

# Art of Olive Green

## Towards Art, an Ethics & a Laugh

## Archives

### All posts for the month March, 2012

## What Kind of Times Are These?

Posted by *getraer* on *March 28, 2012*

Posted in: Activism, Engaged art, The Sides of Thoughts. Tagged: Adrienne Rich, Brecht, poetry, RIP. Leave a comment

The late great Adrienne Rich reads her poem "What Kinds of Times Are These?" Text transcribed from this reading; breaks and punctuation mine. Listen anyway, the delivery is great.

Poetry Everywhere: "What Kind of Times Are These" by Adri...



(<http://www.youtube.com>

[/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=TRQapdNY-F4](#))

### WHAT KIND OF TIMES ARE THESE?

There's a place between two stands of trees  
Where the grass grows uphill  
And the old revolutionary road breaks off into shadows  
Near a meeting house abandoned by the persecuted  
Who disappeared into those shadows.

I've walked there, picking mushrooms at the edge of dread  
But don't be fooled  
This isn't a Russian poem  
This is not somewhere else, but here  
Our country, moving closer to its own truth and dread  
Its own ways of making people disappear.

I won't tell you where the place is, the dark mesh of the woods  
 Meeting the unmarked strip of light  
 Ghost-ridden crossroads, leaf-mold paradise.  
 I know already who wants to buy it, sell it, make it disappear  
 And I won't tell you where it is, so why do I tell you anything?

Because you still listen.  
 Because in times like these, to have you listen at all  
 It's necessary  
 To talk about trees.

Ω Ω Ω

Provisionally, I discovered Adrienne Rich's poetry in that video, posted in the comments on a blog, the day before she died. Though this is only my introduction to her, I hope she is an heir to Brecht's impetus and voice. I found this video extremely invigorating, listened three times and felt a surge of hope for politically committed art—and then she died. If she has intellectual scions I'm not aware of them.

Some quick items in memoriam:

"Art means nothing if it simply decorates the dinner table of the power that holds it hostage."

USA Today (Tomorrow, the World!) reminds us of her [conscientious objectorship](http://www.usatoday.com/life/people/obit/story/2012-03-29/adrienne-rich-feminist-poet-dies/53852362/1) (<http://www.usatoday.com/life/people/obit/story/2012-03-29/adrienne-rich-feminist-poet-dies/53852362/1>):

But when then-President Clinton awarded [her] the National Medal of Arts in 1997, Rich refused to accept it, citing the administration's "cynical politics."

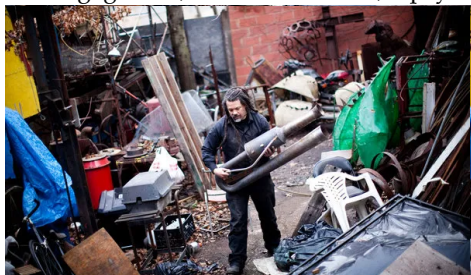
"The radical disparities of wealth and power in America are widening at a devastating rate," she wrote to the administration. "A president cannot meaningfully honor certain token artists while the people at large are so dishonored."

"Rich is one of the few poets who can deal with political issues in her poems without letting them degenerate into social realism." —Erica Jong

## LifeHackett

Posted by *getraer* on *March 20, 2012*

Posted in: Engaged art, Self-Sufficiencies, Upcycling. Tagged: Hackett, obtainium, olive green, The New York Times. Leave a comment



(<http://graphics8.nytimes.com/images/2012/03/18/nyregion/18HACKETT1/18HACKETT1-articleLarge.jpg>)

Photo: Piotr Redlinski for *The New York Times*

Have you ever found someone who's a full-blown expression of your diverted dreams? Not at all moments in his life, but in the one where *The New York Times* saw fit to give him a [richly deserved profile](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/18/nyregion/the-man-with-a-plan-to-rebuild-after-the-apocalypse.html) (<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/18/nyregion/the-man-with-a-plan-to-rebuild-after-the-apocalypse.html>). The guy is probably the purest embodiment of [Olive Green](https://artofolivegreen.wordpress.com/2011/02/17/olive-green-an-introduction/) (<https://artofolivegreen.wordpress.com/2011/02/17/olive-green-an-introduction/>)—however unintentionally.

I can't say I met him, but I stood next to Hackett in a loud, darkened warehouse in 2005 or so. I was living in Bushwick, Brooklyn and going to a lot of the art/performance parties that started there after years of my own, smaller party in my warehouse subdivision (cranked drum & bass with air compressors & powertools). It was an exciting time, and as a metal artisan myself, Hackett and the Madagascar Institute were mythical forces to me. But I really had nothing to say: I was in journalism school and working full time, too tired to pick up a torch for weeks on end. Distracted from one love by another. Now that I have my own studio and the skills that stem from it, I'm strangely happy to see someone so dedicated to the mining and smelting of "obtainium" on his way to becoming a cultural

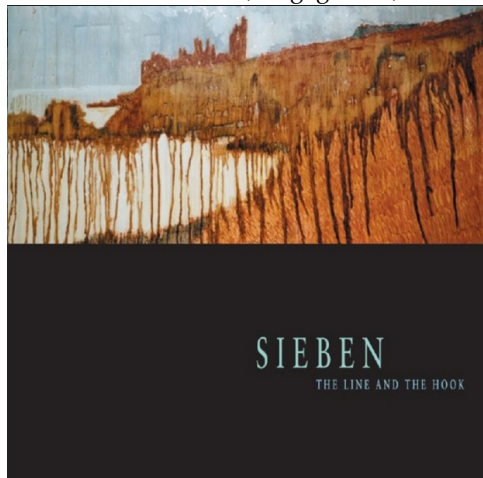
icon.

We have a lot of differences, but the most personal things about us (as described in the NYT piece) are uncannily similar. His style is usually performative, where I'm more reclusive, and our politics are at odds. But our time in this world may be nigh, and it's reassuring that I'm not alone so far east of Burning Man.

## Sieben – Sanguine Consanguinity

Posted by [getraer](#) on [March 12, 2012](#)

Posted in: Culture crit, Engaged art, Uncategorized. 1 Comment



(<https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/sieben-line-hook.jpg>)

In the United States, the right has talked about “culture wars” ever since we borrowed the word from the Germans (<http://www.archangelinstitute.org/americas-political-class-intensifies-the-kulturkampf/>). In Europe, the concept has come a long way from its 19th-c. roots of government vs. religion to suggest more of a guerrilla conflict of “folkish tradition” against an overweening liberal welfare state. The reactionary neoplasm loosely known as “neofolk” is the self-styled bard of this clash, obliquely nurturing the next generation of [color]-shirts.

Britisher Matt Howden’s one-man project, Sieben, has taken an unequivocal political stance within the European neofolk scene. Like the talented Karl Blake, he works as a hired strings (violin, whereas Blake is a bassist) beside musicians who flirt with the dangerous blood-and-soil aesthetics that were so seductive during the 20th century’s darkest hours. (Aesthetics the proponents of which, in our festering worldwide recession, are building their followings zealously in discontent as they did before, and always will.) Unlike Salvador Dalí (<http://t.co/tSMkY9CR>), it seems unlikely that Howden will be

seduced by the company he keeps.

In comments at the watchdog blog “Who Makes the Nazis” (<http://www.whomakethenazis.com/2011/06/karl-blake-comments.html>), the aforementioned Karl Blake speaks of his days touring with neofolk bands of questionable ethics. The information does not come out under interrogation, or “pulling worms out of the nose” (*die Wurme auf die Nase ziehen*) as Germans graphically put it. Ruing wilful blindness, Blake volunteered anecdotes over time which WMTN’s editor collected in the linked post:

“If I come out with “hate-speech against hate speech” it is my reactionary shift against all of that – I’ve got ‘Neo-poisoning’ if you like! I really am fed up with it and a lot of that is down to feeling thoroughly used and duped. I hold my hand up and say I enjoyed going abroad and playing all the time – and recording. Its my own fault that I took the path of least resistance and sat back and took the easy option of just turning up and playing bass and laughing at all the idiots with silly haircuts and anal-aryan uniforms.”

Howden won’t make that mistake. He’s an accomplished violinist who uses the instrument in much the “one man with processing” style ably practiced by Iceland’s Mugison or Finland’s Kimmo Pohjonen. His voice is finer and his lyrics more nuanced than many neofolkers bar Karl Blake himself (and Rome, about whom I wrote previously (<https://artofolivegreen.wordpress.com/2012/02/02/art-holds-a-unity-that-history-does-not/>)). And though Howden’s career took off through associations with Karl Blake and dicey Sol Invictus, he puts paid to any ambiguity in the song “Rite Against the Right” while acknowledging that musicality is an afterthought in much of the scene: “Licking the dregs of evil—it’s feeble... using symbols to shock because your music is cock.”

I’m not a fan of the purple cover featuring a prone naked dude and a big stick (erm), but it’s otherwise a fine album, like the rest of his releases:

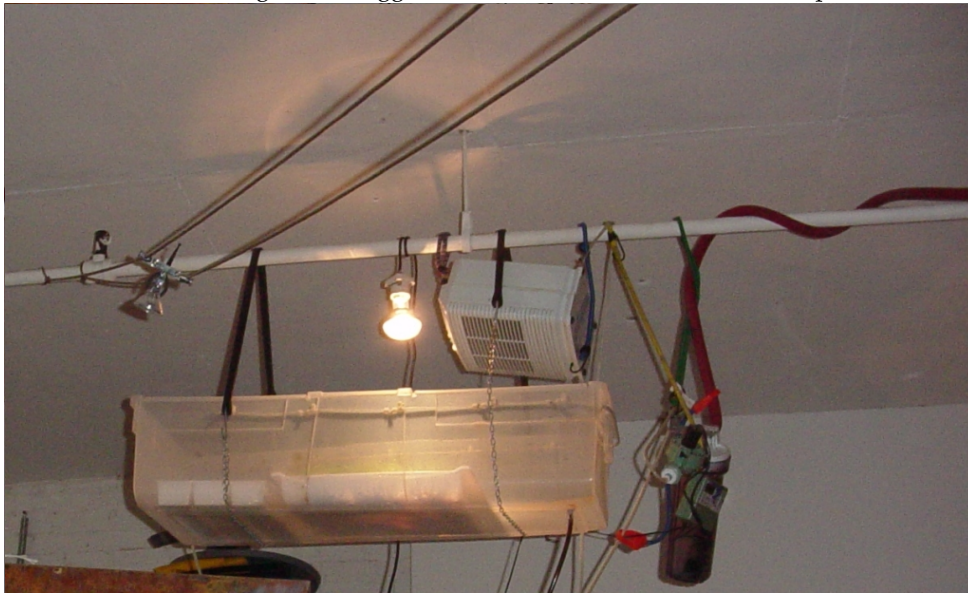
## Sieben - Rite Against The Right



## Eating Babies

Posted by *getraer* on *March 7, 2012*

Posted in: Gardening, Self-Sufficiencies, Uncategorized. Tagged: Bushwick, fertilizer, food desert, sprouts. Leave a comment



(<https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/sptr-05.jpg>)  
Sprouter in Bushwick BK, ca. 2005. Hanging from an overhead sprinkler line.

Wait until PETV (People for the Ethical Treatment of Vegetation) gets a hold of me—I'm eating babies.

As I write this I am snacking on sprouted sunflower seeds, after a breakfast of sprouted oat groats & buckwheat. Later I'll eat some sprouted chickpea raw hummus. I'll admit it's extreme, but I'm excited to be back.



(<https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/imag1353.jpg>)  
Sunflower seed sprouts, 3-day



Above is the first iteration of the sprouter, tapped into the bathtub spigot and hanging from an overhead sprinkler pipe in a Brooklyn loft. Water filter, air filter, timer and grow light orbit an underbed storage box ringed with piping and stainless/brass misting heads. Neighbors brought strangers by at all hours of the day and night to see the spectacle and hear the hiss of the heads punctuated by the whingy snore of the drainage tube. It was a dramatic solution to a grave problem.



(<https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/imag1350.jpg>)

Marrowfat and Yellow pea sprouts, 3-day

In those days, Bushwick at Morgan Ave. was a food desert. The only fresh grocery was run by a transplant from Seattle, as more of a public service than an efficient business (he later cashed out to a

Korean crew). I knew I was nutrient deficient when in the dead of winter when I took a shot of wheatgrass and got a high that lasted 15 minutes. That's when I began researching sprouters.

Val Archer could have a better [website \(http://www.greensmoothie.com/\)](http://www.greensmoothie.com/), but nevermind that; she designed a great sprouter. I reinstalled it last week, plumbing it with 1/4" OD icemaker line from my coldwater line under the kitchen sink. With seeds from [Sprout People \(http://sproutpeople.org/\)](http://sproutpeople.org/), my diet is again full of microgreens like broccoli, turnip and watercress, augmented with varieties of lentil and pea. Sprout People have an astounding selection of affordable, turnkey sprouting solutions, like the [hempcloth sprouting bag \(http://sproutpeople.org/supply/sprouters/hempbag.html\)](http://sproutpeople.org/supply/sprouters/hempbag.html) which, at \$10, will do most of the things I have growing here, and much simpler. Almost as valuable as the sprouts is the water: full of enzymes, minerals and vitamins, it's like a growth factor for anything with roots.

In Bushwick I used sproutwater on 5 habanero pepper plants (raised from supermarket pepper seed) and all grew to over 3 feet, bearing ~40 peppers apiece in a window with southern exposure. A tiny subtropical plant produced 3 flowers almost as large as it was. Now that I have an outdoor garden I'll be able to use the ~5 gallons a week it produces, and I look forward to exciting results.



(<https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/imag1346.jpg>)

/2012/03/imag1346.jpg)

Sprouter, 1-day. L to R: Black lentil, broccoli, turnip, black sesame, bl. lentil, Pardina lentil, sunflower seeds, oat groats & buckwheat, Bill Jump peas, Yellow peas and Marrowfat peas.