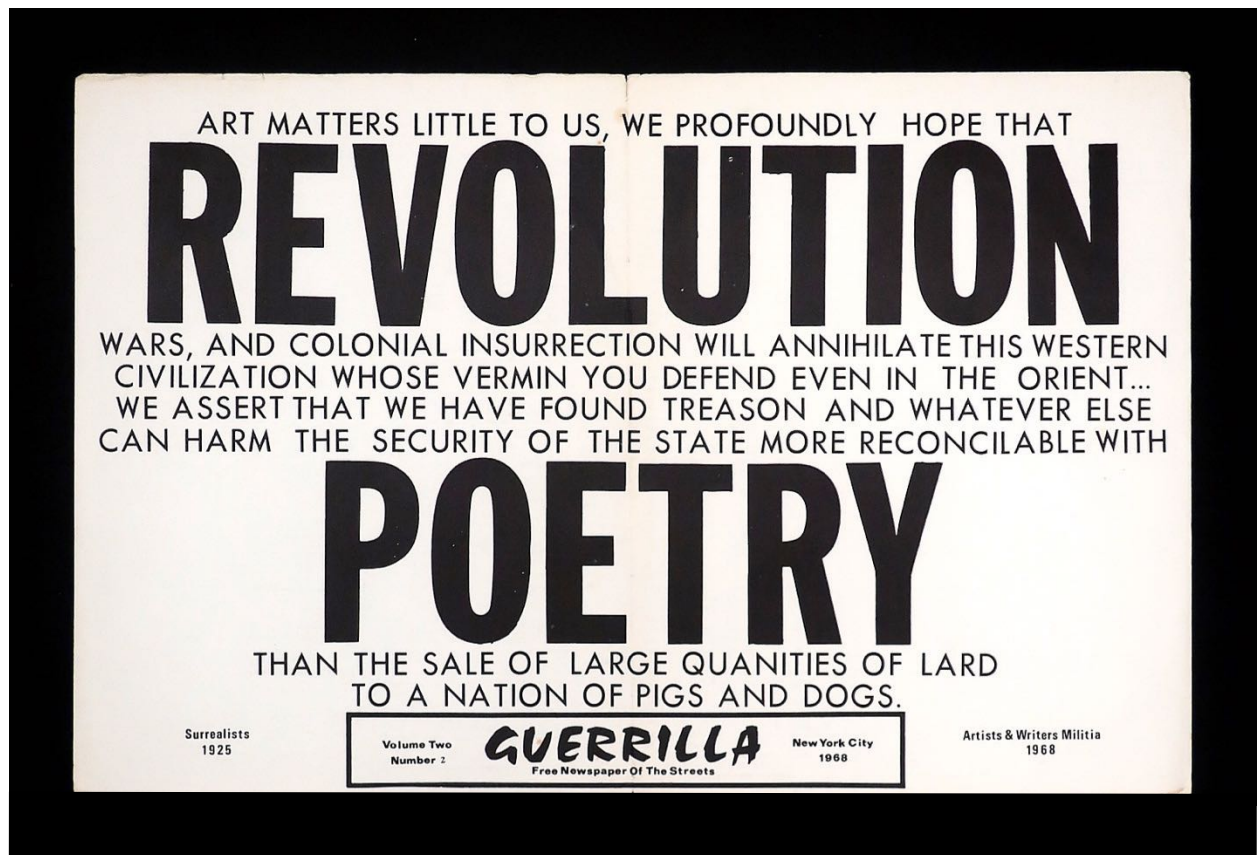


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 2017

**"THE SPIRIT OF THE PEOPLE WILL BE STRONGER
THAN THE PIGS' TECHNOLOGY"**



An exhibition, a symposium, and a month-long series of events re-examining the interdependent legacies of revolutionary poetry and the militant left in the United States, with a spotlight on Allen Van Newkirk's Guerrilla: Free Newspaper of the Streets (Detroit, Mich. & New York City: 1967-1968) and the recent & upcoming 50th anniversaries of the founding of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, Calif. (1966) and the White Panther Party in Detroit, Mich. (1968) including a presentation of rare ephemera from both groups.

Exhibition: 9 November - 29 December 2017 @ Fortnight Institute
Symposium: 17 November 2017 @ NYU

EXHIBITION

A complete run of *Guerrilla: Free Newspaper of the Streets* serves as the focal point for an exhibition of revolutionary leftist posters, broadsides, books, and ephemera, ca. 1964-1970, at East Village (Manhattan) art gallery Fortnight Institute, opening at 6 pm on Thursday, November 9, 2017 and continuing through Sunday, December 29. The display also includes rare, original print materials and posters from the **Black Panther Party, White Panther Party, Young Lords** and other revolutionary groups. For the duration of the exhibition, Fortnight Institute will also house a reading room stocked with chapbooks and paperbacks from leftist militant poets of the era, many of whose works were printed in *Guerrilla*, including **LeRoi Jones, Diane Di Prima, Margaret Randall, Regis Debray** and others.

Fortnight Institute
60 East 4th St. NYC 10003
<https://fortnight.institute>

SYMPOSIUM

In conjunction with the exhibition at Fortnight Institute, New York University will host a one-day symposium considering poetry, revolution, and left-wing militancy in America during the late 1960s and in our own time. The event will take place from 2 until 6 pm on Friday November 17th, 2017, followed by an evening of readings, debate, and reflection at the gallery. Confirmed participants include poet, novelist and NPR commentator **Andrei Codrescu**, communications strategist and activist **David Fenton**, Nuyorican poet **Jesús Papoleto Melendez**, artist and Black Mask / Up Against the Wall Motherfucker founder **Ben Morea**, Detroit-born American painter **Ellen Phelan**, documentary filmmaker **Matt Peterson**, photographer and White Panther Party member **Leni Sinclair**, NYU Professor of Social and Cultural Analysis and History **Thomas Sugrue**, with others to be announced.

New York University
14 University Place
New York, NY 10003
Friday, November 17th, 2017, from 2 pm to 6 pm.
(Free and open to the public)

THE SPIRIT OF THE PEOPLE WILL BE STRONGER THAN THE PIG'S TECHNOLOGY

THE ONLY TASK LEFT FOR THINKING MEN & WOMEN IN THE WORLD TODAY IS CONSCIOUS PREPARATION FOR THE REVOLUTION.

Brainless. The social evolution now in progress & vanguarded by black revolutionaries is a season of cultural revolution.

The cultural revolution seeks not only to transform the entire political & social status quo but in so much as it seeks to liberate the creative spirit inherent in all men then we can say that it tends to transform the revolutionary socialist's task of "making history" into the revolutionary poet's task of destroying the whole SPECTACLE of history as narrated sequences of events. The cultural revolution, as if she were the beautiful woman who dwells in the hearts of all men, whigens, & in critical times like these, shouts: THINK OF YOUR DESIRES AS REALITIES. Again & again this great vision of the world transformed, as if this woman were the very organic source of the planet herself, has called for men to arms that they might reestablish themselves in joyous harmony with all things alive & growing. Yet again & again the infernal cities, regardless of what small reforms they have granted & now seek to take back, never managed to contain the

struggle. Our vision grewed into a kind of blue death. OVER THE PAST 100 YEARS MORE DAMAGE HAS BEEN DONE TO THE ORGANIC PRODUCTIVE PROCESS OF THE PLANET THAN IN ALL HUMAN HISTORY PRECEDING.

Unfortunately, "man... has exchanged the safety and flexibility of generalized characteristics, which since his primitive days have largely contributed to his survival, for extreme specialization. Through the development of the physical sciences, furnished into vast industrial systems, he has created and continues to create new environments, new conditions. These extensions of his mind-fertility and his mind-reach are experienced, like crabs, on the face of the earth, checking his life sources. The conditions under which he must live are constantly changing, he himself being the cause of the changes. In this metamorphosis he has almost lost sight of the fact that the rising resources of his life are derived from his earth-holding and not from his mind-power... Parts of the earth, since living and productive, have thus died at the hands of man. Others are now dying. If we cease more to die, nature will compensate for this in her own way, generally, as already she has begun to do... There would seem to be no real hope for the future unless we are prepared to accept the notion that man, like all other living things, is a part of one great biological scheme."
—F. J. Osborne
in *Our Plundered Planet*

"As long as the arena of the assembly is the modern bourgeois city, to be sure, the revolution is located in a real-citizen environment—more difficult to assimilate to an assembly community. The bourgeois city, by its very nature and structure, fosters centralization, classification, and

exploitation of the resources and the people of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and even Western Europe and Canada. We must make clear the connection between this international imperialism and the colonial oppression of black people and other people of color in this country. We must raise the fundamental question of whom the land and the means of production rightfully belong to; we must declare that the people have a right to enjoy the wealth created by their own labor."
—Edridge Cleaver

Johnson, Humphrey, McCarthy, Westmoreland, Nixon, Reagan, Wallace, Rockefeller, idiots hurrying at the bride's door, beat the crap out of men in newspapers, die & war. Where among these does the spirit reside that restores the land to production order. Nonsense! They & their class are scum on the body of the people. Let them disappear. Let maximal grace reign like a forest over the green earth. Let each man carry his own fog & huge erotic gestures and his land his time his sack.

Take the social revolution to the cultural revolution. Support the vanguard of the Panthers. Demand all power to the people. Everywhere. Everywhere!
—A.V.

"What we need in America is radical political machinery that is able to move in two directions at the same time, able to harness two different sets of political dynamics—the liberation struggle in the black community, and the class struggle in the white community."

If we were dealing with a capitalist United States of America that had no imperialistically possessed colonies, we would correctly have a different starting point than the one adopted in this piece. But we do in fact have to deal with a capitalism that not only possesses colonies in the usual sense of the term, i.e., colonies abroad, separated from the mother country by either land or water, we have at the same time to deal with the phenomenon of a capitalism that holds a people in colonial bondage and subjugation on the very same land mass occupied by itself. And this already complicated fact is further complicated by the additional fact that the colony is not centralized and separated, such as an Indian Reservation of the Native Preserves of South Africa. Rather the colonized black people are dispersed throughout the population of the mother country, clustered here and there in congested enclaves called 'black communities', and radiating out from those centers in a scattering to the four winds.

'POETRY IS REVOLUTION' A Brief History



Allen Van Newkirk. Detroit, 1966
Photo by Leni Sinclair.

Fifty years ago, poets, artists, and musicians counted among the vanguard of revolutionary activists in the struggle to establish a more just society.

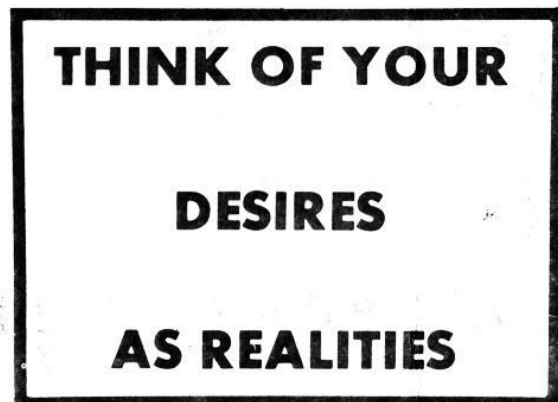
With a focus on select individuals and movements in Detroit, Michigan, New York City, and Oakland, California, this exhibition examines the links between American poetry, designers of agitprop, and militant protest culture between 1964 and 1970. In doing so, it searches for the lessons that members of these circles - both the living and the dead - can pass along to the poets, artists, and activists of today.

Guerrilla: Free Newspaper of the Streets was born in Detroit in January of 1967. It appeared in tabloid format as 'A Monthly Newspaper of Contemporary Kulchur,' co-published and edited by the poets John Sinclair and Allen Van Newkirk. Sinclair and his circle had already been publishing mimeograph poetry and music chapbooks for several years, challenging the norms of 'straight culture' and lionizing the radical jazz musicians and experimental poets they most admired.

With *Guerrilla*, the duo sought to construct a more explicit bridge between the aesthetics of revolutionary art and material support for ongoing liberation struggles in Latin America, Viet Nam, and in the daily lives of African Americans and the working poor in the US. Sinclair and Van Newkirk solicited local contributors from the Detroit Artists' Workshop and fellow travelers from around the world. But during the summer of 1967, after only two issues, Van Newkirk broke off the partnership with his co-editor, whom he deemed to be insufficiently dedicated to the cause.

Though he and Sinclair remained friends, Van Newkirk uprooted the publication to New York City where he forged a kinship with members of Black Mask / Up Against the Wall Motherfucker, a notorious gang of artists and revolutionaries whose street fighting ways and commitment to direct action more closely mirrored his own. Together, he and chief Motherfucker Ben Morea refashioned *Guerrilla* from a staid underground press tabloid into a stark, black and white poster with words, images, and layouts as sharply visceral as the popular uprising it promised readers.

Between acts of symbolic and real violence against the cultural and political establishment of New York City - including the mock assas-



sination of 'bourgeois' poet Kenneth Koch during a reading at St. Mark's Church - Van Newkirk issued a succession of four startlingly militant *Guerrilla* broadsides before the end of 1968. These large format posters were meant to be read in the streets, wheat pasted on walls, or nailed to doors. They included bold statements of support for the Black Panthers' right to violence in the cause of self-defense against police brutality. One issue provided diagrammatic instructions for an adaptation of the Molotov cocktail to a rifle-fired mortar weapon.

All of this appeared alongside arrestingly militant and strangely beautiful poems by Diane Di Prima, LeRoi Jones, Charles Olson, Ed Dorn, Margaret Randall, Robert Kelly, and others. This was no contradiction, because as Van Newkirk saw it, "POETRY IS REVOLUTION."

Brothers! Arise! It is only by the defeat of the imperialist cultures that enslave us that it might become possible for the spirit of poetry to resurrect the forgotten world.

50 years later, *Guerrilla* looks and feels more relevant than ever. With a populist right-wing President in office, antifascist youth on the march, and conservative NRA-backed militias promising to back the Trump regime with "the clenched fist of truth," the cataclysmic vision of total revolution seems as powerful today as it was in 1967.

But at what cost? Rather than glorifying violence in the name of revolutionary art and social change, our exhibition seeks to interrogate the history of left-wing militant protest movements in America, and carefully examine their outcomes. During the November 17 symposium at NYU, we plan to invite members of

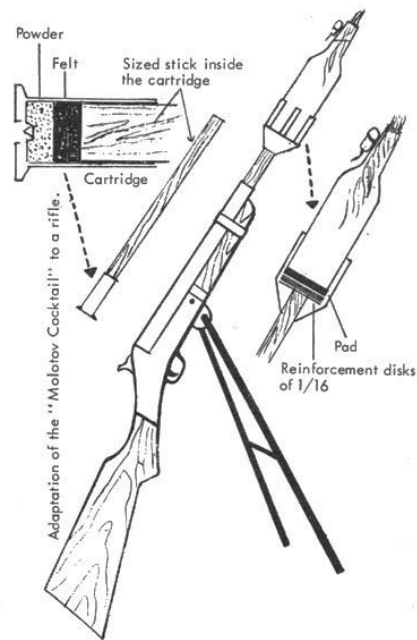
the 1960s-revolutionary left tell us about the personal, ideological, and spiritual costs of their attempts at armed insurrection.

Drawing its title from a Panthers' slogan of the era (co-opted by Van Newkirk as the verso headline of *Guerrilla* vol. 2 no. 3) **THE SPIRIT OF THE PEOPLE WILL BE STRONGER THAN THE PIGS' TECHNOLOGY** also challenges 'the people' of 2017 to consider whether or not their spirit has indeed proven to be stronger than the pigs' technology.

And if it is to become so, what sacrifices could be required of us? What strategies can we adopt, and which ones would we be wiser to avoid?

THIS APPARATUS WILL FIRE THE BURNING BOTTLES A HUNDRED METERS OR MORE WITH A FAIRLY HIGH DEGREE OF ACCURACY. THIS IS AN IDEAL WEAPON FOR ENCIRCLEMENTS WHEN THE ENEMY HAS MANY WOODEN OR INFLAMMABLE MATERIAL CONSTRUCTIONS; ALSO FOR FIRING AGAINST TANKS IN HILLY COUNTRY.

"CHE"





Black Panther Party rally in Detroit, MI. Photo by Leni Sinclair, 1969.

