

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATIONS

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MAC PREMO¹

Collage as a medium eliminates its own author. The artist relinquishes total control and embarks on an agreement to democratize communication and knowledge. I borrow images, reassign and realign them, and they take on new meaning. But that new meaning could never exist without relying on the shared meaning of the initial imagery. The elements of collage have a very important job: they provide context. From there, messaging is created in alliance with the contextual worldview established by that imagery; collage is always a conversation, never a declaration.

These images were created through a mix of analog and digital collage. Each construction of found imagery, texture, and color-field was arranged atop a light table. The camera was locked off in a fixed position, and each composition was photographed with multiple exposures and with a mixture of illumination setups: some completely backlit through the light table, some lit completely from above, and some with a mixture of lighting. Additionally, several translucent colored plexiglass plates were laid over each arrangement. The final illustrations were created by combining

1 Mac Premo is an artist and filmmaker based in New York. He was involved in several programs as a fellow at THE NEW INSTITUTE in 2023–24.

these analogue layers of varying opacity as digital layers. Ultimately, these illustrations are the result of single compositions photographed at different times and in different conditions but presented as a single moment in this book. The intention is to bring a sense of temporality to the imagery, as they reflect conditions that are not static, but alive and transpiring.

Collages are inherently democratic. They rely on ideas that already exist, that have already been built and formed — collage seeks to reshape these concepts to forge new meaning. The new idea is a construction of existing concepts, rearranged and reconfigured, that creates a new vantage point. This new image is composed of elements from contributors, not arbiters, and the composition of the final piece relies on the strength of the gathered building materials. If we're going to get anywhere, it's going to be through a process of (re)imagining.