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from the field

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Cover: Soda Goddess 2, 2003, by and © Alexa Goldstein.
Coming Attractions

Vol. 16, no. 3:

Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis
Guest edited by Sarah Nuttall and Achille Mbembe

Lindsay Bremner on township space; Mark Gevisser on urban regeneration; Frédéric Le Marcis on the suffering body in the city; John Matshikiza on the instant city; Achille Mbembe on the aesthetics of superfluity; Achille Mbembe, Grace Khunou, and Nsizwa Dlamini discuss Soweto; Sarah Nuttall on stylizing the self; AbdouMaliq Simone on people as infrastructure; the artwork of Rodney Place; and more . . .
The body that genuflects raises a host of provocative questions about global cultures of governmentality. The very term *genuflect*—literally, to bend the knee—carries a particular history of worship. After all, the knee bent, as well as the hat doffed, was one of the key corporeal sites in which struggles over the disciplinary power of the Roman Catholic Church were made visible during the long European Reformation. These struggles to refashion the body in relation to new modes of worship and new doctrines of the secular and the sacred predated the rise of manufactory capital and the regulated lines of the factory floor. They are, however, almost immediately deployed in the practices of New World chattel slavery and redeployed by freedmen challenging American post–Civil War racial regimes (Biman Basu). If by worship, therefore, we simply mean the reverence, or pursuit, of something with quasi-divine qualities, then worship can bend the back of the body and shape the poetics of the mind in ways that include spacing out in front of a slot machine (James Rizzo), contouring a national body (Ivor Chipkin), and cross-pollinating symbolic forms such as mangoes, Mao medallions, and genealogical charts (Michael Dutton). Goddesses that stretch across the Taiwan Strait, mediated by televisual technologies, challenge the supreme deity of the state (Mayfair Mei-hui Yang) even as elsewhere the capital-oriented neoliberal state is installed as an ontotheological end of man (Ann Anagnost) only to be undermined by the other systems of (black market) televideo circulation (Brian Larkin). Something is being pursued in such a way as to evoke terms like *sacred, genuflect, worship, or feelings* like prophesies that could come to pass. Each of the essays in this volume—and the volume as a whole—slices into the genuflected body through an ethnographically rich analysis that places this body decisively in a global history of disciplinary modes of power.
Public Culture is delighted to announce that Brian Keith Axel’s essay “The Diasporic Imaginary” (Public Culture 14 [spring 2002]: 411–28) was awarded the 2003 Boyer Prize for Contributions to Psychoanalytic Anthropology by the Society for Psychological Anthropology.

—Elizabeth A. Povinelli
New York City
March 2004
Call for Contributions

**miscellany, n.** a collection of various kinds, especially news clippings, literary extracts, postcards, and other images. Includes media accounts of items relevant to public discourse and debate throughout the world. The section seeks to highlight not only the reported phenomena as such but also the mediated nature of media coverage. *Public Culture* especially seeks pieces that are witty or (unintentionally) ironic. Submissions should include all relevant facts of publication and should be no longer than three pages.

**etymologies, n., pl.** true sense or form of the network of keywords: public, publicity, public opinion, public sphere. Investigates the contemporary uses and meanings of the terms public, publicity, and public opinion. Short essays (of approximately six to eight pages) that consider the semantics and pragmatics of one or more of these interrelated terms in the context of a particular language and a particular people are welcome. How do these terms compare across cultures and languages? Do their meanings “translate,” and what do their “mistranslations” bode for comparative social theory grounded in what may be hidden ontological statements about civil society?

**artworks, n., pl.** brief reports (up to 750 words) on innovative critical cultural work within and outside established institutions. Includes new kinds of museums; alternative or oral history projects; the expansion of musical performance and recording into forgotten musical histories or the dissemination of a broader range of musics; alternative publishing ventures or exhibition practices in film, theater, and dance; innovative cultural work with children; public art and art in public such as murals and graffiti; innovative uses of television, radio, or other mass media; and reports on past cultural work—the modernist, socialist, and avant-garde counterinstitutions of the early twentieth century. Send material and proposals to artworks editor Katie Trumpener.

**from the field, n., sing.** briefly annotated single photographs for inclusion as a photo feature at the end of the issue. Submissions are not limited by style or content but should be glossy prints of at least 5” × 7”.

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