

A - Z
INTRODUCTORY
NOTES

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Futurefarmers



236 WEST 135TH STREET
MANHATTAN - HARLEM
SOLE KITCHEN SHOE REPAIR

A Archaeology What are we digging for? **B Barefoot** Socrates enters a cobbler's shop where youth would gather in a type of school; A sole thinkery. Did Socrates come to the cobbler for shoes? It is said that he was searching for something that he could not find within the Athenian Agora. The cobbler had a different knowledge that was based in materials and their relationship to humans through their hands. Socrates on the other hand, is known for his immaterial ways; he did not write things down, he did not wear shoes and was a man of minimal means. We imagine the 33 Dialogues (that might have taken place between Simon and Socrates) were feverishly written down by Simon after Socrates left his shop, but if they do not exist physically, then where did they go? We could imagine that Socrates burned Simon's notes out of stubbornness or maybe the Shoemaker's Dialogues were used as kindling

for a flame to warm the philosophers feet. **C Cobbler** Socrates enjoyed the company of Simon the Shoemaker because, as a craftsperson, he was one of the few individuals that Socrates could find who possessed a form of secure knowledge and expertise, namely

the art of taking care of one's sole. **D Dust** **E Foot** **F Foot** The original unit of measure is believed to be based on the length of a man's foot. In rural regions and without calibrated rulers, many units of measurement were based on the length of some part of the body of the person measuring. To prevent discord and enable trade, many towns decided on a standard length and displayed this publicly. It is said that in some towns the standard was redefined with each new ruler based on his foot size, thus demanding a total recalibration of

their former standards. **G Gravity** We use the word "soot" to describe settled particulate matter: dust, pollen, skin, meteorite particles, salt from sea spray, tiny particles of rubber from tires, unburnt fuel from our vehicles and the decomposition of organic matter. Soot is the visible manifestation of an ecology of natural and human-made bits. The gravitational pull of the Earth brings this complex of ingredients down to the ground where it settles, becoming evidence of our collaboration with nature, evidence of the fallout of production,

evidence of life and its inevitable decomposition into dust. **H History** Ancient sources refer to a Simon as an associate of Socrates, but the fact that neither Plato nor Xenophon mention Simon has often been cited as an argument against his very existence. The situation has somewhat changed since the discovery of the remains of a shop near the Tholos on the south-west edge of the Agora, the floor scattered with hob-nails, containing a base from a pot with 'Simon' inscribed upon it. Archaeologists commenting upon this discovery have been keen to identify its owner with the Simon mentioned in the literary sources as a companion of Socrates: but scholars primarily concerned with ancient philosophy have tended to remain doubtful. Simon's reputation relies principally upon the claim made by Diogenes Laertius that he was the first to write 'Socratic dialogues' or later referred to as "Shoemaker's Dia-

logues". **I Ink** The color that absorbs the light on this page is ink made from the dust under our feet (or sole). We have collected an inventory of soot from in front of shoe repair stores in the five boroughs of NYC. Ancient shoemakers used a pigment to make shoes black called "atramentum". And similar ink was used for writing. Today the material that makes our shoes black or our ink black is a mineral that we dig from far below the earth's

surface. **J Jar** Five glass jars of "soot" ink sat in a vitrine in the Solomon R. Guggen-

heim Museum between May 4 and 14th in 2011. **K L** "lbs" is an abbreviation for the

unit of mass we call “pounds”. How much does your soul weigh? How much does your

sole weigh? **M** Mining Humans have been digging in the earth from the time we began walking on two feet, having our hands free. We dig down to build up. The material that makes skyscrapers was once far below our feet, hidden, underground. The spiral shaped Guggenheim building emerges materially from the ground – a monument to a long history of digging-

changing what is below us to what is above us. **N O** A partial list of the alleged 33 dialogues between Simon and Socrates; *On the Good, What is the Beautiful, On the Just, On Virtue, that it cannot be taught, On Courage; I, II, and III, On Poetry, On Good Passions, On Knowledge, On Teaching, On the Art of Conversation, On Judging, On Being, On Number, On*

Care, On Work, On Greed, On Pretentiousness, On Doing III. **P** Pedestrian Press A set of 36 shoes each with a rubber letter and stamp pad attached to the bottom. The entire set forms a type family. A roll of paper is rolled out on the streets of New York City. A group

of pedestrians wearing the shoes compose and print the *Soul/Sermons* using soot ink. **Q**

R S Soul/Sole Sermons The word “sermon” derives from the Latin words *sermō*; (“discourse”) and *serere*, which means ‘to join together’ or “conversation”, which could mean that early sermons were delivered in the form of question and answer, and not a monologue.

Futurefarmers invited poet, Bernadette Mayer, essayist, Rebecca Solnit, and short fiction writer, Cooley Windsor to consider the floating space between one’s “sole” and “soul” in the form of a “sermon”. Each writer was given a paper written by John Sellars about the supposed

relationship of Socrates and Simon. **T** Thing When the act of making and thinking come together- an intersection of the material and immaterial emerges. In the case of the shoe, the opportunity arises to question the material object, “the sole” and the more subjective “soul” that it carries above or with it. Looking at a shoe from several perspectives will hopefully give light to the hidden power of common objects. If we imagine the long thread that stretches back to Socrates having a series of dialogs in a cobbler’s studio, “things” and makers of “things” have a long history and role in society. As artists who make “things” we are interested in this place/footing. We are not interested in putting the craftsperson on a romantic pedestal but the conversation that happened between Simon and Socrates resonates

with us and maybe we in some way have both in all of us. **U** As you read this text remember that it was collected from the ground you walk upon- your footprints and my footprints may have rubbed off on the street and could be in this ink that is in the letter “U” in the

word soul or the “L” in the word sole. **V W** Frank Lloyd Wright Futurefarmers extends a curved wooden bench (that Frank Lloyd Wright designed inside the Solomon R. Guggenheim museum) into a cobbler’s bench. Extending the architecture and the function,

the bench becomes an entry point into the re-imagined cobbler’s shop of Simon. **X Y**
You and me. Our soles rub on the streets and we leave a part of our self behind.

Z