

ALPHABET CITY NO. 15

# AIR

The thin layer of atmosphere that clings to the surface of our planet is a fragile and corrupted brew. Air is in constant, restless migration around the globe, connecting us in the most intimate fashion. From the dust storms that sweep into Beijing from faraway deserts to the smog from Chinese factories that shrouds Los Angeles, our air, the ultimate commons, is tragically defenseless. Breathing air is an involuntary physical function, but keeping the air breathable requires acts of political imagination and will. *Air* considers the condition of this basic component of life on earth from a range of perspectives. It reveals the thick materiality of air, air as stinky, clotted, corrupted matter – in a word, dirty. We see the stuff of air in the form of molecules from disintegrating artworks, or as the material for building forms; as the bearer of scents and germs and as the substrate for communications both digital and pneumatic. Here, an asthmatic strains to inhale the air that bears the cause of her distress; a philosopher muses on the intelligibility of air; an artist dreams of being the accountant of dust; and city sidewalk sheds are replaced by a floating “urban-CLOUD.” *Air* leads us to perceive air, and the imperative to protect it, anew.

EACH EDITION OF ALPHABET CITY'S POCKETBOOK ANTHOLOGY SERIES GATHERS THE WORK OF A DIVERSE GROUP OF ARTISTS AND WRITERS TO INVESTIGATE A SINGLE TOPIC FROM MANY ANGLES.



NO. 11



NO. 12



NO. 13



NO. 14

**ALPHABET CITY MEDIA**

<http://alphabet-city.org>

**THE MIT PRESS**

Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142  
<http://mitpress.mit.edu>



9 780262 014663



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Designed by Studio:Blackwell  
<http://studioblackwell.com>

Printed and bound in China  
ISBN: 978-0-262-01466-3

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