



UNTITLED (SCROLL), 2011, from the *Autopis* series
Archival pigment print; 24 x 85 inches (61 x 216 cm)

DISCLOSURES

I believe in believing. I believe in trying. I believe without any promise of reassurance, proof, or guarantee. My desires are grand. I want to touch you to stir changes. I want to challenge, not to please. The challenge is to stay honest with oneself and to continue taking risks. The challenge is to resist the judgments of others and to follow one's own judgment.

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All artwork is vulnerable. It can be abused by wrong interpretations or simply abandoned. My artwork is especially vulnerable since vulnerability is its very aim. It's intricate and restrained. I seek strength in vulnerability to see and to feel more.

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I've done what I've done and I've said what I've said. Withdrawal is not an option. It leads to false freedom. Exodus from existing institutions seems like a radical choice. But exodus does not transform them. Disengagement is simply a fancy pose—and a very sad one. Nonconformity that acknowledges failure but doesn't

submit to it is the way to go. In art, there is a reality of failure and a reality of partial success. Although works of art can fail so easily, failure is not an enemy. It is a comrade helping to produce and retain the tension that is necessary to keep up and live up to expectations for better days to come.

Apparent failures are not end points, but points for new departures. Defeat should be acknowledged, but the struggle should continue. In the present situation when nothing can be something, when even an unspoken thought becomes something—something rather bad—don't despair.

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I want to contribute to the common good.

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Artists have to act responsibly. They should dedicate themselves to their work, curbing their ambition for prestige and money. The moment the practice becomes easy or widely accepted, it is time to pause to reconsider one's art. Artists should not underestimate what effect their work has. Just because there might not be an immediate, visible outcome does not mean that art is

powerless. Art is an instrument of change. It influences how people experience the world, how they judge the past, the present, and the future. Through art, identities and sensibilities are being formed.

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Dare and defy. Break the rules. Make new ones. Stick to what moves you and interests you. Question what is given, especially when what is given seems unquestionable.

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To make art is to make the impossible possible or to make the impossible slightly more possible.

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All art is political. It exists in public, thus it is political. The personal is also political. Only when things matter personally can actions matter. A lack of position toward social and political issues usually means supporting the dominant status quo. The formal aspects of art are political too. Materials carry meaning depending on interpretations attributed to them. The meanings of words, expressions, and styles are not fixed.

They can be neutralized, but they can also be mobilized. Any art medium and any art strategy are potentially transformative.

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My desires are grand. I want to challenge how art is seen and produced—to disrupt conventions. It is like making a collage. I aim to rearrange familiar elements.

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I set up my work as an experiment for myself. I test myself. I embrace many media. But I decide on media in relation to a problem I want to tackle. It is a conceptually grounded decision.

Collage is my method of making art. Collage defines my approach to art. To collage means bringing already existing elements into new configurations. Anything can be collaged—an object and a text, a thought and a feeling. In art, styles and media can be collaged. Art history is a repository of discourses to be collaged. Collage means continuity out of fragments, a process of creating new meanings. Collage is a way out from an oppressive reality, a way of challenging such a reality.

I reserve the term *painting* for my oil-on-canvas works. Painting on canvas is the most complex and embarrassing medium in art making. Painting has potentially limitless possibility for improvement. This makes my own limitations embarrassingly visible. In my painting, I cut images into fragments, letting new connections and new content appear. The working process of painting is a struggle to excavate an ideal that remains intangible—even when a canvas finally starts becoming the ideal.

In my paintings, I work against painterly effects such as brushstrokes, smudges, impastos, and transfers. Effects create immediate contrasts; contrasts immediately please. Effects make “effective” paintings. I want to make effective paintings without effects. That is the challenge. This process of painting is exhausting. But it is like any process in life that envisions a utopian ending. There are no shortcuts. Only through such a process does the vision become real.

Paintings are about endurance; collages are about playfulness. My compositions fall in between. My other works—photomontages, sculptures, and texts—belong to other categories of creation and experience.

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A week ago, when moving one of my canvases, I accidentally knocked down a framed photo collage of avant-garde group portraits, *The Tradition of Intensity and Force*. It had been hanging on my studio wall since 2010. Now it lies broken behind a radiator, making me think that this accident was symbolic. Something ends. Something intangible starts.

Anna Ostoya

I based this text on fragments of: Statement in association with Whitney Independent Study Program 2008–2009 exhibition at Art in General, New York (2009); *Jiggling and Rustling* (2010), lecture-performance, performed at Sculpture Center, Long Island City, New York (2009) and the Power Plant, Toronto (2011); “Non-Spaces,” artist’s statement (2011); *Disclosures—Text* (2013), wall text for “Disclosures,” Bortolami Gallery (2013); panel-discussion statements at the MoMA Forum on Contemporary Photography, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2013); Seth Siegel Memorial Speech, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2013); interview by Marta Gryp, *Zoo Magazine*, no. 41 (Winter 2013); and “Against: the Inertia of Disillusionment,” *Parallax* 20, no. 2 (2014): 61–72.