



doormat (May 20 - 27, 2004)



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on the cover: Seth Cluett	<i>through dust and fire breathes</i> ink, pigment, fire, paper, sound 5.9 x 7.2 inches

S an Keller

winter-help 2003/04:

The Long Way Home - San Keller accompanies you home

The label *winter-help* was founded in 1996 by the Swiss artist San Keller. During the winter of 2003-04, he participated in the International Studio Program of P.S.1 in New York City. *The Long Way Home - San Keller accompanies you home* marked the seventh action staged under this label. The actions are inspired by the potential of a wintry climate to influence social behaviour. They encourage city dwellers to throw overboard their normal code of conduct and to share an unusual experience with people they do not know. The action was repeated once every month, from November to April. German curator Dorothea Strass describes San Keller's actions as "complex, cheerful and melancholy at the same time. They pick up the concerns of social sculpture and, in the most marvellous way, carry it into the 21st century." Last but not least, San Keller performs his actions to get himself through winter!"



Photo:
Shirana Shabazi

All other stills:
San Keller
(*The Long Way Home*,
February 27 2004)

Concept of the action

Participants and artist meet up at 10pm in the Main Hall of Grand Central Station on the last Friday of each month. So as to be recognizable to the participants, San Keller carries a sign with the action's title around his neck. Before embarking on the long way home, the participants decide on the way they want to be taken home: Who will be first? Who will be the last to return home? What places will the journey lead through? Each action thus creates a coincidental community of those who make their long journey together through New York City and its surrounding burroughs. Snugly returned, the homecomers provide the remaining participants with a simple meal so as to ensure their safe way.

San Keller's previous *winter-help* action was called *No Warmth without Friends*. Six people exposed themselves to the winter weather for one night each. Intrepidly, they stood outdoors in the place of their choice from sunset to sunrise, an empty oil barrel next to them. *winter-help* appeals to the population to bring these people firewood and to lend them support.

Small print:

- * The participants must live in one of New York's five districts (Manhattan, Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island).
- * The participants must wear suitable footwear and warm clothes
- * The participant last to return home must write a report about the action.

"Helps against the cold and loneliness!"



Rapport zum 28. November 2003, Christoph Wiedenmayer

In der Halle des Grand Centrals stehend, war die Dauer des Nachhause-Weges zu meiner Wohnung schnell berechnet. Von Strasse zu Strasse geht man 1 Minute, macht mit 27 Strassen von der 42nd zur 15th Street 27 Gehminuten. Von Avenue zu Avenue verlangt 4 Minuten, macht mit 5 Avenues von der Lexington Avenue zur 8th Avenue 20 Minuten, also eine totale Wegzeit von 47 Minuten. Diese Zeitberechnung fusst aber auf einer Optimierungsstrategie: Ja nie stehen bleiben. Da bei jeder Kreuzung eine Ampel ein DON'T WALK signalisieren kann, geht es darum den Strassen und Avenues in einer Weise zu folgen, die ein Stehenbleiben ausschliesst. Die



Regel verlangt, dass so lange auf der gleichen Seite einer Avenue gegangen wird, bis eine Ampel DON'T WALK anzeigt, dann auf die andere Seite der Avenue zu wechseln, und weiterhin auf der gleichen Avenue weiterzugehen, bis zum naechsten DON'T WALK und erst dann in die Strasse einzu-

biegen zur naechsten Avenue.

Meiner Strategie folgend sind wir dann losmarschiert und haben innerhalb von 45 Minuten meine Wohnung erreicht. Wir sind nur einmal stehen geblieben. Manchmal ist die Stadt staerker. Und dann hilft die winter-hilfe.

Report for December 26 2003, Caroline-Mimi-Fabienne

We met up with San at Grand Central Station. After 20 minutes, we realized we were going to be the only ones walking home with him. We lived at the same place, my place. The three of us, Fabienne, Caroline and Mimi, were ready for the night: warm clothes on us and pancake mix and eggs waiting for us all at our final destination, my loft in North Williamsburg. San too came prepared, wrapped in a beautiful wool scarf, and with a map. Instead of walking South to the Williamsburg Bridge, we decided to take the Roosevelt Bridge at 59th Street and then cross Queens towards Williamsburg. It took us 2 hours. Of course we were a bit disappointed that we were not going to discover a 'strange man's sweet home', but on the other hand, we had San all for ourselves.

Why did we choose to walk with him instead of staying warm at home? Out of curiosity, both for spending time with him and to discover the streets of New York, and to see who would show up. We already knew his work and where he was coming from, and were wondering if New Yorkers would enter the game. No one came on our night. So here we were, 4 Swiss citizens walking on Roosevelt Bridge, to Queensboro Plaza, down to Greenpoint and then Skillman avenue.

Did we feel it was long? Yes. Did we enjoy it? Yes. Maybe the outcome of this walk for us was to have been able to talk with San about his art in general and in relation to other artists. We did not experience one 'help' side of the project as we did not have to decide to walk someone else home and stay out longer than other participants in order to accompany them. But

there was a sense of collaboration towards one goal, getting to our home, and being able to do so without relying on anything else but ourselves. In a city where no one walks, it was nice to experience a different pace and to feel the distances. We would like to know what San thought of this walk and would like to participate in a dance event in New York.

Report for January 30 2003, Jean Barberis

Nine people met in Grand Central Station at 10pm. The idea was that San would walk all of us home, one at a time, no matter how long it took.

Our first stop was Roosevelt Island. We walked up to the Queensborough Bridge on 59th Street and along the river in Long Island City. We crossed the bridge on 36th Avenue and reached our destination around 11pm: a comfy apartment in a 1970's condo. We snacked on tea and crackers for about 20 minutes and took off.

We crossed the bridge again and walked down 36th Avenue to Flux Factory, where I live along with 14 people in Long Island City. It was about midnight. We had tea again and peanut curry soup. We dropped off one of my roommates, Sebastien Santamaria and I decided to tag along for a bit.

We left at around 1:30 en route to Williamsburg. We took Northern Boulevard, the Pulaski Bridge, Manhattan Avenue, and then Bedford Avenue. The seven of us had tea once again with delicious taro mochi. We were all getting tired and two people bailed out after that stop.

It took us about two hours to reach our fourth stop in Crown Heights. We took Kent Avenue and walked through Bushwick and Bed-Stuy. We were all tired and starved when we got there, so coffee and scrambled eggs were a great relief.

We left at dawn and by the time we had reached the Manhattan Bridge it was already bright. We got to the last house in the meat-packing district at about 9am. Cream cheese, tomatoes and cucumber sandwiches were served with coffee.

Everyone had been walked home, but San insisted on going back to my place with me. We were both exhausted and took the W train for a section of the road. We finally made it home at noon sharing a final cup of tea before San left for his place in the East Village. He walked of course.



Report for February 27 2004, Matt Dunn

Over thirty of us troop out of Grand Central at about 10:30 pm and begin our way down to 7th avenue and some street in the Village with a name rather than number. My fatigue from the previous couple of days is apparent in my body. This walk seems long; no one is warmed up yet; the ice is unbroken. At the first place we file in and San tapes from behind. In the small apartment, (for a while, later, apartments will increase in size relative to how few people there are to fill them) we stand or sit and make light over big sugar hearts. We head downstairs after a while and gather on the street. At most stops, including Grand Central, we will stand outside and first walk in the wrong direction. Our hosts join us as we walk north and east to tenth street. I find myself next to Channing and we have a smooth, pleasurable conversation. Everything seems light, easy in the warm air outside with all these people to look at.

At Lea's in the East Village we pass plates of vegetables in a vaudeville routine as we shrug off our coats. The speed with which we warm her space makes unmistakable our numbers: here are 30 strangers gathered in one tiny apartment, laughing, no questions asked. Lea puts on a slide show that has us all entertained. For this time I forget about San as we all concentrate on the images on the wall. We applaud thunderously at the end and she feels like an old friend; like everyone's.

On to SoHo, still in full force (minus the squat old man who didn't say much. He walked with ambition but got lost or disillusioned or both before the first stop), still playing at stopping traffic. We stop in a deli near Shana's dorm and she buys us coffee or tea.

The group dips down into Chinatown, then across the island on dark streets that feel like no one has been on before. We see rats. Nathan brings us roundabout to his pad just below the Williamsburg bridge. Inside, he puts on cowboy music and coffee. After chess, musical chairs and many notes taken on cheap rental architecture, we leave Nathan and strategize about Brooklyn. Cries of "Do we know where we're going?" are a common feature

of this segment. No one can believe how far west we arc to get on the Manhattan Bridge. When we get there the street architecture becomes very confused and we race past tightly accelerating taxis and scramble over walls and rails. Everyone enjoys this.

The walk over the bridge, like a ride in a plane, seems fastest at the beginning and at the end. The quiet gives all the conversations privacy. The trains rolling by are many but far between.

We hop into Brooklyn like nurses and chimney-sweeps into a sidewalk drawing and then it's a short way to Catherine's place with the juice and



the peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. She helps me stretch my legs farther than I ever have before. Then it's south straight through the long diagonal of Prospect Park. With no stoplights our paces spread the group out to its widest yet; with no streetlights conversations get quieter, the woods more absorbing. I walk on the grass to relieve my ankles and turn a couple of somersaults. "It was very energizing watching you do that," Harrell says, "but I'd've had a fear of dog shit." "I had a fear of needles," I say.

The woods eventually thin out and a few blocks and one elevator ride later, we sit and many sleep as the eggs and chai cook in the kitchen. The sun rises as we eat and one by one people step out onto the balcony to see the sun's reflection in the tall building nearby. Their outlines are black. Einat looks beautiful. I can see the Verazanno Narrows Bridge more clearly than the speck of Manhattan.

That one is perhaps the hardest to leave. Many are asleep and the sun has sucked the warm air out of our range for most of the next, longest, leg. Amber has her hood up, her head down, and is dancing/jogging to up her heart rate. "Dogging," it looks like. As we stumble the miles to Bushwick, bleary-eyed, the word seems appropriate. At one point as we approach a slight incline someone asks if we should head east to skirt around it. I find this irritating for many reasons, most of them involving physics. "It's a wheelchair ramp," I say disdainfully, and he repeats these words like a mantra, becoming even more annoying.

Doug's, an hour or two later. The yellow awning I'd been hallucinating finally materializes across the street and one floor later Doug is pouring the thickest, most beautiful hand-squeezed orange juice I've ever seen from a gorgeous light blue sake set. It's not the first time I've been delirious in this apartment. The dance party suffers most from the coffee in everyone's hands as well as our host's curious reluctance to crank up the volume (though indeed, San, you were no slouch). Growling, we set off to Williamsburg and I don't remember anything between here and Matt's.

Matt and Einat live in the same building and we sit in her place and I say I'm having trouble thinking. She offers me sage tea (my favorite) and when she tells me it that it's from her parents' [Israeli] garden, I'm floored. The tea is magnificent. Around this time, Williamsburg wakes up and upon leaving we find ourselves in slow-motion, little blistery pools of half-cooled lava around which washes a hot rush of Williamsburgness.

Harrell's sublet is disturbingly color-coordinated but he makes coffee the best way and has an Andy Goldsworthy book.

In Rob's apartment he subjects us to his ten-minute movie I find unbearable. I admire San's tactic of laying down and going to sleep.

Sarah says her place is close but she lies. We are rewarded, though, by her incredible apartment and the fourth-floor deck we sit on at a hot sunny February 1 p.m. and drink wine and eat chocolate.

After that idyllic episode some more walkers peel off for home and it's down to Sarah #2, Jean, Alexi, San and myself. Long Island City via the Pulaski