

Manifest

Congratulation, n. The civility of envy. *Ambrose Bierce*

Editorial Politics 2.0

Much has been said about the role played by the internet in the Obama presidential campaign.

The consensus is that this campaign "changed politics" (<http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/>). However the interesting part is not so much that the internet has been used to change politics. Since the late nineteen-nineties, politicians and their advisors realised that the internet is an important medium. The difficult yet fascinating part, is how to use it to yield tangible results.

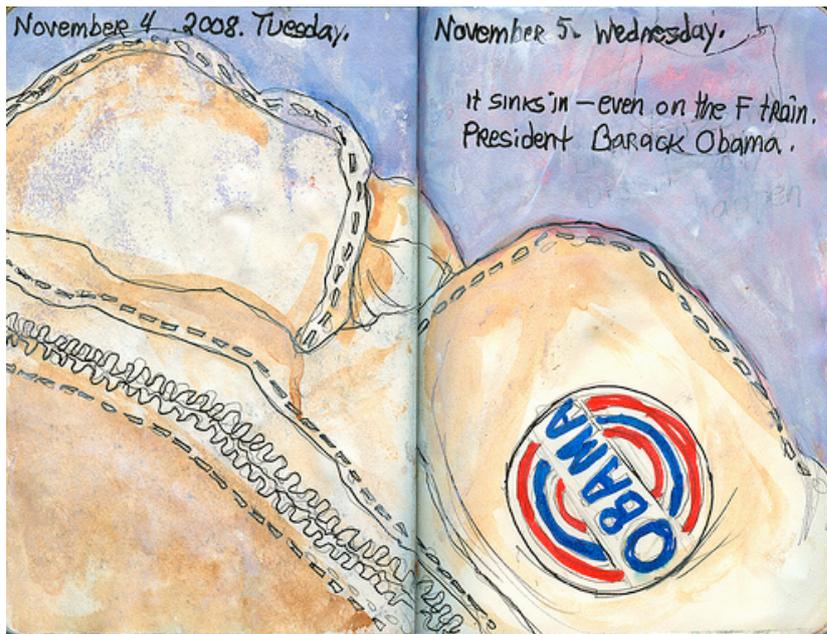
This is where the Obama campaign excelled. It has been able to harness to a yet unparalleled degree all that the new medium has to offer.

Facebook and Myspace, blogs and Twitter, have extended and elevated the internet from static pages on a computer screen to social media status.

Pre-2006, political websites were seen as only another way to ask for money and broadcast a few slogans. In this campaign, politics and the internet are about inspiring, participating, enabling and acting.

Inspiration starts with slogans, colours and layout of the logo but rapidly extends to videos and text messaging. Much positive buzz was generated Obama supporters would find-out their candidate's selection as vice-president by message sent to their mobile phones. This and a barrage of email, text and "tweets" (from twitter.com) made all Obama supporters feel like they were an integral part of the campaign. Messages were not impersonal. Depending on the goal of the message, emails read like they were sent from the candidate himself, from David Plouffe (the campaign manager), Joe Biden and other key members of the Obama team. They felt therefore much more personal.

The key differentiator, is that once supporters and potential voters were inspired and made to feel like they were participating in a mass movement, they were given the tools to act.



The Obama website featured a "resources" section advised on how, for instance, to design contribution forms, host a meeting, set-up goals online and compare your campaigning efforts to that of other supporters.

Once enabled, acting was the last and final step. This too was fine-tuned to an unparalleled degree. If you happened to be a supporter of hispanic origin in one state, you would get a contact-list of undecided, hispanic, voters in a battleground state. If you decided to call them, you would also get a guide on how to lead the conversation and be given suggested points and counterpoints to quell objections and perceived misconceptions.

Other key tactics involved pro-actively framing issues. For instance, ahead of each debate, supporters were warned about what the opposing candidate would say and what could be done about it.

In the end, it is not so much technology, but how it was used that contributed to Mr. Obama's eventual victory.

Wahud Vannoni

*Campaigning in
under 140
characters at
twitter.com*



BarackObama

We just made history. All of this happened because you gave your time, talent and passion. All of this happened because of you. Thanks

Post-Chemo checklist

by *Alicia Staley* three-time cancer survivor

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Once upon a time

"15 November"

1532

Commanded by Francisco Pizarro, Spanish conquistadors under Hernando de Soto meet Inca leader Atahualpa for the first time outside Cajamarca, arranging a meeting on the city plaza the following day



Life... A post-chemo checklist

Alicia Staley is a three-time cancer survivor. She has battled Hodgkin's and Breast Cancer. She has had chemotherapy, radiation and several surgeries but cancer can't keep her down.

The following is a checklist compiled by Ms. Staley for people going through a post-chemo life.

Yesterday was a big day for my friend, Brian. He finished his last chemo and gets pitched back into the real world of life, post-chemo starting today. He's a fighter and a survivor. I've been honored to watch his progress, thanks to twitter, over the past few months. He's done a great job.

His big day got me thinking about my last chemo day, way back in 1993. I was thrilled to close that chapter in my life. No more needles, no more intra-venal hooks.

It's a strange time in one's life – it's a milestone that few people will ever have to mark and it's a milestone I wish more people could avoid... but until "they" find the elusive cure-all for cancer, some people will have to endure the chemo drips, the radiation burns, and the surgical scars, all in pursuit of restored health.

One thing I've always wished I had was a checklist or guide to my new post-chemo life. Here's my attempt at providing this list for Brian...

1) **There is no normal.**

Your life won't return "to normal". Normal is a vaporous state, that's never achieved by anyone. Your life evolves; don't spend precious time chasing some non-existent state of being. Trust me, this one will save you millions in therapy... Just ask my shrink mental health coordinator.

2) **You might get anxious.**

A few weeks out from your last treatment, you might get a little anxious. You'll realize that you're no longer "actively" fighting your cancer. It can be a strange time. For some people, chemo can act as a security blanket, it reinforces that you're doing something to defeat your cancer. The end of treatment is rather abrupt... One day you're getting



Washington University

The Genome Sequencing Center (GSC) at Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine is a world leader in genomics research.

Researchers there have for the first time decoded all the genes of a person with cancer and found a set of mutations that may have caused the disease or aided its progression.

<http://genome.wustl.edu/>

chemo, the next day you're done. No more treatment. It's like you just jumped into the deep end of life for the first time, without your "floaties". It can be scary but, don't worry. The feeling will pass.

3) **Listen to your body.**

Your body is a fine-tuned machine. An experience with cancer heightens your sense of awareness of your body and all its interconnected systems. Pay attention to your body – when you're tired, rest. When you're feeling blue, acknowledge it. When you're feeling good, enjoy it. Your body will tell you what you need – just listen to it and respect it.

4) **Make sure you go to all your follow-up appointments.**

This is very important. You might feel like a strong, healthy person and don't need to see the doctors to "just to check in."

Nonsense, make sure you check in. Be an active participant in your long-term care. You're a survivor. With survivorship comes the additional burden of long-term care. Make sure your doctors have a long term plan for you - they'll keep an eye on all your vital

systems and make sure there's minimal long term effects from your chemo.

5) **Celebrate the little things in life.**

Every day is a gift. Look around; take time to really see things in your life. Beauty is everywhere. Life is a magical thing. Enjoy it

6) **Be patient.**

As you begin to move forward in your life, you might notice that not everyone around you has the "wide-eyed" optimism and appreciation for life that you now have. Be patient with these people – help show them the way. (Thank you Liz.)

"Now it's time to give back... BIG TIME. Help me help others still locked in battle with cancer. Yes, we can make a difference, one patient at a time. Join me on this journey."

Alicia Staley

<http://acs.typepad.com/kacs/>

Bergamo: A City of Surprises

By P.A. Moed

Expect the unexpected. This is our mantra when we travel abroad. Lost luggage, misplaced reservations, poor directions, delays at the airport—all are possible, but so are unanticipated pleasures.

It was just an overnight trip, a convenient stop en route to Malpensa Airport in Milano. We had booked one night in the Hotel Excelsior San Marco in Bergamo, but this quick stop turned out to be one of the highlights of our vacation.

This was our only foray into Lombardia, ranked the third wealthiest province in Italy. Its territory extends as far north as the Lakes Region and as far south as Cremona, and contains some of the most varied and spectacular countryside in Italy—beautiful mountain vistas, lush valleys, and spring-fed lakes. Wealthy and conservative, the area has the dubious honor of producing infamous political leaders and outstanding agricultural products, most notably its butter, cheese, risotto, and salumi. The rich Taleggio and pungent Gorgonzola cheese are produced here, as well as San Pelligrino water. It's also an industrial and banking hub.

Bergamo is not the quiet, conventional city we expected. This Alpine village high above Milano is literally split in two. The citta bassa (the low city) is characterized by classic modern buildings, wide roads, dense traffic, and extensive opportunities for shopping. The citta alta (the high city) is a medieval walled village perched on a rocky escarpment overlooking the stunning Lombardia countryside. After a quick walk around the lower city, we took the funicular to the citta alta. The cable car was filled a group of fun-loving retired couples, joking and telling stories, which helped put us in the right mood. When we stepped out of the funicular into the Piazza dei Scarpi, we were transported to another time and place.

Unlike the lower town, Bergamo Alta is a snapshot of old-world Italy. Pedestrian-friendly streets lead to public squares with splashing fountains, a botanic garden, medieval churches, and a world-class art museum. Winding cobblestone alleys

connect stone buildings, some beige, pink, or gray, dating back to the Twelfth Century. High arched windows are framed with lace curtains, shutters and flower boxes ready for spring planting. But at that moment, we were more intrigued by the smell of bread and cakes.

Tantalized, we followed the scent to a bakery right on the Piazza dei Scarpi and sampled the light, buttery cookies called "lingue di gatto". "They're named cat's tongues because of their shape," I told my son who was delighted with the crisp, delicious biscotti. Equally surprising was the local confection "polenta e osei"; a golden dome of polenta decorated with a nest of birds made from chocolate, hazelnut cream and marzipan. We later learned this dessert commemorates a famous local dish, now outlawed, made with polenta and songbirds.

We walked along the main road, the Via Gombito, lined with specialty shops. Well-dressed Bergamaschi, some pushing strollers, others with designer dogs or ecologically-friendly mesh grocery bags, stopped to chat and shop. There are no big-box stores here. Family-owned shops display luscious fruit, cheese, meat, and salami. The coffee shop roasts and grinds beans stored in burlap sacks and barrels. These friendly owners are eager to talk and share their knowledge of the local produce. A greengrocer told us that his sweet clementines are available all year.

Although we would have liked to eat our way across town, there was more to see. We took a long walk around the perimeter of this fortress town, invaded and occupied by the Gauls, Romans, Longobardi, Franks, and Venetians. More recently, the Austrians ruled until the Italian unification in 1859. The Venetian walls and the stone gates are still standing. Centuries of domination have left their mark not only on the architecture, but also on the psyche of the native Bergamaschi, who say (so I've heard) that they look east towards Veneto for inspiration, but turn their backsides to Milano.

If we had more time, we'd tour the renowned Galleria dell'Accademia Carrara,



Bergamo, Piazza Vecchia, Citta' Alta

which displays one of the best art collections in Italy, including works by Bellini, Botticelli and Fra Angelico. But at that moment we were more interested in food. On a recommendation from a gourmet guide book, we hiked over to the Trattoria Tre Torri, given high marks for its authentic and unpretentious cuisine, but the door was locked even though it was a few minutes past the scheduled opening time.

We decided to exercise some patience and wait. I'm glad we did. In typical Italian style, the chef strolled for twenty minutes later, whistling, keys in hand. With a smile and an apology, he unlocked the door and asked us in Italian, "It's going to take some time. Do you mind the wait?" No problem. After slicing some bread for us and pouring a small dish of dipping oil, he put on his apron and starting chopping the garlic and tomatoes for our pasta sauce.

I'll never forget the meal: a crisp garden salad followed by plates of homemade ravioli and gnocchi that melted in our mouths. But the polenta concia was the real surprise. The cornmeal flour was slow cooked over a low heat in a big copper pot called a paiolo. One taste and I was hooked. Forkfuls of warm polenta were laced with strands of melted fontina and parmegiana cheese. I had never tasted anything like it.

We paid the bill, shook the chef's hand and thanked him for an amazing meal. Outside, a light mist was falling. The streets were silent, beautiful, gleaming.

In the funicular, we studied the "citta bassa" spread out before us, glittering like sunlight on water.

A moment, a memory, and a taste to savor for a long time.

Cursed mug for sale.

By an anonymous writer in Eugene, California.

Merciful it is that the foetid horrors of reality are too vast for the mortal mind to comprehend. Somehow the past becomes uniform - the most basic distinctions, such as those between dream and reality blend together. It is only the nightmare, jarring the sleeper to wakening perspiration, that leaves any real mark on the psychology. Those things that inhabit the dream - can we say that they are in some sense real? If not, is there any alternative remaining to the scientist but to say that they merely reflect some process within the mind? How can this be, when philosophers have so far been unable to refute the most basic of assertions: That reality itself is a dream. To argue both is to say that there is no reality at all; and that, we so dearly hope, cannot be true.

After my grandfather's death in an unfortunate accident, I was called upon to settle his estate. His assets were, by that point, in quite a disarray, having been prayed upon by the many opportunistic vultures of the financial world. It was probably no help that his last decade was marked by a progressive madness that gradually came to overshadow even his perpetual drunkenness.

The task was long and arduous, not at all helped by the summer heat or my dislike of casual attire. For the most part the estate settled without trouble. However, inside of a locked bureau was found a collection of strange objects. These objects included a tome written in some strange tongue, a cloth pouch containing some type of preserved organs (possibly from some small animal), an assortment of tallow candles, a sharp but tarnished dagger, and the coffee mug, pictured below:

The decision was made to donate these bizarre materials to the Massachusetts Cults Collection at Miskatonic University. However, the curator of the collection was not interested in this coffee mug and so it remains in my possession.

Earlier this year I woke in the dead of night to a strange, atonal humming in my kitchen. For reasons that I cannot profess to comprehend, the unearthly noise gripped me with terror. Unable to sleep, I resolved to investigate.

The shadows seemed especially thick that night, as if some wispy, warm membrane were brushing against me. As I fumbled through the dark



hallway from my bedroom, I thought I heard some kind of whispering. This whispering was distant, only audible because of its peculiarity, but at the same time it felt as if the thing that was whispering was practically breathing the words into my ear. Perhaps because of the atonal humming, I could not discern the words that were whispered.

Heart racing, I threw open the cupboard in which I had stored the mug. There it was, bathed in the moonlight, seething with unholy energies. Soon, I thought, soon I will awaken from this nightmare! Dreadfully, not...for this was but the first of many sleepless nights. Shrieking, I fled in my nightclothes to the safe confines of my automobile, in which I fitfully tossed until the morning.

Now I write this tract, pleading really, that some kind soul will be interested in my plight. I have suffered a remarkable run of bad fortune and my estate is bankrupt. I am possessed by a strange illness, and I fear that my medical expenses will soon devour the last of my legacy. I can't bear it...you must take it for a little while...just so I can catch my breath.

Warnings:

- *May contain gates to other dimensions
- *Is known to the state of California to pose significant health risks.
- *Cannot be exorcised or purified by any earthly means.
- *Will not make Starbucks(TM) coffee drinkable.

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Sharon Frost: urban sketching in NYC.

Sharon Frost is a recently retired artist. She “does lots of yoga and very now and then I teach a yoga class.

Sharon has been a “Moleskine featured artist” in September 2006.

Tell us about your background: where have you lived, studied, worked and how each might have influenced your work?

I was born and raised in what was for me an uneasy South Florida. When I completed my undergraduate education I aimed at New York City, with a year-long detour in Bogotá, Colombia. I’ve been an artist as long as I can remember and it was a heady experience to suddenly find myself surrounded by artists in the East Village of the late ‘60s (just about the time that term was invented by real estate brokers). I didn’t mesh with anything in a real way I guess, any more than I’ve been a part of any of my other possible scenes, but it was exciting that so many conversations were taking place among so many artists in such a concentrated area. (It took me decades to acknowledge my reclusive nature.)

Over time I managed to earn a graduate degree in art from Hunter College (thank you Vincent Longo!) and worked for over 30 years in a cultural educational institution (The New York Public Library, Prints & Photographs). This allowed me to stay in the arts, albeit in the curatorial zone.

My stay on that side of the fence exerted a huge influence on how I perceive things in general and how I began to see my eyes as a real instrument. Basically I was paid to look and the interpretation of what I saw became secondary, in a way.

I’ve been retired since 2002 and at last can spend the whole day in my studio but with that same adjust sense of vision. I finally got married at about that time too – I had moved in with my now-husband in the early 90s, finally pulling away from my solitary lair in the East Village.

Did you meet great mentors and teachers?

There have been lots of teachers, artist and friends (some mixing more than one of those categories) who have been supportive of my work along the way – from earliest school years in Florida through graduate school in NYC.

I especially remember my undergraduate painting teacher, Clare V. Dorst who not only supported my work but his wife, hired me, the eccentric artist, to mind his kids.

Artist friends, Nancy Berlin and Ellen Buljetta, my sister Pam (also an artist) have given me their eyes and their brains, as well as their good will. My parents were always behind me even when they didn’t understand what I was doing or why.

What / who inspires you?

Urban decay, public spaces, light (and dark) and anatomy (I have more than one model skeleton – dream of having a real one someday) are rich sources of inspiration for me.

Certain artists have been very important to me and, yes, it’s a disparate lot: Paul Cezanne, Edgar Degas, Alberto Giacometti (especially his paintings and drawings), Ad Reinhardt, Philip Guston’s later work, Robert Moskowitz, Susan Rothenberg, Anselm Keifer.

My husband inspires me as well and my yoga practice helps me focus.

Did you stumble upon hard times that had an impact on your work?

My year in Bogotá was isolating and difficult. No money (my salary was paid only sporadically), no time, but my Spanish got better. I learned resilience.

There were the years in the East Village living off a part-time job and making art from wood scraps I found in the street.

A series of paintings and drawings involving an inside view of stomach biopsies grew from a long stomach ailment.

Highlight one or two seminal pieces.

Choosing seminal pieces is very hard for me because I’ve been working for over 40 years – and besides, like a lot of artists, I tend to view what I’m working on at this very moment to be the most important work I’ve ever done. I decided to highlight two works on paper – I really the immediacy of almost-anything on paper. One of these drawings is from early in my career: a sketch I did on Manhattan’s 104 bus in 1969 or ‘70. Jazz master Rahsaan Roland Kirk just happened to be sitting opposite me. (See image on the right)

The other drawing is from just a few days ago – on the F train in Brooklyn. (Top right)

How do you work?

I have a studio in my apartment – it’s a large room with a leafy view. But, in reality, I carry around my work wherever I go. If I’m stuck I’ll just move my work to another room. This is pretty easy now since my scale has, of necessity, gotten smaller and smaller. We spend a lot of each year in Spanish speaking places and travel makes portable formats necessary. At first this was terribly restricting and now it’s wonderfully liberating.



I’m sure there will come a time when I want to move back to 60 x 90 in., just as I’m sure we won’t be able to continue traveling like we do indefinitely. But for now, it’s lovely to be working in a scale that’s brain size instead of room size.

What beliefs are important to you; do they influence your art?

I’m very old fashioned: French existentialism still inhabits my consciousness. Reading Sartre and Merleau-Ponty in grad school was a real watershed for me. – giving me a “structure” for understanding my own perceptions and thought processes.

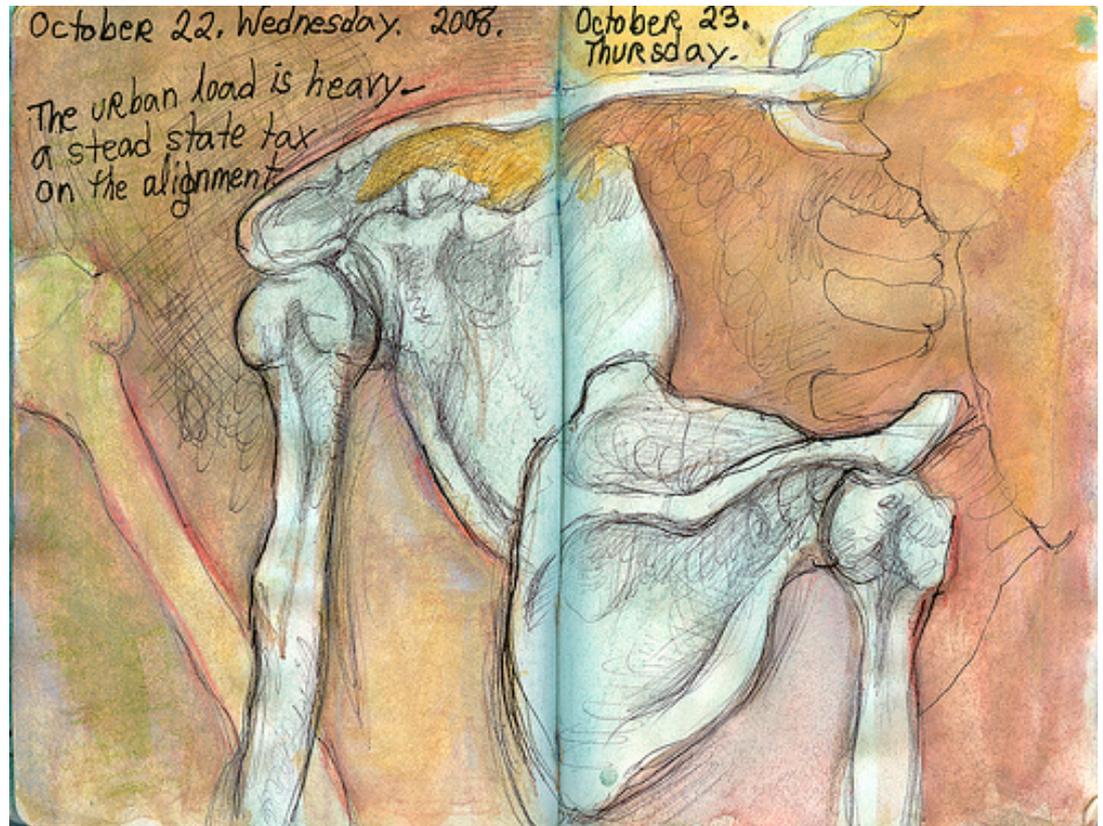
While I’m not a Marxist (too structured for me) I’m definitely a left leaner, although I find more inspiration in the artists of anarchism, including Barnett Newman, than the artists of social realism.

I realize I’ve spent no time on my small resume, don’t list any of the exhibitions I’ve been in (there aren’t that many, but you can find my resume on my blog if you look hard enough). Right now I’m thinking more about right now and on how my



"My "sketchskins" are an intrinsic part of my work as a whole. In a way they're very existence has led to trains of thought and images that wouldn't have been there otherwise. Their physical properties mesh very well with my life and allow me to carry my work everywhere. I'm very particular about drawing instruments: use Pilot Better Retractable and technical pens: Rotring and Rapidograph. Also carry a watercolor field box -- sometimes I use coffee or red wine.

I do a drawing in my book every morning -- something in front of me and, when I feel like it, I include a fake haiku (17 syllables but my own rhythm). Additional drawings are fine but the first one is very important. From that drawing in the moleskine I build the rest of my work: a continuing thread being the effort to make sense of the physical environment from fragmented perception. I'm fascinated by the pull to define experience through perceptual elements. The moleskines give me the foundation vocabulary and, in many ways, they're my foundation art"



Sharon Frost <http://flickr.com/photos/sharonfrost/>

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