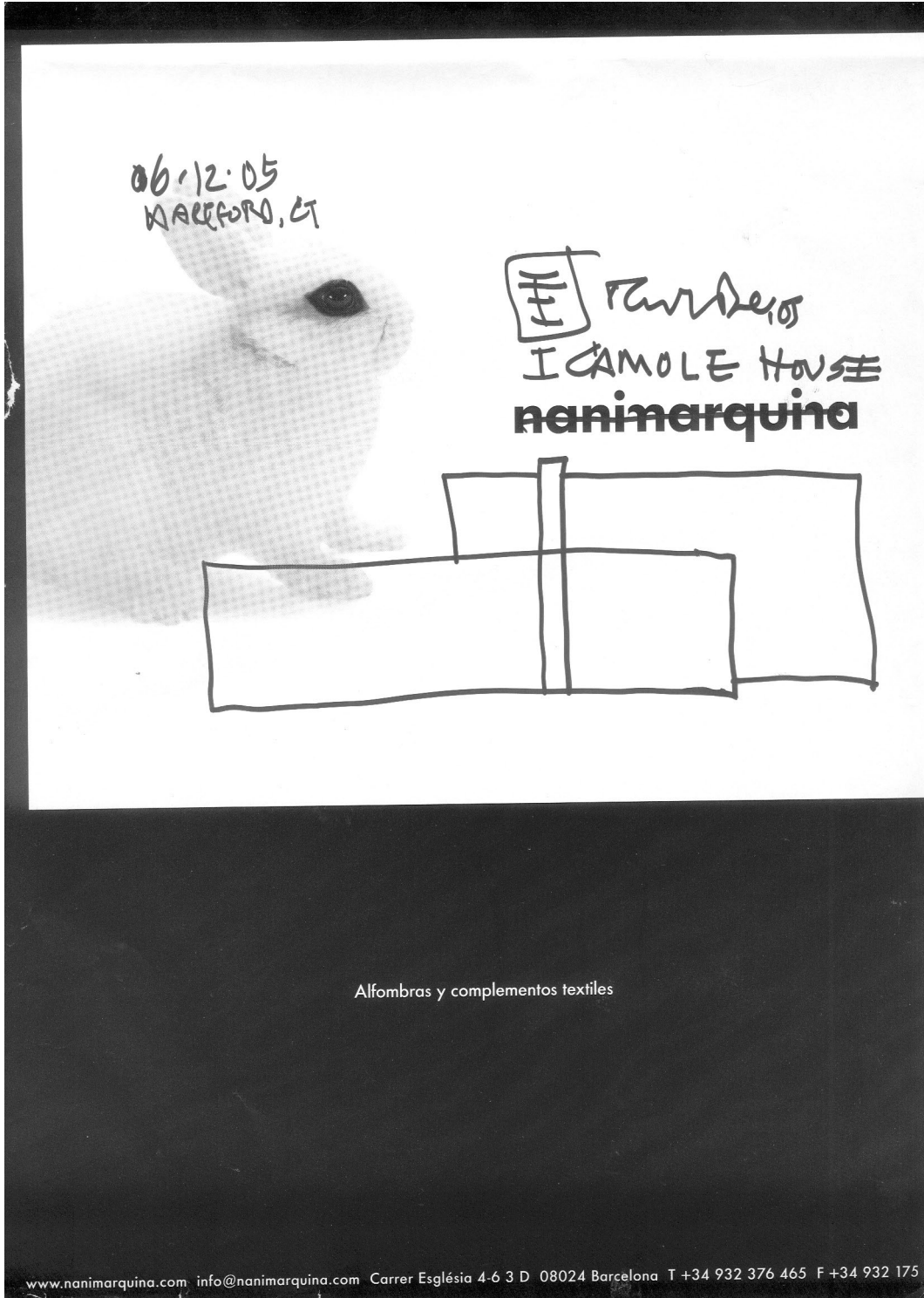


03:1/3  
Title: untitled  
By: Olu Oguibe  
From: Hartford airport /  
en route from Seoul to Toronto



Alfombras y complementos textiles

Aug 8, 2005  
En route Toronto from Seoul  
(I've staked my claims promiscuously)

I've staked my claims with promiscuity  
in every field I've sown my seeds.

~~It is with you~~

It is with great promiscuity that I  
have staked my claims

I've sown my seeds in every field  
and built my house in every

~~I've made my home in every nation~~  
on every continent.

I belong to all nations; I belong to  
nature you.

With great promiscuity I have staked my  
I have sown my seeds in every field <sup>claims</sup>  
and built my house in every land  
I have made my every continent my home

I belong to all nations, I declare  
I belong to all; ~~that nature has made~~  
I belong to you.

And I shall sing the beauty of all women Amen  
I shall sing the grandeur of all that nature  
has made.

03:3/3  
Title: untitled  
By: Olu Oguibe  
From: Hartford airport /  
en route from Seoul to Toronto

While in Mexico in June as a guest speaker at the Casa de la Cultura and a guest artist at Object-Not-Found, both in Monterrey, Mexico, some of my hosts and I had gone to the desert town of Icamole in Northern Mexico where my hosts were prospecting for land. They had talked me into a prospective collaborative venture that would involve land acquisition. Because I fell for the idea, and also liked the landscape despite the remoteness of the town, I got busy immediately with ideas for a residence and studio once the land deal came through. I began by naming the proposed property—naming being the primary rite of all claims of ownership—and went through quite a few names: Casa de l'Africano, Oguibe House, etc. before I settled on one: ICAMOLE HOUSE. On my way back to the US on June 12, I spent quite some time in each airport waiting room sketching out plans for the desert house. Attached is the sketch made on the last stop of my trip at Hartford Airport; I think is the most resolved.

The land deal in Icamole, Mexico, did not materialize, so, one could say that the sketches for Icamole House, though modest, have now entered the category of visionary architecture, along with the unrealized work of Constant, Hadid, Yona Friedman etc.

Interestingly, in relation to the sketches, I found that the rough ideas for verse that I made on September 8 en route to Toronto from Seoul uncannily resonate with the desire to set up home in Mexico. In its final draft form the verse reads:

With great promiscuity I have staked my claims  
I have sown my seeds in every field  
And built my house in every land  
I have made every continent my home  
And I shall sing the beauty of all women and men  
& proclaim the grandeur of all that nature has made  
I belong to all nations, I declare  
I belong to all  
I belong to you

It is not exactly great poetry (which is why I prefer to refer to it as verse rather than a poem), but more significantly, the fantasy of a home in Mexico or wherever else I have entertained such fantasy about in the past, and the utopia of the whole world as home, both speak to loss and longing, the yearning for a home. Though made on different occasions on different trips, these notes and sketchbook entries speak to the same issue, which is the exile's eternal struggle with place and belonging. In my recent essay on "Exile and the Creative Imagination" I speak of the exile's constant effort to rebuild what is lost, but I also state that this effort mostly manifests either as melancholic nostalgia or as propositions, as projections into the future, as "plans" that can only find space in what I call the "free republic of the imagination" where all things are possible. Icamole House, like the home in the world, manifests the imaginative crutches that lever the exile out of the existential morass of un-belonging and regret. Of course I still must obtain a visa to go anywhere in the world, and must wait in line and rely on the mercy and whimsy of others to get entry permissions, but the thought of belonging to all nations in spite of all things, and being at home in the world, is uplifting. It is denial and defiance at once.