

# DARK CITY

*Once in awhile, Mother Nature punctuates our busy lives with her foreboding arm to remind us of the inexorable wane of our climate.*

On Halloween night 2012 I made a trip from Brooklyn, across the bridge, into the darkness of post-Hurricane Sandy lower Manhattan. The experience was uniquely unsettling and uncanny. The first thing that struck me as I walked around was how unruly and out of control things felt. Cars were driving around without traffic lights as guidance, people were running like rabbits across the streets, flashing momentarily in the scattered high-beams.

Occasionally I'd stumble down a side street only to find myself in complete darkness, held tight by shadows from which the moonlight couldn't free me, cut short as it was

by looming buildings. Headphones pulsing in my ears, the inky blackness was coloured only by my imagination. New York City had finally become the living, seething Gotham City that we had been separated from birth by television and cinema screens. Cigarette tips, cell phones and small emergency flashlights punched holes in shadows.

As I walked around captivated by the things I saw, I stopped occasionally to send messages to the internet using my phone. Observations, sensations and imagery as I best I could translate into words, shivering slightly with excitement in this unkempt, eerily unfamiliar, home city of mine.



☰ Kontakte – *With Glowing Hearts*  
WE MOVE THROUGH NEGATIVE SPACES (2011)







*Brooklyn reaches out its sparkling arm of a bridge tonight, cars dripping down it. The inky towers of Manhattan stare quietly back.*

*A family quietly opens a hydrant with all their tupperware waiting thirstily in the trunk of a car.*

*The occasional cab down a street reveals people on benches, talking together in the dark. Shivering cigarette tips like fireflies.*

*Expensive apartment blocks dead monoliths bathed in moonlight. Candlelit windows flicker here and there, like everyone's watching TV in sepia.*

And so on.

In reality, few people really do know what it's like to see a bustling metropolis as full of bravado as Manhattan brought to its knees. Furthermore, it's clear now that this terrifying reminder of the continuing onslaught of global warming still wasn't enough to make any

significant dents in the public consciousness. Some might even argue that the New York blackout of 1977 was more significant, what with the added chaos of the city-wide looting and arson, and the apparent more widespread birth of Hip-hop music as a result. They have probably have never been to Far Rockaway, Queens where Sandy ripped entire blocks, street after street, out of the ground.

In the days that followed I drove out to Far Rockaway to deliver hot food my friends had made to the survivors. I'd never done anything like this before. The weight of science tells us that this kind of thing is only going to become more common as the climate changes—which makes it increasingly difficult to understand how people, myself included, can be so unified in the event of a disaster, but so divided over trying to control the damage we are doing to the climate in the meantime.