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THE BED-REST HOAX

The case against a venerable pregnancy treatment
BY ALEXANDRA KLEEMAN



20 YEARS AFTER THE BOSNIAN WAR

BY ELISABETH ZEROFSKY

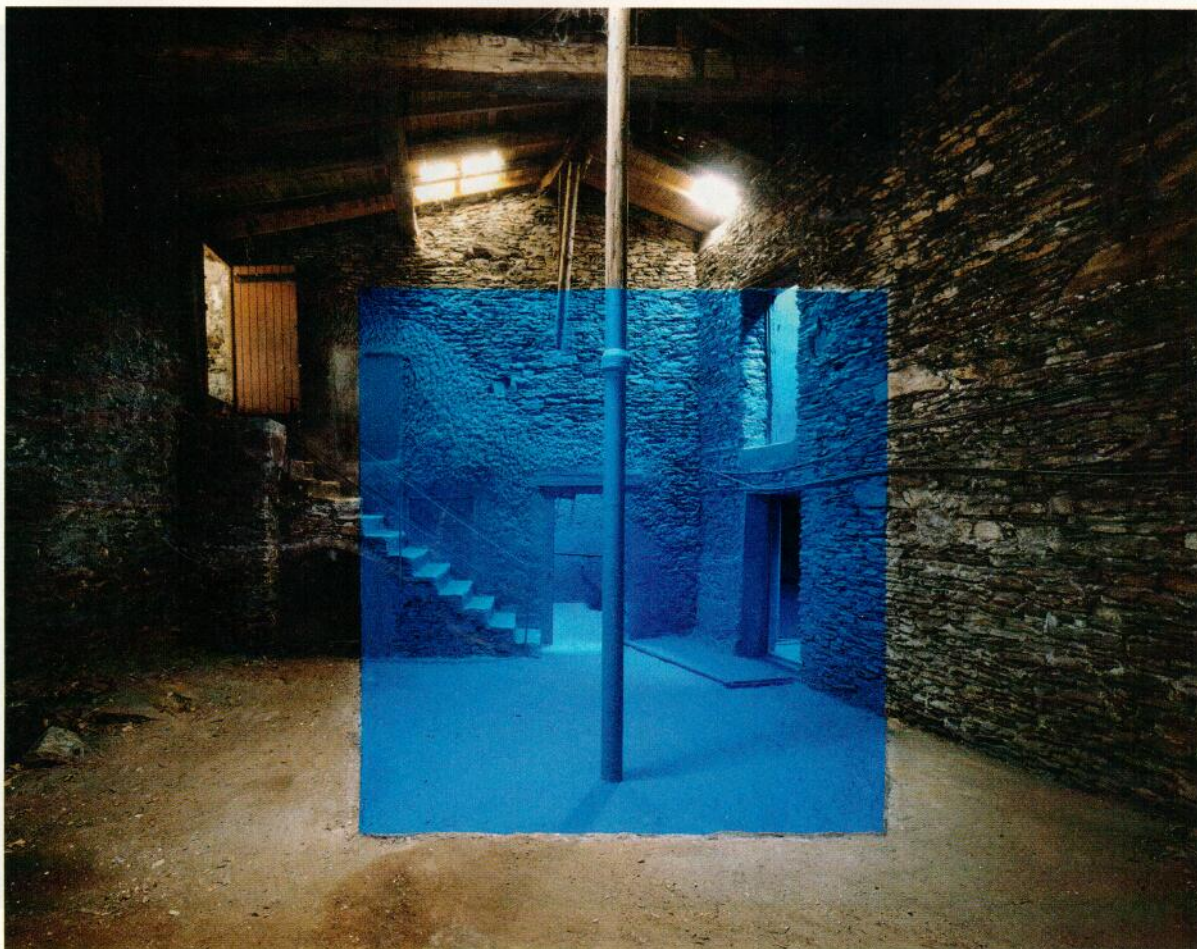
200 YEARS AFTER WATERLOO

BY NAT SEGNI

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“Châsse-sur-Rhône,” a photograph by Georges Rousse, who paints abandoned spaces to create the illusion of geometric forms. His work was on view last month at Sous Les Etoiles Gallery, in New York City.

lives (and vote) at the bottom of the hierarchy and those, such as the Roma, who exist largely outside it, often without proper papers, typical schooling, or a recognized address.

One of the only members of the La Courneuve government who tried to save Le Samaritain was Mehdi Bouteghmes, a municipal councillor in his twenties. In addition to his government work, Bouteghmes is a graduate student in philosophy at the Sorbonne, and with his stylish leather briefcase and horn-rimmed glasses he looks more like a young Left Bank intellectual than a banlieue activist. And yet the banlieue is what Bouteghmes, the child of Maghrebi immigrants, knows best. Bouteghmes says that he has no particular interest in the culture and history of the Roma, and until he became a councillor he was largely unaware of them. His desire to defend them flows from what he describes as Kantian principles, in particular, a belief in inherent human dignity. His disagreement with his peers in the city government revolves around the question of whether a slum can “succeed” and become a proper neighborhood of a city. He had hoped to bring architecture students

to Le Samaritain in order to help the Roma turn their camp into a proper habitation, with real structures, running water, and electricity. Others in the mayor’s office immediately accused him of seeking his own financial gain from the project, and it never went anywhere. “I don’t know why anyone would bother to have a financial interest in a slum,” he said to me. “But never mind.”

Bouteghmes’s idealism had been hardened rather than balanced by his strict commitment to the legal mandate of elected representatives. “The city has legal obligations to provide people housing, education, and roads,” he told me. “If you can’t do this, then why do you go up for election?” The reason for the raid, he suspected, was the United Nations conference on climate change that is taking place in Paris this month. No one wanted the arriving heads of state to see slums, not in this city. Everyone knows that São Paulo has them, Lagos has them, but Paris was not prepared to join those ranks. Better to evict now. If Bouteghmes is correct, then La Courneuve’s slum policy, such as it is, fits within a broader pattern of greenwashing and cynical branding tactics. “They do little things,” he