Contributors:
Rachal Bradley & Jessica Wiesner, Emma Hedditch, Henry VIII's Wives, Kaisa Lassinaro, Avigail Moss, Nina Power, Lisette Smits, Claudia Sola, Meredyth Sparks, Marina Vishmidt

Editors:
Melissa Gordon, Marina Vishmidt

Layout:
Kaisa Lassinaro

Printing:
Linco Press, Long Island, NY

Cover image:
Originally back cover of Heresies #7, 'Women Working Together', 1979
Courtesy of Joan Braderman and the Heresies Collective

Pagination images:
Claudia Sola –
p.2 Afghan women at work in a garment factory in Kunduz.
p.3 Michigan State policewoman officer guards a road block.
p.4 Angolan woman cuts maize.
p.5 Denmark's member of the European Parliament Hanne Dahl and her baby attend a voting session.
p.6 French female commandant, Virginie Guyot, the first woman who leads the French aerobatic team "Patrouille de France".
p.7 Cuban Cigars' marketing director Ana Lopez smokes a cigar.
p.8 Plant protective forces in India.
p.9 Swedish sailor seeking pirates in the Indian Ocean off Somalia's coast.
p.10 Employees inspect newly made products at an automobile components factory in Suining, China.
p.11 American journalist Roxana Saberi shoots footage in Tehran.
p.12 Polish fencer Katarzyna Piekarska during the women's fencing individual epee semi-final.
p.13 German farmer Gerda Schmitt has six cows.
p.14 Patti Burkel and Tasha Livingston install wiring in a car door at GM's assembly plant.
p.15 Iran's only woman truck and coach driver, Massoumeh Soltan-Blaghi.
p.16 Israeli combat soldiers put mud on each other's faces during a training exercise.
p.17 Doctor in Kabul giving a vaccination to mark the World Health Day.
p.18 Woman working in a brick factory in La Paz Centro, Nicaragua.
p.19 Italian author and journalist Oriana Fallaci.
p.20 Palestinian policewoman directing the traffic in the streets of the West Bank town of Ramallah.
p.21 Real estate agent Shellie Young puts up an 'Available' sign in the U.S.
p.22 Palestinian woman carrying sacks of olives.
p.23 Women rebuilding Berlin after WWII.
p.24 A firefighter rests halfway through a 24-hour shift in the Witch Fire area, California.

IN THIS ISSUE:

LABOUR is the first and foremost concern that arose during a series of female artist meetings in New York, Amsterdam and Berlin throughout 2010–11. These meetings, organized under the title 'A conversation to know if there is a conversation to be had', attempted (and continue to attempt) an operation to create a level and open field to ask if there is anything to discuss as a group of women artists, lacking the appeal of any form of art-world promotional event, or pre-determined prerogative of a discussion group or seminar. What became apparent from long periods of talking without a director or specific question was that not only is there plenty to talk about, but what there is to talk about is not just about gender, but rather systems at work: systems that are in place within the economy of production. A figure emerged of the dislocated subject; when trying to sketch the parameters of women working, one realized that the conditions apply to all artistic workers; that the feminization of labour both requires a reading of 'women's work', and at the same time validates the current symptom which is perpetuating the very precarious situation we (art-workers) are in, now. LABOUR, and each subsequent issue of this journal, which will change it's title, format, editorial team and subject with each manifestation, wants to bring such questions about 'women' to the forefront of a discussion about 'art'.

The subject of LABOUR is being approached here from a number of angles and formats. Writers and artists who are critically investigating the question of production have been invited because their work addresses the very pertinent problems surrounding the figure of the (feminized) artist as producer. The intent is not to define or multiply a singular 'topic', but allowing, as Lizzie Borden describes in her interview, 'a cacophony of voices'. The wage-worker, the dandy, the 'woman who chooses to live alone', the painter with multiple personalities, a sculpture with high anxiety, a post-socialist feminist revolutionary, and a collective who has put one of their members through a plastic Christmas tree wrapper and and dumped them on the corner. These are the voices represented to do the job of talking about LABOUR. A motley crew for a messy subject.

Melissa Gordon

For upcoming events, see:
amotleycrew.wordpress.com
Letters to the editor:
aconversationtobehad@gmail.com

> Without the bodily labour and the labour of the body of women, artists or otherwise, there is no understanding of labour in general

WOMEN'S WORK, ARTWORK

Nina Power

In her 2004 study of the transition from feudalism to capitalism *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*, Silvia Federici redefines work from, as we might usually understand it, waged labour, to a much more inclusive notion that incorporates as well the 'production and reproduction of the worker as a socio-economic activity'. Thus unpaid work (including birth, childcare, domestic labour) becomes part and parcel of Federici's expanded notion of labour, carefully avoiding the mysticisms of contemporary descriptions of 'affective' labour in particular, which seem to hint at feminist contributions to ideas of work, but only in a gestural and ultimately unsatisfying way.

Federici, through serious historical analysis, seeks to identify 'a world' of female subjects that capitalism had to destroy in order to proceed: 'the heretic, the healer, the disobedient wife, the woman who dared to live alone, the obeha woman who poisoned the master's food and inspired the slaves to revolt'. Federici identifies the destruction of female subjects as integral to the systematic subjugation of women's labour and reproductive function to the reproduction of the work-force, the construction of a new patriarchal order based on the exclusion of women from waged-worked and their subordination to men, and the mechanisation of the proletarian body which entails that women become 'a machine for the production of new workers'.

Women then, have historically been stripped of particular knowledges they possessed, and particular modes of being, and turned into workers, domestic workers, baby-making workers. No wonder feminism has spent so much time and energy working out where women's work begins and ends, if it ever does. But what of the role of creative work in all of this, the female artist? Federici's list of female subjects that capitalism needed to demonise (the figure of the 'witch' and the brutal and terrifying witch hunts at the end of the feudal era are the central features of her history) possess talents of healing but also of antagonism and disobedience. The 'woman who dared to live alone' is the one who exits the circuits of male-dominated economic relations, and perhaps refuses to have children. Is the female artist, in some sense, the one who refuses to subsume her labour to capitalism and to the reproduction of the labour force in the name of an entirely different order of creativity and production?

One of the clichés of contemporary capitalism is the idea that all ideas are assimilable, that any new mode of creation and resistance will ultimately be swallowed up and its original force muted by the speed and ability of capital to turn anything into profit. Once subversive images and ideas are today's normality; the far out becomes all the all-too-close. At the same time, those modes of activity we would most want to remain outside of the circuits of capture become the things most taken from us, then as now: work performed out of love or affection turns out to be the pillar upon which work in general can continue – children are future workers, taking care of one's family is at the same time ensuring that workers are well-fed, slept and emotionally stable enough to participate productively as employees. Seen this way, one could become cynical and desire to withdraw completely – and become like Melville's Bartleby: I would prefer not to (work, have kids, keep capitalism rolling). But there are always other modes of being, other ways of living, real or imaginary – the ecologically-friendly self-sufficiency model of recent decades has more than a passing attraction for many, not only for the sake of the planet but also for the sake of human relations as such, for the desire for contact not mediated through conditions of competition, employability and so on.

Continued on page five»

"We March Under The Banner of Visual Art

Henry VIII's Wives **are Rachel Dagnall, Bob Grieve, Sirko Knupfer, Simon Polli, Per Sander and Lucy Skaer.**
The collective's projects are discussed in an interview with Lucy Skaer with Jovana Stokic at Location 1, NY (February 4, 2010)

We March Under the Banner of Visual Art **(published by Tramway 2001)**
We studied together in an art school department strongly based in public art which started off as quite a utopian left-wing idea of giving art to the people, and then over the ten years that it ran it became more convoluted, twisted, probably in some ways despairing. But what remained about it was that every year the students had to make a project in public, which led to a lot of hilarious, ridiculous and brilliant moments. What it taught us most of all was to be fairly opportunistic, and to work together.

An Attempt to Make Fire **(1997)**
This is a performance we made; it was the first show we did at Transmission Gallery in 1997, which is an artist-run space in Glasgow. The gallery had no heating and our show was in the winter months so our first performance together was an attempt to make fire. We started off by using traditional materials like the bow and the rod and two bits of wood trying to make sparks, and then we ended up with electric drills and it was an 8 hour video epic. The reason we started to work performatively together was because it was the easiest thing to do – if you start a task then everyone can join in. The way that we worked for the first 4 or 5 years was to go into the gallery and to take up residency there, live there and make all the work on site within the 3-week period, so everything was quite spontaneous and anarchistic in a sense.

Mummification (2000) ↑
was a performative piece made for the exhibition 'The Desert Beautiful' at Gallery 59 in Gothenburg. The video shows one member of the group being passed repeatedly through a Christmas tree wrapping machine and 'mummified' before being carried in a ceremonial manner through the streets, and then dumped.

Poppy, 16mm film, Austria (commissioned for Spike Island, 2007)
We made a silent film in a poppy field in Austria where they grow de-opiated poppies for bagels and oil. It is a kind of loose remake of the scene from the Wizard of Oz, of Dorothy crossing the poppy field but with the family who owned the field and some of the neighbours who lived close by. When we were making the film we decided that we'd show the old people in it the unedited rushes of the film and then film them trying to interpret it.

The Lowest Note ('Populism', CAC Vilnius 2005)
The Lowest Note is a live performance of the lowest note on a church organ. The note is only included in very few church organs, about eight in the world. We had been visiting the Cathedral at Cambridge and spotted some disused oversized pipes up in the eaves. These pipes were used during the Middle Ages to induce the experience of physical hysteria or elation during religious ceremonies.

Religious Leaders (Oslo 1999) ↑
This was the first time we started to work with people outside of the group in a performative sort of way. We invited different leaders or representatives to meet in this disused airport control tower. The image is montage, as we didn't manage to get a single image with everybody in it, which is symptomatic of the way we approached projects, with a kind of 'make do attitude'.

We were curious to see if this would be possible within the concrete constraints of the museum, so we found an organ maker in Lithuania who was able to make a functioning pipe with the same dimensions, and it worked! The staff at the museum complained of nausea for the duration of the show...

The organ makes an eight megahertz rumble and it's an oppressive white noise, it's actually subsonic and if you were to play it now, all other noises would be cancelled out, you wouldn't exactly hear it, but chairs would start to rumble. We equated it with putting the fear of God into people but it is actually a sound, which causes hallucinations and damage to the internal organs if you are exposed to it for too long. It was pioneered as a weapon at some point. It's really a beautiful object in itself, with oak and leather seals. We also made a film in the organ builder's house.

Iconic Moments of the Twentieth Century, (Glasgow 1999) ↓
These images are staged reenactments. These were events that had happened within these people's lifetimes. We were interested in finding a group of people who were under a generic heading, like 'the elderly' or 'the blind'.

Tatlin's Tower and the World (2005–) ↓
This is perhaps our most ambitious project to date. We are trying to build Tatlin's Monument to the Third International, but we are trying to build it full size, in steel and the original intended materials, but in small pieces in different locations around the world until the whole thing exists.

The idea for each exhibition is to make as large a piece of the tower as the budget allows. "We are serious" is the slogan we adopted for our manifesto •

«Continued from page three

Does being an artist necessitate a certain kind of withdrawal from the world, and from the circuits of capitalism, in so far as this is possible? The contemporary art world hardly seems to indicate that this is desirable: of all the figures of the 'immaterial worker', the 'affective labourer', the 'precariat' and so on, the artist seems peculiarly describable using these terms, and the way in which he or she is compelled to operate in a frenzy of networking, communicativity, self-promotion amidst an almost total lack of remuneration, stability and certainty makes the artist the new face of flexible labour for many. How do we link up the material conditions of the female body and the enclosures made upon it that Federici describes and the supposedly immaterial nature of much aesthetic labour? Is it possible? Part of the difficult here is the way in which 'immaterial' has sometimes been understood, as lacking reality, as somehow exempt from production. However conceptual one's work is as an artist, the material conditions of this work are not easily placed to one side. Like other knowledge economy workers, 'intellectuals', critics and the like, we are sometimes supposed to forget that our abstractions and our ideas are filtered through an environment that is all too dependent on real, practical conditions. Artists who take up the matter, the material world, the mess of things – working in a considered way with waste, the products of industry and exposing the links that tie us to production overseas, for example – are reminding us that one never thinks in a vacuum, and one never can.

The 'immaterial' 'affective dimension of contemporary work – whether it be in call centres or in art studios depends upon a condensed and solidified mass of really existing hardware, both human and manufactured – the wires that carry soundwaves, the computers that process information, the body that sits in a chair for hours connected to whichever set of machines carries command and information that flows through the worker. The 'immaterial', 'affective' component of this work like the whistling of the wind across a field of barley, with all the work and resources that field involves. The bodily dimension of affective or emotional labour – the specific tone, the disposition, the posture, the friendliness or otherwise of the worker engaged in paid-for service work – is apt to be neglected if we see this work as solely about the communication of a certain mode of being from one person to another, or group of others. How can art, and an art that addresses these issues from the standpoint of women or from specifically feminist concerns avoid the too-blunt division between matter and that-which-isn't-matter, whether the latter be perceived as words, ideas, concepts, emotions or so on?

> "... to understand what we mean when we talk about creativity, production, labour, and hear the resonances of the words as they play out across the borders between 'private' life and 'public' life

We need to reformulate this question, to spin it around and break it off from familiar axes: to refuse the mystification of production and reproduction. Without the bodily labour and the labour of the body of women, artists or otherwise, there is no understanding of labour in general. There is no sense in didactically saying that all feminist art must address this issue – though there is much work that does – but to understand what we mean when we talk about creativity, production, labour, and hear the resonances of the words as they play out across the borders between 'private' life and 'public' life, the life of employment and employability (which often depends upon renouncing, frequently against one's will, one type of reproduction in favour of another). A certain analytic withdrawal from one-sided understandings of these terms and concepts may link the female artist back with the skills of the women who historically had them stripped from them, denounced and ridiculed. Because what does the female artist do but generate new skills, design and make novel and unique creations? All artists do, for sure, but the female artist has an implicit double-job to undertake, if she is willing – to rethinking production and reproduction in such a way that the material and the immaterial, the personal and the objective are no longer stark opposites, to ensure that the body of the artist is not the body for another artist, as women have for so long been in art. The work of the female artist is to go beyond 'work' as we currently understand it – the double-burden of which has characterised the lives of women for a very long time – to use artistic practice to rethinking the notion of practice as such. The productive female knowledge-economy, jeered at and savaged by capitalism, if seized and understood, however obscurely, could force us to rethink what we mean when we say 'art' at all, when we talk about 'work' and the 'artwork' – who or what is working, and for who, to generate what value, to exercise which affects, emotions and bodily responses? Much feminist art has been 'about' or sometimes 'in' the body, marvelling in its weirdness, its capacities, its ability or not to live up to what it is supposed to be: but in a way this body can be seen as infinitely productive, if the body of the female artist is understood to be necessarily in a critical relation vis-a-vis our usual definitions of work and labour. The artwork is not complete until we have exhausted what we mean by work – and historically no one's work has been most abused, denigrated and yet depended upon than that of women •

Nina Power teaches Philosophy at Roehampton University, London, and is the author of 'One-Dimensional Woman' (2009, Zer0 Books). She writes on many topics including, most recently, police and protesting. She is a founding member of the Defend the Right to Protest campaign.

THE FEMALE DANDY

Lisette Smits
and
Meredyth Sparks
in conversation

Meredyth Sparks: While researching the work of the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, I was struck by her public persona, both in her life (which she presumably dictated) and how she, more recently, has been historicized, especially in comparison with her fellow Dadaist, Marcel Duchamp. When thinking about these two artists in relation to the "dandy" as a persona, some distinctions between their respective projects become quite stark, as well as how their public identities were received by their contemporaries and within modernist histories. Even though critics have noted similarities in their work, Duchamp is uniformly considered one of the most significant artists of the 20th century, while the Baroness has been relegated, perhaps until recently, to the "dustbin of history". I recognize this disparity is common within the writing of art history, but as it pertains to your research, Lisette, these two figures might provide a useful means of approaching the differences and similarities between the male and female dandy.

Lisette Smits: It's great to be introduced to the Baroness. I knew vaguely about her, but refreshing my mind through an Internet search, I found some wonderful works fitting the category "readymade," which must have definitely inspired Duchamp. Or rather, one has to presume, they more likely influenced each other. I suppose, to deconstruct the myth of the male genius cannot simply mean replacing it by a female genius "behind" him, if one is critical of that notion in the first place.

What struck me more though in the Baroness' biography, and this doesn't have so much to do with her dandyism, is the apparent scatological nature of her work. She made her works from other people's rubbish, which reminds me of the work of Laurie Parsons almost seventy years later. Little is known of Parsons; she consciously left behind the art world in 1994 after making work for only a few years. Like the Baroness, Parsons also collected debris that she exhibited in small "scattered" compositions and later in large installations in gallery spaces.

Filling the generational gap between these two, Lee Lozano is another artist that comes to my mind. She stepped out of the art world in 1971 with her well-known *Dropout Piece*. Moreover, there is a stunning similarity between the Baroness' *God* and Lozano's tool drawings. And not just because of the subject matter. For the rest, I think the Baroness' life story is tremendously tragic (her early years) and unbelievably adventurous (the years after). An extremely short career is what all three women have in common, whether deliberately, or through an undesirable fatal ending.

Lee Lozano, *No Title*, 1964
← The Baroness, *God*, 1917
Lee Lozano in 1963 ↘

MS: There is a curious parallel among these artists, both in their work and in the institutional limits they experienced in their respective careers.

To get us started in attempting to define the female dandy, what do you consider to be the key differences and similarities between the male and female dandy? Given that women hold a different social position than men, do you see women as capable of embracing the traditional role of the dandy?

LS: I would like to point out that today it is complicated to talk about a traditional role of the dandy (and for one thing, traditional is something the dandy never is!) Today, "dandy" has become a trope much more generically describing a certain way of behaving or dressing, whether or not performed in the public arena, but historically I think it is a more complex phenomenon. Today a dandy seems to be a label for anyone fitting the look. In the Dutch context there was the politician, Pim Fortuyn, who lived up to all the characteristics of a dandy (he was later assassinated but that's another story). But one may ask what this 21st century politician has to do with that historical taste-and-beauty-obsessed man, apart from their love for sartorial fashion? Interestingly, the Dutch politician's political preference combined a libertarian lifestyle with a form of conservative populism, quite a contrast to the "traditional" dandy, who withdrew from any kind of consensus apart from a reliance on class and being part of a certain establishment, of course.

However, throughout the last century the dandy has been de-politicized, it seems, and pretty much reduced to a self-obsessed, decadent, privileged, anti-social and, therefore, a-political figure. But historically the dandy has been embodied by all kinds of individuals struggling with the limits of a given identity – of race, gender or sexuality – and by introducing the notion of 'female dandy' in the context of my exhibition, *Madame Realism*, I aimed at a more political interpretation of the dandy.

MS: Using the term "traditional" does seem problematic in relation to the dandy and I agree that there are multiple strains and characteristics associated with the dandy, both then and now, which make for a complicated subject. I would like to try and parse out different uses of the term in order to establish what is at stake in applying the label "dandy" to women. Precisely because it is such an abstract concept and, when put into action – by either men or women – is received in different ways. Because of this, the female dandy cannot be merely the flipping of the standards associated with the male dandy, but perhaps the creation of a new persona altogether.

LS: Indeed, the intention of introducing the character of female dandy in my exhibition was very much a gesture of directly flipping the roles. To balance this male hegemony and exclusive right of 'gender play' by presenting works by only female artists; to counter this, to obtain for women the same "running room" to transgress strict notions of identity. To me, this is really still a matter of women's emancipation, despite the achievements of feminist movements throughout the 20th century. That's why I exclusively chose female

artists, writers and designers for this exhibition, and decided not to involve, for instance, gay artists – a question that was often posed to me – I mean, I didn't ask the invited women about *their* sexuality either. I guess sexual orientation or sexual identity in itself was not primarily at stake here, nor a wider understanding of being a woman – beyond the biological and including other marginalized groups – a political strand that I have always perceived as the opposite of liberating for women.

In the exhibition, the notion of the (domestic) interior being identified as a woman's domain was central and one should see my choice of only female artists also in this light: the interior as another trope to be deconstructed, and a highly political one. And that is not just about women rejecting housework or – perhaps even worse – to get properly paid for it… it was really about the social and cultural limitations for women born as women. Here *Madame Realism* entered.

MS: You've put forward a concept that, in the context of the show, provided you with a way to curate in the larger framework established by Marres, and offered a feminist means of exploring various 19th century characters, such as the Collector, the Flâneur and the Dilettante. If we talk about the female dandy outside of the parameters of *Madame Realism*, it might help to better unpack this idea even further. Speaking more broadly, the more mainstream and contemporary interpretation of the dandy is sometimes limited to one who has a certain flair for fashion, but we also have seen dandyism taken up in the LGBT community as a way of challenging strict notions of gender and sexuality. If we talk about the dandy more broadly, as an arbiter of taste or as a connoisseur and collector, we can point to more recent manifestations of the dandy in Andy Warhol and perhaps David Bowie, both of whom affect an apolitical air, but to my mind, are highly political for that very reason.

My work has been circling around the concept of the *male* dandy for some time, having been included in group shows that addressed different aspects of this persona. One exhibition was called, "Dracularising," (curated by Matt Williams, Neue Alte Bruecke, Berlin, 2007), which presented the dandy as a cultural vampire, pointing towards Jeff Koons' early attempts to co-opt pop culture as an example. Koons used himself as subject matter for a series of photographs that tried to compete with Hollywood imagery that was then being produced. His photographs were in response

> "To balance this male hegemony and exclusive right of 'gender play' … to obtain for women the same "running room" to transgress strict notions of identity

to an image of David Bowie, dressed in a gold suit, that he saw in the pages of *Artforum*.

LS: I don't think the apolitical can be considered as something political after all. Both Warhol and Bowie were so much engulfed in pop culture – a product of it, in fact – that it's hard to locate the political in their work. It was more about being successful and about a relation to audience. Both also had an addiction, the first to diet pills and the latter to cocaine, something that probably also influenced their experiments with looks and transformations. I think their appearances were more received as scandalous than political.

MS: Drug use and fashion both carry a political significance, whether among those French dandies who consumed absinthe in *fin de siècle* bohemia or Bowie's use of cocaine in Berlin. I also think we need to acknowledge the confusion – a productive and political confusion – that exists between fashion and performance. If the dandy is a political figure because s/he plays with assigned gender roles, and the way a dandy *looks* is one of the ways that indicates this play, then fashion has the potential to be political. It is difficult for me to dismiss this aspect of dandyism because style is such an integral part of the concept as a whole.

If we are talking about the dichotomies that arise when considering gender and the dandy in general, the political/apolitical is one, but I am not sure the female body can ever be depoliticized. In considering

Continued on page eight»

Lisette Smits is a curator living in the Netherlands. She curated 'Madame Realism', an exhibition that took place at Marres, Centre for Contemporary Culture in Maastricht, The Netherlands in spring 2011, positioning the usually male construct of the dandy – the most idiosyncratic 'home curator' – against a counterpart, presenting the works of female artists and designers within the context of the interior.

Meredyth Sparks is an artist who lives and works in New York. Her work considers, among other things, the contemporary relevance of the politics and aesthetics of musical and political subcultures, the historical avant-garde, and the ever-evolving legacies of labor and gender. Sparks' most recent exhibition 'Striped Bare, Even and Again' is on view at Elizabeth Dee Gallery, NY, September 15 – October 29, 2011.

THE BARONESS AND DUCHAMP

Sometimes criticized for transforming the work of the artist into leisure activity through his infamous "rejection" of art in favor of chess, and for his gender-bending alter ego, Rrose Sélavy, Marcel Duchamp's status as an art-world provocateur provides an avant-garde variation on the dandy.

Like other controversial figures from Dada, the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven was a polymath of sorts, inserting herself into social situations in elaborate, gender-bending costumes to "upstage" others and to disrupt standards of decorum.

Images of the Baroness in several costumes of her own design (a walking Dada sculpture), as well as an image of Duchamp as Rrose Sélavy, (both sets taken by Man Ray) appeared in the April 1921 issue of *New York Dada*. In these images, both artists play with bourgeois notions of male and female identity.

The Baroness' apartment-studio in New York was filled with detritus she collected in making her work. If Duchamp elevated the every-day, the Baroness, in this sense, might be said to have curated trash.

> If the dandy is a political figure because s/he plays with assigned gender roles, and the way a dandy *looks* is one of the ways that indicates this play, then fashion has the potential to be political

«Continued from page seven

Duchamp and the Baroness's respective experiments with gender – Duchamp's Rrose Sélavy and the Baroness's "lived" gender provocations – it seems clear that Duchamp is *creating* a character, an alter-ego he can bring out and use to whatever end he sees fit, whereas the Baroness *embodies* her position. No matter how much one would like to challenge gender roles, a discrepancy exists between *performing* and *embodying* gender in these examples. This is not to say there isn't a challenge to perceived norms at work in both, but the social reception and impact just isn't the same.

LS: Yes, Duchamp in reference to Rrose Sélavy, is always photographed as a portrait so one can never see what she's wearing below the waist – suggesting that she (who's a he) is probably still "wearing the pants."

MS: I am glad you brought that point into the conversation. This line about "wearing the pants" is from James M. Harding's book *Cutting Performances: Collage Events, Feminist Artists and the American Avant-Garde*. In it Harding argues, "Since those portraits stopped at the shoulders, there is no reason to believe that Duchamp didn't keep his pants on." For me, this quote articulates the divergent aspects of both of Duchamp and the Baroness' respective gender experiments.

MS: There is also a disparity that arises between the public and private, the interior and the exterior, where "public" and "exterior" are privileged over "interior" and "private" space. I am particularly interested in how the dandy and, historically a bit later, the flâneur, might act in contradistinction to one another in terms of an interior/exterior tendency and how these two character types in conjunction might complicate the idea of the female dandy. A contemporary manifestation of a female dandy might be able to move between home and public life, occupying either space and thereby disrupting the meanings associated with both spaces.

LS: This ambivalence is part of the dandy's characteristics I would say. We need only think of Joris-Karl Huysmans' Des Esseintes, who is repelled by the idea of having to deal with the reality of real people, while at the same time living up his particularities. Of course, the dandy is an opportunist. But so is the flâneur. Even though the flâneur immerses himself in society, he is not a participant either.

To address the dandy as someone who's mainly concerned with the domain of the interior is the archetypical idea of the dandy – and one that we know mainly as the literary character brought to life by Huysmans. In my exhibition I was more interested how the 18th and 19th century interior had been primarily the man's domain, whereas in modernity it suddenly becomes the woman's domain.

Modern life, according to Walter Benjamin, is identified by the separation of the living and working environment and since women at the beginning of the 20th century were still in very limited ways part of a working environment, they were condemned to the home. More than repurposing a domestic role, however, I have proposed to consider the interior as a space from where emancipation can be established – an emancipation from within the interior; the interior as a potential for subversive or clandestine activities. And again, the interior has also been a refuge for the marginal, for the socially unaccepted, and for minorities of all kinds. It is a place to hide the dissident and the illegal.

MS: I'm thinking about another type of interiority – mental interiority and the way that "prison diaries," for example, Oscar Wilde's prison letter, *De Profundis*, was a soul-searching autobiography of sorts that became political when published. Wilde might not be the best example here because he was first and foremost an early exploiter of the mass media and likely knew his work would be read sooner or later, but hopefully you take my point.

LS: Well, to think that revolutions start in the living room, or any kind of secret, private place, is not new. Prison writings such as Wilde's, or other literary works, even if they are not published or read by a large public, represent a latent disobedience, a critical voice which, suppressed or not, can be raised at some point and therefore is a threat to the ruling powers. We have just seen today how social media,

> A contemporary manifestation of a female dandy might be able to move between home and public life, occupying either space and thereby disrupting the meanings associated with both spaces

used by individuals sitting behind computers in domestic environments, can bring about forces that make an Arab Spring!

MS: Yes, all media was new at some point in history and, in this sense, today's social media feels different only by degree, but not by kind.

I'd like to continue with our discussion of the separation of living and working environments as one of the effects of modernity because that seems to dovetail nicely with the focus of this publication in terms of divisions of labor. Suffice it to say that 'modernity' covers a huge swathe of time and has many iterations. To talk about a woman's domain being "in the home" seems more in keeping with a 1950s housewife than, say, women's roles in early 20th century modernism, which included

the art-historical avant-garde and the women's suffrage and labor movements.

In the early 20th century, the idea of modernity hadn't been codified as a monolithic and patriarchal concept and women were recognized, even during modernity's infancy, as playing more than a supporting role in shaping radical, socio-political changes within culture. There is a *New York Evening Sun* article published in 1917 (this being the same year that Duchamp introduced the idea of the readymade at the Society of Independent Artists exhibition) that conflates the public's ambivalence regarding both the idea of modernism and the "new woman." In the article, a reporter interviewing Mina Loy states, "Some people think that women are the cause of modernism, whatever that is." In this quote, the appearance of women in the public realm corresponds to a shift in thinking that the writer associates with modernism and it isn't necessarily regarded as positive. If one extends this logic, if women are the *cause*, then modernism is kind of a *disease*.

The appearance of this disease also carries an ethnographic and class-based significance. The New Woman wasn't exclusively an upper-middle or high-class phenomenon. Although many women involved in the arts had money, and with that the freedom to push boundaries, there were also important examples of politically radical women emerging out of the poor, immigrant and working classes. Women were rallying to gain the right to vote in the U.S. and female textile workers were forming unions to advocate for better working conditions. One famous example,

> More than re-purposing a domestic role, however, I have proposed to consider the interior as a space from where emancipation can be established

the women working at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in New York had been demonstrating for safer conditions for several years prior to a fire that swept through the floors of the factory in 1911, killing 146 garment workers. The fire brought national attention to working conditions widely prevalent within the garment industry and evinced a broad shift in public thinking about women in the workplace. All of these instances point towards women moving out of the interior and into the public realm, though there was another shift inwards that occurred in post-war America, and strangely this is now sometimes seen as the "starting point" of the "modern woman."

LS: I agree with you that modernity has many faces and that to consider the home as a woman's domain seems to apply more to the 1950s (or as you bring up, in post-war America) than today. On the other hand, modernity, if we define it as a form of modern capitalism, also brought about a global society where domestic labor, for instance, in the two-earner household, is outsourced to other women (cleaners, babysitters, nannies), so I guess it is not an anachronism after all.

In the Netherlands, for instance, day care for children still needs to be improved and is very expensive which makes it difficult to work as a parent anyway. I think the notion of the domestic and service is still very much considered a woman's responsibility. I find it interesting that you mark this moment when woman appear in public space at the beginning of the century being perceived as not necessarily positive. There is a very interesting book on the appearance of women in the 19th and 20th century city titled *The Sphinx in the City* by the sociologist and feminist writer Elizabeth Wilson. In it she mentions how liberating the city is for women (as well as how other marginal groups can survive more autonomously in cities than elsewhere). She positions the woman as a *flâneuse,* immersing herself in the city, as opposed to the male character who controls the city, ruling the masses. So it comes as no surprise that in these early modern times, 'the masses' were considered female – the female being perceived as uncontrollable, and therefore potentially a threat.

MS: This brings us back to distinctions between the dandy and the flâneur. In the past decade, the idea of an flâneuse, the female equivalent of the flâneur, has been widely discussed, often pointing towards a figure like George Sand as an example. But I question if the idea of a flâneuse is even feasible for the very reasons you highlight in Wilson's argument. If the flâneur wanders aimlessly, aloof to their surroundings, this drift implies a form of power that was not afforded to women at the time, or even now, in public space. I wonder if it is more productive to try and understand how the separation of living and working environments dictates the legacy we are trying

> It comes as no surprise that in these early modern times, 'the masses' were considered female – the female being perceived as uncontrollable, and therefore potentially a threat

to now maneuver around in our discussion of the female dandy? With that goal in mind and in thinking about the domain of the dandy as an "idiosyncratic 'home curator'," how might the female dandy influence the exterior through the use of interior tropes?

LS: I guess I have referred to the dandy as a curator in order to draw a parallel with myself curating an exhibition in a 19th century mansion. I deliberately wanted to confuse "decorating" and "curating" and, likewise, I stated that *Madame Realism* would be something between a private interior and public exhibition. I envisioned the artists participating in the exhibition as 'female dandies' but unlike the male 19th century dandy and his highly individual universe, the female dandy is more analytical and self-reflective … this was at least something that I claimed with *Madame Realism*, a title inspired by a character created by the American author, Lynne Tillman. The introspection of Madame Realism, the character, is more of a *dissection* of a context, in this case the interior as a reflection of the outside world.

MS: The notion of the interior as a trope to be deconstructed is a very rich topic and it might be interesting, again, to go back to the beginnings of modernism to address the privileging of the public over the private and fine art over craft, which can be viewed as by-products, or another example, of gender inequality. In my most recent work, I use the avant-garde gesture of the "cut," and its relation to modernist collage, in combination with stitching. The stitching in these paintings connects digital prints, often depicting subjects like a covered radiator or window blinds, to traditional fabric patterns. The decorative act is an aspect of these pieces, but it functions primarily as a stand-in or signifier for decoration.

Continued on page ten »

Meredyth Sparks, *Extraction (Painted Blue Wall/ Radiator)*, 2011

Josephine Pryde, *The Mystery of Artistic Work VIII*, 2010
in *Madame Realism* -exhibition, Marres, Maastricht 2011
Photo: Johannes Schwartz

> "Confusing the role of "curator" with "decorator" (and collector) might be another way to articulate female dandyism

Of course, there are many historical precedents for this, as female artists and curators have done important work in drawing attention to the political value of the interior, especially during the Feminist Art Movement of the 1970s. I'm thinking here of Martha Rosler's, "Semiotics of the Kitchen," Cal Art's Woman House Project, or Mierle Laderman's "maintenance" performances, among others. These examples ask insightful questions, especially in relation to contemporary readings of the interior. I think one question contemporary female artists might continue to consider is how to negotiate between the decorative *act* and decoration as a form of *signification*, in relation to concepts like "decoration, "the interior" and "women's work" more generally.

***LS*: I didn't want to dwell overtly on artworks with the subject of the interior; for instance the kitchen – as an integrated part of the house – or anything that might be associated with domestic work is not mentioned in *Madame Realism* at all. Martha Rosler's revealing works around domestic labour as service colonization or the domestic in relation to war, was not there. The Frankfurter kitchen, designed as a more 'economical' kitchen (a kitchen as a little factory for women to save time for other things) by the modernist designer Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, wasn't there either. Only perhaps in the work of Josephine Pryde was there a direct female notion of the domestic – although the baskets in her sculptures rather provoke the idea of craft as associated with certain expectations of female art, not necessarily as a critique of domestic work. *Madame Realism* was not about any *improvement* of the interior (for women that is) but proposed a radical change of it. For the sake of that argument, I think, in *Madame Realism* it was all focused on the living room, a more abstract idea of 'home' – yes, the room least defined by house work, but the room in the house for intellectual activities, relaxation or other frivolities, such as, well, collecting and decorating. The 'man's room', I guess.**

***MS*: Focusing solely on activities that might be carried out in the living room – the room in the home most often associated with leisure – is a provocative aspect of *Madame Realism* and one that opens up a space for women to participate in activities that have the potential to then leave the home and enter a more public discourse. By extension, I'm wondering if confusing the role of "curator" with "decorator" (and collector) might be another way to articulate female dandyism since your role, as curator in the context of Marres, is to cultivate an interior that is always already a public space?**

***LS*: To confuse the role of curator with decorator is a deliberate provocation and it seems this is a provocation that relates to your position as an artist as well. It alludes to the discrepancy between the professional and the amateur (and in terms of traditional role patterns this could be read as male and female), but also brings about the old chestnut of the tension between art and design, which I wanted to address. I think that to locate the political is not so much in making the private public, but more in transgressing borders – between (the object as) art and decoration, private and public, the professional and the amateur. The interior, and everything associated with the house, is a perfect context for that.**

***MS*: I'm also thinking about the function of the salon in the early 20th century and how many of the most famous examples were hosted by women like Gertrude Stein. This seems to be an instance of the merging of public and private. However, it could be argued that the salon host plays more of a supporting role to the activities carried out by the guests. One might wonder if salonists were collecting people?**

***LS*: Ha ha! Well, like curators are collecting artists? I don't know a lot about these salons, but what I have read is that women were very important as hostesses in the first half of the 20th century, and that these salons were fertile ground for great, experimental and critical, literary and other artistic works. But they really could also function as a shelter, which made them, politically, equally important •**

"One might wonder if salonists were collecting people?"
Alice B. Toklas & Gertrude Stein photographed by Man Ray

I DON'T SING, NO REALLY I DON'T SING,
NOT PROFESSIONALLY ANYWAY (IN B FLAT)

by
Jessica Wiesner & Rachal Bradley

FADE IN: INT. AUTO ITALIA SOUTH EAST #1 - DAY

People sat on hay bales chat amiably as they sip the complementary beer and lemonade. It's a balmy afternoon in South London and the monitor hums in harmony with the nervous, anticipatory audience as the talk begins. Kerton's fingers tap the computer keyboard in preparation for his PowerPoint tasks. A bird song is playing in the background.

JOHN JONES #1
Ad lib introduction to the commissioning of the project Ever-Changing Moods from the Auto Italia perspective.

WIESNER #2
Hi everyone, thanks for coming. I guess I thought I'd start by talking about some of the ideas that informed this project. One of the main ideas was generated from an examination of a mutual feeling of uncertainty. This uncertainty related to feelings about our place in the world and indeed the tenuous nature of our disintegrating connection to the world in crisis.
This declaration is a declaration of Anxiety: interaction and cooperation on the one hand and substantiality and inertia on the other. The dizziness of freedom and the relentless saturation of perceived choice, rubbing against the realization that the very availability of these choices actively neutralizes the ability to choose.
Unsurprisingly, because what is at stake is the potential that there may in fact be nothing meaningful at all in the 'real', either because a wrong choice or no choice would not help you down life's path or just the plain fact that death brings with it the ultimate leveler of human achievement and experience.

WIESNER glances at BRADLEY

BRADLEY #3
Yes, indeed, this appeared to me as a threshold, a moment of uncertainty; like the top of a wall, the space between the hand that holds a pen over a blank piece of paper, the gaze out the studio window.
(Glance to KERTON. Show slide BUBBLEGUM)

BRADLEY #3 (CONT'D)
And with this moment of uncertainty, in fact crucial to its manifestation, is a self-conscious objectivity.

Wiesner reaches for glass of water, takes a sip, replaces glass.

BRADLEY #3 (CONT'D)
In 'Concept of Anxiety', A Philosopher argues that a positive resolution to anxiety is a self-conscious exercise in responsibility and choice. Commit yourself to a choice, commit yourself to an anxiety-free existence, commit yourself.

WIESNER #2
(Beat)
But there's a necessary disingenuousness that operates in this self-conscious anxiety, one which when used expertly can score out the uncanny and disconcerting relationship between fear of exposure and the desire to be exposed. It was this particular treatment of anxiety that tickled my fancy.
(Glance to Kerton. Cue MEL BROOKS IN HIGH ANXIETY CLIP)

WIESNER #2 (CONT'D)
It is a state of high anxiety that provides the drivers for final realization or, put another way, production.
(Glance to Kerton. Show slide HOPE/ COPE)

BRADLEY #3
The body's long-term stress response process also known as homeostasis is a primal and physical management system, which brings about an internal stability in the face of external instability, for example a life- threatening danger or too much caffeine. When thought about in terms of the body politic, the body's stress management processes (fight/flight and homeostasis), are also recognised on a state level. Invocation of crisis can contribute to manipulating large groups of workers or in the long term a menacing suppression of the new. Radical conservatism borne out of the need to maintain 'internal' stability in the face of 'external' instability.

WIESNER #2
What are you suggesting, Rachal?

BRADLEY #3
I think I'm suggesting that states of high anxiety are not to be placated; rather they are innate bodily functions giving us intense capability when needed.
(Glance to Kerton. Cue ADRENAL GLAND CLIP)

BRADLEY #3 (CONT'D)
The crisis is needed, and not to be ignored. But the means of production and control of the crisis are salient.

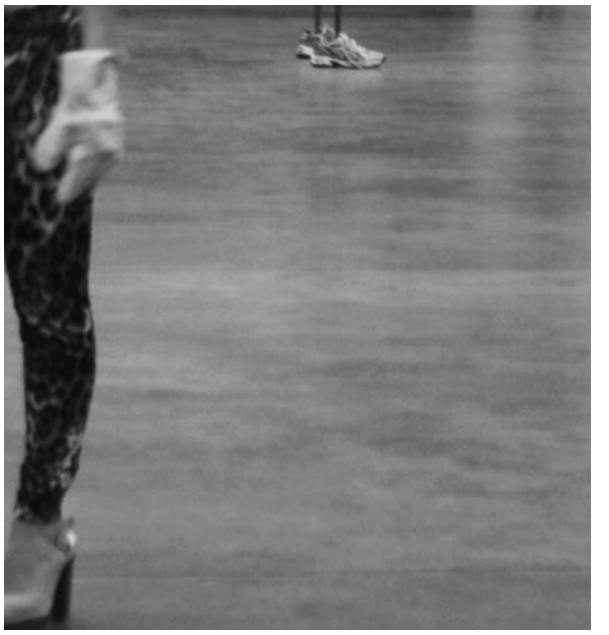
Bradley can hardly stay seated. Wiesner leans back on her hay bale.
(Glance to KERTON show slide PILLOWS/ATLAS' BALLS)

WIESNER #2
I've been thinking recently about housewife pillows, the kind sold in packs of two from John Lewis. As an object it serves to index the human head, reassurance that the mainstay of thought is comfortable and supported. Like the bed, the pillow is a space par excellence for the individual, the singular person, singular thought, singular body. A body that is indexed crucially on the horizontal plane.

BRADLEY #3
(Glance to Kerton. Show slide of FARNESE ATLAS)
That's funny because I've been thinking recently about balls.

Wiesner reaches for the glass of water and takes a sip. Atlas is the classical reminder of vertical man's burden. This particular sculpture of Atlas shows the effect of gravity upon the doomed man particularly on his testicles. Exceptional in this 2nd century example, Atlas has a sagging scrotum that plummets towards the earth on which he kneels.

BRADLEY #3 (CONT'D)
Formally three spheres are emphasized and crucially reciprocated within each other. The globe of the celestial spheres (here we can read this as the universe), the sphere of Atlas's head (the brain/ capability of thought and language) and the sphere of his testicles (nature/instinct). In this sculpture there is metaphysical unification of all aspects of 'man'.
(Glance to Kerton. Show slide of BALLS CLOSE-UP)



Rachal Bradley and Jessica Wiesner, performance and production stills:
Working Tax Credits, Full Time, FULL ON **from the exhibition 'Ever Changing Moods',**
Auto Italia, London, 2011
Images courtesy of Tim Steer, Melissa Gordon, Rachal Bradley and Matthew Richardson

WIESNER #2
(In Russian; English subtitles)
But what appears to be the most painful part of Atlas's burdensome fate is the knee resting on the triangular 'non- form'.

BRADLEY #3
This interests me. There is a paradoxical attempt by the sculptor to hide not the labor of Atlas in his task of holding up the sky but the holding up of the sculpture itself. This attempt to hide the physical support structure of the sculpture's material acts as a reminder of the codependent relationship between the mundane and the transcendental. A point painfully revealed through the angular knee.

WIESNER #2
(Glance to Kerton. Show slide SCULPTRESS PROTEIN SHAKE)
If sculpture at its peninsular can be described as an effect on a material, period, then lets say I'm interested in the double bluff of the effect of gravity on the vertical and horizontal plane; primary forces as anthropomorphic affect. A sculpture's vertical achievement held up by footwear sold for perpetual body-mobility. Its, like, bluffing back the effects of gravity and the upstanding forward facing 'man'.

Bradley and Wiesner simultaneously reach for their glasses of water and each take a sip, replacing the glasses.
(Glance at Kerton. Cue RAF PILLOW PERFORMANCE CLIP)

BRADLEY #3
Sir Anthony Caro is a counterpoint. In Caro's account of sculpture... in a book...he puts forward the argument that sculpture has such an impact and transformative potential primarily because of its permanence in space and time. Performance is discredited because it occupies finite temporal and spatial dimensions. I'm interested on the back of this to experiment with the potentially mundane aspect of sculpture.
This grows out of a prima face dichotomy between sculpture and performance. Trying to make these two mediums stand in for intangible, existentialist dichotomies such as materialism and idealism.

WIESNER #2
(Glance to Kerton. Show slide MUNDANE LIFE/TRANSCENDENTAL LIFE)
Beuys's dictum "everyone is an artist" presents a very specific relationship of an individual to the 'real' via an idealized and material account of the power of art.

BRADLEY #3
Yeah I try not to think about Beuys too often, I wanted to see 37 individuals aggressively and chorally index a standardized measure of labour i.e. a working week, on a chorus of essentially temporary workers - art freelancers. I needed to see what this looked like.

WIESNER #2
(Glance to Kerton. Show slide FREELANCERS/ FIGHT FLIGHT + REST DIGEST IMAGE)
This indexing of the invisible and yet extremely direct and contentious socioeconomic refrains is actually just an examination of our own reality, Working Tax Credits is a standardisation, part of a larger system, we are freelancers with low yield and high productivity. Rachal I'm going to mention now the over-arching theme of rest and action.

BRADLEY #3
OK Jess.
Yeah, like in Lucy Stein's 'The Last Bohemian on the Costa Blanca' there's another double bluff, the bohemian works hard to look like they're not working hard.

WIESNER #2
Hmmmm, maybe...

Wiesner sips again from her glass of water and shuffles papers.

WIESNER #2 (CONT'D)
Can we talk about sculpture again please?

Joanne Robertson coughs loudly into her hands.

BRADLEY #3
Well I want to bring up something about evidence from that picture you emailed to me.
(Glance to Kerton. Show slide POLICE MEN CARRYING EVIDENCE BUNDLES.)

WIESNER #2
It reminds me of that picture you tore out of Vogue.
(Glance to Kerton. Show slide VOGUE RUNWAY ROUND UP OVERSIZED HANDBAGS)

BRADLEY #3
Hmm, I feel like in art discourse there's an assimilation of the value of an object via socioeconomic models, such as Marxism or capitalism or via psychoanalytical models. There are other ways of thinking about our relationships to the material world in terms of value. I mean there are other ways of describing the relationship between object, value and the self.

WIESNER #2
Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

BRADLEY #3
Evidence? Real Evidence?

WIESNER #2
Uh-huh.

WIESNER #2
(Nod to Kerton. Show slide REAL EVIDENCE EXPLANATION)
Uh-huh.
'Real evidence is a type of evidence which usually takes the form of some material object produced for inspection in order that the court may draw an inference from its own observation as to the existence, condition or value of the object in question. Although real evidence may be extremely valuable as a means of proof, little if any weight attaches to such evidence in the absence of accompanying testimony identifying the object in question and explaining its connection with, or significance in relation to, the facts at issue or relevant to the issue.'
This description of the value of an object is contingent on a testimony which activates it and for me it points to a potential basis for the deconstruction of some fundamental precepts so eloquently argued by Sir Caro for example, and further problematising our relationship to sculpture and performance, an interrogation of our connection with the real.

BRADLEY #3
I'm sure there's loads of stuff we've missed out.
(Glance to Kerton. Show slide of MIME ARTIST)

BRADLEY #3 (CONT'D)
Let's finish on the Dennis Potter clip.
(Show DENNIS POTTER, ARENA INTERVIEW 'SUPERFLUITY OF CLUES' CLIP)

Wiesner and Bradley look expectantly at Kerton.

FADE OUT

THE END

LABOUR

Align Spend 2011

Emma Hedditch

Workshop at UDK Berlin. A student climbs through the window after exploring a protest against advertising on the school building by Coca Cola. At this time the Bologna process was being introduced at the school and students were organizing against it. I was paid to be a visiting workshop organiser.

The kitchen of an apartment in Herne Hill, London. I share the tenancy with one other person. The apartment is approximately 970 pounds per month.

Windows I covered in an apartment in Berlin that I rented for one month, in the summer of 2006, from an artist who recently bought it at an auction.

Composting unit built by students at the Art Academy in Tromsø, 2007 where I was paid to be a workshop organiser for one week.

WORKING ARTISTS IN THE GREATER ECONOMY

Marina Vishmidt

'...one of the most important experiences of our times is the fact that we are unable to have any experience of it. The result is a permanent criticism that is blind to the crisis, and a permanent crisis that is deaf to criticism. In short, a perfect harmony!' Boris Buden, 'Criticism without Crisis: Crisis without Criticism'*

For the past however many years, I've been looking into the 'speculative mode of production', that is, ways of valuing labour which disavow its character as labour. Art is the primary site of investigation, inasmuch as art is supposed to be the opposite of labour, typically behaving more like a luxury commodity in the market or an investment of love in the studio or community. But are these cordons still so sanitary, given the proximity of art and labour via the promulgation of creativity and voluntary effort as the watchword for all kinds of work, while the distinctiveness of wage labour itself starts to blur in a climate of debt-fuelled proximity work and finance? It could be said that the speculative mode of production is not based on the generalization of creativity but on the confusion about how and where to extract surplus-value. Thus we observe a generalization of 'de-valorisation' rather than of 'self-valorisation' as a notionally post-capitalist economic or political trend. This is what links the precarity of the artistic mode of production and the conditions for most other work, as they're both subsumed by financialised regimes of accumulation. It is more a generalization of non-value, of fictitious capital, than some idealized 'creativity' – the only way we can speak about creativity here is that assigned to the friction-less multiplication of money, the normativity of capital's own growth pattern of self-valorising value extended to all human life.

W.A.G.E.† make the point that artists are structurally and subjectively reproduced as speculators in the market since their work is not remunerated with a wage. This gives them a direct interest in the fortunes of capital which wage workers don't have. In a situation where everyone is supposed to be a speculator, 'investing' in themselves no matter what they do, what are the consequences not just for the critical status of art in relation to the capitalist whole, but to the status of the labour that happens in art? Does it get closer to industrialized forms of labour, i.e. more like all other kinds of work? Does the turn to services as a mimetic genre since the 60s and most visibly in the recent 'relational aesthetics' and 'socially engaged' practices also herald a final loss of distinction between artistic labour and non-artistic labour, or does it mark the subsumption of labour under art as a regime of speculation and abstraction just as it has been subsumed under finance? Is this the sign of a 'primitive accumulation' of other social practices undertaken by art, or does art just mediate 'primitive accumulation' happening elsewhere?

Further, what happens when the sources of surplus-value for the self-valorising value of art and of finance start to dry up, that is, when unemployment is the order of the day? If the boom years of the past decade poised art as the form of social services expedient to creative neoliberalism, with funding disbursed at the same time as cuts to the welfare budget, austerity sees them both as expendable. Does it not clarify that culture is part of welfare on the one hand, and that this

Composition made in studio at IASPIS in Stockholm, where, on a residency in 2008, I was given an apartment, studio and money to live for 6 months.

Cladding on a building in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, photographed as part of a series of images for an exhibition.

can be politically dramatized or used in an emancipatory or at least a critical way on the other? In the same way as defending the public sector, or cultural budgets within the public sector these days can be a radical programme insofar as it entails asking for more, not agreeing to less out of shame at a dubious and relatively poorly-funded privilege created by exactly that mode of production and exploitation about which many artworld actors entertain a perfunctory scepticism? Perhaps. Yet the rational core of the opportunism that is by and large the practical horizon of existence for most cultural projects these days is that the moment for demanding things from the state has passed, and another way of conceiving any notion of 'the public good' has yet to take its place, much less the political means to institute it.

Given this collapse in the social reproduction or recognition of culture, we should focus a bit more tightly on the practical criticism of value performed by labour in the sphere of art. The art sphere has a problematic relationship to the commodity not only at the level of the artwork, but at the level of labour. Most art institutions run on voluntary labour, as do most art practices. This is labour which is not reimbursed and is thus objectively judged (i.e., by funding structures) as non-commodifiable, often also by those who perform it. This accords with the specifically 'useless' status assigned to art in capitalism's social division of labour, since commodities which do not find a price are socially useless – see Marx when he says 'If a thing is useless, so is the labour contained in it; the labour does not count as labour, and therefore creates no value.' Here it's not only the matter of the 'absolute commodity' which is the artwork that bears no use-value whatever and is thus free in some important way in a world pinioned by the law of value (Adorno); here we're thinking about the commodity labour-power which does not find a price in the sphere of art production thus is useless. And thus it is free: it is important to note what desires and privileges are capitalized or even just mobilized in the institution of unpaid artistic labour; people work for free because they find it less alienating than another kind of work which might be paid, though usually that other kind of work cannot be wholly avoided for survival reasons. The prevalence of free labour in art-related spheres has to do with art's constitutive ideological opposition to labour as such (as well as more humdrum mechanisms of supply and demand). The economy of art, that part of it which positions itself somewhere not in 'the market', is understood to operate with other kinds of exchange than monetary, and to be producing other kinds of value. Hence people who would never work for free in a regular job consent to unpaid opportunities in the art-related sphere because it's not work, in fact, what better proof could there be that it wasn't work than the fact that's not paid? Here we must distinguish between work and alienated labour, since the above instinctively conflates them, separating them out again in 'artwork'– payment is considered a corollary to alienated labour, compensation for it in some way, as much as a 'valuing' of this labour, while art is done for its own sake, and its labour is somehow unquantifiable. Art is art and labour is labour, but only art has the privileges of testing out forms of activity which could obtain in a world where they are not separate: 'the status of art as a space for

> "The art sphere has a problematic relationship to the commodity not only at the level of the artwork, but at the level of labour. Most art institutions run on voluntary labour, as do most art practices

Desk space in a room that I rented in Manhattan for 9 months in 2008/09 for $800 per month.

The seminar room at the Whitney Independent Study Programme with adjustments to furniture. The WISP has been running for 40 years and is funded by private donors. Participants spend one year at the institution and pay between $500 and $900 for twice-weekly seminars and a studio space in Chinatown, in NY. I attended the programme in 2008/09.

A bicycle lent to me by my roommate in Manhattan, 2008.

A desk at a press conference for an exhibition in Barcelona in 2008. I was paid an artist fee of almost 2000 GBP. The desk became part of my work for the exhibition.

A beehive cared for by two friends in Holyoke, Massachusetts.

Studio space at Whitney Independent Study Programme, shared with 2 others.

* in *Art and Contemporary Critical Practice: Reinventing Institutional Critique*, Gerald Raunig and Gene Ray (eds), MayFlyBooks: London and mayflybooks.org, 2009, p. 41.

† W.A.G.E. works to draw attention to inequalities that exist in the arts, and how to resolve them. wageforwork.com

—

Marina Vishmidt is a writer, editor, and a Ph.D. candidate at Queen Mary, University of London, who works mainly on art, labour and the value-form. She contributes to Mute, Afterall, Texte zur Kunst, Ephemera, Kaleidoscope, Parkett, and related periodicals, collections and catalogues.

Post lunch, whilst at Whitney Independent Study Programme.

Action made at the corner of Elizabeth and Prince Street in New York, 2009.

Roof repairs made to a building in Braddock, Pennsylvannia. The roof needed replacing and the first stage of replacing the rafters took about 10 days with a group of 4 friends from NYC, 2009.

Laundry drying rack at the apartment in Herne Hill, London, 2010.

Bloomberg-sponsored education area at Tate Modern, London, 2010.

> Would it then be more radical to insist that all artistic practice is labour, and that this labour-power find a price, if only because of the fact that art is not considered labour and is not paid for unless it finds a price in the art market?

the de-functionalization of subjectivities: singularities emerge there emancipated from any utility. As a purely aesthetic space, the world of art harbours a potential critique of the general organization of society, and of the organization of work in particular.' (Claire Fontaine). Here the point has to be that even while art is a function of inoperativity, as CF argues, it is also the case that labour registers in art as a disruption of its own social and aesthetic consistency. If for no other reason, this is why the question of labour continues to have a valence for self-reflexive or socially critical art practices.

The practical estrangement from commodity relations tends to materialize as unpaid labour in the art world. And this anomalous performance grounds its preconditions – because unpaid labour is so abundant and accepted, institutional budgets frequently don't cost for it. This is especially the case in discursive or public-art practices or projects; when there is no discernible relation to the art market, the work is not valued – that is, the art market is the only existing metric whereby art can be valued, even by public funding. So art produced under such auspices exists perforce outside the market economy, regardless of its makers' views on the commodity-form. Would it then be more radical to insist that all artistic practice is labour, and that this labour-power find a price, if only because of the fact that art is not considered labour and is not paid for unless it finds a price in the art market? This would tend to impose a certain kind of 'capitalism' on the feudal structures of the artworld. If not always recognizing labour through the wage, they would have to adopt mechanism of rent, getting them to price 'knowledge production' like the academy or industrial R&D departments do. This would also countervail the unlimited exploitation characteristic of the art sphere as prototype for all waged labour under conditions of economic crisis (affect over money). Finally, it would acknowledge the fact that not everyone is unpaid in the economics of art, tackling the unlovely issue of distribution. So learning to ask for artistic labour to be reimbursed through either wages or rent seems equitable, since barring a society-wide revolutionary challenge to commodification, it is reactionary to hold up artistic labour as not-labour. Under capitalist conditions all work should be priced the same way.

This is the pragmatic-political level W.A.G.E. (Working Artists and the Greater Economy) are operating at. On this level at least, the philosophical or critical distinctions between art and labour, the 'aesthetic relations of production' or art's status as both a commodity and not a commodity are otiose. That is, the question of how labour in the field of art is to be valued has everything to do with those things, but the resistance to the commodity cannot be enacted in working for free when things cost money. Real conditions of exploitation demand capitalist social relations like the wage be transvalued, and sometimes reinforced, when it is the exceptions to them which help to cement their grip. In proposing that artists and artworkers get paid as a matter of course, W.A.G.E. sometimes identify as workers, seeking to cut the tie with the artist as speculator in her own work, transfixed by the movements of the market like the financiers whose gifts make the museums go round. W.A.G.E. define artistic work as the provision of 'cultural

Danish daily newspaper covers the story of a workers' struggle in the Philippines. I printed this image for an exhibition in Copenhagen in 2010.

The household chores schedule for a household of students in Aarhus, Denmark. I was paid as a visiting workshop organiser and went on excursions to the places where students live in Aarhus during the week I was there.

> W.A.G.E. define artistic work as the provision of 'cultural value' to society which should be recognized by 'capital value'; paid in money rather than non-exchangeable forms of currency such as 'exposure' or 'prestige'

value' to society which should be recognized by 'capital value'; paid in money rather than non-exchangeable forms of currency such as 'exposure' (or) 'prestige' or any of the usual ways of phrasing the question mark that art labours under. This has been known to raise eyebrows, especially in Europe where the critical pre-set demurs at such conflations as too market-friendly. But to my mind, the eyebrow misses the point. It seems more like an ironic strategy of over-identification intended to highlight the absurdity of a class of workers in capitalism who are paid in recognition rather than money; freedom from work paradoxically resulting in absolute dependency on the charity of patrons, institutions, and yes, successful speculators. Asking for a wage for artists' work (in the form of fees in budgets, etc) is already highlighting the incredibly problematic nature of considering artistic production in line with any other kind of work in capitalism. It is a paradox which can genuinely prompt political thinking as well as being a narrow reformist demand. I would tendentially compare this to the historical instance of the 1970s Wages for Housework campaign; where the question of a wage for what is constitutively supposed to be out of sight and out of mind for capital – domestic labour and reproduction done out of love – shows the dependence of capitalism on the violation of the law of value in its dependence on unpaid labour. The driving idea of WfH was that in order to destroy the relations of production as they are, founded on the exchange relation with capital in the form of the wage, everything should be re-defined as labour since all labour is waged and then supposedly capitalism would crack under the strain. This is perhaps the chief example that

> It is a paradox which can genuinely prompt political thinking as well as being a narrow reformist demand

comes to mind of a materialist feminist politics that set out to directly challenge the relations of production from the standpoint of value. It's also one of the clearest examples in this branch of feminism of trying to apply capitalist logic against capital, and thus seems directly relevant for thinking about W.A.G.E.. I have written more extensively elsewhere on the problematic aspects of the campaign at the time and now, none of which didn't have a dialectical underside, summed up perhaps in the title of an essay from the time by one of its main activists, Silvia Federici: 'Wages Against Housework'.

Interview with W.A.G.E.

Marina Vishmidt: Paolo Virno has recently said 'Nowadays artistic labour is turning into wage labour while the problem is, of course, how to liberate human ac-

A fire in the forest clearing at the Blue Mountain Center in the Adirondacks. The Blue Mountain Center has a residency programme for artists, writers and activists. I was there for 2 weeks during 2010. All accommodation and food was paid for. The residency is supported by a private foundation.

A studio at the Blue Mountain Center in the Adirondacks.

Materials from the Women's Archive Bolzano. After researching at the Archive I found some collections of newspaper articles that highlighted changing attitudes to women and their occupation of public space in the city. I was in Bolzano as part of Critical Complicities, a project curated by Lisa Mazza and Julia Moritz, 2010.

Paper document storage at Cinenova offices in London. Cinenova is a women's film and video distributor that I volunteer for with eight other people.

Monitor depicting a video by the Disabled Women's Theatre collective from the 1980s. The video is viewed by a visitor to the exhibition Reproductive Labour at The Showroom in London. Reproductive Labour was an exhibition project by Cinenova in early 2011.

Poster on the outside of a space in Soho, Manhattan, 2011. The space is called 'We Work' and is a combination of office space and café, where members can come to work, hold meetings and have their mail delivered.

Equipment cupboard at the Contemporary Art Museum, Roskilde, Denmark, 2011. The Museum currently has an exhibition entitled Trauma 1–11 which was organised with the now closed Copenhagen Free University, of which I took part (or was a part of/member of).

Studio at IASPIS in Stockholm. I am trying to make photos for a magazine where I hold a large piece of cloth at the window.

Bed at the apartment I rented in Manhattan 2008/09.

«Continued from page seventeen

tivity in general from the form of wage labour.' While this is a reference not to artistic labour per se, and the ways it is economically or theoretically valued, but to the increasingly 'creative' ideological component of all kinds of exploitation, this does bring in the question of the wider political horizon within which the pragmatic demand for the institutional recognition of artistic labour through artist fees should be situated. While the demand itself is hard to disagree with, in the present context capital is trying to get out of paying anyone, which is part of the reason artistic labour is used as a model for limitless (self-) exploitation. The history of Wages for Housework can also be a reference here, though it was formulated at a time of a strong welfare state compared to today. But that can stay as a backdrop for now.

> "Capital is trying to get out of paying anyone, which is part of the reason artistic labour is used as a model for limitless (self-) exploitation

The question for W.A.G.E. would be whether the current post-crash economic and political climate has influenced the idea of W.A.G.E. as a 'capitalist project' – in the times of a 'jobless recovery', mass unemployment, attacks on the public sector and soaring profits, getting paid for your labour seems far from essential to capitalism. Can you see a cultural or legislative change in the support infrastructure of artists and artworkers coming in a climate of backlash against workers (or any social priority besides the well-being of financial institutions), and whether and what kinds of alliances would be necessary to make this possible?

W.A.G.E.: We define W.A.G.E.'s mission simply: cultural workers (visual artists, performers, independent curators, writers) must be a part of the art institution's economic equation. W.A.G.E.'s role in consciousness-raising is to reconnect with the systems that are currently in-place, in which cultural workers are positioned in relation to a labour model that's disconnected and dispersed, a self-exploitative "non-worker" model. As Andre Gorz stated, "We must learn to cast a different gaze upon work; to no longer think of it as something one has or doesn't have, but as what we do."

Our work doesn't negate other formulas, dialogues, paradigms, dreams and goals of alternate, and currently practiced, economies. But the cultural worker is removed from the particular economic relationship W.A.G.E. is highlighting, one that falsely assumes that institutional exposure equals a capitalist return on the free market; this speculative burden assumed by the art worker in a collapsed economy has less relevance than it did when there was a "robust" economy.

Very often when visual artists, writers, performers and independent curators present their work at art institutions (major and minor venues), both the labour involved and the presentation itself go uncompensated by the presenting institution. And yet our continued participation in the marketplace is essential to it's functioning;

> "Cultural workers are functioning within false dichotomies regarding the concept of work, speculative entrepreneurial schemes based on a business model of profit and/or laws of supply and demand

the tendency of some of our peers and colleagues to be dismissive of this reality perpetuates the notion of artists-as-hobbyists asking for special treatment. Cultural workers are functioning within false dichotomies regarding the concept of work, speculative entrepreneurial schemes based on a business model of profit and/or laws of supply and demand, when their production and presentation models at the arts institution have no inherent relationship to those economic formulations. Both "cultural" and "capital" values currently function within the cultural worker's economic landscape; but while cultural capital does not necessitate/guarantee the capital gain of currency, capital-based currency is still required in exchange for survival.

One of the variables that leads to non-payment is that most of the labour involved in exhibiting/performing/lecturing etc. precedes the event itself and is done on a voluntary basis, and it is this contribution which is

very difficult to monetize. But there is clearly wage-labour involved in the presentation of art – art handlers are a case in point, they get paid an hourly wage to install and de-install exhibitions. An artist fee is both symbolic and real compensation.

In any other free-market-place, the contribution that artists make would be valued as labour and would therefore necessitate compensation. We're fighting to be compensated as educators and producers in the non-profit, and public-private partnership arts economy. Institutions taking part in this economy provide the public with a cultural experience which cannot exist without us – the cultural producers. Our cause recognizes that the rules played must be the ruled applied to everyone involved in this particular economic sector, to be paid within a system that, by law, must compensate the other labourers within it.

The traditional formula of "the worker" is fractured. We're acutely aware that cultural production and cultural capital are laden with "value". The question is, what kind of value? Cultural, economic, psychological, societal, entertainment, historical? A scheme in "futures" (as we know, a dead artist is worth more than a live one!) is not viable. Art institutions worldwide present tens-of-thousands of independent curators, writers and artists annually via exhibitions, performances, readings, panels, lectures, film/video screenings and other events. W.A.G.E. is in active dialogue about payment practices and financial distribution by the arts institutions within our communities.

MV: How do you see W.A.G.E. in the historical trajectory of groups like the Art Workers Coalition (as a campaign) or the UK Artists Union (as an organization)? I suppose that historical experience was very much one of the problematics of organizing artists as workers – as opposed, perhaps, to artworkers who could seek representation from other and more established unions. It was about problems of collectivity, but also about valuing labour (when are you 'on the clock'?), and trying to separate that labour-value from how the artist's work might or might not function as a commodity in a market, and finally what kinds of weapons were available for artists to protect the value of their labour – withdrawal of labour not being an option, although of course there were 'Art Strikes' but that was a gesture with all kinds of other performative and political implications.

W.A.G.E.: We frame our goal as 'consciousness-raising' because we must begin to see ourselves as a community, to attach value to a holistic view of that community. We're highlighting the notion of the self-regulating art institution as a strategy: consciousness regarding our vast and varied economic realities as cultural workers must be recognized by the board members, administrators and staff of the art institution. The art institutions and the artist share a mutual dependency, and that relationship has never been contemporarily clarified in economic terms in contemporary terms. W.A.G.E. is building an advocacy organization based on something like CARFAC (Canadian Artists' Representation), but of course recognizing the socio-economic landscape of communities in the U.S.

MV: One of the catchphrases of W.A.G.E. is the idea of being paid in 'capital value for cultural value'. And from what you say in your response, the nature of this value is to be established locally and in each particular institution or situation. I guess, like before,

> "... for the artist or artworker to get paid not in 'futures' (capital, symbolic or otherwise) but in wages, so turning the artist from a speculator into a worker

I'm interested in the role 'capital' plays in the narrative, since there's a difference between wages and capital, and part of the reason artists getting paid is politically and practically important is exactly for the artist or artworker to get paid not in 'futures' (capital, symbolic or otherwise) but in wages, so turning the artist from a speculator into a worker.

W.A.G.E.: The artist is currently both a speculator and a worker – again, a duality, not a dichotomy. We know there is a price for labour – identified as a "wage"; capital is the sum of commodity values. So hard currency is currently traded for "flesh and blood commodity" in wages, as well as for the objects of production. When the commodity's use-value is of general utility, its share of workforce remuneration is still necessitated at this juncture even through a late-capitalist transition. We need to start applying and understanding the multiplicity of terms available for our situation, like a corporacratic Post-Fordist Walmartified cognitive capitalist commons of general intellect...

One could also argue that social practice and related post-studio strategies make it possible to quantify the actual time spent making the work, which in a traditional studio practice is almost impossible to measure. Today, most contemporary artists (individual, collaborators and collectives alike) and independent curators produce a combination of ideas, situations and objects. Both the commercial and non-profit systems are presenting objects, performances/ events and installations, linking them inextricably in the marketplace of art sales, as well as in the marketplace of networking/ exposure. A traditional studio practice in which the artist/s produce objects on their own time, regardless of whether or not they get exhibited, is precisely the area of labour that is challenging to remunerate. Why should the artist/s get paid for time spent voluntarily making something which was not commissioned, and who should be expected to pay them? But the time spent working with/in an institution- what is presented at and for how long, and what the institutions budgets are- can be measured and monetized. We know that artists and institutions are mutually dependent.

MV: From your research into the Canadian artists union situation, as well as other existing models in Scandinavia, do you think a national legal framework – which you've advocated – ensuring a provision for artists' fees in institutional budgets – will be flexible enough to apply across different scales of institution, or is it intended for institutions above a certain size/ budget? As far as I know, many of these compensation structures relate to the hire and exhibition of artists' work – how would these kinds of fee schedules apply to more 'discursive', transient or socially multiple types of practice? Doesn't the question of payment for artists' and artworkers' work (rather than the sales of the products of this work) always end up back at defining the nature of this work?

Continued on page twenty »

Implicit Horizon Or, What We Talk About When We Talk About Painting

Avigail Moss

What do we talk about when we talk about painting? Or rather, in what ways do artists think about painting, and how does this match the way their work is received by their publics, by their patrons, and by history? In a 2005 interview, art historian Katy Siegel and artist Mel Bochner presented a version of this question as well as one answer:

> Siegel: Did you consider yourself a painter in the mid-1960s? How did you perceive painting's general position at the time?
> Bochner: I was trained as a painter, and most of the artists of my generation had a similar background. Painting, as a way of thinking about the world, has always been the implicit horizon of my work.[1]

In one respect, Bochner evokes the horizon – one of painting's metaphoric dividing lines; the index of space and depth upon which illusion and perspective rely. But in another, Bochner – an artist often associated with Conceptual Art of the 1960s and 1970s – also refers to his own experiments of that period, when he turned from painting to measurements of spaces and serial structures. That is, he construed his practice through painting even when he did not explicitly paint.

This exchange offers a productive frame for describing a symposium on painting I co-organized with art historian Kerstin Stakemeier in November 2010 at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht, Netherlands. Entitling our

1. Katy Siegel and Dawoud Bey, *High Times, Hard Times: New York Painting, 1967–1975*, New York: Independent Curators International, 2006, p. 58.

«Continued from page nineteen

W.A.G.E.: Any type of fee schedule must relate to contemporary practices, so an applicable and flexible schedule should be constructed by artists and institutions together. W.A.G.E. and Artists Space in NYC are launching a year-long collaborative project that will do precisely this. Our work with AS will provide framework for our WA.G.E. –certification platform and other components of support mechanisms that W.A.G.E. can offer to cultural workers.

MV: Apart from the historical examples of artists organizing in their own interests after the model of worker's organizations which I raised in the previous question, is the campaign inspired by other historical or current examples which agitated on issues relating to equal pay but which were also civil rights struggles (like the ERA, but, more micropolitically perhaps, the welfare rights movement)? If so, are these more political or tactical inspirations? Do you see a relation to not just AWC and the like, but e.g. Wages for Housework?

W.A.G.E.: Yes, we see other labour and civil rights models – both historical and current – as relevant, applicable and inspirational, which is why we started W.A.G.E. We don't calculate whether they are "political" or "tactical" inspirations, or which one movement is more important to any of us- there's multiplicity and continual flux in how the work of activists and cultural transformations have influenced and are influencing our group.

AWC was highly motivating to our formation. We went to the MoMA archives and looked through the AWC papers before starting W.A.G.E., and their list of demands was inspirational in the writing of the wo/manifesto. We looked to AWC to see what results they got through what types of actions. So at the onset we looked to AWC for what to do, as well as how we might approach things differently. We're very influenced by the development of CARFAC and are interested in utilizing some aspects of their representational, flexible and continually evolving system of support for visual artists.

MV: What's your assessment of the prospects for legislative change in the current economic and political environment, which seems to be characterized by an austerity-era open season on workers' rights?

W.A.G.E.: Right now, we're developing a W.A.G.E.-certification platform in order to implement self-regulatory institutional practices. We're focused on creating economic formulations regarding the arts community's interdependencies. We will explore these possibilities this year, in order to implement a crucial and necessary economic parity within the arts institution.

MV: You've said the W.A.G.E. campaign is not meant to 'negate all other formulas, dialogues, dreams and goals of alternate, and currently practiced, economies – some that would inherently discount that very economic relationships we're highlighting.' Following from that, and again, not thinking of the wage and these other forms as mutually exclusive or antagonistic, how do you think the debates on intellectual property, peer production, copyleft, commons et al. relate to the kinds of questions you're trying to raise, all these being discourses that try to consider production outside the wage-labour relation, and the kinds of social relations it presupposes. So mainly it's a question about how you see the different economies within which artistic labour functions, and what other kinds of economies can it put into practice – something like e-flux's Time/Bank is perhaps a visible iteration of this in the art sphere.

> "The rules of the game being played must be the rules applied to all the players of that game

W.A.G.E.: "Politics" (i.e. citizens tactics, militant connectionism) and "economics" (i.e. systems of currency distribution) continually create false dichotomies and notions of ideological purity to fracture and splinter how communities and systems work together with some sense of congruity. Again, the rules of the game being played must be the rules applied to all the players of that game. So the formulas must be determined by both the players and those played •

symposium, *Painting – The Implicit Horizon*, we invited ten discussants from Europe and North America – four artists, four art historians, and two critics – to address how painting, as a complex mode of production formed by cultural commitments, economies, and materialities, has always remained in the present as a primary limit for other artistic propositions.[2]

Why offer another academic discussion on painting? Innumerable writers and artists addressing painting's position in art have cited how Western painting has existed in a perpetual state of malaise since the eighteenth century, when art transformed from a religious to a secular *métier*. In the early twentieth century, Marcel Duchamp declared painting's impossibility in a note to himself, while others like Aleksandr Rodchenko and Ad Reinhardt respectively laid claims to having painted the last painting – in both cases, definitive negations: monochromes.

"What role does *quality* play in an artist's practice and how is it established?

Since the 1960s, critics and art historians like Yves-Alain Bois and Arthur Danto have also produced various requiems for painting, describing it as a material practice no longer able to express collective truths. In these narratives, painting becomes, for better or worse, an anachronistic activity forced to accept its own obsolescence in the face of ever more numerous artistic attitudes and forms. But others criticized such declamations as rhetorical, and invested in the idea of art as progress. For instance, curator Katy Seigel turned a revisionist eye to post-war painting's history in her exhibition at the National Academy Museum in New York, *High Times, Hard Times: New York Painting, 1967–1975* (2006). Labouring to expand insular canonical limits, Siegel proposed works by African Americans, women, and others whose practices were neglected by the ascendant art-cultural debates of the era around Minimalism and Conceptual Art in New York. Meanwhile, still others have argued for painting's continued relevance alongside, or counter to, popular culture's hold on viewer's attention. For example, articles in a thematic issue of the German art journal, Texte zur Kunst, "Painting is not the issue" (March 2010) charted painting as a kind of adjunct to Conceptual Art. Meanwhile David Joselit has proposed that recent works present themselves as transitive devices for "...[suturing] spectators to extra-perceptual social networks rather than merely situating them in a phenomenological relationship of individual perception."[3] That is, painting turns out to have had its finger on the progressive social media pulse all along.

We wanted to provide a place for separate conversations such as these to encounter one another, to see whether we could collectively unpack some different ways of interpreting the work of painting and the work of painters alike.

MATERIALISMS

Due to its portability, painting still functions as a staple for museums and private collections. This versatility has always made painting vulnerable to critics who call it the complicit commodity *par excellence* in capitalism. Yet, as there is no scarcity of artists who paint, how are artists and historians to account for this continuing labour of painting? With issues like this in mind we structured our first panel, entitled "Materialisms", to look at how certain material and ideological structures have determined painting.

Our first discussant, art historian Stephen Eisenman, explored radical art historical scholarship in California in the 1970s and 1980s, surveying authors like T.J. Clark and Otto Karl Werckmeister who interpret art as contingent upon histories of class relations. These models have historically countered other interpretive methods that focus on internal metaphoric analogies between a work's form and its content. Eisenman's presentation served as reminder that all interpretive models come from somewhere, and that, like art, the discipline of art history is bound by time and space. Also employing a materialist line, art historian Warren Carter surveyed the Federal Arts Projects (1935–43): branches of the Works Progress Administration that employed artists in the United States during the Great Depression. His presentation of a period when the American government granted artists relative financial security introduced a question: what role does *quality* play in an artist's practice and how is it established – internally or externally – by an artist, by public opinion, or in this case, by the state? And how do such influences affect the work itself?

In her talk "Painting's Flat Support, Canvas and Screen," scholar Esther Leslie examined painting's material history. Citing Walter Benjamin's influential essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility" (1939) Leslie reflected on technological advances in high-definition digital screens and liquid crystal displays, and asked where painting's place was now, at a time when Hollywood filmmakers like Michael Mann can call their films "digital painting." Because painting still relies on the localized, phenomenological experiences of individual viewers, it is excluded from cultural production's material shifts, and appears, as G.W.F. Hegel once described in his lectures on aesthetics of the early nineteenth century, incapable of reflecting social truths. Digital media seem to make progress (that is, if planned obsolescence can be considered progress) even as they still rely on mimetic allegories to beguile viewers. This discussion carried a host of important implications for artists: what funding and institutional structures support the artist's work, how do artists reflect on these relationships, and what ideological conflicts might be at stake.

Artist Dierk Schmidt analysed such questions in a presentation of his practice, asking whether contemporary forms of history painting can act as vehicles for critique. His investigations into the inconsistencies

"Because painting still relies on the localized, phenomenological experiences of individual viewers, it is excluded from cultural production's material shifts, and appears incapable of reflecting social truths.

2. Symposium discussants were: Carol Armstrong (Yale University, USA), Jo Baer (Amsterdam, NL), Warren Carter (Richmond University, UK), Helmut Draxler (Merz Academy, DE), Stephen Eisenman (Northwestern University, USA), Elisabeth Lebovici (Paris, FR), Esther Leslie (Birkbeck College, UK), Ulrike Müller (New York, USA), Dierk Schmidt (Berlin, DE), Amy Sillman (New York, USA).

3. David Joselit, "Painting Besides Itself", *OCTOBER 130*, Fall 2009, pp. 125–134.

between political situations and image production question whether paintings can offer legible translations – of text or *context* to image – and what this means for his agency as an artist. For instance, in a minutely researched, two-part work intended for – but censored from – a group show in Kunstverein Münster entitled *Questionnaire to H. von Pierer* (1998), Schmidt interrogated how the museum's corporate support from Siemans AG, a powerful multinational conglomerate, undermined participating artists by usurping their works to pad a nominally philanthropic corporate image.

PAINTING AS *THE* MEDIUM

Our first panel set the tone for our second panel, entitled "Counterpoints – Painting as *the* medium." Here we questioned how the perennially uttered death of painting related to an artist's identity – and how an artist's identity might correspond with painting's relation with, or ambivalence to, other media.

Evoking works by Helen Frankenthaler and Sigmar Polke, art historian Carol Armstrong argued in favor of recursive art historical models. She proposed a history where binary oppositions between painting and photography no longer obtained, where painting, "... the art of pushing materials around on something that is notionally a two dimensional surface in order to suggest something in the mind of the painter and then its viewers," was its *own history*, and photography was its alchemical and philosophical child. Explicit in her presentation was that a viewer's circumstances affect their interpretations of art, and therefore (as Armstrong has described elsewhere) a viewer need not encounter a work as being only "...of [its] time."[4]

Following Armstrong's lecture, artist Amy Sillman presented her intellectual influences: Japanese writing, comics, improvisational jazz, Abstract Expressionist painting and experimental films by artists like Jack Smith. For Sillman, such historical signs are fit for retrieval and inhabitation; and like Armstrong, she sees painting not as an ahistorical soup of disembodied images but as a crucial human resource – evidence of localized, embodied thought. This thought may be riddled with paradoxes and prohibitions but this is also precisely what makes engaging with its history all the more profound.

Critic Elisabeth Lebovici confronted painting's embodiment by reminding us that painting discourses are still determined by local contexts, whether they are European, Anglo-Saxon or South American. Presenting the example of eighty-seven year old Hungarian-born French painter Vera Molnar, Lebovici discussed duration in painting and the age – as in date of birth – of an artist, as well as the valences of *achievement* – a term used to describe the passage of time as much as the realization of an artist's work.

Artist Jo Baer further unpacked such questions in a video representing thirty-five years of her work. Baer's multifaceted painting practice spans – one might even say expands – generic boundaries of terms like Minimalism, feminism, and what Baer has called "radical figuration." Speaking to us via a faulty Skype connection, Baer offered proof of the way an artist must account for duration and distance in her practice.

ILLUSIONS OF THE REAL

On our third and final panel, we addressed the terms Realism and Illusionism: two ideas that pace the divide between description and

4. Carol Armstrong, "All-Time Favorites: Carol Armstrong on Paul Cézanne", *Artforum*, Summer 2011, pp. 87–90.

...*"Talking about 'office wives'?"*

☎ Kaisa Lassinaro talks to director Lizzie Borden about the film 'Born in Flames' (1983)

What set you off to make Born in Flames in 1977?
I realised that there was big divide between feminists; white feminists and black women who would not describe themselves as feminists. There was no dialogue among blacks, Hispanics, and white women, politically and socially. So I decided that I wanted to create a situation, a film, which would bring all of these women together, to see if there was common cause. I wanted to set it in a science fiction context because it wasn't happening at the moment. I wanted to create a world in which it was possible – because I wanted to see it myself.

The music's very prominent in the film; can you tell us about its role?
I wanted the music to be part of the different voices that all of the women use, because each of them has a different way of speaking and style of music. I wanted the music to clash, to overlap, to create energy and dynamism in the film. In Radio Regazza, Adele's rhyming and rhetoric was part of the music; when Honey broadcast on Phoenix Radio, her messages were rapped and couched in the lyrics of the music she played. I wanted the music and dialogue to create a cacophony of voices – because there never was one unified voice. As Flo Kennedy (as Zella Wylie) says in the film, "Who would you rather see come through the door, one lion or five hundred mice?" I wanted the women to be those mice because there's strength in numbers. The multiplicity of voices meant that all the voices were significant. All the women were after the same things – even if their music was different and they spoke about issues differently.

How did you end up getting the Red Crayola and The Bloods tracks in the film? Were you involved in the music scene in New York?
In New York at the time everybody was working together. Mayo Thompson, from The Red Crayola, was part of a conceptual group, Art and Language, which Katherine Bigelow worked with. That's how I met Mayo, who wrote the song, "Born in Flames." Becky Johnston who, along with Kathryn and Pat Murphy, plays one of the three Socialist Youth group editors, was living in the same building as Adele Bertei. That's how I met Adele – who is part of the film as an actor and as part of The Bloods. Adele introduced me to Pat Place,

who also became involved in the film. Downtown New York at the time was a small world, like the Wild West. There was still sand on the beaches. That's where I shot some of the Algerian scenes. We all loved and hated the World Trade Center. It was such a big phallic symbol, a natural target. The last shot of my film is the blowing up of the transmission tower of the World Trade Center, not the entire building. I am truly horrified about what happened and filled with grief it's no longer there.

Many of the people in Born in Flames were involved in the art, music and the film worlds. Scott and Beth B, Nan Goldin, Jim Jarmusch, Bette Gordon, so many others. If you went to the Mudd Club, you'd run into them, and they'd become involved in one way or another. Some of the actors were in other directors' movies – Adele, Pat Place, Ron Vawter (from The Wooster Group.) There was such great synergy and so much activity. We all helped each other. When Kathryn Bigelow made her first movie, of two guys beating each other up, she borrowed my big old car for the scene. The film, art, and music worlds were intertwined then, which made collaboration possible.

It took five years to make the film; can you tell us about its making and how you got people involved in it?

Yes, it took five years because of the way I made it. It started with a question – why are women so segregated from each other? I did not know black women, Hispanics, many Asian people. There were hardly any in the art world. So I recruited women from lesbian bars, sought women out everywhere, asked if they wanted to be in the movie. I asked women playing basketball at the local YMCA, where I found the woman who played Adelaide Norris. Many women started in the film, but quit. The ones who stayed ended up being the main characters.

I think there are two ways of making a movie – inductive and deductive. A deductive movie is where you have a script and follow it.

Adelaide conducts a community meeting about daycare cutbacks:

"I'd like to know if anyone has any ideas or any suggestions as to how we can keep this center open, because for those of you who are working, what this means is that you're going to have to stop working and stay home and take care of your kids."

"No, it's going to be impossible for me to stop working. We have to figure out some way we can keep the center open independently."

Images from the book 'Born in Flames', Occasional Papers, 2011

Hendrik Gerrits and Cristina Gómez Barrio posing during a life drawing session organized by Friends of the Fine Arts and dedicated to "bible studies", Brooklyn, November 2009.

narration, chronicle and chronicler, and carry formal as well as political implications. We asked: How have questions of the Real in painting moved away from discussion of representation and towards discussions of enactment?

In his talk, "Return of the Proof," art historian Helmut Draxler explored how painting provides a frame for negotiating relationality. He showed how histories of Modernism and the avant-garde posited by authors from Clement Greenberg to Rosalind Krauss offered a unilinear account of painting's end. Draxler argued that in order to resist such teleological endgames, one must interrogate other discursive realities, make space for other proofs. He offered Leon Battista Alberti's theory of painting as an episteme ripe for re-investigation, pointing out that the metaphor of painting as a window stemmed from an art historical misconception. Rather than a window opening onto the Real, painting framed a stage of drama, of tableau. Thus, Draxler posited that rather than asking how painting could represent the Real through its illusions, a more important question would be, "*what can painting represent as art*?"

Similar to Draxler, artist Ulrike Müller also presented painting as a relational form. She prefaced her lecture entitled, "Very Abstract and Really Figurative," by suggesting that abstraction and figuration, once in opposition to one another, could both be expanded beyond their binary positions to describe the way humans relate to objects and to one another. Müller figures this link in her studio works – baked enamel paintings on steel – as well as in her recent collaborative work as co-organizer with Celeste Dupuy-Spencer of a life drawing collective, "Friends of the Fine Arts" (FFARTs). Describing FFARTs's activities, Müller explained how participants take turns drawing one another, effectively decentering the inequity of the artist/ model working relationship and challenging canonical injunctions of mastery.

POSTSCRIPT

The symposium skated around the tensions and ambiguities inherent in painting – painting as object, as context, as discourse. But ultimately the implicit element in the *Implicit Horizon* was the figure of the painter itself: an individual still adhering to aspects of the artisanal even while the division of labor has long permeated art practices. So what kind of questions should we pose to the painter in a time when some painters function as creative directors running studios, while other painters incorporate painting as only one part of their practice? How should we distinguish the day-to-day work of the painter from the work of all artists; the painter who, like all artists, ultimately faces the tension between choice and exigency?•

Avigail Moss is an artist and writer. In 2009–10 she was a researcher in residence at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht, Netherlands, and is currently an MA candidate in the History of Art at University College London.

"The economic sex war that has threatened the city in recent weeks erupted last night as gangs of men, mostly Black, roamed the streets breaking windows, looting stores and attacking passersby, protesting what they call 'racism in workfare'. The rioters claim that Blacks are given meaning-less jobs that don't pay enough to support their families. Government officials say that the rioters will be severely punished. However they do admit that there are some problems with the workfare system and pledge that in the future, priority placement will be given to male heads of families."

«Continued from page twentythree

Proceeding inductively is the opposite. It's not like a documentary, where you go entirely in the direction your subjects lead you. In inductive filmmaking, you don't have a script, you start with an idea and let the film evolve from there. That's how Born in Flames was made – and why it took so long. I had no money and could never spend more than $100 for a shot at one time. We would go out and improvise a scene, which would serve as the foundation for the next scene. I'd look at it on the editing machine, then write a script based on what we'd shot. We'd then go out and shoot it again. It's kind of funky, since so many people in the film are non-actors playing themselves for the most part. Some of the things they say and do are what they'd do. We shot where they really lived; we placed them in "real" demonstrations. The fictional parts, obviously, are when they arm themselves, steal trucks, blow up buildings, etc.

What was the relationship between feminist groups and gay and lesbian groups at the time?

At that time in New York, there was major conflict within the mainstream feminist movement about the presence of gay and lesbian groups – they were afraid that lesbians would alienate women across the country, prevent them from supporting the Equal Rights Amendment, which the mainstream feminists were fighting for. So they distanced themselves from lesbian groups, which created a lot of controversy. I never became involved with mainstream feminism, represented by Ms. Magazine, which was a great magazine but didn't address everyone's issues. Mainstream feminists are represented in my film by the three women who run the socialist newspaper.

I felt that the lesbians were most marginalized, which is why I made them the most radical in the film. They were the most daring, had the most to gain and the most to lose – the most energy because they needed to be heard. (There were actually two major issues dividing the feminist world at that time – the relationship to gay women and the relationship to pornography. I didn't address pornography in Born in Flames, but later, in Working Girls.)

"This is a special news bulletin from NBC News. Four armed female terrorists broke into a newsroom of CBS this evening during the live telecast of the President's speech on Wages for Housework."

How do you see Born in Flames today? Do you find it still relevant?

It's interesting and depressing to me that the same issues that existed back then have not gone away. Some of these issues still make me as angry as they made me back then. Anger and frustration fueled my making of Born In Flames. I wanted to stir up people, create an agit-prop. That's why I pushed the women's actions to the point of armed resistance. I wanted to present the whole range of choices – peaceful revolution, change through the printed word, the spoken or sung word, and when all of that failed, presenting the possibility that one might have to use force.

When I see the film again – which I did after reading the graphic novel – it's hard for me to look at technically. I'm very critical of it, but, in all, I'm amazed at the creativity of the women in it, and the creativity of their music. That wasn't me, that was my being an anthropologist, going out into the world and bringing these women together. It was their collective energy that created the film, it was bigger than the sum of its parts. But what astonishes me the most is that the film appears to be relevant to a younger generation of women. I couldn't be more pleased, although it means that the same problems and issues are still here to be resolved •

Lizzie Borden is a filmmaker and writer living in Los Angeles.

Kaisa Lassinaro is a designer living in London. Her illustrated transcript of 'Born in Flames' is out now on occasionalpapers.org

The women from SYR become involved with the Army. When the Army interrupts another TV program, it is Pat who delivers the message:

"We are interrupting this program to bring you a special message from the Women's Army, and we will continue to make this kind of direct action until everyone understands and is prepared to do something about the way the government has betrayed women. ...

... Look at the reality of your lives. The government thinks that socialism was instituted ten years ago, after the War of Liberation, but it denies the very basis of true socialism, which is constant struggle and change. Wasn't the War of Liberation fought to create an egalitarian state? Why, then, does the government attack women, putting them out of their jobs and relegating them to secondary positions at home? ...