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An exhibition organized by Lucy Lippard at The Vancouver Art Gallery. January 13 to February 8, 1970

Lucy Walking North – A deck of 138 index cards catalogues gestures and fragments by 70 artists. Like Tarot, these cards are a tool and an object for contemplation in themselves. They share a structure, are each unique, and in their combination lead you to endless conclusions. The cards are your guide to an exhibition spread throughout the city.

Of 70 artists, 6 are women. Counting is an effective feminist strategy in 1970, as Lucy well knows. I hear she has made most of the works herself, from directives on these little cards and her conversations with the artists, many of whom never make it out to Vancouver. The artworks were transmitted by fax, phone, postcard, and all end up on the index cards.

The cards indicate no sequence and far too many possibilities and directions. Some give instructions for shadows, rocks, rain, soil, bullets or people. The indeterminate meets the determined: units, markers, and grids structure materials, time, and space. I shuffle the cards and lay out a plan for today. Chance is a mediator and the only respite.

I start downtown at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Outside I find a mirrored cube, reflecting a shaved landscape of cut grass. Inside I enter a dark room showing grainy footage of an unremarkable suburban landscape shot from a moving vehicle. Then the mirrors return – I walk into a stage of light, a tripod and mirrored walls and see myself seeing. At least there is no camera. Then: **SOMEBODY'S FRAGMENT** – a rock swinging from the ceiling like a pendulum, too close to the mirrors for comfort. Ask the pendulum for advice? It is as blasé as the cards.

It swings me toward a room full of tables. Visitors sit down and flip through heavy binders of laminated pages, examining printed information like office workers. A child studies Hanne's codes – counting sums on his fingers, he's on the edge of cracking it. In the next room I sort through a filing cabinet of more mirrors. I visit a kiosk and transmit **VISUALLY SENSITIVE INFORMATION** via telex with the N.E. Thing Co. (available for North American and Global Transmissions).

The paper cuts have got me down and no one has responded to my telex, so I decide to get some fresh air. There is something in these systems I can't access – my processor is jammed – the abundance of data cancels itself out. Each gesture is concrete but obscure, a game of misdirection, an infinity mirror. Many, many vertical stripes greet me outside. Daniel's jail bars have spread out from the gallery onto the streets in fragments, blurring the planes of the city together like a herd of zebras.

The cards indicate that some works have used the local landscape and its resources: a floating log, a chopped log, logs manipulated on the beach. The cards also include that some works didn't make it: a giant hole by Michael: "150 feet in diameter, and 15 feet in depth" that would have flooded with the tides. The landscape would have filled in the void.

Next card in the stack is a child-like drawing by Robert of a truck shitting "50 truck loads of mud, cement, or ASPHALT." I hear that for various reasons, a more modest dump was executed for the occasion: a single barrel of glue. The event happened a few weeks ago but its traces might still be around. I head out west to find it in the forest surrounding the university.

I've been told to head south at the fork on the old logging road past the new construction, through the thinning forest of cedar, alder and hemlock, left before the bank drops. I walk into a clear-cut area and see an old sign, "Do not dump refuse." I walk down the ridge with mud creeping up my boots. Up ahead I see a glimmer in the brown, reflecting light: something slick, sick.

I approach an orange mass – it is brighter and more toxic-looking than I imagined. The initial drama of the pour has dried up, it has slumped, thinned and mixed with dirt on its way down the hill. Like a snail, it coats roots and stones in its sticky trail. At the bottom of the incline the glue pools like lava, congealing into a resting body, waiting for entropy to finish its demonstration. It starts to rain. The water beads on the surface of the glue, running off like sweat.

It's just me and the abandoned material as the rain intensifies. The slime will seep into the soil, now saturated with rainwater, and mix and contaminate long after the cards and their proposals. My feet stuck. I see Lucy in the distance, walking towards true north.

