



Paul Lloyd Sargent  
Summer 2014



[subset of the archive]



A drift through the waterways connecting Buffalo and Brooklyn, NY,  
to return to NYC a subset of the externalities of globalism.



## Erie Basin Meets Erie Basin, Vol. III: Artificial Corridors

~~~ by Paul Lloyd Sargent, Summer 2014 ~~~

"Where we perceive a chain of events [the angel of history] sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress."

Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," 1940.

**Artificial Corridors** is a nautical *dérive*, or drift across New York State, a durational performance by boat, tracing a line to highlight a now obsolete but formerly crucial route of trade and transport crisscrossing the vestiges of the Erie Canal and Hudson River that once connected the cities of Buffalo and New York. As the third iteration in the series **Erie Basin Meets Erie Basin**, this drift will reconnect two nodes in an ever-expanding network, two places embodying the inequities of uneven development, where the canal, as the instrument of global Capitalism, catalyzed the production of tremendous wealth at both termini: Buffalo, as Western Door, the gateway to vast exploitable resources of the North American interior, and New York City, as port of international trade and center of Capitalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. But in the environmental and economic inequality of resource distribution central to Capitalism, though New York City has continued to advance its position as a global metropolis throughout the two centuries subsequent to construction of the Erie Canal, the sacrifice zone of Western New York remains permeated with legacy toxins, brownfields, polluted waterways, and other public health burdens and socio-economic hardships indicative of the myriad externalities of industries of extraction, manufacturing, and energy production. Long after smokestack-chasing industrialists abandoned the region, traveling first south, then across the oceans to the east in a perpetual search for cheaper labor, fewer regulations, and freer markets, Buffalo, like many "legacy cities" in the Great Lakes Basin, was left with an accumulation of rust, rot, corrosion, and contamination.

In an absurdist response to the complexities embodied in the wreckage of such histories, artist Paul Lloyd Sargent employs the tactic of the *dérive* in this summer's **Artificial Corridors** project to pilot a 19-foot, open-hulled powerboat, to navigate across the New York State Canal System and down the Hudson River, and to transport a cargo comprised of remnants of the Great Lakes Basin's toxic legacy. Titled **[subset of the archive]**, Sargent has compiled an array of pollution and environmental toxin samples in order to critique commonly held conceptions of "pollution," ultimately positing that the entirety of the Great Lakes watershed, with its tributaries, littoral zones, and coastlines, as an enduring archive of the material histories and conditions that produced this region. As cargo on the drift, **[subset of the archive]** manifests as a curio cabinet of samples ranging from roadside litter, leaking fuel oils, and lawn chemical run-off to soil, sediment, air, and water samples laden with mercury, lead, dioxins, polychlorinated biphenyl, *C. botulinum*, *E. coli*, and fecal coliform, each collected from brownfields, waterways, and Superfund sites in the Erie Basin, like the Buffalo River, Scajaquada Creek, Love Canal, Tonawanda Coke, and the Manhattan Project. In addition, **[subset of the archive]** includes culturally constructed "contaminants," such as invasive species and weeds, as well as personal pollutions of everyday life, represented by household dust and detritus, pharmaceuticals and other health care discards, pet waste, residential sewerage, and the microplastics found in beauty products now impacting the ecology of the Great Lakes and other water bodies on the molecular level. Juxtaposed in this context, **[subset of the archive]** aims to illustrate that, just as there is inequity in the distribution of wealth and risk in the production of Capital, similarly, not all pollution is created equal.

Paul Lloyd Sargent is proud to produce *Erie Basin Meets Erie Basin, Vol. III: Artificial Corridors* in partnership with **Dr. Sherri Mason**, Professor of Chemistry at SUNY Fredonia (<http://www.fredonia.edu/chemistry/Faculty/Mason.asp>), the **Clean Air Coalition of WNY** (<https://www.cacwny.org>), and **PUSH Buffalo/PUSH Blue** (<http://pushbuffalo.org> / <http://greendevlopmentzone.org/jobs/push-blue>).

## **Artificial Corridors – Route and Schedule:**

• *Note bene:* Due to the ambling nature inherent in the *dérive*, as well as the fickle fates of weather, mechanics, and other factors, the schedule below is merely an approximation and is likely to change significantly over the course of this project. To connect with Sargent directly, travel with him for a stretch of the route, and/or invite him to stop, speak, or stay at homes, towns, institutions, or sites along the route of the NYS Canal System or Hudson River, it is best to contact him via cell phone (area code 312 dash 860 dash 0562) or email (paul dot lloyd dot sargent /at/ gmail dot com). You may also follow his progress along the drift and find more contextual information about ***Erie Basin Meets Erie Basin*** and other projects by visiting and following these sites and social media platforms:

<https://twitter.com/ebasin2ebasin>

<https://twitter.com/paullloydsargen>

<https://facebook.com/eriebasinmeetseriebasin>

<http://recycledcarbon.com>

<http://eriebasinmeetseriebasin.wordpress.com>

<http://paullloydsargent.tumblr.com>

According to the NYS Canal System website, the average travel time between Buffalo and Albany is approximately seven days: <http://www.canals.ny.gov/about/faqs.html#3> Travel speed for much of the journey will be less than 10 knots, with close to 50 locks dotting the route. A map of the Canal System, its locks, and intertwined lakes, rivers, and waterways can be found here: <http://www.canals.ny.gov/maps> Sargent will be making numerous overnight stopovers where safe, primarily sleeping in the open-hull boat. As might be expected, he welcomes any possible hospitality on this rather absurd journey—a trek tantamount to car camping in urban parking lots.

### **Buffalo • Saturday, June 28<sup>th</sup>**

***Artificial Corridors*** will officially embark from Buffalo's Erie Basin, at the mouth of the Buffalo River, on June 28<sup>th</sup>, following a christening ceremony and launch event, from 6:00 to 8:00pm, to publicly name Sargent's vessel during Buffalo's 2014 "City at Night" festival, located at Silo City. Entitled ***Hey NYC! Take Back Yr Sh#!***, this event encourages Buffalonians to visit with Sargent, talk about the project, and to contribute to ***[subset of the archive]*** with their own detritus to be "returned" to the rightful owners in New York City. More information can be found here:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/608128225972758>

[Prior to ***Take Back Yr Sh#!***, at 3-5pm, Sargent encourages anyone in Buffalo to attend Anna Scime's premiere of the film *Everybody Lives Downstream*, screening at the Burchfield Penney:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/281280908720978>

<http://www.burchfieldpenney.org/events/event:06-28-2014-3-00pm-everybody-lives-downstream>]

Following the official christening and launch event, Sargent will sail to Rich Marina on the Niagara River to moor for a few remaining days to complete any necessary maintenance and safety preparations, as well as to load the vessel for departure. Barring any unforeseen delays, he will embark for the mouth of the canal, in North Tonawanda, on the morning of Wednesday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Lockport (30 miles) • Wednesday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>**

### **Albion (30 | 60 miles) • Thursday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>**

### **Brockport (15 | 75 miles) • Thursday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>**

### **Rochester (20 | 95 miles) • Friday, July 4<sup>th</sup>**

### **Newark/Lyons (40 | 135 miles) • Friday, July 4<sup>th</sup>**

### **Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge (20 | 155 miles) • Saturday, July 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Syracuse/Onondaga Lake Inner Harbor (45 | 200 miles) • Saturday / Sunday, July 5 & 6<sup>th</sup>**

As Syracuse is Sargent's hometown, this will be a two-night stay, mooring at the Inner Harbor on Onondaga Lake, in Syracuse, NY.

**Oneida Lake/Verona Beach (50 | 250 miles) • Monday, July 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Utica (40 | 290 miles) • Tuesday, July 8<sup>th</sup>**

**Herkimer (15 | 305 miles) • Tuesday, July 8<sup>th</sup>**

**Amsterdam (50 | 355) • Wednesday, July 9<sup>th</sup>**

**Schenectady (20 | 375 miles) • Thursday, July 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Troy (25 | 400 miles) • Thursday, July 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Albany (10 | 410 miles) • Friday, July 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Hudson (30 | 440 miles) • Friday, July 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Poughkeepsie (40 | 480 miles) • Saturday, July 12<sup>th</sup>**

**Beacon (15 | 495 miles) • Saturday, July 12<sup>th</sup>**

**Tallman Mountain State Park / Palisades (40 | 535 miles) • Sunday, July 13<sup>th</sup>**

**Gowanus Canal / Brooklyn (40 | 575 miles) • Monday, July 14<sup>th</sup>**

Upon reaching Red Hook's Erie Basin and the Gowanus Canal in Brooklyn, Sargent will need to consider mooring, dockage, and trailer options. Though the 19' Eastern, powered by an outboard 90hp Honda, is at home in and thus accustomed to the ravages of saltwater, concerns about secure, affordable, and "corrosion free" moorings remain. Ideally, Sargent would like to spend about a week in New York, should he find appropriate dockage and [a] place[s] to stay, rest, speak, eat, and/or present on this project publicly. Again, any tips, leads, and/or hospitality are greatly appreciated—especially if both he and his boat can take a much-needed freshwater bath.

**Return Route and Schedule • Sunday, July 20<sup>th</sup>?:**

While it is premature to state with any authority when and via what approach Sargent will return to Buffalo, two possible options are:

- Renting a pick-up truck in Buffalo with a 2" hitch for a week, costing approximately \$350 from U-Haul, including a flat fee for 750 miles, plus 29¢ per mile overage. This would require a very generous offering of time and responsibility from a friend or family member willing to tow the 20' MagicTilt trailer by way of rented truck from Western NY to the New York City area, so as to meet up with Sargent, who would then trailer the boat back to Buffalo.

- Navigating back up the Hudson River to Troy to reenter the NYS Canal System and travel on to the St. Lawrence River via the Lakes to Locks Passage, comprised of the Champlain Canal and Lake Champlain, in the US, and the Chambly and St. Ours canals, in Canada. While this is certainly the more appealing option, as it would deposit Sargent onto the St. Lawrence just downstream of Montreal, it would also more than doubling the total mileage of the drift. And, in all likelihood, his charge card will have, by that point, far surpassed its financial tensile strength.

### **Thank You:**

As the launch date for **Artificial Corridors**, a project four years in the planning, swiftly approaches, my crew and I would like to extend a heartfelt note of thanks to the dozens of family, friends, mentors, and colleagues who, directly or indirectly, advised, inspired, provided research for or contributed in some manner to help make this project possible, especially Teri Rueb, Randy Schiff, Sara Metcalf, Roy Roussel, Paige Sarlin, Marc Böhlen, Mark Shepard, Steve Kurtz, Stephanie Rothenberg, Paul Vanouse, Joan Linder, Sandra Firmin, Lindsay Caplan, Jordan Dalton, Katy Brown, Alex Young, Lize Mogel, Jenna Loyd, Mary Mattingly, Natalia Mount, Bill Brown, Sabine Gruffat, Byron Rich, Anna Scime, Jennifer Nalbone, Sam Mason, Jennifer Caddick, Erin Heaney of the Clean Air Coalition of WNY, Aaron Bartley of PUSH Buffalo, Stephanie Weiss of Save the River, Margaret Wooster of Buffalo-Niagara Riverkeeper, Helen Domske of NY SeaGrant, Robin Nagle, Max Liboiron of Discard Studies, Andy Greene, Jeff Pennington, Erik and Jenifer Soykan and family, Ken Larson and family, Anna Larson, Stephan von Muehlen, Dylan Gauthier of Mare Liberum, E. Zell Steever, Elizabeth Raisbeck, Emmett Smith of the Antique Boat Museum, Rob Hoehn, Jax Deluca of Squeaky Wheel, D. Olivier Delrieu-Schulze, Brian Larson, the crew of TECCorp and the Burchfield Penney, Marion Werner, Marc Fischer, Brett Bloom, Salem Collo-Julín, Sarah Kanouse, Nicholas Brown, Sarah Ross, Ryan Griffis, Carrie Dashow, Stacey Murphy, Bil Hooper, Rhonda Turnbough, Liz Flyntz, Cayden Mak, Laura Curry, Carl Lee, Dorothea Braemer, Jennifer Gradecki, Derek Curry, Matt McCormick, Neil Colletta, Liz Lessner, Tra Bouscaren, Sean Finer, Maureen Bartley, Patricia and Richard Logan-Greene, Estelle Davis, Thomas Frank, Sam Sebren, Rob Ray, Deborah Stratman, Nato Thompson of Creative Time, Victor Margolin and family, Vanalyne Green, Barbara DeGenevieve, Sara Reisman of Percent for Art, Elizabeth Ellsworth, Jamie Kruse of smudgestudio, Matthew Coolidge, Trevor Paglen, The Center for Urban Pedagogy, Leila Darabi of Everyday Trash, Steve Mentz, Ray Howell of the Gowanus Dredgers, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, Miss Rockaway Armada, Lois Gibbs, Allan Sekula, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Lucy Lippard, Leslie Carol Roberts, Karen O'Brien, James Jones, Laura Hsieh and family, Thomas Comerford and family, Trey Sager and family, Bekah Fisk, Margaret Catania and family, Bryce de Reynier and Jini Watson and family, Kelly Van Eaton and family, Xianneng Shen and family, the Holcombe, Row, Sargent, Neppi, and Hunterton families, Cleo, Spec, and the Powell family, Dianne Kaminsky, Jill, Richard, and Christy Sargent, and, most patient and generous of all, Jenifer Kaminsky. And Walter Rhubarb, who hates water.

### **Artist Biography:**

Paul Lloyd Sargent is a multidisciplinary artist currently enrolled in the PhD program in the Department of Media Study at the University at Buffalo. He received his MFA in video from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2000. His research-based art practice examines externalities of supply and disposal chains, focusing primarily on the interconnected urban waterways of the Great Lakes Basin and the St. Lawrence Seaway. His writing and aesthetic works have been presented in the compendium *Making the Geologic Now* (punctum books, 2012/2013), at the 2013 *Landscape Across the Disciplines Symposium*, the 2012 *Annual Meeting of the Society for Social Studies of Science (4S)*, and the 2102 *International Symposium on Electronic Art (ISEA)*, in the publications *AREA|Chicago* and *Proximity Magazine*, and online, at <http://enact-artinthemind.com> and [http://drainmag.com/index\\_psy.htm](http://drainmag.com/index_psy.htm), as well as internationally at venues such as Exit Art, Conflux, Smack Mellon, Proteus Gowanus, and Devotion Gallery, in New York City; Para/Site Art Space and the Microwave Media Festival, in Hong Kong; Gallery M, in Berlin; Big Orbit and the University at Buffalo Art Gallery, in Buffalo; the Impakt Festival, in Utrecht; Invideo Festival, in Milan; the OneTakeFilmFestival, in Zagreb; FLEXFest, in Gainesville, FL; and at Mess Hall, Dogmatic, the Onion City Film Festival, Gallery 400 at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and the Hyde Park Art Center, in Chicago.