PAPER TIGERS!!!

SMASH MEDIA MYTHS !!!

paper tiger MANIFESTO

Paper Tiger Television is a video collective. We look at the communications industry via the media in all its forms.

The power of mass culture rests on the trust of the public. This legitimacy is a paper tiger.

Investigation into the corporate structures of the media and critical analysis of their content is one way to demystify the information industry.

Developing a critical consciousness about the information industry is a necessary first step towards democratic control of information resources.

WHERE

is your style created?

In the cotton fields of INDIA and AFRICA?

In economic free zone sweatshops?

In corporate meeting rooms?

FASHION:
Exploitation of labor, the environment, and desire

Who decides what is beautiful? And why?

Right up there with weapons, oil and food, fashion is one of the biggest global industries. How do your taste, style and consumption habits affect people around the world?

whose fantasies fill our childhood dreams?

Mythologies around gender and relationships are indoctrinated through the fairy tales we are encouraged to love as small children. Why is it acceptable to introduce false hope into the impressionable minds of boys and girls everywhere? How can we navigate the deep waters of desire and intimacy as we swim into adulthood? How long does is take many of us to break away and reclaim our identity from those ingrained by Disney's pervasive and dominant cultural narratives?

is this REAL?

The real place of Black people is to mock themselves for our entertainment

Women are gold diggers

Women are stupid, really, and a woman really is nothing without a man

Men are only valued for their money

who creates the reality of reality tv?

It does not matter how offensive, demeaning and deceptive you are, women will still want you

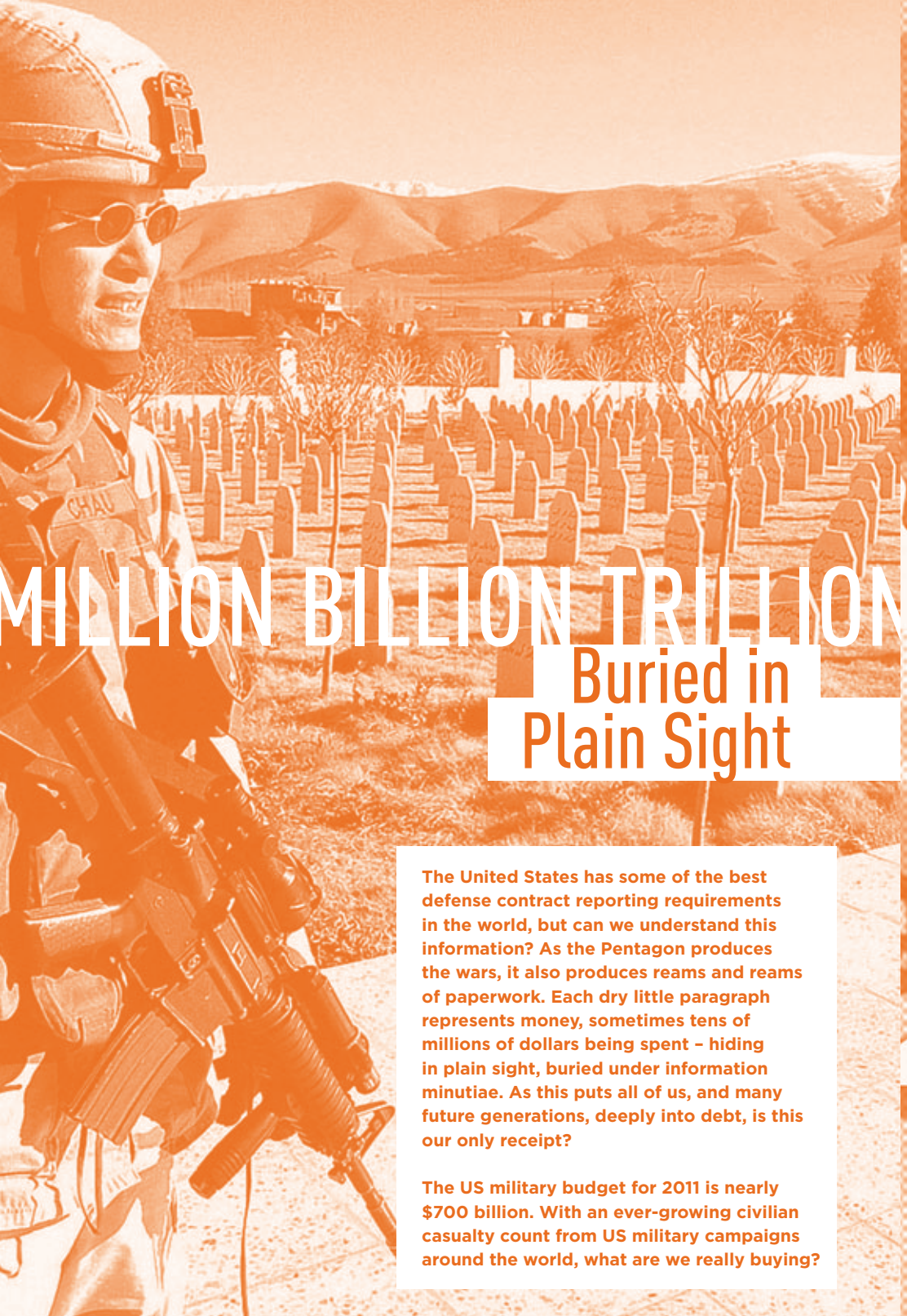
These images are harmless

This image has not been distorted in any way

This is what people want to watch

the reality tv world is permeated with the racism, sexism and classism that have long been the basis for repression and exploitation.

It is OK to deceive and manipulate people



MILLION BILLION TRILLION

Buried in Plain Sight

The United States has some of the best defense contract reporting requirements in the world, but can we understand this information? As the Pentagon produces the wars, it also produces reams and reams of paperwork. Each dry little paragraph represents money, sometimes tens of millions of dollars being spent – hiding in plain sight, buried under information minutiae. As this puts all of us, and many future generations, deeply into debt, is this our only receipt?

The US military budget for 2011 is nearly $700 billion. With an ever-growing civilian casualty count from US military campaigns around the world, what are we really buying?

EXCLUSION

why wasn't this on the evening news?

Regardless of the issue, in a democracy, thousands of people rising up to demand their rights is news. However, these types of demonstrations are routinely left unreported unless there is violence or death.

Although the perspectives of business leaders are frequently amplified in the media, the voices of labor are readily left out.

If we are not informed about both sides of the issue, is this a true democracy?

INTRUSION

who defines our neighborhoods?

What does it mean when our neighborhoods are redefined entirely to meet the objectives of outside business interests?

It's usually not the people that live there. Unfortunately this means marketing interests that have nothing to do with a community, its history, or well-being can exploit neighborhood identities for their own purposes.

YOU LIVE WHERE?

as of 2007, there are no billboards in São Paulo

If São Paulo can do it why can't we?

in-depth?

whose stories will we never hear?

"One thing we learned was the structure of the news media does not fit into what we would like to tell people. We would like to have long explanations of the root causes of the problems in our community, long indictments of people who come in to exploit those conditions. But that was not the structure within which we were working. So we had to develop mechanisms for reaching out to people and also for utilizing the media, with the understanding that that whole concept is a two edged sword. That while we say we use the media, as often as not they are still able to manipulate us. But the more conscious we are of that manipulation, the more able we'll be to make the best use out of the media."

-Richie Pérez (1944-2004),
Human Rights Activist

happy associations

happy associations

Are avatars people?

"The lover is always virtual," according to philosopher Dominic Pettman. Pettman says that love is generated through "feedback and information": love develops in an individual through a personal, unilateral conception of things. A person could feel love for an inanimate object, or a computer program–regardless of what that object or program could ever possibly conceive or feel in return.

The act of falling in love with a computer program is rare in our society (though Pettman says it may soon be a lot less rare), but it's very common for interpersonal relationships to form over the Internet. Online environments, though, are also media environments. As much as an online world–the space inside a multiplayer role-playing game, for example–may feel like a living, breathing society, it's also a specific form of commercial media, created with specific goals and limitations in mind, and maintained in order to generate a profit. What happens when human relationships are born in worlds that charge you for every day you're there?

Is social media actually a hindrance to social change?

Around the beginning of the 20th century, fingerprinting began to be embraced by law enforcement agencies as a remarkably precise, new way to solve crimes and to monitor and control criminals (or perhaps "criminals"). At the same time, this new technology was also embraced by a very different group: wealthy people, who happily fingerprinted themselves as a way to prevent fraud and mistaken identity. According to sociologist and journalist Christian Parenti: when it comes to surveillance technology, that weird sort of dichotomy isn't unusual. "Routine forms of surveillance have frequently entered society from the end of the elites and from the most marginalized," says Parenti. "These technologies of surveillance were not imposed upon people but gradually came into use partly out of convenience."

Parenti also points out that popular social media can be thought of as a conveniently-utilized system of surveillance. "The practice that's involved on Facebook of documenting your life in minute detail for the public I think is naive.... [It's] a way of keeping a dossier on yourself and making a social map that can be put to uses other than that are intended."

As artist and writer Jill Magid points out, surveillance is a sort of "double-edged sword"–we desire privacy, but we also want to be looked at and paid attention to. If we can agree that in a system of constant surveillance, people are much less likely to challenge prevailing social norms or to question entrenched authority–what, then, is the cost of Facebook? What are the effects of so many people willingly, happily reporting their private selves to the world?

When does radical media stop being radical?

Videos created by radical activist groups often feature viscerally violent protest footage–the sort of thing that is often referred to as "riot porn." Anthropologist Maple Razsa points out that riot footage can feel like pornography, not just because of the sort of macho, instant gratification it presents, but because it's part of what theorist Linda Williams calls "body genres"–the sorts of films you can really, physically feel. Razsa notes that this is especially true for activists themselves (the primary audience for this sort of media): "...it isn't just that you vicariously experience something that someone else has been through–I think it actually taps into bodily memories you have yourself of similar confrontations."

But, do these videos create a distorted vision of what it means to be an activist, or to be engaged in radical praxis? Philosopher Michael Hardt has argued that focusing on immediate, cathartic acts of rebellion can be counter-productive in the context of broader movements. On the subject of riot porn, he says, "...it eclipses, it blocks from our view and takes our energies away from, what seems to be a much more important struggle which doesn't have anything to do with the police or even with repression." At what point does activist media become detrimental to practical activism?

Paper Tiger Television has been creating videos and media since 1981. Paper Tiger functions as a collective, and our projects are made through collaborative, non-hierarchical means. This pamphlet was created in the summer of 2011 by four collective members; each page relates to a particular Paper Tiger production:

01 - upcoming production on the political and cultural realities of fashion and style.

02 - "Paper Tiger presents The Little Mermaid Singalong" (2011). This project was created with artist Matthew-Robin Nye.

03 - "Reality Unreeled: The Really Real Unreal Reality of Real Reality TV" (2010). This project was created with author Jennifer Pozner.

04 - "Paper Tiger Reads: U.S. Department of Defense Contracts" (2010). This project was created with the Red Channels collective.

05 - upcoming feature-length production on post-industrial global capitalism in the city of Detroit.

06 - "Right to the CIty" (2009). This project was created with members of the Right to the City coalition and scholar David Harvey.

07 - upcoming production on the politics of public space.

08 - "Richie Pérez Watches "Fort Apache: The Bronx"" (1983). This project was created with professor and community activist Richie Pérez.

09 - upcoming production on credit card debt (in the form of an opera).

10 - "Love Me, Love My Avatar" (2008). This project was created with professor and philosopher Dominic Pettman.

11 - "Surveilling Surveillance" (2010). This project was created with journalist Christian Parenti, artist Jill Magid and attorney Melissa Goodman.

12 - "Maple Razsa and Michael Hardt Read Riotporn" (2010). This project was created with anthropologist Maple Razsa and philosopher Michael Hardt. Elements of this project will also be utilized in an upcoming production on contemporary social movements.

Paper Tiger is an open collective; new memberships are encouraged.

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The cover of this pamphlet can be enlarged and cut to create a wearable tiger mask. We recommend photocopying and enlarging by 120%.

ART 15 ISTS & ACTIV ISTS

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