 2014

## This Project is Experiencing Some Delays: Noah Dillon's Deferred Reading List

by THE EDITORS

In our regular BOOKMARKED column, artists, critics, collectors et al. share and comment on their favorite blogs and art-related or -inspiring sites. This month, New York-based painter, art critic, and artcritical Associate Editor Noah Dillon shares what's been waiting in his browser for him to look at. Dillon, a graduate of the School of Visual Arts' MFA Art Criticism and Writing program, says, "I don't know why you would expect I could say anything about these. If I had read them I would have closed those tabs and moved on to something else. These all hang around because I haven't looked at them yet." Here's a curated list of some of the materials he's been avoiding.



A screencap of some of Noah Dillon's as-yet-unread browser tabs.

1. [The New York Times](#), "[Working or Playing Indoors, New Yorkers Face an Unabated Roar](#)," by [Cara Buckley](#), [July 19, 2012](#) — Yeah, most of the places you can go to socialize in New York are way too loud. Maybe I'm just getting old and I've blown out my ear canals with too much loud, bad music. But if we go out somewhere, I'd like to be able to hear you talking to me from across the table — not just the person I'm rubbing shoulders with. I've got an agenda to share with people and I want to be able to hear them when they tell me why I'm mistaken about something. I can't learn anything if all I hear is a dull mix of some sentimental and ironic pop songs from the late '70s to the early '90s blared at me at 120 db.



Noah Dillon's downtime offline. Photograph © 2014 by Daniel Herr.

2. [3AM Magazine](#), "[romanticism, punk rock, and the importance of rim jobs](#)," [Andrew Stevens in conversation with Brandon Stosuy](#), [March 4, 2007](#) — Brandon Stosuy is pretty rad. I like the way he writes a lot. There's a bunch of cultural flotsam from the 1980s that's in the process of being rediscovered, saved, found, or retained. That stuff is really important since there was a lot of artistic and cultural development going on then that we're just now trying to think about a little more clearly. (Koons is an OK example of this, though there are also far, far better ones, like Jack Goldstein, Louise Lawler and Richard Prince). Stosuy has shown a pretty cool dedication to that excavation work. So thanks, Brandon Stosuy, for helping with that whole thing.

3. [Vice Magazine](#), "[KOMP-LAINT DEPT.: TRUST NEVER SLEEPS](#)," by [Bob Nickas](#), [February 5, 2014](#) — I'd read anything Bob Nickas writes, whether it's an essay on art and culture or a grocery list, or some graffiti he scrawled on the wall of a public toilet. He wouldn't do that, maybe. He writes a column for *Vice* and I feel like he's doing some of the best writing of his long, totally illustrious career. I also haven't read this or his current essay yet, but I would strongly suggest everyone read and re-read and re-read "Why I Want to Fuck Ronald Reagan, Part II," "To be Read (Once Every Two Years)," and "Why. I Hate. Graffiti."

4. [sweettomb.com](#) — This is the website of Trinie Dalton, who (full disclosure) was my thesis advisor. She's absolutely awesome and makes really cool zines. Pick up *MYTHTYM*, *Baby Geisha*, and *Dear New Girl or Whatever Your Name Is*.

5. [seanjosephpatrickcarney.com](#) — After reading Walter Benjamin and other cultural criticism-type stuff for a long time,

SJPC and his Social Malpractice project finally explained that stuff in a way that made way more sense than a grad school seminar discussion and was also more entertaining than a grad school seminar discussion.

6. [skeptoid.com](http://skeptoid.com) — I volunteer copyediting services to Skeptoid's blog. I like the science and skepticism community's encouragement of questioning, thinking about rhetoric, doubting and thinking systematically. I do better when I'm suspicious of my own preconceptions and assumptions. Plus also science is very, very cool.



Egyptian, Fragment of the Head of a Queen, ca. 1353–1336 B.C.  
Yellow jasper, 5 1/8 x 4 15/16 x 4 15/16 inches. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

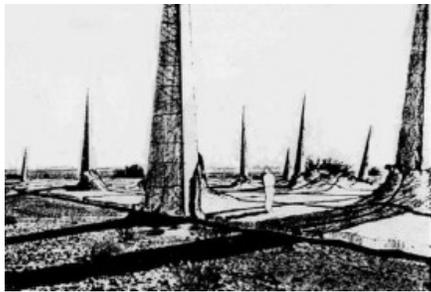
7. [The “Egyptian hieroglyphs” entry on Wikipedia](#) — I like hanging out in the Egyptian wing at the Met. And the history of how this stuff was used and later decoded is really cool. [Maya hieroglyphics](#) is also incredibly interesting and weird, and prizes inventiveness.

8. [Slate Magazine. “Why Joseph is my Hero.” by David Plotz, June 1, 2006](#) — I tried again to read the whole Bible. I got into Exodus. It can just be so boring. I'm reading another novel right now and will possibly return to the Bible when I'm done. David Plotz, the former editor at *Slate*, wrote a blog about his thoughts, reactions, and curiosities while reading the Bible. He's an atheist, but he takes the book earnestly and generously, and his insights are very cool.

9. [The “Kitzmilller v. Dover Area School District” entry on Wikipedia](#) — This was a landmark lawsuit about the teaching of evolution in schools. My cousin works at a non-profit, the NCSE, that consulted with the plaintiffs and provided some of the best arguments for the difference between intelligent design as a conceit and evolution as a theory that's scientifically demonstrable. In the arts we tend to abuse the word “theory.” What we usually mean by that word is a hypothesis or a proposition or a description. What it means in the hard sciences is very different. Here's a good definition, from Wikipedia: “A scientific theory is a well-substantiated explanation of some aspect of the natural world that can incorporate facts, laws, inferences, and tested hypotheses. A scientific theory is differentiated from a hypothesis in that a theory must explain actual observations.” Also, as you might be able to tell from this list, I use Wikipedia all the time and hope to someday be able to state unequivocally that it rivals the achievement of the Library of Alexandria. Fingers crossed.

10. [Common Spark Collective. FAQ](#) — I'm sad to say that I'll likely never contribute to this project, even though I find it really intriguing. These people are mapping “the shared national and cultural resources we inherit and pass around.”

That's pretty amazing when you think about it. It's an enormous project. I'd like to see what they do with it. The commons is one of the best assets we have in a free society, and recognizing what they are (both as cultural products and as shared spaces) is one step towards thinking about what we can do with them, how we relate to one another, and what our socio-cultural environment is. I found out about this project from a bumper sticker.



A proposed landscape by Mike Brill intended to discourage future archaeologists from coming anywhere near a nuclear waste dump.

11. [SolveForX. “Power from Nuclear Waste.” by Leslie Dewan, February 10, 2014](#) — Most of what we call nuclear waste and store in places like Yucca Mountain, where it will remain dangerous and toxic for thousands of years, is actually unused nuclear fuel. About 90% of the available material in nuclear fuel goes unused, so then it just gets dumped in the middle of nowhere. So, but, Dewan says that technology that allows for more complete consumption of the available fuel in the uranium pellets that nuclear power plants use has existed since the 1950s or so. It's safer, produces a much shorter half-life (hundreds of years rather than tens of thousands), and is more energy efficient. Plus it requires smaller installations that can exist at current nuclear plants or that can be set up all over the place, which means that any given site is much less dangerous than something like Fukushima (which was a very old and more dangerous model than the ones currently being built). Look: nuclear power is kind of scary, I get that. But the accidents that we've seen have all been preventable and aren't very likely with the current nuclear power facilities that can be built. It's a way, way, way, way better source of energy than gas, oil, or coal (which, coal, by the way, dumps enormously larger amounts of radioactive material into the environment than nuclear power ever will).

[There are also some cool articles from Slate](#) that explain the attempts by various committees to figure out how to warn future generations how horrifically dangerous nuclear waste will remain. It's a really hard project, since we have no idea what people will be like thousands of years from now. [We don't know what language they'll speak or what various signs will mean to them](#). It's like trying to figure out how to make a Rosetta stone that will retain its communicative clarity easily and effectively for dozens of centuries.

12. [Giacometti: A Biography, by James Lord](#) — Lord quoted Giacometti as saying, “In a burning building I would save a cat before a Rembrandt.” Amen, man. That cat is better for people than any painting. And despite their flaws, this and [Lord's A Giacometti Portrait](#) are amazing depictions of the artist.

13. [The Bloggess. “Women Who Are Ambivalent about Women Who Are Against Women Against Feminism.” by Jenny Lawson, July 21, 2014](#) — Jenny Lawson's a good writer and I really dig this essay on the difficulty that reactionary forces have imposed on disrupting structural inequalities and outright bigotry.



Alberto Giacometti, Portrait of James Lord, 1964. Oil on canvas.  
Courtesy of Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

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