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TRUTH IS CONCRETE

Sternberg Press

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A Handbook for Artistic Strategies in Real Politics

Edited by steirischer herbst and Florian Malzacher
Coedited by Anne Faucheret, Veronica Kaup-Hasler,
Kira Kirsch, Andreas R. Peternell, and Johanna Rainer

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Introduction

"Truth is concrete" is what was written in big letters over Bertolt Brecht's desk in his Danish exile—quoting Lenin quoting Hegel quoting Augustine. In a time of extreme political turbulence, it was a constant reminder never to forget the reality around him. In a corner, there was—as Walter Benjamin writes in his notes—a little wooden donkey standing with a sign around its neck: "Even I must understand it."

This image was in our mind when we perceived the event that was the forerunner of this handbook: "Truth is Concrete. A Marathon Camp for Artistic Strategies in Politics and Political Strategies in Art" brought together in September 2012 over two hundred artists, activists, and theorists as part of steirischer herbst festival in the Austrian city of Graz. Together with one hundred students and young professionals, as well as many local and international visitors, it was a meeting on the small common territory of art and activism: twenty-four hours, seven days; 170 hours of lectures, performances, concerts, films, discussions, assemblies—collecting useful strategies in art and politics. (More on the Marathon on page 328.)

The preparations had started some months before the Occupy movement came to life. At a time when the Tunisian revolution had just swept away the regime, when Egypt was in the midst of a second wave of uprisings. In Spain and Greece, people were taking to the streets to cry out against the antisocial policies that followed the financial crisis in Europe. Japan was in shock after the nuclear disaster in Fukushima. And in many more places societies found themselves in increasing turmoil.

In all these movements, artists were involved right from the outset, often unsure about their own position and possibilities: What role should art play in this? Should art be a social or political tool? Can it be useful?

When the Marathon finally took place, it came at another crucial juncture for many of these movements. Occupy Wall Street and many other occupations all over the world had been evacuated, and were searching for new ways and modes to continue working.

In Cairo, it was a time of disillusion after religious fundamentalists had taken over. In Syria, no end to the warlike revolution and counterrevolution was in sight. In Moscow, the three arrested members of Pussy Riot had just been sentenced to years of imprisonment. There still was a lot of energy, even euphoria, about the regained sense of empowerment. But it had also become clear that change—or rather the many different changes hoped for—would not come easily.

Since then other protests have made the news: Turkey, Brazil, Ukraine … There are signs of hope and brutal disillusion. The times of turmoil and uprisings will continue, as will the often much less spectacular work on the ground, in political, social, and educational initiatives. And art, as well as creative activism, will continue to be an essential part of them.

Obviously it is impossible to represent in a book an organic event like the "Truth is Concrete" Marathon Camp, with all its encounters, but also with the bodily impact made by the non-stop program. So this is not a documentation of the week in Graz, even though a majority of contributors overlap. Rather, it is the transformation of a performative idea into another medium with its own logic. The Marathon was a machine that ran non-stop and wasn't easily consumed. The idea of abundance is mirrored by a book through which everybody has to take her/his own path. It is a handbook, hopefully a useful tool in itself, an inspiration not only for reflecting and contemplating but for acting.

This book takes the notion of concrete truth as a working hypothesis and looks for direct action, and concrete change and knowledge. For an art that not only represents and documents, but that engages in specific political and social situations. And for an activism that not only acts for the sake of acting, but searches for intelligent and creative means of empowerment.

By focussing on artistic strategies we hope to address specific tools and specific ways of doing and thinking, while "real politics" of course refers to the German idea of *Realpolitik*, in the sense of working on concrete possible change. Translating it—incorrectly—into English on the other hand wants to remove the term from the very pragmatic and diplomatic connotation it has as a historical political concept.

So ninety-nine short, precise descriptions of artistic strategies form the nucleus of this handbook, organized into nine chapters grouping central aspects of socially and politically engaged art, as well as creative activism today. These chapters are propositions, and suggest no hierarchy or causal narration. They could have been put together differently, and many strategies could just as easily have appeared in other chapters.

"Self-Empowering" of an individual or a group is at the core of what drives the protagonists of this handbook: it is the basis of any form of activism. By assuming control over political means and knowledge production, the self-empowered subject questions established hierarchies, as well as prevalent authorships, and defines new alliances: in other words, she/he creates the basis for "Being Many." This idea of a multitude has to mean more than the rising of a nameless mass—more than self-organizing and creating visibility. It is about intensifying potential and actual power by setting a common aim. But how to imagine this goal? How to imagine a shared and different future?

Where violence, oppression, or less visible control mechanisms want imagination to collapse, the strategy of "Reality Bending" aims instead to unleash the imaginary and the power of fiction. It alters the reality we live in, for a short time, at least: long enough to remember that alternative realities are possible. Playing with our perception of reality is also a strategy for reoccupation of the territory of our own political imagination.

"Reclaiming Spaces" not only means taking over squares and institutions, but opening up new public and media spaces to create new visions of the commons.

One of the main goals of engaged art and artistic activism is to unveil non or less visible truths about preexisting, hegemonic narratives. "Documenting and Leaking" are means to make visible what is swept under *the carpet, what is denied or simply declared* impossible. In an increasingly regulated media landscape, artists and activists often have to first take on the job of investigative journalism, before they go on to create new images and new narratives. "(Counter)Agitating" for example uses the tools of propaganda to diffuse dissidence, to oppose hegemony, and to mobilize minority forces. This might happen within given societal jurisdictional frames but can very well also disavow them or (mis)use the legal loopholes. The subversive qualities of art offer the possibility of "Playing the Law" and of testing the limits of freedom of expression with its actions. Often feeling uneasy about this strange force, the legislature and the judiciary are sometimes willing to accept practices that cannot be defined by or may even happen outside of the law. And, every once in a while, the law itself explicitly allows art to do what would otherwise be illegal.

To address the inadequacies of the state and the segregations it causes, many engaged artists base their practice on "Taking Care" of concrete people in concrete circumstances. Acting like this, they are doing far more than compensating for the deficiencies of society. They are fostering an altruistic attitude and putting human aspects first in a self-centered, profit-oriented society. Paying attention, stopping business as usual: these are already small moments of "Interrupting the Economy," playfully or forcefully trying to produce gaps in the efficiency of the markets inside and outside the art world. If art cannot be a refuge from capitalistic alienation, at least artists—just like anyone else—can strike, withdraw, and refuse.

The approach to these ninety-nine strategies is not a neutral one, they are presented from the inside, by their practitioners, by the people who invented them, developed them further, or otherwise have a special insight. And the choosing of these authors too was subjective, and often directed by chance: Whom did we meet at a certain time in a certain context? Who impressed us? Who told us about something we didn't know? What aspect *was lacking? And yet there is obviously still* much that is missing—sometimes purposely, sometimes out of pragmatics, sometimes because authors refused. But also due to our own geographical and cultural limitations. It cannot be overlooked that the focus of this book is—with some exceptions—on Europe, the USA, Latin America, and the Middle East. This is also due to the fact that artistic activism and directly engaged art, as this publication understands it, is in many parts of the world and for many reasons, at best marginal.

Our own list of choices is enlarged by the specific knowledge of the authors of the essays, and chapter introductions. These texts not only draw additional strategies and protagonists into the picture but also different times and contexts. They reflect on cultural and geopolitical differences, as well as on the general limitations of this approach. By thematizing the role of institutions—of the state, as well as of the arts—they discuss the options of changing the system from within or from the outside: reform or revolution. This continues to be a central question, which is reflected in these pages. As a publication itself realized by an institution, this book is also a way of self-questioning, of self-challenging.

This volume—however preliminary and incomplete—attempts to map the contemporary field of engaged art and creative activism—a mapping that includes activists with a deep loathing of all things related to the art market, as well as participants of Venice Biennale and documenta. As a platform, it is meant to continue the many conversations begun at the Marathon Camp in 2012. As a handbook, we hope it will be useful to learn about the many artistic strategies used in real politics and about some of the people behind the many struggles around the world. To show the creativity, the power, and the political but also artistic quality that can be found if one looks beyond the mainstream of the news media and the art world.

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Florian Malzacher

Putting the Urinal back in the Restroom

The Symbolic and the Direct Power of Art and Activism

> *Art is not a mirror to hold up to reality,*
> *but a hammer with which to shape it.*
> (Attributed to Marx, Brecht, Mayakovsky ...)

When mathematician and philosopher Antanas Mockus became mayor of Bogotá in 1995, the city was considered one of the most dangerous in the world, a community destroyed by drugs, crime, corruption, and machismo. Mockus, not a professional politician at all, had run his campaign with no party support and virtually no budget but with the strong belief in the possibility of convincing people that a different world was possible. He believed that the most important thing to do as a mayor was to encourage people to trust themselves, to take their lives in their own hands and to strengthen their feeling of responsibility for the society they were part of. And he invented the concept of citizen culture, *cultura ciudadana*, as he describes in this book: a kind of civic self-education method based on play, symbolic actions, and staged situations.

But most significantly he claimed: "When I am trapped, I do what an artist would do." Borrowing strategies from contemporary art meant for him decontextualizing everyday situations, framing them, making them graspable. And, at the same time, it meant a feeling of internal freedom, the ability to see things in their complexity from a distance, and thereby making change possible. He called his strategy *subart*: a modest art without symbolic pretentions, a way of borrowing from *high art* whatever could be useful and introduced into direct political action. His measures as mayor became world famous. He exchanged weapons for toys (counting on kids to put pressure on their parents), he publicly wore a "super citizen" costume to make fun of his own presumed power, as well as to illustrate that everybody in democracy has the ability to govern, that power should always be shared. He cut the form of a heart out of his bulletproof vest to demonstrate his commitment to nonviolence—and actually risked his life. He founded libraries in the most neglected parts of the city, running completely on trust, with no need to show ID to borrow a book. He organized performances at open graves to talk about violence and homicide, and he fired the corrupt traffic police and replaced them with more than 400 mimes in the belief that being ridiculed would be more of a deterrent for Columbians than any fine. And ...

he succeeded. Within three years water usage dropped forty percent, traffic fatalities over fifty percent, and the homicide rate fell seventy percent. 63,000 Bogotá citizens voluntarily agreed to pay ten percent higher taxes.

Mimes, cut-out hearts, performances at open gravesides—all this might not exactly be considered good art by the standards of our aesthetic discourses. But how often does art have such a direct impact?

Art and politics have always had an intense love-hate relationship. Artists positioned—or sometimes just found—themselves between servile obedience to the powers-that-be and critical distance, between constructive cooperation and outright antagonism. There is no way to place oneself outside the empire, even as an artist, hard as some might have tried. Even inner exile exists only in relation to the outer world.

But, despite repeated claims, this does not mean all art is political. Engaged art is more than mere relational reflection or aesthetics. It takes a stand, or provokes others to take a stand. It does not only want change; it wants to be an active part of this change, or even to initiate it. It is not by chance that the artistic tools used in this struggle are often developed, or at least radicalized, at moments of social turmoil, at moments when the relationship between art and society is at a turning point in general: right before and after WWI (Dada, Futurism, Constructivism ...), the 1960s, and the early 1970s (performance, concept, installation art ...)—these were times of artistic and philosophical but also political avant-gardes.

So it is not surprising that politically and socially engaged art gained fresh momentum after 1989, with the fall of the Eastern bloc, the end of the Cold War, the acceleration of capitalism and the corresponding rise of anti or alter-globalization movements. But only with the manifold political and economic crises all over the world in the last couple of years has the idea of activist art become more pointed and recently even a main topic even within the more mainstream contemporary art world. Whether in Tahrir, Zuccotti, Syntagma, Taksim, or Majdan Squares, in front of the Kremlin, in Japan after Fukushima, or in the midst of the iconic architecture of Brasilia, artists are always among the first to get involved. But one question constantly reoccurs: What role should art play in this?

It looks like we are witnessing another paradigm shift in the relationship of art and politics. A generation of philosophers who derived their theoretical concepts from their very own concrete political experiences and engagements (Michel Foucault fighting for human rights in prisons with the *Groupe d'information sur les prisons*, Alain Badiou being engaged in migration and asylum policies in the *Organisation politique*, Jacques Rancière as a short term member in a Maoist group, Antonio Negri even sentenced to prison for his engagement in *Autonomia Organizzata*, to name but a few) was followed by new generations of philosophers (and artists, curators, etc.) who built on these thoughts and abstracted them further—but too often without binding them back to their own contemporary reality. So we got used to calling philosophical theories and artworks "political," even if they are only very distantly based on thoughts that themselves were already abstracted from the concrete political impulses that sparked them. A homeopathic, second-hand idea of political philosophy and art has become the main line of contemporary cultural discourse.

That classic leftist idea of the 1970s—"the personal is political"—was meant to politicize the private. But by now it seems rather to have privatized the political. The idea of "the aesthetic is the political" was meant to politicize the aesthetic. But it seems that over the years the political has been aestheticized instead.

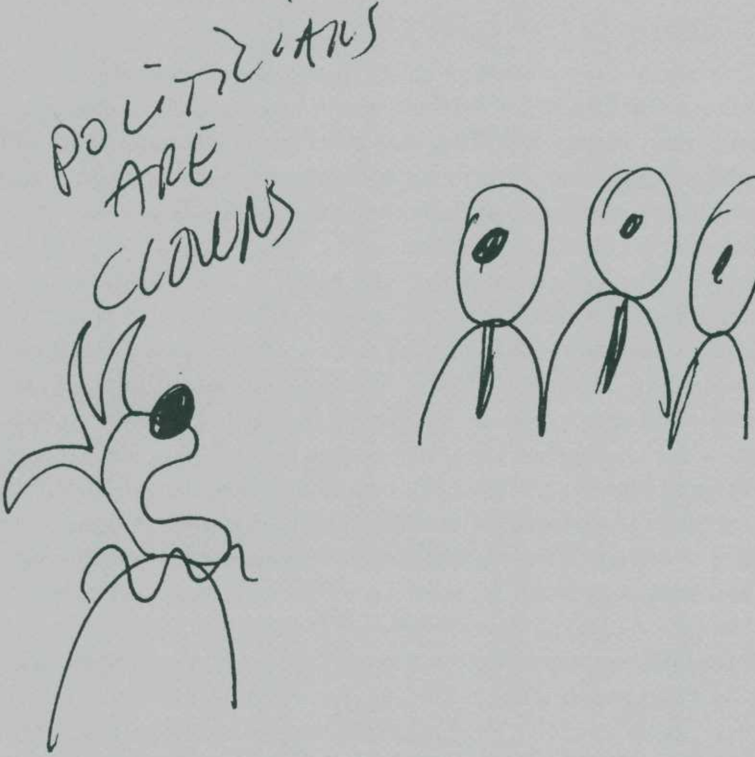
The constant awareness of the complexity of the notions of truth, reality, or even politics seem to have maneuvered us into a blind alley: either we are too simple or we are too complex, too populist or too stuck in hermetic eremitism. Either we include too much or we exclude too many. We have reached a point where the necessary awareness that everything is contingent has often become an excuse for intellectual relativism.

Art, Activism, Artivism

Against the backdrop of these confrontations with social and political realities, as well as philosophical and ethical dissatisfactions with the predominant discourses, all kinds of new or renewed alliances between art and activism have emerged. And some have become so close, so inseparable, that they merge into one concept—art activism—and even one word—artivism. Underlining the idea of using artistic skills, tools, tactics, and strategies to advance or achieve activist goals, this term brings together what does not always go together well. Just as artists reject the notion of giving up complexity and ambiguity, activists are likewise alienated by the traditional role of the artist as lone author—and even more by the market she/he is usually part of.

At the core of activism stands the concept of direct action: an action with the very concrete goal of pointing out a problem, showing an alternative, or even a possible solution. Direct actions can be violent or explicitly nonviolent. Strikes in all forms might be direct actions, as well as occupations, squattings, acts of civil disobedience, or resistance. Sabotages, blockades, assaults. But also interventions on the Internet—hackings, for example. The "direct" points at the idea of a nonmediated action—in short: the time for talking, for negotiating, is over or at least suspended. Direct action is the opposite of hesitation, of ambivalence. Reflection—to a degree—is postponed. In this regard, direct action might feel like the moment where activism is farthest apart from art.

On the other hand there is also a moment when a performance gains momentum and there is a point of no return. Where it is all about the here and now. In this regard, direct action might feel like the moment when art is closest to activism. Many radical moments of live art might very well be considered direct actions.



In any case, direct actions are usually not spontaneous; they are often meticulously prepared, mapped out, and staged. Different possible developments are considered, and possible encounters, coincidences; mistakes are anticipated. They are planned like a military action—or like a piece of performance art. Pussy Riot, as they describe in this book, did not just march into the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and spontaneously decide what to do. They chose the setting carefully, rehearsed text and movements. Even the demonstrative anarchist Voina group, who made a last minute decision to withdraw their part from this publication since they consider too many other contributors to be just prostitutes, needed precise preparations in order to pull off a stunt like painting a sixty-five meter dick on the Liteyny drawbridge right before it was raised, so that it pointed directly at the Federal Security Service's headquarters in St. Petersburg.

The inflatables invented by Tools for Action serve as a means to resolve tense and potentially violent moments—or, in case this fails, as shields against water cannons, etc. And, at the same time, they are perfect eye-catchers for the media covering the demonstration. Before they are used in an action, they have been tested, prototyped, considered, as, for example, are the many creative blocking methods the laboratory for insurrectionary imagination has developed over the years.

Obviously the contexts these artists and activists are working in are diverse—they range from straightforward dictatorships like Belarus to authoritarian governments like Russia, to societies in transition as Egypt, to the strongholds of supposed democracies in the north and west. While in non or less democratic states the danger is often incomparably higher, and the protagonists frequently and bravely risk their freedom, health, or even their lives, the lines of confrontation are usually also more clearly defined: there is still a goal to be reached, a goal that in other societies is already achieved, at least on paper: democracy.

But it is important to bear in mind that—for better or worse—this democracy is a form of ideology in itself, which is why artist Jonas Staal calls it "democratism." It is a moral construction that many contemporary theorists from Noam Chomsky to Slavoj Žižek or Alain Badiou—regardless of their different analyses and conclusions—have described as a kind of pacifier, which, by offering the treat of minimal participation, delegates with almost Beckettian absurdity, the responsibility for what is happening to the citizens—and thus is able to continue more or less undisturbed with the task of maintaining the capitalist system we are part of. Rare elections, basic social care, here and there some small measures against climate change and human rights violations—and our conscience is satisfied. Žižek calls this procedure cultural capitalism.

Within this scenario, activism often tries to create highly concrete, achievable change: the Austrian group WochenKlausur, for example, aims at improving the lives of at least some people—e.g. immigrants, sex workers, or drug addicts—by shifting money and attention from other fields (like the arts) to social causes; the ongoing project of Michal Murin, now entering its tenth year, is directed at raising one single person's quality of life: Milan Adamčiak was a well known conceptual artist, poet, and musicologist in the 1970s and '80s, before he fell through the gaps in time and life. From 2005 on, Murin started to support the forgotten and broke artist, and friend, by slowly restoring his financial situation, reconnecting him to the art world and taking care of his artistic heritage—and declared this a work of art, or even an artistic genre: artruism.

Other actions aim for awareness, working with propaganda or counterpropaganda (like Marina Naprushkina's Office for Anti-Propaganda, or many street artists the world over), or trying to make visible the invisible (like Mosireen's "Tahrir Cinema," which screened testimonials against the Egyptian military and police), by documenting, leaking, or reinterpreting. And sometimes it is just about performing a short moment of normality in a permanent state of exception: Khaled Hourani, director of the Art Academy in Ramallah, managed in a two-year process to bring an iconic Picasso from Eindhoven to the West Bank to be exhibited there for a couple of weeks.

Many of these works can be described the way WochenKlausur introduces itself: as an artist group that "develops concrete proposals aimed at small, but nevertheless effective improvements to sociopolitical deficiencies."

There is always the paradoxical risk that striving toward achievable, small scale change, especially when it is successful, might just prolong and cover the very nuisances and ethical disasters it is aiming to fight—a danger of which most activists are well aware. Therefore the best examples of artistic activism at the same time open up a space for radical imagination. After all, as Žižek pointed out in his speech at Occupy Wall Street: it is today actually easier to imagine the end of the world (as done in so many Hollywood blockbusters) than the end of capitalism. At a time where we have even lost "the language to articulate our nonfreedom" (Žižek), radical imagination is sometimes already to remember that there is still the possibility to act at all.

Social Turn

The rise of artistic activism and politically engaged art in general since the 1990s is closely connected to the "social turn" in the arts that art historian Claire Bishop unfolds in her book *Artificial Hells*—a shift in a direction where close encounters or even mergers of art and activism often become inevitable. Artists' increased interest in collaborative practices, and in the participation of the public, especially in the field of visual arts, has led to an "expanded field of poststudio practices" that have a lot of different names: "socially engaged art, community based art, experimental communities, dialogic art, littoral art, interventionist art, participatory art, collaborative art, contextual art, and (most recently) social practice."

The explosion of names is more than just a symptom of a young art form's growing pains; it points at conflict lines, different constructions of (self)identifications, assumed heritages, and discursive roots. In this regard, it is important to note that many of these practices, and the theories accompanying them, are in explicit opposition to Nicolas Bourriaud's concept of "relational aesthetics," which, on the one hand, points out how artistic processes are based on human relations and their social contexts, but, on the other, obviously emphasizes mainly the aesthetic aspect of these relations and stays within the realm of the art world, rather than pointing toward more substantial participation and the possibility of change.

Within the field of participatory arts, this disagreement is perhaps most consistently described by the increasingly popular term "social practice," a term that doesn't even bother to reference art at all. For the artist and theorist Pablo Helguera, this is a positive move, since it avoids connotations with old-fashioned concepts like beauty or the traditional role of the artist as author as he describes in *Education for Socially Engaged Art*: "The term democratizes the construct, making the artist into an individual whose specialty includes working with society in a professional capacity." Furthermore, the concept of participation, as well as that of the collective or community, is often seen as a counterproposal to capitalist societies of the spectacle (to quote Guy Debord, the crown witness for this line of argument), as well as to the consumerist individual formed by neoliberalism (following postoperaist theories like those of Paolo Virno, in which the virtuous contemporary artist is the role model for the desired hyperflexibility of all workers, employed or freelance).

But while participatory art practices constitute a significant critique of all kinds of representational arts, the shift toward creating real social situations also brings to the fore the very questions that accompany all socially motivated initiatives: To what degree are the people involved self-determined? How long does a commitment have to last? Who is profiting most? Is it sustainable? It soon becomes clear that such questions don't always have the same answers when looked at from the perspective of art, or from activism, or even from that of social work. After all, participatory art not only stays within the field of art—it is an art "in which people constitute the central artistic medium and material, in the manner of theater and performance" (Bishop). And this is most likely not the way activists would describe their practice.

Care and Confrontation

People as medium and material: this rather sober description might be exactly one of the points where many would draw a line between social engaged art and activism. Even though activism also deals with people, organizes them, uses them, perhaps even manipulates them, this definition would be considered cynical by most. And even though many artists would also tend to avoid phrasing it like this, it is important to underline the fact that socially engaged art does not have to happen in consensus with the people involved; it does not even have to be a positive experience for them. It can also aim at direct confrontation, play with miscommunication, manipulation or even abuse.

The works of Spanish artist Santiago Sierra, for example, are also known for their conceptual and minimalist clarity—but mostly for the disturbing radicality with which he uses people as material, paying them minimum wages for obviously meaningless or humiliating actions when, for example, hiring six young Cubans to tattoo a line on their backs (*250cm Line Tattooed on 6 Paid People*, 1999). By reproducing injustices, financial dependencies, power abuse by (mostly Western) society within the frame of an artwork, Sierra repeats the mechanisms he despises in order to criticize them. And makes us part of the dilemma.

Dutch artist Renzo Martens uses a comparable strategy: in his film *Enjoy Poverty* (2008), he shows how he convinces Congolese photographers to participate in earning money from the bad news their country supplies to the Western media. Instead of making photos of marriages and other celebrations, they now take photos of war, or more concretely of "raped women, corpses, and, let's add, malnourished children." The argument is crystal clear and rational—and deeply disturbing because it points right at our own hypocrisy.

Martens now continues this work with a more long-term project described in this book: *The Institute for Human Activities* (together with Delphine Hesters and Jacob Koster)—an ambitious (and obviously ambivalent) gentrification program in the Democratic Republic of Congo, claiming to turn art's potential for gentrification into a critical, progressive, and interventionist tool.

Pablo Helguera differentiates between nonvoluntary (with no negotiation or agreement involved), voluntary (with a clear agreement or even contract as in the case of Sierra), and involuntary participation—the negotiations in the latter being rather subtle, not direct, a play of hidden agendas in which "deceit and seduction play a central role." While in Sierra's work there is a clear-cut deal made with the participants, in Martens' projects it is unclear how far all those involved are aware of the implications—including the artist himself, who puts himself right in the middle of things, rather than acting from the safety of the outside.

Even more provoking are the many works by Polish artist Artur Żmijewski, in which the protagonists, to apply Helguera's definition, "at first willingly engage but later become involuntary participants or actors." In Żmijewski's video *80064* (2004), Holocaust survivor Jozef Tarnawa is not literally forced to re-tattoo his faded concentration camp number—but he clearly only does so after much persuading.

Such works are not aimed at achieving or introducing possible change themselves, but want rather to produce a critical awareness. They unveil what society would prefer to keep hidden. Drawing from concepts of performance art of the 1960s and '70s, artists like Sierra and Żmijewski change our role from spectators to witnesses—as famously Chris Burden called the audience of his performance *Shoot* (1971), in which he had himself shot with a gun in his left arm and from a distance of five meters. The spectator becomes an active witness—and by this a countermodel to the passive spectator in Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*, who is taken to "have no idea and no claim to anything" and who "watches always only so as not to miss the sequel."

But we are not good witnesses, since we get drawn into the situation: scopophiles in the Freudian sense, actively watching something we are not supposed to and taking pleasure in it. The mediated form of participation, by watching the video rather than the live act, gives us—differently from the live encounter of such scenes—no possibility of direct intervention. But it does not relieve us from that fact that we should be doing something: because we ourselves—as part of our societies—are committing the very crimes we are witnessing. We are, at the same time, the accused.

At the other end of the scale of dealing with human beings stand artists who are obviously driven by empathy, those who put care, service, and humility at the center of their work: Mierle Laderman Ukeles invented the genre of Maintenance art when she was a young mother, confronted with the fact that suddenly supporting and maintaining another human being became her primary work. While her approach is clearly rooted in second wave feminism, she opened our view of "care" to a wider understanding of how society functions. Today she is still, after more than thirty-five years, an unsalaried Artist in Residence at the New York City Department of Sanitation, where she has realized several long term projects. The Austrian group Shared Inc. uses scientific research, as well as artistic experience, to develop tools to make contact with patients in vegetative states considered unable to communicate, and, in the 1980s, Polish artist and designer Krzysztof Wodiczko built transportable shelters for homeless people in New York City—which functioned both as a place to sleep and as a communicative tool to prompt conversations with passersby.

But are such works actually so opposite to those focusing on confrontation and dissensus? While their strategic approaches are obviously different—directly engaging with the situation and trying to make it better on one side, unveiling the wounds and crimes of society, and forcing the audience to take up a position on the other—the motivation behind them is often similar—as is the direct personal involvement. Many works which play with controversy and even antagonism are also works of deep care, almost a cry to pay attention to the miseries and ethical crimes in the world. This is perhaps manifested most clearly in the works of the late German theater, film, and performance artist Christoph Schlingensief—a deeply rooted love for people and a hatred of injustice was the driving force behind very different works. In *Bitte liebt Österreich!* (Please Love Austria!, 2000), he staged a "Big Brother" game with asylum seekers: containers placed right in the center of Vienna housed a group of immigrants who could be watched via CCTV on the Internet—and the Austrian population was invited to vote them out of the country one by one. The scandal was enormous: not only did patriots feel insulted (while simultaneously arguing that Austria actually should not take in any more immigrants), the left was also upset by the supposedly cynical display. But Schlingensief never was a cynic—even when he brought a group of neo-Nazis on stage to perform as "The Players" in his *Hamlet* interpretation in Zurich (2001): he saw the provocation, of course, but believed strongly, at the same time, that they might actually change. This work too found opponents on all sides of the political spectrum.

For Schlingensief, the loud controversies, which he knew very well how to stoke and handle, the media debates, and even the physical confrontations he sometimes provoked, were no contradiction to being a caring, sensitive artist. For many years, he worked together with handicapped actors, whom he admired for their different presence and straightforwardness. Of course, he was also accused of misusing them, but his friendship and his desire to make them visible in the center of society has outlasted these criticisms. As did the compassion with which he included people on the fringes of society, or life: For *Kunst und Gemüse* (Art and Vegetables, 2004), Angela Jansen, who suffers from ALS—an almost total and usually fatal muscular paralysis—had to be brought to the theater every evening by ambulance. There she was, lying in bed, in the midst of the audience and all the action, calmly commenting on the show through a special machine that translated her eye movements into letters, like SMS. While *Kunst und Gemüse* dealt with the art world, Bayreuth, Schönberg's opera *From Today to Tomorrow*, the centenarian entertainer Johannes Heesters, and much more, at its center stood the provocative, moving, and barely visible presence of Angela Jansen and her illness.

Most of the more powerful works dealing with care and empathy are not without provocation: "People constitute the central artistic medium and material." Even Michal Murin's "artruism" is not only an act of friendship. Its artistic strength is, at the same time, its moral problem. Is it okay to expose the mischief of Adamčiak in this way, to make him a subject in this resocialization, to expose him and his life as an artwork? Obviously both Murin and Adamčiak are fully aware of this question, as the work deals with it directly: help and the patronizing aspects of this help. It is a staged situation, or as Polish artist Paweł Althamer, who, for almost fifteen years, has worked with his many neighbors in a housing block in Warsaw (*The Golden People*), calls it: "directed reality." However caring or confrontational artistic works might be, in the end, as Helguera states, it is wrong "to create a division between controversial or confrontational works and nonconfrontational ones. Antagonism is not a genre but rather a quality of artmaking that is simply more exacerbated in some practices than others."

Art as Institutions

For years, two artistic production strategies have dominated in the attempt to escape consumer capitalist demands for ready-made products to be infused into the art market. One has been to focus on the unfinished, on the process—keeping works forever in progress or not even really starting them, and sticking to neverending research in all kinds of laboratories. The other has been to create precarious forms of project-based work, finding ever smaller and smaller manifestations that are still financeable without having to be commercially successful.

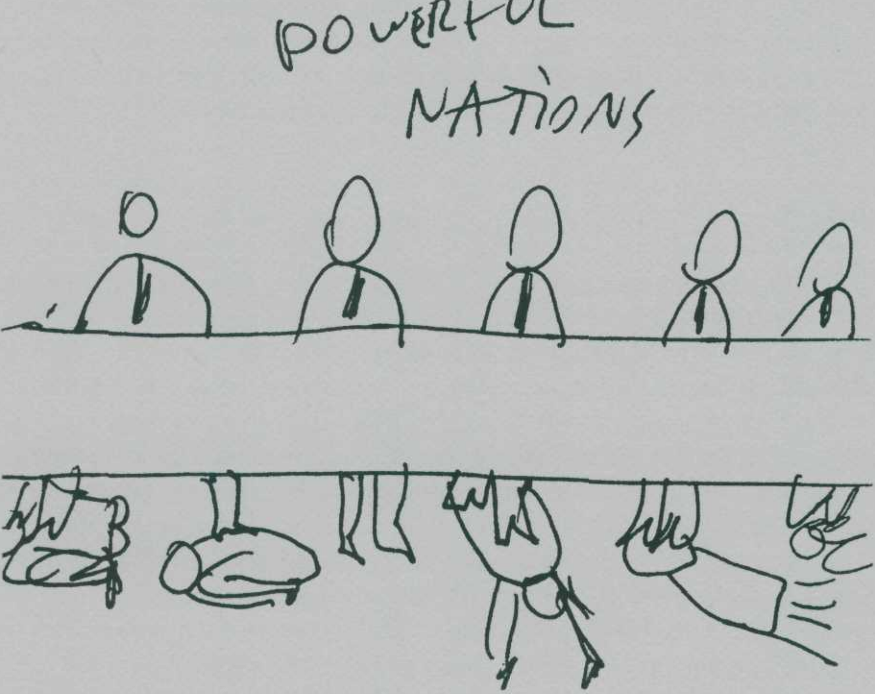
But recently the wish for more continuity, for sustainability, seems to be growing. A lot of engaged art boldly assumes the form, or at least the façade, of institutions or organizations, sometimes symbolically—for example, on the level of naming—sometimes testing the dramaturgies and structures that this might imply, but more and more also as the founding of real, fully functioning organizations. The idea of an organization or institution that brings stability to a project, signals gravity and states the will to last. At the same time organizations are living organisms and stress the collective aspect of many contemporary artistic works, however hierarchically or horizontally they might actually function.

While Israeli artist Yael Bartana's *Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland*, with its call for the return of 3,300,000 Jews to Poland in order to reestablish the annihilated Jewish community, remains in the realm of fiction and gains its provocative potential largely via aesthetic means, Tania Bruguera's Immigrant Movement International is a very real political tool, as is Renzo Martens' Institute for Human Activities, which *really* does want to create a zone of gentrification in the Congolese jungle. Reverend Billy's Church of Stop Shopping plays with the organizational and aesthetic means of US-American TV churches, when he publicly exorcises cash machines or the BP sponsor logo at Tate London. Marina Naprushkina uses her artistic skills to run the Office of Anti-Propaganda against the Belarusian dictatorship, while the Center for Political Beauty initiates subversive political campaigns in Germany. The International Institute for Political Murder uses theater as a means of investigation and Jonas Staal's *New World Summit* creates alternative political spheres for organizations banned from democratic discourse (meaning those considered "terrorist" by Western democracies).

Different as all these organizations, offices, movements, institutes, churches are, they are all political instruments, as well as being defined as works of art by their originators—even though they might develop lives of their own. They all combine—with different emphases—symbolic practice and structural effect.

Perhaps the most clear tradition of creating artist organizations exists in the field of education and knowledge transfer. Already Joseph Beuys, founder of the Free International University for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research (1973), was convinced: "To be a teacher is my greatest work of art." Along these lines, many alternative academies, schools, residencies, and laboratories have been founded in recent years, but only a few of them also with political ambitions outside the field of art, like Kurdish artist Ahmet Öğüt's "Silent University": established in several European cities, he creates alternative educational structures in order to allow refugees to teach in their profession, which they are often denied in their "host" countries, due to their illegal or undefined legal status. He does not consider this necessarily an artwork, but it is through art institutions (and his name as a recognized artist) that it is made possible. And it is through the label of "art" that it can claim a certain freedom within the restrictions of migration laws.

But there is not only the option of establishing new institutions, there is also, still, the possibility of entering the ones that already exist, to work, to change from within—an often tricky and ambivalent attempt that Israeli artist Omer Krieger addresses when he tries in this book to render the term "state art" positive again. Not only did Mierle Laderman Ukeles implant herself—unasked and unsalaried—into the heart of the NYC Sanitation Department, but in the field of representational politics there have been repeated attempts to introduce artistic strategies into governing institutions. It is not by chance that this mostly happens on the communal level, since the role of mayors often has the most direct influence of any political office and is less dependent on parliamentary procedures. Antanas Mockus aside—the most radical example of a politician employing artistic strategies—there are



many more: the painter Edi Rama famously made the headlines when, as mayor of Tirana, he ordered grey housing blocks to be repainted in bright colors, while daily life remained rather dull. In the meantime, he became prime minister of Albania. And comedian Jón Gnarr, with the Best Party, won the city elections in Reykjavik in 2010, when both the city and the country were so ruined by the financial crisis that people thought it might be a good idea to elect a party run by artists. Joseph Beuys's role in founding the Green Party in Germany in 1980 was not as central as is often claimed today, but still, he was another artist who took his political beliefs to the institutional level.

Maybe this trend to invent, to try out, test, and play with new institutions is part of what political theorist Chantal Mouffe argues for in this book: a new kind of critical engagement from within. Her "hegemonic approach envisions radical politics as an articulation of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggles, and aims to establish a synergy between parties and social movements. Challenging the view that institutions cannot be transformed and that resistances can only develop and be successful by deserting them, the hegemonic strategy of 'war of position' stresses the need to combine political strategies in art and art strategies in politics."

And, a few pages further on, philosopher Gerald Raunig, looking more concretely at the institutions of art themselves, claims that "we have to involve ourselves in conceptualizing and instituting other worlds. Instituting other worlds implies, on the one hand, inventing ever new instituent practices wherever possible, but also occupying, reterritorializing, and molecularizing existing art institutions, when many of them become dysfunctional, out of joint, or even fall apart."

Useful Art

Still, despite all these examples of very different forms of socially and politically engaged art, despite all these strong proposals for how to use creativity as a tool for concrete change—after hundreds of years of struggle for the autonomy of art, after decades of learning that its main quality is ambiguity, after years of repeating that art is about asking questions, not about giving answers—this seemingly sudden and persistent call for an art that doesn't shy away from clear statements and even clearer engagement is often perceived as a mere provocation. But the strongest provocation, though, seems to be the call for art to simply be useful, as done most prominently by Tania Brugera. As declared in her "Introduction on Useful Art": "It has been too long since we have made the gesture of the French Revolution the epitome of the democratization of art. We do not have to enter the Louvre or the castles, we have to enter people's houses, people's lives, this is where useful art is. We should not care for how many people are going to museums. We need to focus on the quality of the exchange between art and its audience."

This claim for usefulness is not new, of course. It has its predecessors. The productivists, for example. In clear opposition to Naum Gabo's dictum that constructivism (the most en vogue art trend of post-revolutionary Russia) should exclusively stay in the realm of abstraction, artists like Aleksei Gan, Alexander Rodchenko, and Varvara Stepanova demanded that art should play a practical, a useful role in society.

Despite such traditions , the call for usefulness reflexively brings back the same old question that has accompanied all avant-gardes and that has defined the aesthetic discourse of the twentieth century: Is this still art?

But repeating this question is even more redundant since answers have usually already been given: socially engaged and participatory, as well as useful, art practices are frequently based on artistic strategies of the '60s and '70s: Installation art, performance art, conceptual art, all focused on creating situations (creating "reality") rather than representing them. They emphasized process and social relations, and they questioned the notions of authorship and individualism (thereby critiquing the capitalist system). Site specific practices not only taught us how to use non art spaces, but also to understand the theater stage as a specific site. The idea of participation and intervention radicalized the understanding of audiences—and redefined the very subtle (and often misconceived) differences between voluntary and involuntary participation.

Obviously the claim for "usefulness" is problematic—it seems to agree with the social democratic instrumentalization of art as a mere tool for social work and as an appeasement strategy. Especially in recent years, after the rise of Tony Blair's New Labour, for example, the idea that the positive effects of art should be measurable has become a common trope. Art should either fit seamlessly into governmental concepts or it should stay in the realm of symbolic gestures, reminding us politely of our shortcomings (such as crimes of the past) and thereby giving us the feeling that we have already acted.

But one should not underestimate the subversive qualities of art. The most powerful examples of socially engaged art are far from fulfilling social democratic demands for symbolic gestures: Tania Bruguera giving illegal immigrants a voice, Jonas Staal making visible groups excluded from democratic discourse, WochenKlausur moving money and attention to social causes. Renzo Martens, Santiago Sierra, or Artur Żmijewski point in uncanny ways at wounds we try so hard to ignore, while Paweł Althamer and Christoph Schlingensief want to be part of the complex process of healing.

These works as many others introduced in this book offer no easy answers, they give no easy comfort. They are useful not only through their direct engagement, but also through—subtly or polemically—their critique of the capitalist status quo. Their practice is symbolic and direct at the same time. And they shift the emphasis from the ambiguity of the artwork to the ambiguity of our own lives. They all underline, in very different ways, Tania Bruguera's claim: "We need to put Duchamp's urinal back in the rest room, where it can be of use again."

Florian Malzacher *(DE) is an independent live-arts curator, dramaturge, and writer, as well as artistic director of Impulse Theater Biennale in Cologne, Düsseldorf, and Mülheim/Ruhr in Germany. In 2006–12, he was coprogramer of the steirischer herbst festival, where he cocurated the nonstop 170-hour marathon camp "Truth is Concrete" (2012). His latest publications include books on the theater companies Forced Entertainment and Rimini Protokoll, as well as on curating performing arts.*

Stephen Duncombe and Steve Lambert

The Art of Activism

There is a problem.

You know the problem is a BIG problem. It's very serious and very urgent.

(It doesn't matter what this problem is. God knows there are lots of problems in the world. Whatever problem popped into your mind you can use for the purposes of this example. Let's continue.)

Now that you are aware of such a big, serious, and urgent problem what's the next step? Of course, you want to do something about it!

Perfect. Let's look at what just happened in our example. We can use this equation:

YOU + AWARENESS = CHANGE

You were just reading, then you thought about a problem, and now you are motivated to take action.

So, following logic, the inverse of the equation must be true:

CHANGE = PEOPLE + AWARENESS

If we want to create change, and there is no change happening, what do we do? First we create awareness. We study the problem, and devise ways to effectively communicate this information as far and wide as possible. When we spread this information, people become aware and become motivated. They gather together and create a movement, and that movement creates change. That change results in more motivation, which results in more change. Eventually we create a near perpetual motion machine that cycles back and forth between motivation and change, all fueled with information.

And this is how change happens.

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At least, this is one fairly common approach among activists. And it makes sense when you understand cultural change as being rooted in enlightenment and rationality: people, armed with facts, reasoning out their ideas through informed discussion all in the service of a larger truth.

Although it makes some sense, unfortunately, we don't believe change works this way. Raising awareness is a far step from creating change. If only it were so simple.

For another approach we look to the arts.

Creativity can be described as making combinations. Because there are no truly new ideas, only new combinations of ideas that came before, creative people are always examining the world and making connections. Out of those connections and combinations of ideas, perspectives, and artistic materials a creative project can be born.

How might an artist handle our sample problem?

They could take a technique they're familiar with, let's say experimental video, and combine it with a problem, say shrinking glaciers, and create a project. An experimental video climate crisis project. Sounds like an interesting political artwork, right?

Let's try it again. An artist could take a technique like, say just for example, charcoal drawing. Then combine that with a topic like the 2004 Abu Ghraib torture scandal. Boom! You've got a political artwork: the *Abu Ghraib Prison Torture* drawing. Or combine data visualization and economic inequality and—*presto*—you have a creative economic inequality data visualization project.

As you can see, this method is a highly useful technique in generating project ideas for interesting artworks about political events. Unfortunately we don't believe this changes much of anything either. Making artwork about politics is not the same as making art that works politically. The former aims to, again, raise awareness, while the latter is directed toward changing the world.

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Both of our examples illustrate a common approach to social change politics because raising awareness makes intuitive sense to someone trained in political science, policy work, performance, or plastic arts. However, this is the same intuition that tells you, when you notice your arm has caught fire, to wave it around, and run. In your past experience, waving your arm causes whatever is on it to fly off. If that doesn't work, running away is an excellent second option. But when your arm is on fire these techniques, as much as they make intuitive sense, don't put out the fire. This is why we learn to "Stop, Drop and Roll," because the most effective reaction is not always the most intuitive. We need to rethink what makes sense.

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Let's go back to February 15, 2003. In New York City more than a million people are overflowing the streets to protest the impending United States invasion of Iraq. They are joined by an unprecedented ten million protestors around the world in the largest, collective antiwar statement of all time: "The World Says No To War." Thousands of activists have organized for months in order to bring this message to the awareness of the people and leaders of the world. The result? The protest is covered for a day or two in the mass media, President George W. Bush's response: "Democracy's a beautiful thing [...] people are allowed to express their opinion, and I welcome people's right to say what they believe," and a little over a month later, the US invades Iraq, beginning what will be an eight year occupation.

Fast forward to August 6, 2005. Cindy Sheehan, an American mother who has lost her son in the Iraq war, sets up a small, makeshift camp just outside the ranch in Crawford, Texas (population 711), where President Bush is vacationing. Surrounded by white, wooden crosses representing the soldiers killed in Iraq, and under a banner which reads "Bush, Talk to Cindy," she announces her intention to stay at the side of the road until the President meets with her to explain why her son, Army Specialist Casey Sheehan, was sent to war. Cindy Sheehan's vigil strikes a resonant chord with a war weary public and the media cover the unfolding drama for weeks. Over the next few months, public opinion swings from a majority supporting the war to a majority against the war. Camp Casey was a sincere vigil of a grieving mother, but it was also an effective performance well tuned to symbols of private grief and official indifference, cultural narratives about the human costs of war, and the mass media's voracious appetite for the dramatic and the spectacular.

It is artistic activism. And it worked.

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Why did it work?

Humor us and try a little exercise. Take a short break from reading and recall the moment you decided to become engaged. Remember the first time you realized the world needed changing, and you felt the stirrings within you to be part of that change.

Now return to that time and place in your mind.

Where were you and who was around you? What do you see? hear? smell?

What were you feeling at that time?

Take a little more time to feel it. Close your eyes and experience it again.

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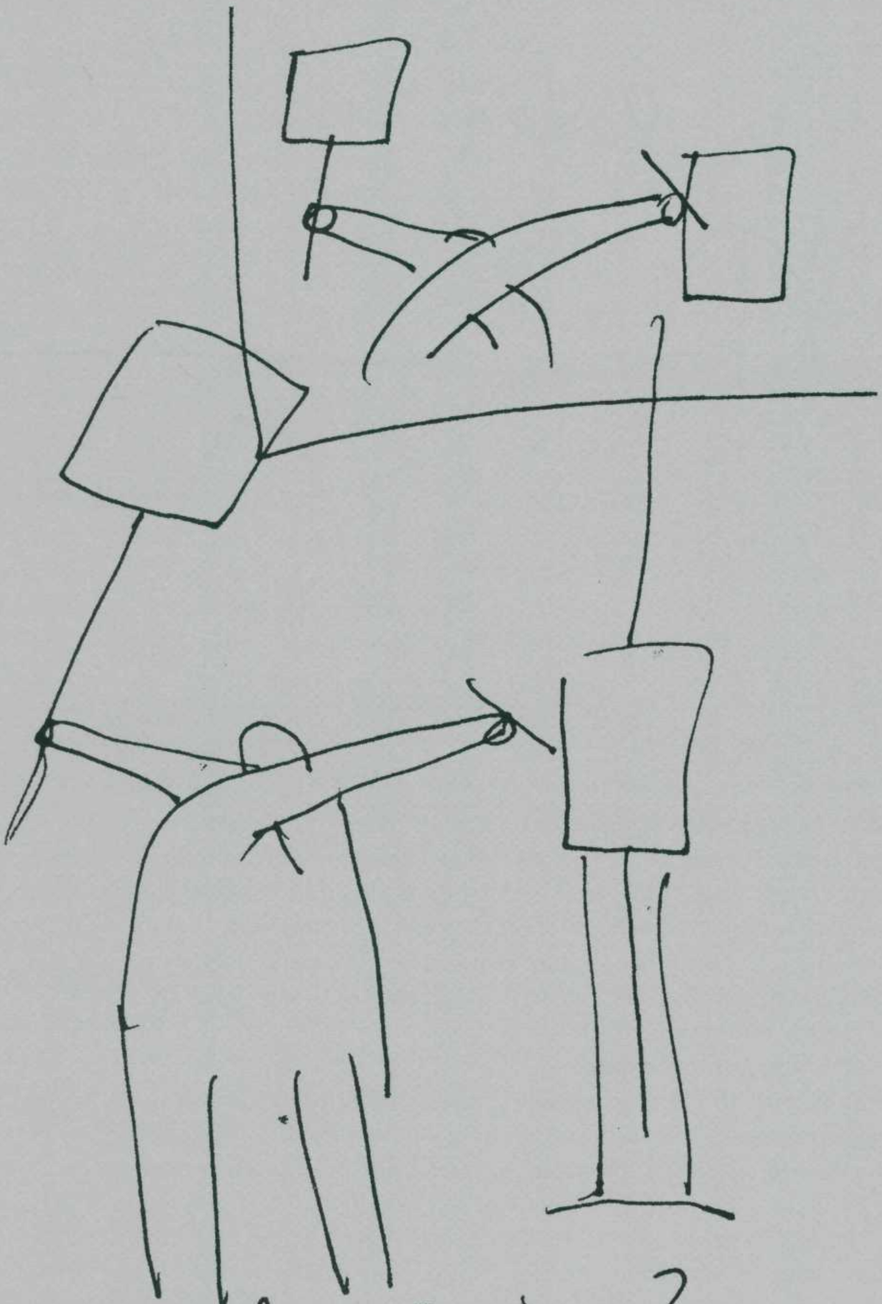
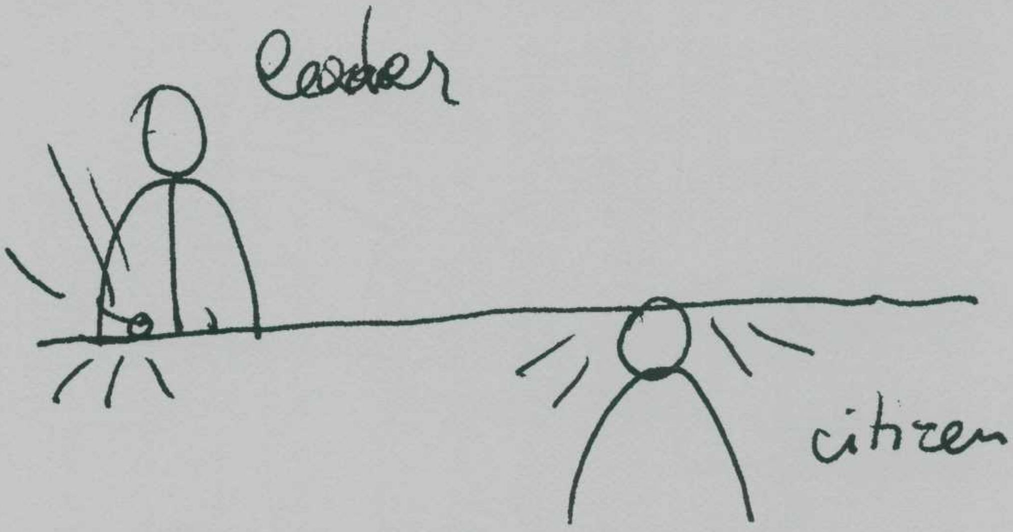
Was your transformative experience the time when you:

1. Read a flyer?
2. Studied a policy report?
3. Attended an academic lecture?
4. Signed a petition?



ARTIST OR ACTIVIST?



Likely, it was none of these things. Yet this is how activists often approach others when trying to convince people to step off the curb of indifference and join them in the streets. We approach strangers at their doorstep with a clipboard, stuff a fact filled flyer in their hand (composed in tiny type to jam in as many facts as possible), or we invite them to public forums where they can hear "the truth" from experts. We dump overwhelming amounts of often depressing information about the world on them, and then expect them to be energized and excited to join us.

This is routine activist practice.

It is also not very effective.

We work with lots of seasoned activists and when we ask them to recall what triggered their sense of injustice and prompted them to want to change the world, they invariably describe powerful, personal, and emotional experiences. You probably felt this too. They are moments you can usually still feel and see as if it happened yesterday. Politicization is an affective experience. Activism that aims to build a movement purely through rational argument and factual discourse is ineffectual because it runs counter to our own experiences of engagement. It is playing to the wrong key.

Activists are trained to think critically about the world and make a cogent case for how it could be different. We provide people with evidence—facts, figures, and other information—that will lead them to interpret reality as it really is and, hopefully, see the world as we do. This is good; a reflective and reasoning public supplied with factual information is the basis for a thoughtful democracy. It is also naïve. A nation of considered thinkers or a republic of rationality may be our ideal of politics, but the practice of effective politics resembles little of this. From our own histories we know politics is not a purely cognitive affair, yet we consistently approach others whom we want to join us with black and white arguments and documented facts. Somewhere, right now, there is a canvasser on the street mechanically repeating a reasoned argument why the person in front of them should sign their petition. And they are being ignored.

We are moved to become involved with politics for what are often nonrational, emotional, and personal reasons. We make sense of our world through things like images, sounds, and narrative as much, if not more, than we do through facts and figures. None of this is to say that people's rationality should be ignored, that facts don't matter, or that the truth is relative. It's just that we are never going to get people to read our facts or understand the truth, unless they desire to read the facts and are attracted to the truth in the first place.

This is where the art of activism comes in.

There is an art to every practice, activism included. It's what distinguishes the innovative from the routine, the elegant from the mundane. One thing that can help the "art of activism" is applying an artistic aesthetic tactically, strategically, and organizationally. Throughout history, the most effective political actors have married the arts with campaigns for social change. While Martin Luther King Jr. is now largely remembered for his example of moral courage, social movement historian Doug McAdam's estimation of King's "genius for strategic dramaturgy," or what we call tactical performance, likely better explains the success of his campaigns. From Jesus's parables to the public stage of Occupy Wall Street, working artfully makes activism effective.

Good activism is instrumental. It is activity targeted toward a discernible end. Art, on the other hand, tends not to have such a clear target. It's hard to say what art is for or against; its value often lies in showing us new perspectives and new ways to see our world. Its effect is often subtle and hard to measure; even confusing or contradictory messages can be layered into the work. Good art, in our opinion, always contains a surplus of effect: something we can't quite describe or put our finger on, but leaves an impression upon us nonetheless.

Art is felt more than thought. This power of art to circumvent our rational minds and effect our emotions, our bodies, even our spirit, has been recognized for millennia. And has been feared for just as long. The Judeo-Christian Bible and the Muslim Quran are filled with strictures against visual depictions of all manner of things because it was believed that people would worship their own creations rather than God's; humans would be empowered at the cost of the divine. Witness the jealous God of Exodus when he commands Moses: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth."

Plato devoted a chapter in *The Republic* to the power of art. The philosopher's objections are many: art is merely a representation (of a representation) of reality; there is no way to judge its utility; artists draw from imagination not experience; and so on. But Plato's criticisms culminate in his fear that art can have an effect on its audience in a way that circumvents cognition. Watching a play or listening to a poem, the audience experiences the "pleasure and pain" of the characters in the drama. Rationally, we know these are merely made-up characters, fictive creations of the artist, but emotionally we feel as if the struggles and triumphs of these fictions are ours. Plato doesn't like this.

But we do. One of the most effective weapons in the arsenal of the powerful is knowledge. As Marx and Engels famously wrote: "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas." If we know that humans are distinguished by race, or gender, or intelligence, then we won't think of building an egalitarian society. If we know humans are innately individualistic we will not work to create a cooperative society. If we know that the world we presently love within is the only possible reality, we will not struggle to build another one. Knowledge is what determines the horizons of our imagination. This is why so much activist time and effort is expressed in critique and argument: the pamphlets, the studies, the lectures—we are trying to change what people know.

We advise another course: an end run around what we know by connecting to what people see, hear, taste, touch, and, above all, feel and experience.

The power of art lies beyond simple thinking and knowing. In the past, philosophers and critics called this quality the "sublime." It's commonplace to judge a piece of art as beautiful or ugly on the basis of cultural standards and personal preference. The sublime is something else: it can be beautiful but it can also be horrific; in either case it is beyond direct description, beyond measurement, beyond even comprehension—what Immanuel Kant called the "supersensible." As mystical as it is, or perhaps because it is so mystical, the sublime is a powerful force because it has the ability to affect us in ways that our conscious minds cannot always account for. This makes for potentially powerful politics too. The ancient Greek philosopher Longinus believed that the strength of the sublime lay not only in its capacity to provoke awe, but also in its ability to persuade. When we are effected, or rather: affected, by a piece of art we often say that it moves us. This motion is good for social change.

In an essay called "Poetry is Not a Luxury," the radical poet Audre Lourde writes, "I could name at least ten ideas I would have once found intolerable or incomprehensible and frightening, except as they came after dreams and poems." Art allows us to imagine things that are otherwise unimaginable. Art allows us to say things that can't be said, and give form to abstract feelings and ideas, and present them in such ways

PROTEST
AGAINST
YOU

that they can be communicated with others. As Lourde continues: "Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought." Art, if we let it, allows us to take the mundane, imperfect world we live in and combine it with radical, idealistic visions of the future. Through creative thinking we use these contrasting visions to form tangible, complex plans that inspire and re-enliven our work and others to join us. It enables us to map out our goals against reality, envisioning pathways to a better world that was previously uncharted.

The problem with art, from an activist perspective, is that all this power of the sublime is wasted, sequestered safely away from politics. A painting hangs on the wall of a museum. It moves us. And then we move on, leaving that experience and its transformative power confined to its "proper" location, to be tapped only by cultural institutions seeking to increase their status or profits. In our world, the sublime is in the service of hierarchy and capitalism.

But what if we could harness the "supersensible" power of art and apply it to the world-changing potential of activism? This is what artistic activism does.

And this is what you will find in the pages of this handbook: tactics, strategies, and case studies of the powerful union of arts and activism. This is not just art about politics: using social injustice and political struggle as mere subject matter, without serious thought about what the political effect might be. Nor is it only activism that uses art as window dressing: designing a better looking poster or banner, with little concern for the affective power of art. Artistic activism is a hybrid practice combining the aesthetic, process based approach of the arts with the instrumental, outcome focus of activism. It recognizes that in order to shift power you need to also shift perspectives, and in order to shift perspectives you need to also shift power. Artistic activism blends the affective and the effective.

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A few words of warning before you leave us.

Just because activism is artistic does not always mean that its politics are good. The "dark side" also understands, sometimes better than us, the power of artistic activism.

Turn on the television, flip through the pages of a magazine, or browse the Web and you'll see artistic activism in daily practice: images of people whose lives are transformed by the purchase of products. Advertisers are in the business of using signs, symbols, and stories that tap into our dreams and nightmares in order to prompt a very particular and focused action: buying stuff. And they are very good at what they do.

When the US military bombed Baghdad at the start of the Iraq war in a demonstration of "shock and awe," they were staging a deadly visual spectacle planned to have a devastating visceral impact. When George W. Bush landed on the aircraft carrier the USS Abraham Lincoln in a navy fighter bomber, and emerged in a flight suit to declare "Mission Accomplished" at the start of the Iraq War, it was a masterful—and deceitful—performance meant to replace his own less than heroic military service with the image of a warrior leader, and convince the public that his ill-conceived and ill-executed invasion was a success. When the terrorists of Al Qaeda targeted the symbols of America's commercial, military, and political power by crashing their hijacked planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon (only missing their third target: the White House), they were painting a picture in blood and fire meant to move their sympathizers and their enemies alike. And, arguably, the most successful artistic activists in history were the Nazis. Their appropriation of powerful symbols like the swastika; their staging and documentation of pageants, marches, and rallies; their use of art, sculpture, and architecture; and their attention to sartorial style and acting techniques—all of these tactics were part of a larger aesthetic strategy meant to captivate, inspire, and frighten the public in the service of their overall goal of racial genocide and world domination.

Artistic activism is powerful stuff. It can be used for good, and it can also be used for evil. But if we throw out any tool ever used unethically we'd have nothing left. This is why we must use artistic activism carefully and thoughtfully, and continually ask ourselves if the creative process we use and the artistic actions we produce are in line with the politics we hold dear and the vision of the world we aspire to build. This isn't easy, as creativity in the service of action has been successfully employed for years to garner support for heinous political systems and the purchase of superfluous consumer goods. Many of the creative techniques that have been developed were done so specifically with these aims in mind, and contain within them the traces of these uses. We must be critical of creative activism of the past, further the practice, and employ the approach ethically today.

Neither is artistic activism meant as a replacement for other forms of activism: legal activism, political activism, or community activism. No matter how artistic our activities, there will always be a need for old-fashioned, boots on the ground door-knocking, organizing community meetings, badgering politicians, and submitting legal challenges. A good activist, like a good carpenter, has a big toolbox and is able to select the right tool for the right job at the right time. One of these tools ought to be artistic activism. And, as with all tools, using this one will help you to see the job differently. Artistic activism is not merely a tactic that helps you be a better activist, but an entire approach—a perspective, a practice, a philosophy—that transforms activism.

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The first rule of guerilla warfare is to know the terrain and use it to your advantage. The topography on which the activist fights may no longer be violent battles in the mountains of the Sierra Maestra or the jungles of Vietnam, but the lesson still applies. Today, the political landscape is one of signs and symbols, story and spectacle, where affect and emotion is as important as reason and rationality. To succeed on this battlefield we need the art of activism. And, like all art forms, artistic activism is a practice. One can't expect to paint masterfully the first time they pick up the brush and it is no different here. We encourage you to pursue the art, make room for mistakes, hone your skills, and use them to make a better world.

***Stephen Duncombe** (US) is Associate Professor in Media and Culture at New York University, as well as a life-long political activist. His books include* Dream: Re-Imagining Progressive Politics in an Age of Fantasy, The Cultural Resistance Reader, *and* (Open) Utopia.

***Steve Lambert** (US) is Assistant Professor of New Media at SUNY Purchase. In addition to many other socially engaged art projects, in 2008 Lambert helped produce* The New York Times Special Edition, *a utopian version of the paper announcing the end of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.*

In 2011 Duncombe and Lambert founded the Center for Artistic Activism around their shared interest in the intersection of art and activism. Running training programs around the world, they use their combined expertise across multiple disciplines to help activists to be more creative and artists to be more effective.

Sketching a History of Art and Activism

Federico Zukerfeld and Loreto Garín Guzmán / Etcétera...,
Nato Thompson, and WHW in conversation with Florian Malzacher

With the growing interest in political, socially engaged, activist art—the difficulty of naming it properly is already part of what I'm getting at here—there is also a growing interest in telling a different kind of art history. An art history that would include these practices and thereby allow us to understand what we are doing today within a certain tradition. On the other hand, it is very clear that such a history would look quite different in different parts of the world, in the context of different political struggles and in different artistic discourses. If you were to write such a history of art and activism in the context of Latin America—where would you begin?

Etcétera...: If we approach this question from a Latin American perspective, we have to consider colonialism as a fundamental matrix. The negation of a culture "of one's own" as a collective identity and the acceptance of Eurocentric models of representation seem to have laid the fundamental traces in the continuity of the colonial heritage.

So, the first question that comes to mind is: Who writes this history and for whom?

Such narratives are always political: sometimes they have the function of explaining cultural behaviors and works in order to categorize, segment, and organize the episodes and to affirm historical myths, accounts, or stereotypes. In this way, any form of precolonial narrative in Latin America has generally been denied; perpetuated by both the massacres of native peoples, and the imposition of alien cultural and religious views. For most Latin American countries, it has been just two hundred years since the so-called independence processes and the emergence of the notion of nation and state, and since iconographies "of their own" were created by artists attempting to represent their culture without giving up the European legacy (dependence). England, Spain, and Portugal brought their own artists and illustrators, generating images and predominant trends that continued into the nineteenth and mid-twentieth century. So, thinking about that, if we wanted to write a history of art and activism in Latin America, perhaps we should start by looking at the earliest forms of resistance to cultural colonialism—and their continuity to the present day.

But when we talk about Argentina today, we find an already written art historical timeline. There are many books on contemporary art history, where the narrative starts in 1968 with the experience of *Tucumán Arde*. At that time artists took an activist role through specific denunciations of the misery caused by the excessive ambition of national oligarchies that used Indians and peasants as slave labor, subjecting them to misery and precariousness. The artists involved in *Tucumán Arde* did collective militant research, experimenting with tools taken from the mass media to call society's attention to these issues. It's important to remember that a large number of those artists were also affiliated to left-wing parties, or to revolutionary and guerrilla movements. The protagonism of artists as social agitators and their political participation under the influence of the Cuban revolution, the French May, or the Vietnam War brought about intense experiences of political art and activism on issues of gender, pacifism, and civil rights.

The next sharp break, I guess, were the coup d'états and military dictatorships that seized power right across South America in the 1970s. This must have drastically altered the parameters of art, as well as political engagement ...

Etcétera...: Yes, persecution, repression, and violence against the resistance, especially against artists, journalists, and intellectuals defined the whole atmosphere. Many were arrested, executed, disappeared, or went into exile. But artists continued to resist the dictatorship with different kinds of actions, using metaphor as a way to escape censorship, fight the military, or support the struggles from exile.

Later there emerged human rights organizations such as the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, who were looking for their children and missing relatives. Consciously or not, the mothers brought into play powerful symbolic actions, such as wearing their missing children's diapers on their heads to identify each other, walking in circles counterclockwise outside Casa Rosada, stating demands such as "appearance with life" when confronting the military. Artists supported their struggles by accompanying their weekly demonstrations with different kinds of visuals, graphics, and performances.

With the return to democracy, there was a kind of return to social life: artists went back onto the streets with massive public art experiences like *El Siluetazo* (The Big Silhouette), which was part of the *Marcha de la Resistencia* of 1983, a huge demonstration in support of human rights, on which artists and activists cut out life-size silhouettes to draw attention to the issue of disappeared people. The silhouette as a symbol has become one of the icons reused in various contexts. Many artist collectives emerged working on the streets, with participatory practices like Ca.Pa.Ta.Co and GASTAR in Buenos Aires, or more conceptual interventions like CADA (Coletivo de Acciones de Arte), or poetic performances by Las Yeguas de la Apocalipsis in Chile, to name just a few.

The 1990s opened with the stimulation of globalization and neoliberal policies, and the trend was to "party and have fun." So, during the early '90s most of the art scene was market focused. Activist art was not a fashion and it was labeled by some curators and critics as old-fashioned and not at all contemporary. Indeed, most art activist collectives from our generation felt much closer with the experiences from the '70s and '80s than the cool and clean aesthetic of the early '90s.

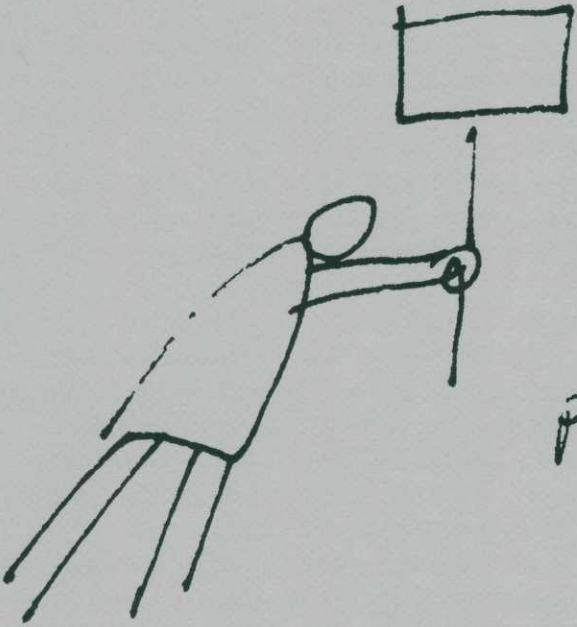
Then, from 1997—continuing the artists collective supporting human rights movement—in Buenos Aires, collectives like GAC (*Grupo de Arte Callejero*) and Etcétera... started collaborating with the missing persons organization H.I.J.O.S. (Sons and Daughters for Identity and Justice Against Oblivion and Silence), making actions, interventions, and signposting in so-called *escraches* (activities seeking justice and denouncing crimes during the last dictatorship, outside the houses of the military responsible for the crimes of the Dirty War). Thanks to artist-activist participation in those protests, it spread to the rest of the country (and to Chile and Uruguay) as a viral expansion taken from other collectives with similar actions and images.

The socioeconomic crisis of 2001 opened up a new social space for more and more collectives, street artists, and demonstrations such as TPS (*Taller Popular de Serigrafía*), *Arde! Arte*, *Mujeres Públicas* or *Iconoclasistas* in Buenos Aires, the *La Araña Galponera* collective in Mendoza Province, *Entransito* and *Compartiendo Capital* in Rosario or *Urbomakia* in Córdoba. So the history of art and activism continues to be very much alive—and there are many comrades who are, at the same time, starting to write down their art-activist practices: recently published books by GAC, Etcétera..., and *Iconoclasistas* in Argentina, or by collectives like *Bijari*, *Contra File*, and *Frente Treis de Fevreiro* in Brazil, narrate their own experiences. Maybe in the future history will be done without the mediators to become a kind of open encyclopedia, a wiki composed of tales narrated by the protagonists of the experiences, recovering the force of their actions, such as tool manuals or children's tales.

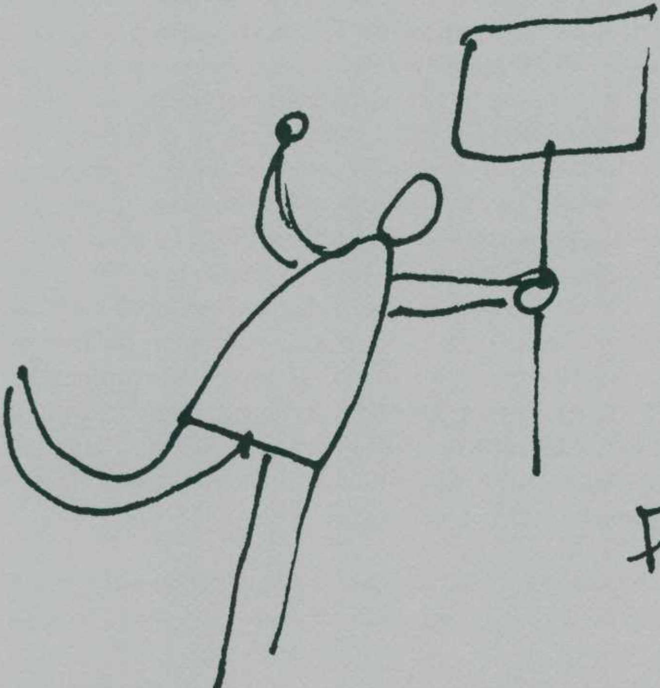
What would such a wiki story—or history—look like in the context of east and southeast Europe? And more specifically in the context of Yugoslavia?

WHW: If you're talking about straightforward art activism as the term is used nowadays, in Eastern Europe it is clearly related to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the introduction of democracy in many states—and in the case of Yugoslavia, of course, to the conflict between the different states. Before that time the understanding of civil society was different—and so was activism.

But wouldn't you consider the feminist works of Sanja Iveković, for example, or even earlier the interventions of the OHO group in Ljubljana in the 1960s to be predecessors of post 89 art activism?



PROTEST



FASHION

WHW: Of course, there were also a lot of artistic practices before 1989 that tried to intervene in the social and political world, but they were intervening in the understanding of art as institution—and in the institutions of art. What did not happen at that time was artists working directly with activist groups. Straightforward art activism really only happened with the dawn of civil society in the '80s. Before that, many artists were concerned with politics but mainly through artistic means and practices. Fighting for progress in art, for the democratization of art, was often inevitably a creation of a left social position, so in that sense aesthetics merged with the political.

There are many valuable examples that took place within *new art practice*; an informal art movement that, in the late '60s and throughout the '70s, presented radical turns in critical artistic engagement. Their searching for alternative means of production and presentation for the artwork also redefined the status of art and modes of mediation between artist and audience. It has achieved this by asking radical questions of the "autonomy" of the museum and gallery system, and of the role and operation of societal institutions.

In a contemporary context, one could speak of a kind of relevant cultural continuity between this generation and the one that appeared in the 1990s. We can say that the activities of the earlier generations, primarily related to the field of arts, were later intensified both through art practice but also through the wide phenomenon of a self-organized civil scene that is not strictly related to the arts. As activities in the 1970s often inaugurated a participative, provocative, collectivist model of operation with the tactical deployment of media, we can, in a sense, regard them as predecessors of activist practices, if we define activism as the continuous effort to link art with society or intervene in it. The feminist practice of Sanja Iveković is actually a rare example of how the socially engaged art intervention in the public sphere typical of the 1970s came to be transformed into an activist practice. Her *Women's House* is a good example: it is a project in progress, each stage being realized in a series of workshops in close collaboration with women taking refuge in women's shelters. Apart from addressing the issue of violence against women, each performance of *Women's House* reveals a number of pertinent issues closely related to particular geopolitical contexts from Thailand to liberal democracies. The project got under way in Croatia in 1998; inevitably the war in former Yugoslavia with rising nationalism and ethnic intolerance formed the backdrop to the project.

So, before the late 1980s, there were no direct links between artist and political activists? There must have been at least a common discourse?

WHW: Before the mid or late 1980s, rather than activism we can talk of various political practices of art and culture. They weren't separate; artist and intellectuals were very concerned with politics. But the way they dealt with these issues, the artistic language they used, did not necessary comply with what we would call art activism today.

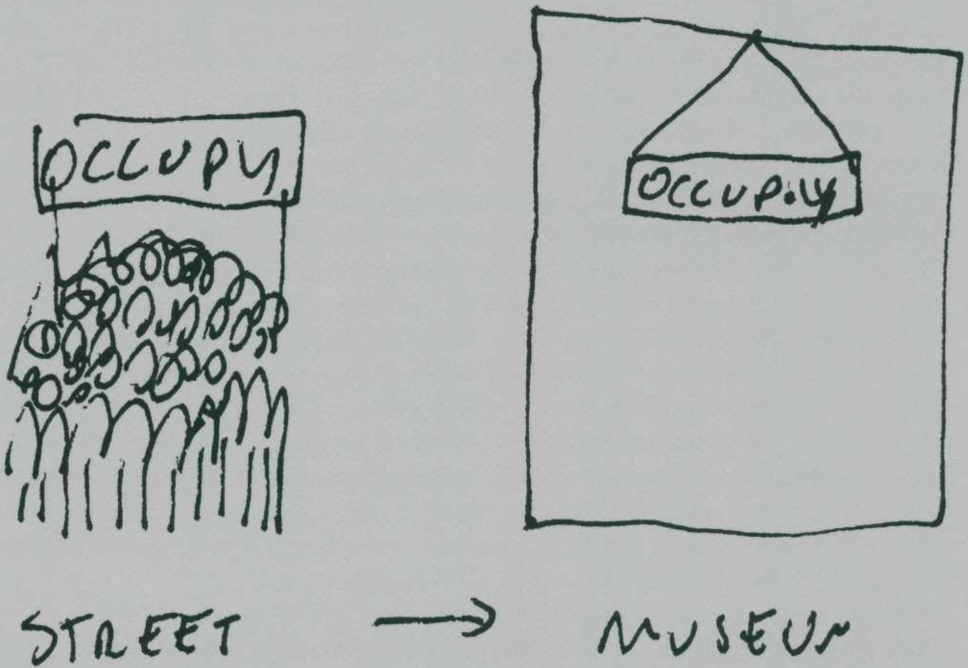
In the field of politics, there were a lot of debates, a plurality of voices, and open criticism; politics was part of society. If we're talking about the critique of society from a Marxist position during the 1960s and 1970s in Yugoslavia, the Praxis movement was especially important. It was a philosophical school based on Marxist thought: they published the journal *Praxis*, one of the most important international Marxist journals. This group of Yugoslav intellectuals also organized the famous Korčula Summer School, in which many international philosophers such as Herbert Marcuse, Ernst Bloch, Henri Lefebvre, etc., took part. Like the "Black Wave" film movement, which engaged with critical and innovative cinematographic explorations even when some films were publicly criticized and partially banned—like, for example, *Early Works* (1969) or *June Turmoil* (1969) by filmmaker Želimir Žilnik—those positions were not dissident in the sense that this notion is typically understood within the context of the former Eastern bloc countries; they could be better understood as active positions that, as Boris Buden has pointed out in relation to Žilnik's films, were reluctant to criticize society from the outside without the commitment and desire to intervene into it.

There are numerous episodes of critical aesthetic reinvention of the avant-garde tradition in relation to the reinterpretation of Marxist thought that examined communist values and ideas much more seriously than the elite in power. One such example in the visual arts was the Exat 51 group, founded in 1951, made up of painters and architects. The very title of the group—Exat—abbreviated from Experimental Atelier, made apparent a desire to take art out into the broader field of social experiment. Positioning its battle against outdated ideas and types of production within the field of visual arts EXAT 51 advocated the ideology of progress, calling into question the essential principle of art's autonomy and attempting to redefine its position in relation to actual social practice. Acting against official institutions—or at least apart from them—these practices were politically engaged, but not as a "battle against the darkness of Communist totalitarianism." The political practice of art was realized as a fight for the complete self-realization of individuals and culture, against real bureaucratic limitations.

Having said that the situation in Yugoslavia as a bloc-free state was quite specific in many ways, I assume there were links to Eastern bloc countries as well. How did the situation look in the Soviet Union and other "bloc states"?

WHW: To look outside of Yugoslavia—a country that broke with Stalin's politics in 1948 and then tried its own way to socialism—also demands a careful look into the specifics of each country, as the Eastern bloc was in no way homogenous.

In relation to activist art practice, it could be useful to look at artist's books and publications as one segment. This practice can be regarded not as an example of



necessarily activist practice, but rather as a transformative and communicational tool that, in the form of artists' publications, magazines, books, *samizdats*, etc., created a parallel art system while, at the same time, offering a critique of it. This applies not only to the clearly dissident and underground "unofficial" practice of *samizdat* in the Soviet Union and other Eastern bloc countries, which was located completely outside of the official system, but also to marginal practices developed during more tolerant periods and situations in these countries, as well as in non-aligned Yugoslavia.

May 75 from Zagreb or *Artpool* from Budapest are examples in which the practice of artists' books is directly related to strategies developed by a group that aimed to create an innovative, critical, active context for the presentation and reception of their artworks, a framework that removed itself from the mainstream. *May 75* was a self-published magazine initiated by the Group of Six Artists and named for the first exhibition-action of the group. *May 75* was an open collaborative platform in which many artists of similar artistic persuasions took part and was conceived as an alternative against the official cultural policy of the day, the artists belonging to the "new art practice" circle. Unlike socialist Yugoslavia, where book production was not subject to direct censorship, but rather to institutional marginalization, in Hungary, for example, until the mid '80s, the right to publish was reserved for authorities. In the situation in which the public had no access to photocopiers or printing studios, and artists could print only under the category of "graphic art," the activities of Artpool in the '70s and '80s were of almost heroic proportions. Artpool, an alternative cultural institution in Hungary working with an archive on experimental art, was set up in 1979. By the time the police closed it down, the archive they had started had established itself as the center of officially proscribed avant-garde art: periodically banned, but on the whole tolerated. In Poland, from 1971, the artists Zofia Kulik and Przemyslaw Kwiek formed KwieKulik, an artist couple that ran an independent Studio for Art Activities, Documentation, and Propagation (PDDiU) from their private apartment in Warsaw. PDDiU was involved in documenting artistic activities of both Polish and foreign artists, and encompassed objects, films, artists' books, documentary and theoretical works, actions, interventions, and performances, as well as activities associated with mail art. Although artists worked in different contexts, the inheritance of that period is a strong tendency toward the development of parallel systems and tensions between progressive practices and institutional support.

Not only in Europe but also in the United States there was a shift around 1989. Art activism seems almost to have become a genre of its own. Can it be said that, before this shift, the focus of engaged art was also more directed toward own institutions and practices of art—for example, the Art Workers Coalition strike at MoMA—and the development of institutional critique in general? And that the field of action was then expanded in the 1990s and later to broader political and social issues?

Nato Thompson: This kind of historicity and its complexity is vast. We could look at the collapse of the dichotomy of art and activism—at the moments where this division could no longer be tolerated. There are many of those: second wave feminism, the black power movement—spaces where the contradictions between art and politics are too vast not to collapse. On the other hand, there are those who tolerated these contradictions for the purpose of separating them. That is a different kind of balance. Take for example the movements for art into life: someone like Allan Kaprow was very invested in separating his art from activism—but, at the same time, very interested in moving his art into life. He was very careful not to make his work political in any kind of sense—in fact to protect it from politics. That kind of maneuvering at some point becomes impossible and in some ways perverse. But he is an important figure in terms of balancing contradiction and in this kind of willful naïveté. And this is the dominant line in art history. That said, I have an appreciation for moments where artists feel the need to protect art from any kind of instrumentality and even common sense. It just requires a particular historical context and relationship to power for this kind of maneuver to be a radical gesture.

The history of art activism as a genre is a whole different story: for example, groups in the '80s, like Political Art Documentation and Distribution (PAD/D), with people like Lucy R. Lippard and Gregory Sholette, who were actively pushing against this dichotomy. For them art and activism were part of the same field. They were less successful than Group Material; the art press did not like them; they didn't have any commercial success. And they were willfully that way. There is a long history of work like that where the activism and the art live in one particular movement.

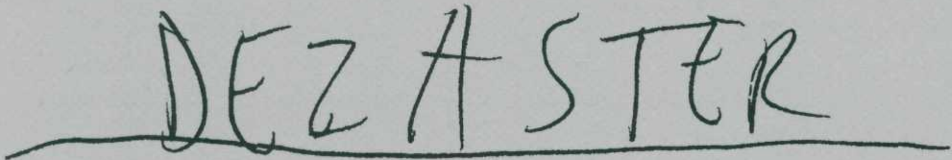
Or there are groups like the Yippies, the very theatrical, anarchistic Youth International Party in the '60s, who weren't necessarily radically artistic but thought of the whole idea of the art world as nauseating and horrible. And, at the same time, they also refused politics. They are examples of willful rejections of the whole dichotomy. The Yippies, for example, attempted to levitate the Pentagon in a public action. This could be an Yves Klein inspired event, but in fact it was just a ridiculous political stunt. Maybe they are the most interesting, those who reject the entire genre of art-activism.

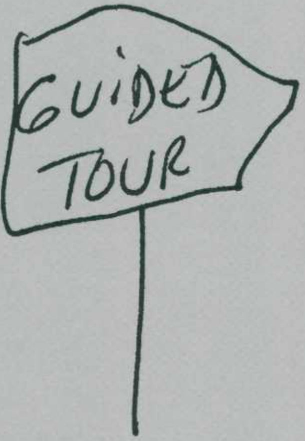
The shift toward art and activism as an actual genre came much later, after 1989. The arts in the United States took a major hit after the Reagan Administration, as the Federal Government's program for supporting artists, the National Endowment for the Arts, was no longer able to give money directly to artists. This produced a major restructuring of how the arts worked in this country. And because the arts, and its corollary art institutions, were attacked by a rampant right-wing headed up by Senator Jesse Helms, institutions became far more protective, and conservative, in what they took on.

Despite the disparities you mention, and despite the very different contexts in different parts of the world, there also seems to be a need to look for common denominators and developments, and to write a different art history—to find predecessors, figures to relate to. Tania Bruguera's Museum de Arte Útil is an example of such an attempt. And, of course, many artists who are part of mainstream art history and who are, in one way or another, also part of the dichotomy you are describing, would belong there as well—from the futurists or constructivists to Hans Haacke or Mladen Stilinovic.

WHW: Well, the collapse of the dichotomy of art and politics was, of course, already happening before the end of Yugoslavia, which then provided the framework of so-called art activism in the late '80s and '90s. A lot of artistic practices in Yugoslavia and other Eastern European countries dealt with this question. They used their art practices as political tools, not only in the sense of direct political art, but also in terms of discussing their own practice. But then again, Yugoslavia was a bit of a special case. The position of political engaged artists was not really a dissident one, since they rather criticized the state for failing to fulfill their promise to build a socialist society. That was very different in some other Eastern European countries.

In that regard, art practices that would call themselves dissident were not interesting for us, either artistically or politically. The Biafra group (1970–1978), for example, claim to have been dissident, but their sculptures, which were supposed





to be engaged with “humanism,” were not at all interested in breaking down the dichotomy we are talking about. They were absolutely reenforcing it.

That is another interesting dichotomy: that, in most socialist countries, critical political engagement would either mean being part of a more or less antisocialist opposition—like the conservative Catholicism behind Solidarność in Poland—or wanting to push the government to be more truthful to the vision of Socialism—as, for example, some East German intellectuals close to Brecht attempted.

WHW: But Yugoslavia is a specific case also in terms of how these art practices were being produced, how they were being promoted, and so on. This was at least partly also happening within the institutional system. And that was very different from most of the Eastern bloc or Russia. Take the Collective Actions group, founded in Moscow in 1976, for example: they had to carve out a space that would free them from politics. Collective Actions was primarily a performance group, engaging in different kinds of actions mostly in outdoor spaces. Their performances followed a uniform dramaturgy: an invited group of spectators would take a train to a suburb of Moscow, from where they headed to a large field that served as the stage for the majority of Collective Actions performances. The audience was asked to compose a written description and interpretation of the performance. Usually, the audience could observe only part of the whole performance, which was happening outside of their field of vision. Their practice introduced not only new relations toward the work of art, but also toward the audience and notion of the space.

How they delivered their actions in empty fields far from the city expresses the desire to carve out a different politicality of art practice, although, or rather, precisely because they claimed their works were not political.

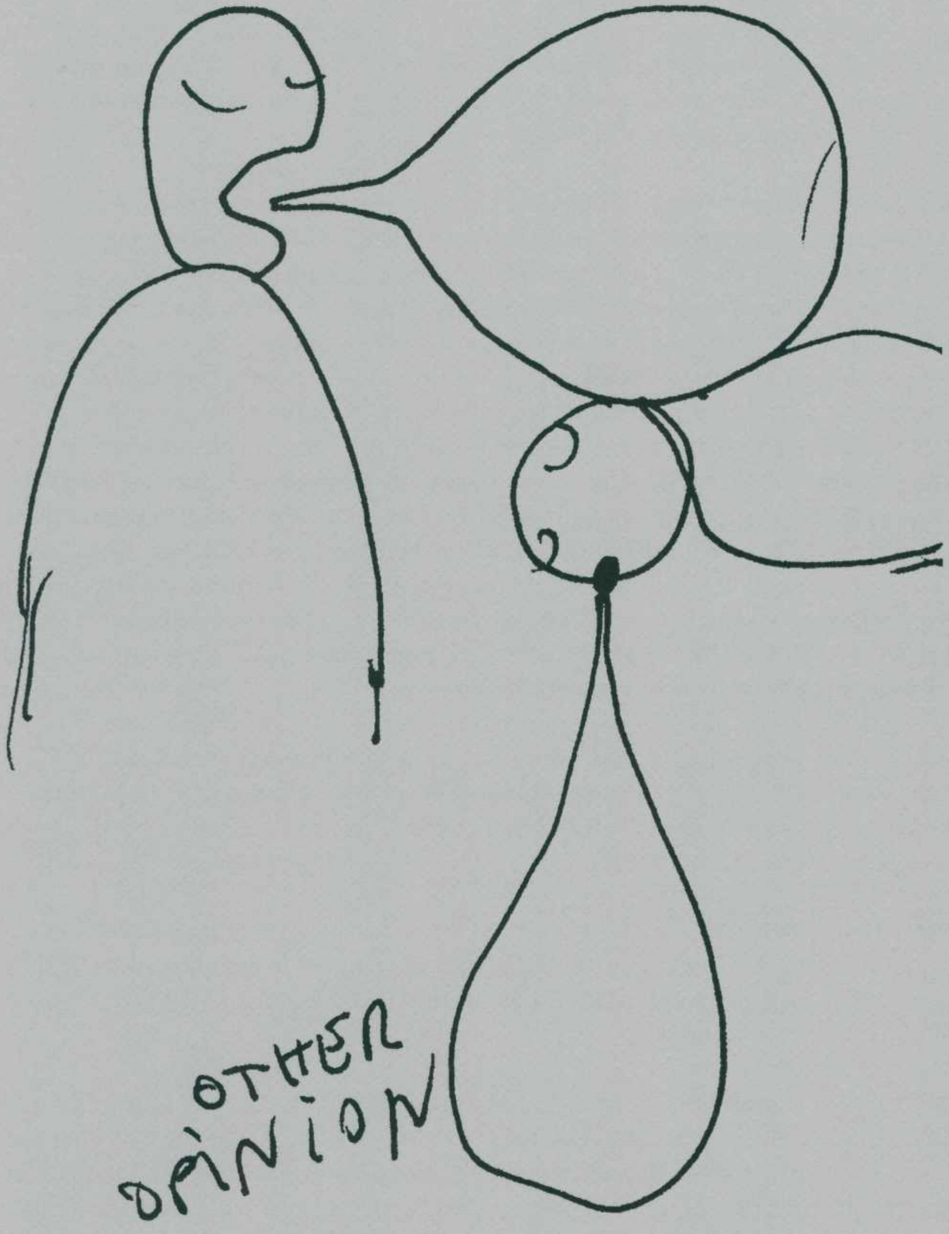
These trajectories are quite complicated if you look closely. Around the same time, the Group of Six Artists with Mladen Stilinović and others held their *Exhibition-Action* (1976) in the streets of Zagreb: during the first of May celebrations, they raised banners with slogans like "Stipe loves Stipa" instead of celebrating International Workers' Day. So they infiltrated it with private content or something that was more or less their "private" artistic obsession. This was also a political action in opposition to what was considered art at that moment, what was considered the right place for art, and what was considered the right content.

But at the same time, Sanja Iveković was doing very outspoken, very clearly feminist works: Double Life *from 1975, for example, where she paired private photos of herself next to models in similar poses in advertisements ...*

WHW: Sanja Iveković's works in the late 1970s absolutely profited from the first feminist groups at that time—but how they were received in the art world and why the art world was excited about them had almost nothing to do with feminism. This connection was only made on an individual level. There was no framework in which this could have been seen at that time as a feminist act. They were interpreted as private, as the work of a woman: of course she likes to look at the mirror and thinks how pretty she is, or something like that ... The political context only built up gradually. But indeed, after the collapse of Yugoslavia, she was the only one of her generation who really got in contact with activist groups from different backgrounds. Not only with feminist groups but also the antiwar activists, and so on.

But maybe, rather than trying to determine all those complex practices as activist or nonactivist, we can look at some of the methodologies that were introduced in the 1970s from the Group of Six Artists or other communities. Many of them were based on principles like collective work and self-organization. And they were able to accomplish something in public space as a political intervention, like *Exhibition-Action* and other radical performances, by Tomislav Gotovac, for example. It produced a collective surplus and a tremendous force of self-organization in public space.

We could go even further into the past and look at partisan art, created between 1941 and 1945 during the revolutionary anti-fascist struggle of the Yugoslav nations, as something that is ultimate activism from the perspective of today, as the process of creating revolutionary subjectivities and building a new world, inseparable from



Dan Perjovschi *(RO) is a visual artist mincing drawing, cartoon, and graffiti in artistic pieces drawn directly on the walls of museums and contemporary art spaces all over the world. Perjovschi has played an active role in the development of civil society in Romania—through his editorial activity with* Revista 22 *political-social and cultural magazine in Bucharest.*

thinking new parameters of art as such. In this process, it was not about the political or revolutionary themes that defined the politics of work, but their deep and total connection with revolutionary struggle that rethought the autonomy of art and broke completely with bourgeois conceptions of art.

Nato Thompson: In terms of mapping a history, it could also be a good methodology to think about aggregations of people across space in relationship to big political upheavals. Certainly, there are intensities of people coming together that are good to map certain kind of moments or certain kinds of genres of dealing with politics and art. And to see which schools or institutions are related to this. Often these places are hubs of this activity. And simultaneously one would look at larger political events or movements that are the galvanizing forces behind a lot of the more interesting work: feminism, civil rights, the anti-nuclear movement, the alter-globalization movement, AIDS activism. Those kinds of historical movements push along an increased capacity for people to come together and often spur radical art production. You cannot tease apart Hans Haacke from the anti-Vietnam movement. They come out of the same time and the same social milieu. And you cannot talk about Suzanne Lacey, one of the pioneers of a feminist socially-engaged art form that borrowed from activism, as well as her mentor Allan Kaprow, without talking about second wave feminism and "Women's House" and all the other different projects.

WHW: Yes, people get together when there is a social agenda that creates a social movement. In Yugoslavia, this began in the '80s with the affirmation of a civil society. And then civil society started with a lot of positive engagement, before it later slowly became a rather suspicious term.

Nato Thompson: Another kind of history is the history of institutions that began to parse out the parts of radical projects that they felt they could embrace. And certainly some artists became more known for navigating this than others who, for whatever reasons, could not stand it.

WHW: In Eastern Europe, institutions only started to look at practices from art and activism when these were looked at from the West. The whole narrative of what was going on was constructed through the strange viewpoint from the West. And then the institutions tried to compare: "Ah, we also had that kind of art practice, it was already around in the '70s." We should be careful about this.

But at the same time, it is interesting to see that artists chose the institutional setting for certain debates: the New Tendencies movement in the '60s was an attempt to radically rethink what an artwork is and what the position of the artist is. But it happened within the institutions. So there was a need to step out of this frame—like later the Group of Six Artists.

One can also read the work of Goran Trbuljak as institutional critique—like his famous poster works, for example. In 1971, in the Gallery of the Student Center in Zagreb, in an otherwise empty room, he showed a poster, featuring a photo portrait of the artist, and the statement: "I do not wish to show anything new and original." In 1973, when invited for an exhibition by the City Gallery of Contemporary Art, later to become the Zagreb Museum of Contemporary Art, he again made a poster containing a photo, this time of the City Gallery building, along with the statement: "The fact that someone has been given a chance to make an exhibition is more important than what will be exhibited at that exhibition." In 1979, the poster with the sentence: "With this exhibition I am demonstrating the continuity of my work" was the only exhibit in the Studio of the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Zagreb. Trbuljak clearly recognized the outstanding importance of the venues in which he was invited to show his work: they were crucial not only as exhibition spaces but as much for opening up discussions, and for shaping the whole field of contemporary art of the time. And he decided to use these invitations to probe into construction of power relations in the arts, as well as the ways in which they are reflected in each particular exhibition—in a very similar way to what happened in the framework of institutional critique in the West at the same time, and yet coming from a different perspective and with a totally different set of issues. Because it has to be seen in the context of the changes in socialism in Yugoslavia, the first economic crisis, and so on.

Nato Thompson: In the United States in the late 1960s and '70s, one saw a massive growth of infrastructure for the arts. A lot of institutions, particularly for parallel practices, were born that are now very much renowned: PS1, New Museum, etc. And there was great enthusiasm and belief in the possibility of a new kind of formation of what art could do in civil society. So I think there is a historical parallel in this period for the kind of emergence of a baby-boomer inspired institutionalism.

But this was followed by a huge transformation of the economy over the last thirty years. The US shifted radically from a post-Fordist economy to a knowledge based economy, and conditions of austerity and precarity. That means that the number of people who would consider their practice somewhat art-related was growing exponentially. And, at the same time, the politics of precarity was hitting them as well. So we have a lot of people working in culture who are, at the same time, living without any kind of a safety net or economic capacity to do so. And that also pushes artists to make more political work.

But there also lies a danger: that the work becomes mainly self-referential, that artists are rather dealing with their own precarity than with that of others. And this also points to another aspect: that art, including politically engaged art, is mainly a middle class business.

WHW: The class question was never openly discussed in Yugoslavia, but it was also more complex in many ways. One of the things that makes it different from the United States, for example, even though not so different from Western Europe, was that education and access to education was much more universal—even though that is also changing now and it is much more middle class than it used to be.

The phenomenon of art as well as activism being a middle class and, as such, a predominantly "white" phenomenon too, is that true also for Latin America? Because this seems to be a core issue here: Am I speaking in the name of others or about others—or am I "the other?" What kind of legitimization does this imply?

Etcétera...: In general in Latin America, there is still, unfortunately, the old division between contemporary art and so-called popular art. Popular art is identified with crafts, folklore, murals, or various forms of ritualism. While contemporary art has a higher social elitist status. In general artists (mostly in the visual arts) are upper middle class. The deeper problem is about an implied discrimination, usually associated not only with racial issues (it is difficult to find legitimization of the art world for artists with indigenous or black features), but also because of the deep classism that exists in the fields of contemporary art.

This classism is based on the lack of access and economic support for those who do not belong to a certain social stratum. A historically constructed notion has grown up, in which artists perform a function of social climbing that legitimizes the social pyramid, represented by the most well-off families.

In contemporary art, appearances seem to be more important: an artist who comes from a poor or working class family has to change their way of speaking, of dressing, of behaving in order to be accepted. They simulate a social status that does not belong to them in order to gain access to museums, galleries, and cultural spaces. In the best case, they will have the chance to be who they are, if they can provide a certain exoticism or fashion that responds to a certain kind of fashionable aesthetics of poverty.

But in terms of artists specifically linked to activism or social struggles, such spaces are where they mix with different classes and social movements. With this conjunction, those with a public education are far more open and tolerant than those from private art institutions.

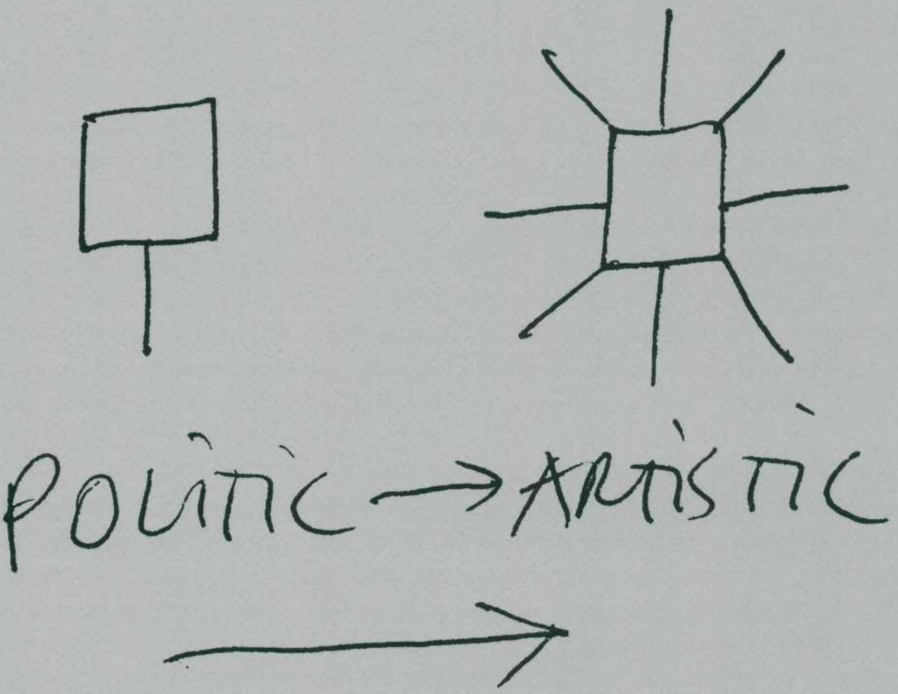
Artists with activist practices are linked with those they "represent," and it's fundamental and healthy to break the isolation and individualism prevalent in contemporary art. Perhaps Latin American and former Yugoslavian artists both share the common pressure to be internationalized in order to exist. So Mladen Stilinović's sentence "AN ARTIST WHO CANNOT SPEAK ENGLISH IS NO ARTIST" could also apply in our context.

Nato Thompson: In the US, the question of race and class is still the main divider. This is a reoccurring problem. In the US, there are large immigration movements, and there is a vast level of inequities, particularly around African Americans in this society. The sheer imbalance makes a community of activists that are predominantly white feel that there is something wrong with the entire genre itself. In fact, this has been happening all the time over the last thirty years. So we also have to look at moments where these racial boundaries are bridged and at how new forms of cooperation are produced. Certainly, the movement for immigration reform coming out of California is an exciting example of a multiracial movement. Additionally, I would say that much could be learned through Laurie Jo Reynolds and the Tamms Year Ten project, which successfully closed a supermax prison in Illinois. This was not only a cross-race project, but also a project that managed to get something done in a field where activists were not having a lot of success. Frankly, it is as much a result of Reynold's tenacity as it is of her acumen in the arts. I wouldn't want to overstate the case that the arts are always the best route to go down when it comes to getting things done. It just happens that in this particular instance, the ability to be versatile, to produce a sense of community and poetics around an issue that is particularly painful, and to keep pushing toward a particular goal—the closing of a prison, for example—provided a road map for working on this issue that differentiated itself from the tried and failed tactics of other grassroots activist organizations.

So far, we've mainly been talking about the role of the visual arts. What about the performing arts? What about theater makers, for example? I'm thinking about Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed, which played an important role mainly in Latin America and later in Africa—or the Living Theater, and the Bread and Puppet theater in the US, to name just a few. Also, in Germany, theater played an important role as a place of dissidence in the East and in producing a more open discourse in the West—a role it lost after 1989.

Etcétera...: Of course, the Theater of the Oppressed could be a good example, as could those experiences of community theater companies, which were really important in Latin America. We consider that the theater is central in social struggles, as it's less individualistic and isn't as market-orientated as the visual arts.

During the '80s, performativity had a strong social role, which, of course, comes from the influence of the theater and the happenings of the '70s, but also from the search for the appearance of the bodies that were disappearing. *Yeguas del Apocalipsis*, created by the writers collective Lemmebel Pedro and Francisco Casas, realized the fragility of bodies with their intense performances in Chile during the '80s. The performances of Chilean artist Víctor Hugo Codocedo who works with his own body, wearing nationalist and patriotic flags outside the National Museum of Fine Arts as a gesture against the dictatorship, took on



subversive meanings. Or artist Lotty Rosenfeld, part of the so-called Escena de Avanzada (Advanced Scene), intervening on the pavements of Santiago streets during curfew, where simply putting your body onto the street could cost you your life. The performance was a powerful political gesture, a taste of the stance of disobedience that would be adopted in years to come. Logically it is impossible not to connect this force of performance with the strong political tradition of Chilean theater, from the days of the saltpeter works in northern Chile in the early twentieth century to today. There is the example of Luis Emilio Recabarren, leader of the labor movement in the early twentieth century. He was a politician, writer, and one of the founders of the so-called Chilean Social Theater, through which he spread propaganda and tools for social organization, using educational and teaching strategies for workers who couldn't read.

In Argentina, the story was similar. The happening, performances, and community theater in the '60s and '70s were influenced by social, economic, and ethical issues. The Teatro Núcleo company emerged from the Comuna Baires community and created experiences of communitarian life and street theater, publishing books and magazines with contributors like Eugenio Barba, Eduardo Pavlovsky, or Living Theater. They ran art nurseries and de-education projects for children during the '70s. With the military dictatorship of 1976, several members of theater companies, directors, and actors were killed or went into exile. Political theater was again relegated to the underground until the late '80s, when there was a strong comeback, with companies like El Periférico de Objetos, which used objects and puppets to represent the social conditions of the day.

WHW: In the 1980s in Yugoslavia, there was a revolt against bourgeois theater. Theater was where you went on Sundays, all dressed up in your Sunday best. Neue Slowenische Kunst tried to shatter that. In NSK's visual art department, IRWIN tried to think of performance as political intervention, with their first *State in Time* embassy in Moscow in 1991. Within that project, the action "Black Square on Red Square" is iconic: around fifteen to twenty people gathered on Red Square and spread out a gigantic black textile that symbolically represented Malevich's black square. This was when such a thing was still possible in Moscow, and the action drew little public attention. But it was important for art circles.

With Truth is Concrete, *we are trying to look at strategies and tactics that are used in socially-engaged art and in creative activism: Are there tools? Is there something to be learned from others, even if these tools were used in a totally different context, in space or in time?*

Nato Thompson: In some way, the question of usefulness has always been there: just go back to the whole Brecht versus Adorno battle, for example. In some regard, the places that produce the most interesting projects in the context of art and activism are usually the ones where nobody benefits from either use or art: institutions that have no connection to the art market and therefore don't care whether one produces useful or useless work.

Etcétera...: We agree that there are certain contexts—and spaces—that produce potential activist-art and socially engaged art experiences, but we think that "usefulness" should not be reduced by oppositions. Of course, it's essentially dialectics, but there's a different kind of "benefit" (and beneficiaries) which art can provide for the market or for social movements and their struggles. At the same time, there's another benefit that's permanently hidden by the art (or creative) industry which is the symbolic surplus remaining from those symbolic transactions. In our experience, we consider that times of crisis—which today seem to be permanent and no longer the exception—create the conditions in which such practices emerge. We think that it's the social pressure, the protest, and the demands from below that produce social imagination, imposing a new ethic and renovating the aesthetic. Then institutions react and create programs—or not—that include those art-activist practices. So we can see that it's always social needs that are the biggest inspiration for those engaged in the fight for change by creating equal conditions and other kinds of society than neoliberal-capitalism has to offer.

WHW: Well, it isn't only about the intention of the artwork itself; it's also how you use it: how and for whom it could be useful. That's important for us in putting exhibitions together: for example, when we were dealing with Collective Actions or art as a political force, we looked at the '70s in Argentina; not because it was some kind of predecessor of present activist art, but because it happened in a moment of extreme political oppression. So how artists came together around those issues and how they could do so regardless of this oppression, that was interesting for us thirty years later. Can we take this impact and translate it into the situation of Yugoslavia falling apart, having a neoliberal transformation, criminal privatization, and so on. How can that knowledge and practice be usefully translated into the here and now?

Etcétera...: There are many examples of how such knowledge and practice can be usefully translated into the present. It's interesting to see how certain artists begin to take up positions in mainstream art spaces beyond their own artworks (and careers), especially regarding the question of the responsibility of cultural institutions receiving funds from corporate sponsorships. A clear example is Liberate Tate, founded with the aim of ending Tate Modern's sponsorship by BP (formerly British Petroleum, a multinational oil and gas company responsible for several ecological disasters). Among other actions, they delivered a wind turbine blade to the gallery and organized performances.

Another recent example would be the artists who refused to take part in this year's Sydney Biennial because of its major sponsor Transfield, a contractor for Australia's network of immigration detention centers. Their boycott was actually successful: the Biennial cut all ties with Transfield. That's the role which artists and other people involved in cultural activities should take as a concrete example of an attitude of usefulness beyond any art production or exhibitions .

Referring to the artistic situation in the 1970s, WHW described how in Argentina (and most other Latin American countries) artists were forced under the military dictatorships to imagine how to act and how to fight with symbolic (and sometimes other) weapons. "Responsibility" is a word that could be used to see how different international contexts could be. But we should jump now from the 1970s to the present. Not only because healthy nostalgia can easily become rhetorical melancholy, but also because the history of this period has already been told—and in South America, it's difficult to break free from this model.

Anyway, what emerges when reviewing this type of artistic practice from the 1970s to now is the fact that most of these movements and breakthroughs were connected to questions of what is termed art and what is not art, what is political and not political, whether institutions should be changed or just left. And the point seems to be to go beyond the limits of art, to move toward the social body and to accept responsibility in constructing the social imagination in order to build or experiment with new forms of life. Therefore, we believe that in times of permanent economic crisis and crisis of representation, we as artist-activists, militants, or however you want to redefine our practices, have to go beyond our practical utility and become part of a collective reconstruction of the social imagination.

We believe that the biggest crisis we're living through right now is not the crisis of images but of the imagination; it is about how to imagine ourselves into another economic system, breaking stereotypes and hierarchies. This is a crisis in the emotional connection between art and society, between life and desire, the individual body and the social body. In this catastrophic history of capitalism, we feel that art can help to produce the kind of things that could be done by everyone were they just to recover the ability to imagine. But the question is whether to use that tool to repeat a life we don't want any more or, collectively, to try and imagine other forms of life and society.

Loreto Garín Guzmán *(CL) and* ***Federico Zukerfeld*** *(AR) are cofounders of the collective Etcétera..., formed in 1997 in Buenos Aires as a multidisciplinary collective composed of visual artists, poets, actors, and performers who share the intention of bringing art to the site of immediate social conflict, and of bringing this social conflict into arenas of cultural production, including the media and art institutions.*

Nato Thompson *(US) is a writer and activist, and chief curator at Creative Time, a New York-based organization that commissions and presents public arts projects. He curates the Creative Time Summit, a gathering of socially engaged artists from around the world, and organizes numerous projects on art and activism. He recently published* Living as Form, *a collection of socially engaged art from 1991 to 2011.*

WHW *(HR) is a curatorial collective formed in 1999. WHW organizes production, exhibition, and publishing projects, and directs Gallery Nova in Zagreb. WHW is currently working on a long term collaboration project, "Beginning as well as we can (How do we talk about fascism?)," and on the seventh edition of Meeting Points, entitled "Ten thousand wiles and a hundred thousand tricks."*

Jonas Staal

Progressive Art

The Mass Performance of Blank Voting

José Saramago's novel *Seeing* describes a city—somewhere in the Western world—where democratic elections are being held. When seventy percent of the population turns in his or her ballot blank, the government of the day decides to rerun the election. But when an even higher percentage of the population, eighty percent, casts a blank vote, the government embarks on an operation to hunt down the conspiracy they believe is recklessly undermining their regime. The confusion grows when not a single blank voter is prepared to admit his or her choice and the resistance movement seems to lack any organizational coherence. Put succinctly, the people have used the margin provided by the system—the possibility of voting for none of the candidates—as a civil right. Consequently, the state does everything it can to restart the "regular" democratic process and track down these saboteurs of the free world. The state newspaper attempts to address the citizens' responsibilities ("Capital City Orphaned Overnight" and "Blank Voters Blanked By Government"), but the citizens systematically give the same explanation:

> *No, sir, I didn't [cast a blank vote], but if I had, I would be just as much within the law as if I had voted for one of the parties listed or had made my vote void by drawing a caricature of the prime minister.*

As a result of the citizens' actions, the government, which is no longer recognized as legitimate by the citizens, decides not to back down and to employ every means of violence at its disposal to reestablish its rule and convince its citizens to "return to democracy." False bombs are planted by government officials to convince them of the dangerous state of anarchy they have brought upon themselves by retracting their vote from the system. Leading figures of the "conspiracy" are executed to set an example. And ultimately, the city is closed off and left to starve until it comes to its senses as the government literally abandons its former citizens, while waiting for them to embrace the democratic doctrine again while stationing itself outside the city. No one asks the government to return. The blank vote thus becomes an act of defiance that triggers the state of emergency that is always located at the criminal core of the "democratic" state.

In the face of the state of emergency the blank vote proves to be both an artistic and a political act. The blank vote is at once a political and a performative gesture that subverts the notion of representation in the most radical terms. Through the blank vote—this unwritten "exit" from the democratic doctrine by means of the very mechanisms it propounds—the promise that power belongs to the people is acted upon in the most fundamental sense. The people of Saramago's city do not abandon their power in order for new rulers to continue ruling; this is about taking power back. The radical imagination needed to enact this subversion is precisely where I locate the role of progressive art as a tool for mobilizing progressive politics.

The difficult and terrifying process of reclaiming power—power so long lost to *unknown and unloved representatives—is precisely what Saramago describes in his* novel. In this context, cleaning the street or baking bread become acts that in the given context are more revolutionary than firing a gun. The state already overpowers us with drones, wiretaps, and military arsenal. It takes little imagination to create a global state of terror and control. That is the basic dream of every dictator and of the dictator inside of all of us. It takes much greater imagination to act upon the idea of a world beyond that.

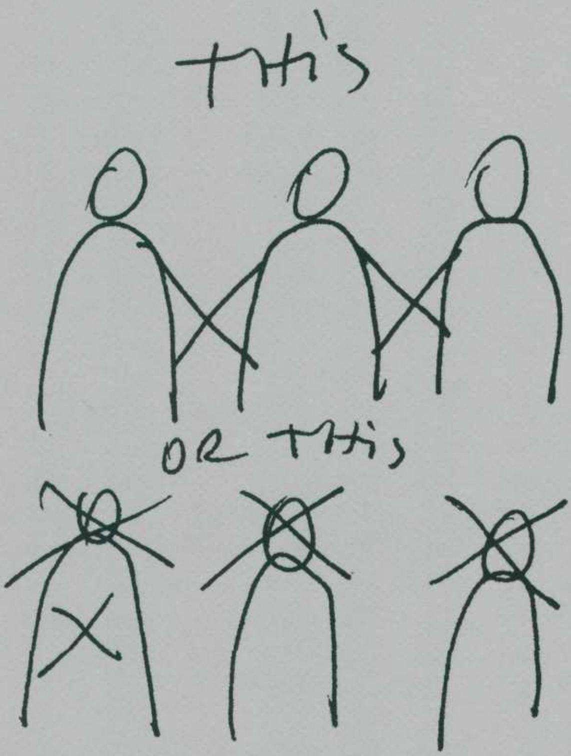
Another crucial dimension of Samarago's novel is its focus, not on the moment of the election itself, but on the disasters the citizens have to face in its wake, and on the tedious day to day struggle of living resulting from their revolutionary acts. Similarly, what has been referred to as the Arab Spring is not limited to the symbolism of peaceful cohabitation on public squares, no matter how hopeful and moving these moments might be. Equally moving are the days after, the moments when power rearranges itself, the moments when new and unknown oppressors manifest themselves. The Western media have created both the myth that the "real event" was the protests themselves and the myth that these protests "failed" because of the complications and ideological struggles and oppositions that followed. Our notion of revolution has been severely reduced through the lens of those who are not served by any structural change whatsoever, and thus, the Arab Spring is suddenly the Arab Winter. Revolution in the eyes of commentators takes as long as the most visible of events: that is the blind order of the media, in great contrast to Saramago's city of the seeing.

The significance of Saramago's story is that the initial moment of subversion, the mass performance of the blank vote, is valued only through the practice of the days following this moment and the continuous fidelity of the people's choice to abandon the ruling power structures. I don't know whether "poetry" is the right word to describe this, but let me say that it encompasses a moment in which the project of progressive art and progressive politics create the foundations for a struggle in a new, radical, creative political reality—creative in the sense that it opens up a concrete, material field of politics still to be defined by the actors involved. This is a field in which the revolutionary slogan "Power to the People!" becomes a permanent question: "Power? To which People?!" The notion of progress in "progressive politics" thus does not become a blind strive for acquiring more means, but indicates the capacity to alter the fundamental conditions in which we define the notion of people and power beyond the idea of man as a mere animal who knows nothing but survival. Progress lies in the deconstruction of the notion of power as a commons, not in the glorified survival of the fittest, which today has translated into that worldwide nightmare, the myth of the American Dream.

A similar analysis can be made of the Occupy movement—the global wake-up call of the Western lower and middle classes to oppose the disasters of their financial systems. Today the initial moments of the movement are still celebrated by former Occupiers, artists, and intellectuals: the mass gatherings in public squares, the enthusiasm that resulted from the establishment of public kitchens and libraries. This was, according to many, the "true" meaning of Occupy. But should we not be just as interested in the abuse and violence in the camps, the financial corruption and tedious bureaucratic political processes that have characterized so many of Occupy's settlements, be they in New York or Amsterdam? There is a tendency to pick revolutionary moments as suited, and to consider critique as betraying its intentions. But isn't the true meaning of the Occupy movement and its decline to be found in its participants' continued willingness to end the outsourcing of power and thus to confront so many of its mechanisms inside of each of us? A mass act of global psychoanalysis, a public challenge of the oppressive institutions that have managed to occupy our very being. I'm not trying to make the absurd claim that "we are the system," which would severely depoliticize the role of the oppressive economic and political forces truly responsible for the crises we are facing. But nonetheless, our occupation opposes both those responsible and the traces of the occupation these institutions have left within our very being.

After outsourcing power for so long, reclaiming it means that we are first confronted with an unprotected political sphere. The beauty is that this is our sphere. The terrifying consequence is that there is no one else to look after it but us. Again, the imagination of a different political sphere touches upon the tedious practice of shaping it while remaining loyal to its principles. But that means we confront its successes as much as its failures. For at least, these failures are ours, and ours alone.

Saramago's novel is the ultimate political pamphlet: a script for the masses of militant blank voters willing to engage in the political struggle of everyday life. This is where the task of progressive art lies today: in its capacity for aligning its radical imaginative force with the project of progressive politics.



Lenin in Japan

Our understanding of art today is shaped by dominant political, economic, and social forces, and as such much of art practice is forced into complicity with the self-proclaimed democracies that have taken our public domain hostage. This has created the rather cynical consensus that we cannot escape the conditions of the systems that structure our daily lives and thus that there is no longer any outside from which resistance is possible. The additional illusion that our world is just too "complex" to develop any consistent political position within it proves the success of a delicate ideological operation that suggests that resistance is futile, there being no real opposing ideological positions to choose from, as philosopher Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei has argued. The rise of the new social movements has proven that both these illusions are false, both in the sense that our forced complicity with the systems that occupy our existence does not keep us from engaging in alliances that help us to recognize this "enemy within," and in the sense that the revolutionary event proves that there are always unthought outsides to manifest themselves. Samarago's novel again provides us with a dialectical way out: the blank vote is an act against the system, performed within the system but loyal to a political principle in a not-yet-defined space located outside the system.

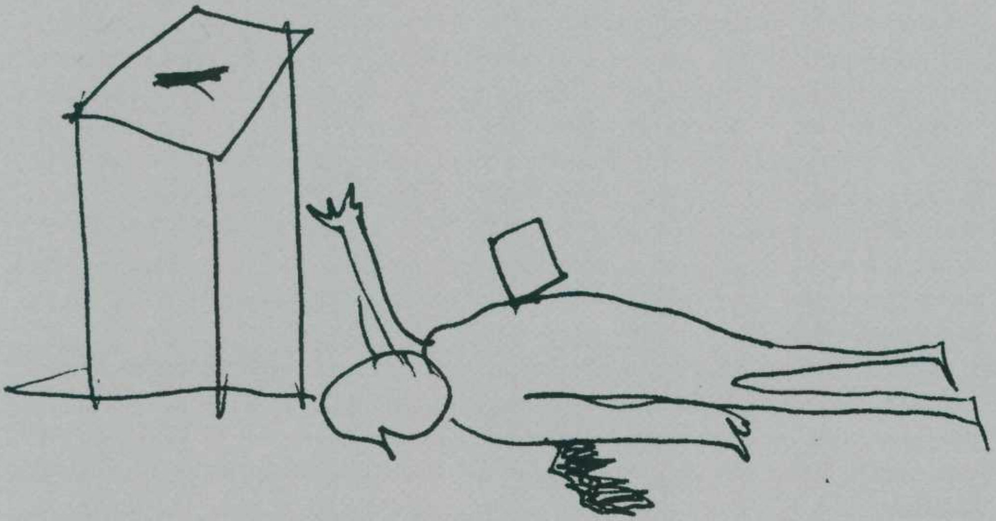
In essence, the blank vote makes visible two democracies within democracy. Its ruling body, which legitimizes itself through the notion of democracy but is sustained by the state of exception and the manner in which the blank vote—the exit button—shapes a new democratic space beyond the guise of parliamentary election. This "doubling" of the concept of democracy has an important historical precedent. When Lenin visited Japan, he was forced to perform an intervention that today we would recognize as the Deleuzian proposal to "speak of what we know best in a language that we know the least." Lenin, when speaking to the masses, was forced to make use of a translator. When he came to his fundamental critique of what he considered to be "bourgeois democracy," the translator looked at him confused. It became clear to Lenin that the word "democracy" did not exist in Japanese language; at best, it could be translated as an ism: as democratism.

Translation resulted in subversion. The term democracy broke, fell apart, and doubled up. By speaking the language least known to him, Lenin was confronted with a choice: the choice between democratism and democracy. In Japanese, democracy was the word that had yet to be spoken. For Lenin, similar to our situation today, democracy was a term that had yet to be imagined in practice. Lenin made good use of the term, and after returning to Russia the following lines can be found in his essay "Working-Class and Bourgeois Democracy":

> *Besides the interests of a broad section of the landlords, Russian bourgeois democratism reflects the interests of the mass of tradesmen and manufacturers, chiefly medium and small, as well as (and this is particularly important) those of the mass of proprietors and petty proprietors among the peasantry.*

The democratist doctrine, what philosopher Alain Badiou refers to as the "capitalo-parliamentarian order," is inherently connected to the field of art, technology, and culture. First of all, democratism, through its permanent display of culture in the form of art, industrial progress, and even conquered people, aims at proving its capacity to engineer "peaceful coexistence" between different cultures and ideologies: it functions as a grid for a variety of lifestyles. Second, democratism's display of global peaceful coexistence is based on the fact that its engineering structure, formed by colonial capitalism, is not questioned or subverted itself, which would result in the immediate introduction of martial law or other "states of exception" in order to guarantee the continuation of democratism's rule. And thirdly, this engineering structure is defined by a continuous overlap between governmental forces and private ownership, which Lenin refers to as "mass of tradesmen and manufacturers," and which in our time would be referred to as commercial enterprises or corporations.

Democratism stands for the translation of the constantly self-reassessing emancipatory principles of democracy into a stagnant, non-reflexive, expansionist



ideology. Of key importance are the series of monopolies it upholds in the field of politics, economy, ecology, and the public domain. Art today is impotently trapped in these monopolies, a hostage to the legitimization of the democratist doctrine of "holding up mirrors" to the world, asking "critical questions," showing "ambiguity," and "paradoxes," but never confronting or altering the conditions of dominant rule in which it operates. Since the postwar global expansion of the democratist doctrine, art has become one of its primary tools of legitimization: art exactly embodies the "freedom" that democratist rule claims to bring to the world. And the more art criticizes its superstructure, the more it confirms the engineering structures of democratism as the final phase of historical political struggle. For where else than in democratism do politics and its free markets ask artists to be critical of their own rule?

Possibly the ultimate example of the bizarre conglomerate of the power of state and "free market" in employing art as democratist propaganda is a notorious CIA funded project during the Cold War, the "Congress for Cultural Freedom," which was among other things tasked with globally promoting the works of American abstract expressionist artists in response to the pictorial regime of socialist realism as the officially sanctioned art of the Soviet Union. Through the Congress for Cultural Freedom, which journalist and historian Frances Stonor Saunders has described in *Who Paid the Piper?* as the "Deminform," the notion of "abstract art" became a synonym for "free art." Even though the American public was far from charmed by the works of the abstract expressionists, this abstraction allowed democratism in the context of the Cold War to be depicted as the "natural" outcome of centuries of social struggles precisely by ruling out all depiction. The work of that Cold War weapon, Jackson Pollock, is the ultimate figurative representation of the incapacity of the artist to understand his role as an instrument of democratism. This implies that I do not acknowledge his work as abstract, but that I perceive it as a series of figurations that we are supposed to recognize as "abstraction." I would claim that it is not the artwork as such that is the work of democratist propaganda, but that the figure of the democratist artist "performing" gestures that have been "liberated" from the dogma of figuration is the real ideological expression.

Wasn't that why the "critical" theater group Orkater and the author Arnon Grunberg joined the Dutch troops in Afghanistan in 2006? Both are known as critical cultural producers who have translated their experiences in Afghanistan to expose the ambiguities and paradoxes of war, the discrepancies between the home command and the war on the ground. Interestingly enough, it is not in spite of, but precisely because of this criticality that they were tolerated by the military. By their mere presence, the artists prove the success of democratism as an exported product: its transparency and self-critique extend to the point where war is being criticized even while it is being waged. However this critique never brought the war to an end. Here of course we arrive once again at the methodology of the blank vote: the act of critique "within" the system, needs its imaginative counterpart—the space it wishes to open up rather than to occupy—in order to move beyond its legitimation. Instead, in the case of Afghanistan, the artist has become a living statue of liberty in favor of democratist rule.

The Art of Fundamental Democracy

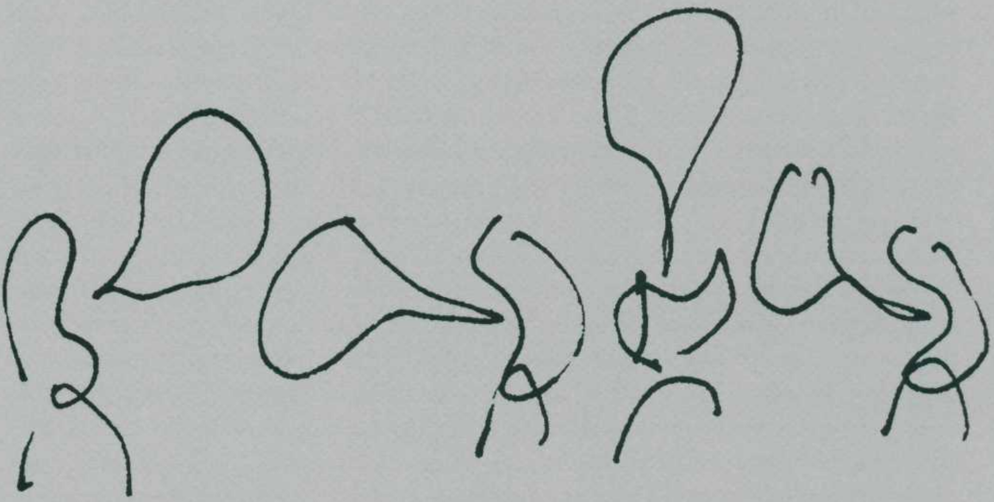
Following Saramago's pamphlet, I believe that the militant blank voters of the progressive political project are to be found in what I regard as the "international democratization movement," which is certainly not as new as is often claimed, although it has made its mark in recent years by developing its claims in a dialectic between the not so World Wide Web and our cities' "public" squares. I believe that this movement's claims reside in a refusal to continue to operate under the conditions of a domain dictated by unknown others, and a demand to shape and decide upon these conditions ourselves. In other words, where democratism is defined by the maintenance of the monopolies of power in the field of politics, economy, ecology, and the public domain, this movement—which I refer to as "fundamental democracy"—demands the mass democratization of the fields of politics, economy, ecology, and the public domain.

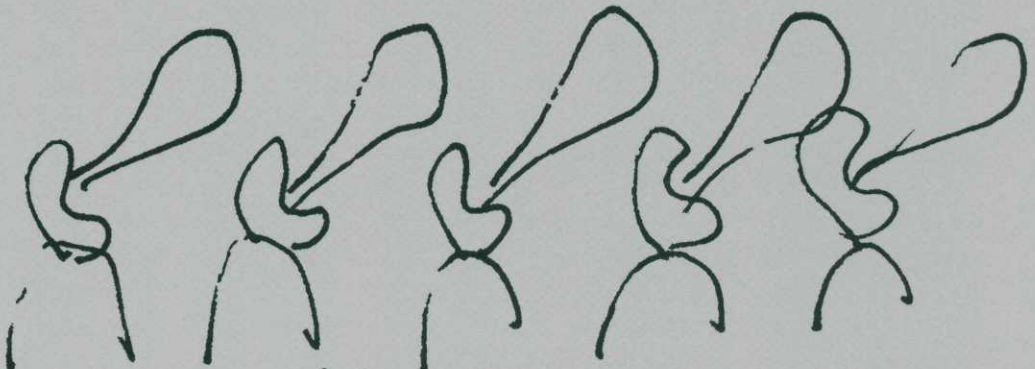
What we witness in the international democratization movement is the blank vote in practice. However different the conditions are that resulted in the Indignados protests in Spain, Catalonia, and the Basque Country, the worldwide Occupy Movement, Real Democracy Now in Greece or the Gezi protests in Turkey, the old Green and new Pirate Parties, the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative (IMMI), Wikileaks, and the leading role of whistleblowers such as Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden, we can recognize some common denominators. The most important being the reoccurring demand to organize ourselves not simply as "citizens," but as political beings. This demand translates in the shape of public spaces where the meaning of this concept of egalitarian society is explored in varying collectives: through protests, squares, and virtual spaces. By working on what has sometimes been referred to as the "parallel polis," parallel political infrastructures, cooperatives, and collectives that enact the principle of the commons through day to day political work and sometimes—as is the case with the "Indignados party," Partido X—in between parliamentary and public space, they are forms of political action that transcend the moment of gathering by becoming infrastructure. This means that the act of revolt becomes the art of day to day living beyond the structures that have previously subjected us to their governance. Political commentators tend to see only the empty squares of our cities, arguing that yet another protest movement has disappeared; but what they choose not to see is how these movements are interconnected, borrowing from each other's successes and mistakes, and slowly building a common agenda and a common infrastructure. This is an infrastructure where we do not outsource our vote (the Dutch word for vote, *stem*, literally means "voice"), but where we attempt to shape ourselves. This notion of fundamental democracy as an emancipatory movement that does not take territorial or ethnic dimensions as its basic points of orientation, but grounds itself in the spirit of internationalism, is irreconcilable with democratism.

In his book *Mammonart* (1924), Upton Sinclair attempted to analyze the history of art as a history of the ruling classes. He regarded the time he lived in as "extended prehistory,“ dedicating his life to the dawn of a new internationalism that would break with the prehistory of man under capitalism that equally defined the prehistory of art. His exploration of what we today could consider as the "culture industry" starts with a group of cavemen. The cave drawings of the protagonist Mr. Ogi scare the leader of the group of caveman, forcing Mr. Ogi to convince him that his drawings are made not to invoke resistance against the leader, but as a way of acknowledging, honoring, and expanding the leader's existing power.

The history of art as something more than the narration of the dominant class has, according to Sinclair, yet to be written. He would most certainly have endorsed Andrea Fraser's famous dictum "We are all always already serving," and he ends his exercise in an institutional critique *avant la lettre* with the following words:

> *The artists of our time are like men hypnotized, repeating over and over a dreary formula of futility. And I say: Break this evil spell, young comrade; go out and*





CONSENSUS

> *meet the new dawning life, take your part in the battle, and put it into new art; do this service for a new public, which you yourself will make. [...] that your creative gift shall not be content to make artworks, but shall at the same time make a world; shall make new souls, moved by a new ideal of fellowship, a new impulse of love, and faith—and not merely hope, but determination.*

Our task as artists is to expose, defy, and change the conditions that maintain the violent, criminal core of democratist politics. In the field of art, the historical basis for the need to alter the conditions of our practice to oppose democratist instrumentalization can be found in the movement of institutional critique and its inroads into the field of concrete political practice—not in order to produce art, but to change the conditions that have taken hostage the figure of the artist as a living statue of liberty in favor of the doctrine of democratism. Democratist freedom has proven to be a freedom in the service of a continuously expanding global state of control, placed there through the "incentive" of tools of massively subsidized markets and illegal wars. Artistic freedom today should be tied to a different ideological project: an exploration of a principled fundamental democracy in which the imaginative force of art is a primary tool to defy rather than secure democratist monopolies of power.

We oppose the monopolies of democratism that define our world in order to break them. Breaking them is an act of liberation, releasing power from the privileged to a public sphere. Revolutionary moments are the moments when power becomes unstable, when power is no longer capable of holding itself together. These are moments when power becomes fluid, undefined; moments in which it belongs indiscriminately to the people as a whole. What Saramago tells us is that this revolutionary moment cannot be separated from a progressive art. The mass performance of blank voting, this call to become political beings, is as much a conceptual proposition as a concrete mode of action. It is as much a questioning of the conditions of representation as a tool to arrive at new ones. The truth of politics is here first spoken by art; its radical imaginative force redefines our notion of politics as whole. As Sinclair makes clear to us, the art of a fundamental democracy is not only to question the world and imagine it differently but to redefine the concept of political action, of political being in the world itself. Not to make new artworks, but to make a world. For the world we live in is not merely "a world," it is our common world. The task of progressive art is to make that truth a reality.

Jonas Staal *(NL) is a Dutch visual artist who focuses on the relationship between art, politics, and ideology. He is the founder of the artistic and political organization, New World Summit, which contributes to building alternative political spheres for organizations banned from democratic discourse, and together with BAK basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, of the New World Academy, that connects political organizations invested in the progressive project to artists and students. Jonas Staal was a member of the collective Artists in Occupy Amsterdam.*

Chantal Mouffe

Artistic Strategies in Politics and Political Strategies in Art

The central theme of the 170-hour 2012 marathon camp, "Truth is Concrete," was how to envision artistic strategies in politics and political strategies in art. There was general consensus in refusing the view that artists and cultural workers can no longer play a critical role in society because they have become a necessary part of capitalist production. According to this view, the production of symbols is now a central goal of capitalism and, through the development of the creative industries, individuals have become totally subjugated to the control of capital. Not only consumers, but cultural producers too have been transformed in passive functions of the capitalist system. They are prisoners of a culture industry that is dominated by the media and entertainments corporations.

Yet this consensus vanished when it came to visualizing the types of resistance to which artistic practices could make a decisive contribution and the forms that those resistances should take. One of the main disagreements concerned the spaces in which resistances should be deployed and the type of relationship to be established with institutions. Should critical artistic practices engage with current institutions with the aim of transforming them or should they desert them altogether? One position consisted in advocating what may be termed a strategy of withdrawal. It claimed that, under post-Fordist conditions, artists working inside the existing system are transformed into businessmen and totally instrumentalized. They are therefore bound to contribute to its reproduction. Resistances are still possible however but they can only be located outside the institutions of the art world, which have become complicit with capitalism and can no longer provide a site for critical artistic practices. The objective of critical art practices should be to contribute to the development of the new social relations made possible by the transformation of the work process. Their main task is the production of new subjectivities and the elaboration of new worlds that would create the conditions for the self-organization of the multitude.

This view of the role of art practices goes hand in hand with a conception of radical politics formulated in terms of Exodus, as coined by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, as well as Paolo Virno. This Exodus strategy comes in different versions, depending on how the future of the multitude is envisioned. Yet all these versions assert that the traditional structures of power organized around the national state and representative democracy have become irrelevant and will progressively disappear. Hence the belief that the multitude can ignore the existing power structures and concentrate its efforts on constructing alternative social forms outside the state power network. Any collaboration with the traditional channels of politics, such as parties or trade unions, is to be avoided. The majoritarian model of society, organized around a state needs to be abandoned in favor of another model of organization presented as more universal. It has the form of a unity provided by common places of the mind, cognitive-linguistic habits and the general intellect.

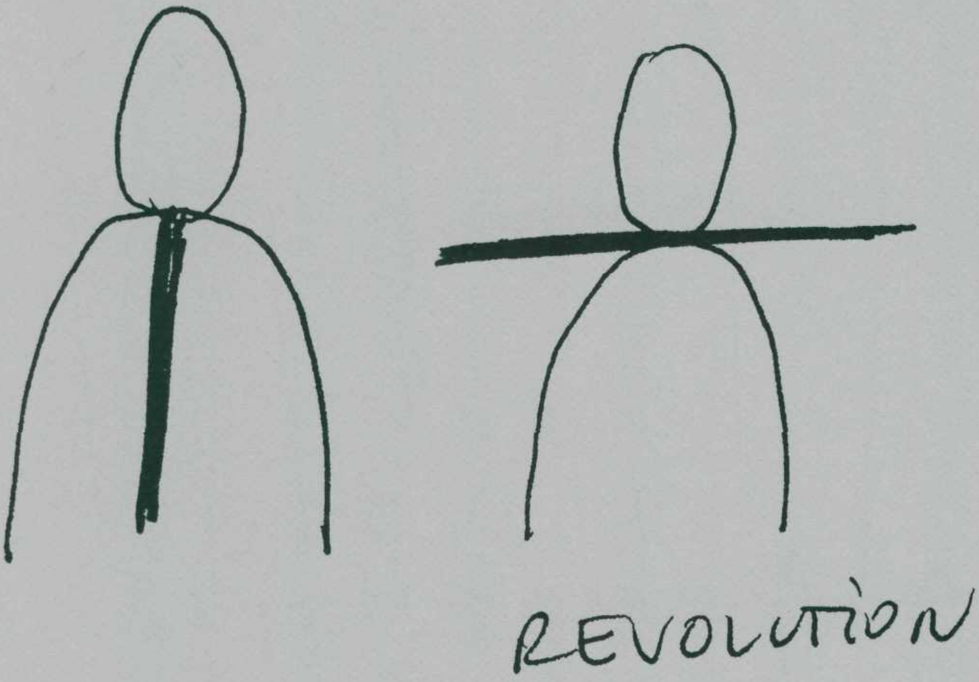
The other position contested the pertinence of this withdrawal from institutions and recommended instead an engagement with institutions. This strategy is informed by a theoretical approach whose key concepts are "antagonism" and "hegemony." This approach asserts that addressing the question of "the political" requires the acknowledgment of the ever present possibility of antagonism, and a coming to terms with the lack of a final ground and the undecidability pervading every order. This signifies recognizing the hegemonic nature of every kind of social order and envisaging every society as the product of a series of practices that attempt to establish order in a context of contingency. Those practices of articulation, through which a certain order is created and the meaning of social institutions fixed, we term "hegemonic practices." Every order is seen as the temporary and precarious articulation of contingent practices. Things could always have been otherwise and every order is therefore predicated on the exclusion of other possibilities. It is in that sense that it may be called "political," since it is the expression of a particular structure of power relations. What is at a given moment considered the natural order is the result of sedimented hegemonic practices; it is never the manifestation of a deeper objectivity exterior to the practices that bring it into being. Every hegemonic order is therefore always susceptible to being challenged by "counter-hegemonic" practices, that is, practices which attempt to disarticulate the existing order so as to install another form of hegemony. This counter-hegemonic struggle does not take the form of an exodus from the existing institutions, but should be visualized in terms of what Gramsci calls "a war of position," whose aim is to profoundly transform those institutions by critically engaging with them.

Such a strategy requires an adequate understanding of the current dynamics of capitalism. In order to grasp the stakes of the counter-hegemonic struggle, it is necessary to correctly envision the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism. We can find interesting insights for such a project in Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello's analysis of that transition. In their book *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, they bring to light the role played by what they call "art critique" in the transformation undergone by capitalism in the last decades of the twentieth century. They indicate how the demands for autonomy by the new movements of the 1960s have been harnessed in the development of the post-Fordist networked economy and transformed into new forms of control. The aesthetic strategies of the counter-culture—the search for authenticity, the ideal of self-management, the anti-hierarchical exigency—are now used to promote the conditions required by the current mode of capitalist regulation, replacing the disciplinary framework characteristic of the Fordist period. Nowadays artistic and cultural production play a central role in the process of capital valorization and, through what they refer to as "neo-management," have been transformed into an important element of capitalist productivity.

What I find interesting in this approach is that it shows that an important dimension in the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism was a process of discursive rearticulation of a set of existing discourses and practices, thereby allowing us to apprehend this transition in terms of a hegemonic struggle. To be sure, Boltanski and Chiapello do not use this terminology. Yet theirs is a clear example of what Gramsci calls "hegemony through neutralization" or "passive revolution" to refer to the situation where, by satisfying them in a way that neutralizes their subversive potential, demands that challenge an established hegemonic order are recuperated by the existing system. Envisioned in such a way, the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism can be visualized as a hegemonic move by capital to reestablish its leading role and restore its legitimacy.

Such an analysis helps us develop a complex understanding of the forces at play in the emergence of the current neoliberal hegemony. This hegemony is the result of a set of political interventions in a complex field of economic, legal, and ideological forces. It is a discursive construction that articulates a manifold of practices, discourses, and language games of a very different nature. Through a process of sedimentation, the political origin of those contingent practices has been erased, and they have become naturalized. Neoliberal practices and institutions therefore appear as the outcome of natural processes, and the forms of identifications that they have produced have crystallized in identities that are taken for granted. This is how the worldview that provides the framework for what most people currently perceive as possible and desirable has been established. To challenge neoliberalism it is therefore vital to transform this framework, and this is precisely what the hegemonic struggle ought to be about.

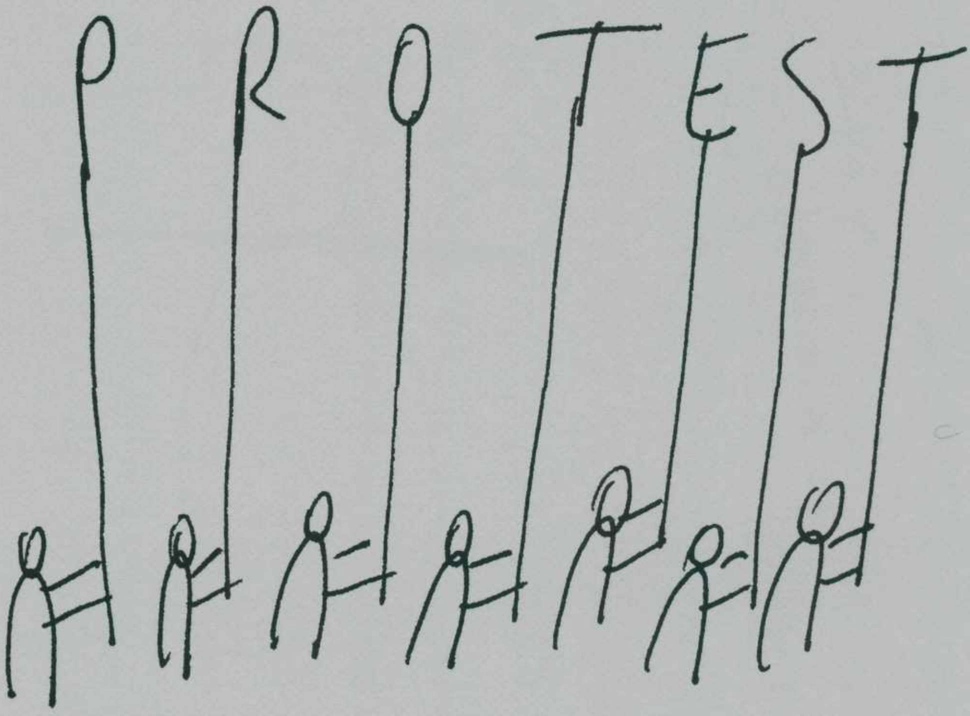
When it comes to apprehending the relations between art and politics, and addressing the issue of art strategies in politics and political strategies in art, I submit that the hegemonic approach is particularly fruitful. By bringing to the fore the discursive character of the social, it reveals how it is that "our world" is constructed through a multiplicity of discursive practices, a construction that is always the result of a particular hegemony. Moreover, it highlights the fact that hegemonic confrontation is not limited to traditional political institutions, but that it also takes place in the multiplicity of places where hegemony is constructed, i.e., the domain of what is usually called "civil society." This is where, as Gramsci has shown, a particular conception of the world is established and a specific understanding of reality is defined (what he refers to as "common sense") providing the terrain in



which specific forms of subjectivity are constructed. And he repeatedly emphasizes the centrality of cultural and art practices in the formation and diffusion of this "common sense."

Acknowledging the centrality of the cultural terrain in the construction of a hegemony allows us to enquire into how cultural and art practices might contribute to a counter-hegemonic challenge to neoliberal hegemony. Before addressing this question, I would like to clarify that the hegemonic approach does not envision the relation between art and politics in terms of two separately constituted fields, with art on the one side and politics on the other, between which a relation would need to be established. There is an aesthetic dimension to the political and a political dimension to art. Indeed from the point of view of the theory of hegemony, art practices play a role in the constitution and maintenance of a given symbolic order, or in challenging it, and that is where their political dimension resides. The political, for its part, concerns *the symbolic ordering of social relations and that is where its aesthetic dimension* resides. This is why it is not appropriate to make a distinction between "political" art and supposedly "non-political" art. The question should be couched in terms of the possible forms of critical art.

Critical art practices are those that contribute in a variety of ways to unsettle the dominant hegemony and play a part in the process of disarticulation/rearticulation



that characterizes a counter-hegemonic politics. This counter-hegemonic politics aims at targeting the institutions that secure the dominant hegemony so as to bring about profound transformations in the way they function. This "war of position" strategy is composed of a diversity of practices and interventions that operate in a multiplicity of spaces: economic, legal, political, and cultural. As we have seen, the domain of culture plays a crucial role because this is one of the terrains where "common sense" is built and subjectivities constructed. In the present conjuncture, with the decisive role played by culture industries in the capitalist process of reproduction, the cultural and artistic terrain has acquired ever greater strategic importance. Artistic and cultural production is indeed vital for capital valorization. This is due to the increasing reliance of post-Fordist capitalism on semiotic techniques in order to create the modes of subjectification which are necessary for its reproduction. As Foucault pointed out, in modern production the control of souls is crucial in governing affects and passions. The forms of exploitation characteristic of the days when manual labor was dominant have been replaced by new ones constantly calling for the creation of new needs and incessant desires for the acquisition of goods. To maintain its hegemony, the capitalist system needs to permanently mobilize people's desires and shape their identities and the cultural terrain, with its various institutions, occupies a key position in this process.

According to such a perspective, it is not by deserting the institutional terrain that critical art practices can contribute to the counter-hegemonic struggle, but by engaging with it, with the aim of fostering dissent. This can be done by creating a multiplicity of what I call "agonistic" spaces where the dominant consensus is challenged and where new modes of identification are made available. Since the fostering of agonistic public spaces is an important dimension of how I envision the counter-hegemonic struggle, it is worth clarifying what I mean by this notion. I should specify right away that we are never dealing with one single space. As I see it, agonistic confrontation takes place in a multiplicity of discursive surfaces, and public spaces are always plural. I would also like to insist on a second important point. While there is no underlying principle of unity, no predetermined center to this diversity of spaces, there always exist diverse forms of articulation among them, and we are not confronted with the kind of dispersion envisioned by some postmodernist thinkers. Nor are we faced with the kind of "smooth" space found in Deleuze and his followers. Public spaces are always striated and hegemonically structured. A given hegemony results from a specific articulation of a diversity of spaces and this means that the hegemonic struggle also consists in an attempt to create a different form of articulation among public spaces.

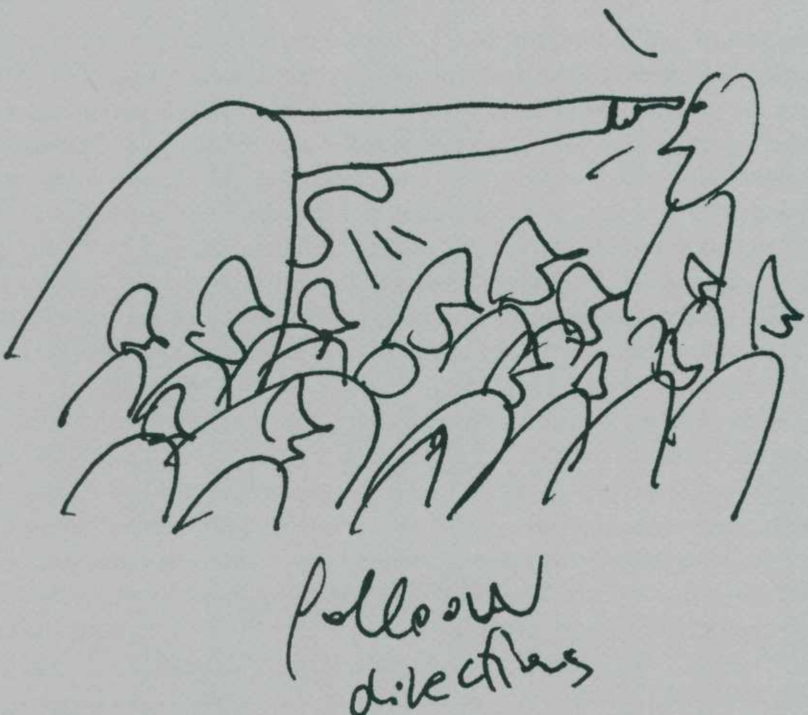
Agonistic public spaces provide the terrain where conflicting points of view are confronted without any possibility of a final reconciliation. Such an agonistic view challenges the widespread conception of the public space, which is conceived as the terrain where one should aim to create consensus. It is for instance very different from the conception defended by Jürgen Habermas, who presents what he calls the "public sphere" as the place where deliberation aimed at rational consensus takes place. To be sure, Habermas now accepts that, given the limitations of social life, such a consensus is unlikely be reached and sees his "ideal situation of communication" as a "regulative idea." However, from the perspective of the hegemonic approach, the impediments to the Habermasian ideal speech situation are not empirical, but ontological. Indeed, one of its main tenets is that such a rational consensus is a conceptual impossibility because it presupposes the availability of consensus without exclusion, which is precisely what the hegemonic approach reveals to be impossible.

To visualize public spaces in an agonistic way has important consequences for artistic and cultural practices, highlighting the multiplicity of ways in which they can contribute to the hegemonic struggle. Clearly, those who foster the creation of agonistic public spaces, envision the role of art practices in a very different way than those whose objective is to build consensus. Critical art, for them, is constituted by a manifold of art practices aimed at bringing to the fore the existence of alternatives to the current postpolitical order. Its critical dimension consists in making visible what the dominant consensus tends to obscure and obliterate. Good examples of this kind of critical art can be found, for instance, in the work of artists like Alfredo Jaar and Krzysztof Wodiczko who, in different ways, question many of the assumptions informing neoliberal common sense.

I would like to stress that, envisioned in such a way, critical art practices do not try to lift a supposedly false consciousness so as to reveal "true reality." This would be completely at odds with the anti-essentialist premises of the theory of hegemony, which rejects the very idea of "true consciousness." It is always through insertion in a manifold of practices, discourses, and languages games that specific forms of individualities are constructed. What is at stake in the transformation of political identities can never be a rationalist appeal to the true interest of the subject, but the inscription of the social agent in practices that will mobilize its affects in a way so as to transform the framework in which the dominant process of identification is taking place in order to bring about other forms of identification. This means that, to construct oppositional identities, it is not enough to simply foster a process of "deidentification," or "disarticulation"; a second move of "reidentification" and "rearticulation" is needed to allow for the emergence of new identities. To insist only on the first move is in fact to remain trapped in a problematic according to which negation would be sufficient on its own to bring about something positive. It is as if new subjectivities were already available, ready to emerge when the weight of the dominant ideology has been lifted. Such a view, which informs many forms of critical art, fails to come to terms with the nature of the hegemonic struggle and the complex process of the construction of identities. Indeed, as Yannis Stavrakakis points out in *The Lacanian Left*, "a critique of an ideological system of meaning cannot be effective if it remains at a purely deconstructive level; it requires a mapping of the fantasies that support this system and an encircling of its symptomatic function."

I would also like to emphasize that, in examining the relation between art and politics, it is important to adopt a pluralistic perspective. There are a great many ways to bring about agonistic spaces and they can emerge both inside and outside institutions. In the specific domain of art practices, such an approach encourages a diversity of interventions, inside and outside the traditional world of art. Critical art practices can take many different forms and exist in a multiplicity of terrains. Museums, for instance, can, under certain conditions, provide spaces for agonistic confrontation, and it is a mistake to believe that artists who choose to work with them cannot play a critical role and that they are automatically recuperated by the system.

On the other hand, it is also necessary to look beyond the art world and to acknowledge the significance of the various forms of art activism that have flourished in recent years. By putting aesthetic means at the service of political activism, this "artivism" can be seen as a counter-hegemonic response to the capitalist appropriation of aesthetics in order to secure its valorization process. In its manifold manifestations, artivism can certainly contribute to subverting postpolitical common sense and to creating new subjectivities. During the Marathon, we had the opportunity to witness different types of artivist interventions. We saw how Reverend Billy denounces corporate capitalism through performances that take the form of sermons. We have became acquainted with the strategy of Public



Movement thanks to their project "Rebranding European Muslims" and also with Lexxus Legal's use of hip hop as a weapon to raise consciousness about several political issues in Africa, particularly about Aids. For his part the Colombian, Antanas Mockus, former mayor of Bogota, showed how artivist interventions can contribute to develop practices of civility in a big metropolis. In a more general context, one could also mention forms of artivism influenced by the Situationist strategy of *détournement* that, like The Yes Men, are extremely effective in disrupting the smooth image that corporate capitalism is attempting to impose, thus bringing to the fore its repressive character.

Artistic strategies in politics and political strategies in art are, in my view, both legitimate and important. They can play a decisive role in the counter-hegemonic struggle by fomenting an agonistic contestation. However we need to be aware that critical art practices, in whatever form they are conceived, are no substitute for political practices and that they will never be able, on their own, to bring about a new hegemonic order. In the construction of this new order, the strictly political moment cannot be avoided. The success of radical politics requires new political subjectivities, but this only represents one dimension—vital as it is—in the war of position. Many further steps need to be taken in establishing a new hegemony, and the long march through political institutions cannot be avoided.

On the nature and importance of this "war of position," an interesting parallel can be established between the discussion concerning critical art practices and the current one about the potential of recent protest movements. Theorists promoting the "Exodus" approach see in those movements the expression of new "horizontalist" or "presentist" democratic practices. They claim that they are a manifestation of the power of the multitude constructing new forms of social relations outside traditional institutions. They see the various encampments as a prefiguration of "absolute democracy" and celebrate them as the realization of the "common." In my view, the strategy of focusing exclusively on horizontalism is what constitutes the main limitation of mobilizations by the likes of Indignados or Occupy. In their call for "*¡Democracia Real Ya!*" (Real Democracy NOW!), the Indignados of 15M reject the representative democratic system in favor of "real" democracy, promoting "assembleism" instead of "parliamentarism." Insisting on remaining without leaders, they refuse to have anything to do with traditional political institutions like elections, parties, or trade unions. A similar negative stance toward representative authorities is found among the various Occupy movements in Europe and North American which, like Indignados, function as leaderless networks, as platforms without a center. They have certainly stirred up a welcome debate about the shortcomings of current representative forms, but, without institutional relays, this kind of protest was bound to be short-lived and they have almost disappeared. In countries, like Greece, where a sustained popular mobilization is still taking place, this is due to an articulation of different forms of protest under the leadership of Syriza, a coalition of left parties. Its objective is to come to power through elections in order to implement a set of radical reforms. The aim is clearly not the demise of representative institutions, but their profound transformation to make them more representative of popular demands. It is a strategy of "engagement with institutions" not of "withdrawal" from them.

To the reading of the protest movements in terms of Exodus I would like to propose another one informed by a critique of the postpolitical trend. We are currently witnessing a crisis of representation as a consequence of the "consensus at the center" that has come to dominate politics in most liberal-democratic societies. This consensus, which is the result of the unchallenged hegemony of neoliberalism, deprives democratic citizens of an agonistic debate where they can make their voices heard and choose between real alternatives. Until recently, it was mainly through right-wing populist parties that people were able to vent their frustration and anger against such a postpolitical situation. With the recent protests, we are seeing the emergence of other much more laudable ways of reacting against the democratic deficit that characterizes our "postdemocratic" societies. But what is at stake in both cases is a profound dissatisfaction with the existing state of democracy. If so many people, not only among the young, but across the whole population, are now taking to the street. This is because they have lost faith in traditional parties and feel that their voices cannot be heard through traditional political channels. As one motto of the protesters goes: "We have a vote, but we do not have a voice."

Understood as a refusal of the postpolitical order, recent protests can be read as a call for the radicalization of liberal democratic institutions, not for their rejection. What they demand are better, more inclusive forms of representation. To satisfy their demand for a "voice," existing representative institutions have to be transformed and new ones established so as to create the conditions for an agonistic confrontation where citizens would be offered real alternatives. Such a confrontation requires the emergence of a genuine left that is able to offer an alternative to the social-liberal consensus dominant in center-left parties. What constitutes the central problem with our current postpolitical model is the absence of such agonistic confrontation, and this will not be remedied through "horizontalist" practices.

That is not to say that those struggles and their specific practices do not have a role to play in an agonistic democracy. I am convinced that the variety of extra-parliamentary struggles and the multiple forms of activism are valuable, not only in bringing to the fore issues that are neglected, but in providing a realm for the cultivation of different social relations. This type of activism also provides a favorable terrain where artivist practices can develop agonistic modes of intervention. Indeed those practices usually flourish in the public spaces provided by those movements, and can play a significant role in a counter-hegemonic offensive. What I again contend here is that "horizontalist" practices cannot provide a substitute for representative institutions and that it is necessary to establish a synergy between them and other, more institutional forms of struggle.

I hope that by now it is clear that I am not arguing in favor of a purely institutional conception of politics or for the relegation of critical art practices to the traditional domain of the art world, but for an articulation of different modes of political intervention in a multiplicity of spaces. The hegemonic approach envisions radical politics as an articulation of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggles, and aims to establish a synergy between parties and social movements. Challenging the view that institutions cannot be transformed and that resistances can only develop and be successful by deserting them, the hegemonic strategy of "war of position" stresses the need to combine political strategies in art and art strategies in politics. In our postpolitical times where the dominant discourse tries to occlude the very possibility of an alternative to the current order, any practices that contribute to the subversion and destabilization of the hegemonic neoliberal consensus are welcome.

***Chantal Mouffe** (BE/GB) is a political theorist and professor of Political Theory at the University of Westminster. She is the author of several books, including* The Democratic Paradox, On the Political, *and* Agonistics. *She is currently developing a non-rationalist approach to political theory and formulating an "agonistic" model of democracy, and is engaged in research on the rise of right-wing populism in Europe and the place of Europe in a multipolar world order.*

Gerald Raunig

Occupy the Theater, Molecularize the Museum!

Inventing the (Art) Institution of the Commons

In times of persistent multiple crises, the moves of neoliberal institutional reformism cannot just continue as if it were art business as usual. But nor is there space for naïve anti-institutionalism or pathetic theory/practice divides either. All the inventive power of text machines and social machines must work together to find radical alternatives while the ship of machinic capitalism is not only sinking, but making its permanent demise ever more productive.

We can neither go on fetishizing practice and activism as territories beyond theory production (as some protagonists of artivism seem to have it), nor go on privileging the cynical rule of negativity, shying away from getting our hands dirty (as certain anti-activist strands of contemporary theory do). Instead of keeping our hands or our heads clean, especially in the privileged geographies of central, western, and northern Europe, and even more especially from the perspective of its most highly privileged sectors like the fields of art and knowledge production, we have to involve ourselves in conceptualizing and instituting other worlds.

Instituting other worlds implies, on the one hand, inventing ever new instituent practices wherever possible, but also occupying, reterritorializing, and molecularizing existing art institutions, when many of them become dysfunctional, out of joint, or even fall apart. To occupy art institutions does not just mean conducting spectacular one-off actions in art spaces or occupying museums from time to time, leaving the institutional structures unchanged. It means persistently transforming institutions from within and without, as well as physically occupying and molecularizing (evaded) institutions and making them common.

There is no essential opposition between instituent practices and institutions of the common—as long as we do not just serve the institutions, as long as we do not conserve the institutions, as long as we reinvent their very forms.

Becoming Common

If we are really dealing with a "communism of capital" today, as Paolo Virno, Christian Marazzi, or Antonio Negri assert, how can this perverted form of "communism" be turned into a new commonism? The commons is not homologous to the old concept of the public, it does not refer to the state or a sphere of civic debate. It thwarts the dichotomy of private and public, and even that of individual and collective. Especially in the terrain of machinic capitalism, which centers around coopting and valorizing cooperation and sociality, the currents of social cooperation have to be differently reterritorialized, not as the old concept of the public sphere suggests: not as occupying a homogeneous space, not as regaining sovereignty in the form of an old community or a territorial state, but rather as recomposition of the commons, as continuous production of the commons, as becoming common.

But what does "commons" mean here? As Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt write in their preface to *Common Wealth*, the commons is, on the one hand, "the common wealth of the material world—the air, the water, the fruits of the soil, and all nature's bounty—which in classical European political texts is often claimed to be the inheritance of humanity as a whole." On the other hand, and this is the aspect stressed by Hardt and Negri, the commons encompasses "those results of social production that are necessary for social interaction and further production, such as knowledge, languages, codes, information, affects, and so forth." In terms of the latter, the commons therefore means the practices of interaction, of care, of living together in a common world. These are practices that do not consider "humanity" as separate from "nature," either in the logic of exploitation or in that of protection.

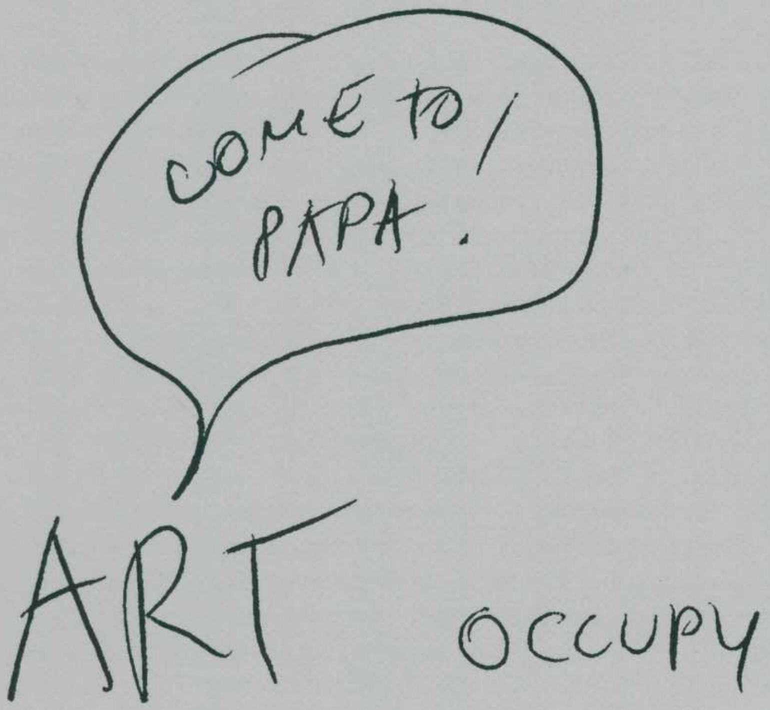
Both aspects of the commons, material and immaterial, however, are not to be understood simply as something that exists naturally, which needs only to be cultivated and managed, but rather as a constantly present production of the commons. In this context, a third aspect can be inferred in addition to the basic aspects of the commons. This third aspect centers around the question of recomposing multiplicity: the commons as the self-organization of social cooperation. Yet, the self-organization meant here is not at all a simple empirical fact or even a seemingly natural automatism, but rather the political project of instituting the commons. Instituting the commons implies that it cannot be understood as a being-common, but only as a becoming-common, as a constant production of the common.

The Modulating Museum

What would become of institutions in the art field, if they become institutions of the commons? Of course it does not suffice that they are public institutions that preserve and administer the archives and collections entrusted to them as remainders of a "common heritage" for an educated class. Yet they would also not be institutions of the commons if they only prepared and conveyed these treasures of a past "common" to as many people as possible. The commons is not a quantity of cultural assets accumulated in the past, which is either reserved for the few or foisted on the broad masses through education by experts from cultural history and museum pedagogy. Gone are the days not only of exclusive cultural connoisseurship, but also of the populist imperative of participation.

Public access to high culture for as many strata of the population as possible, access in the sense of the material accessibility of "cultural treasures" and access in the sense of conveying know-how in order to achieve immaterial access: all of that sounds good, but it has been tainted in recent decades by machinic capitalism. In the age of neoliberal transformation, the social-democratic museum as a public service has turned into a modulating museum (and this transformation can refer to any institution in the art field). First of all, this clearly implies a development that turns the demand for "culture for all" into a simple logic of increasing the number of museum visitors. However, this is not simply a matter of quantities, but rather of the instrumentalizing mixture of modularizing and modulating, of counting and discounting. On the one hand, time and space are organized, striated, and gridded in small structures for those working in the museum, but increasingly for visitors as well, so that the modularization of all participants is taken to an extreme. At the same time, the modulating state of cultural education never ends: in the new mode of modulation, people never stop starting, and they are never finished with forming and deforming the self. The imperative of participation implies this double interpellation of modulation: an interpellation of measuring modularization, and an appeal to be prepared to constantly stay on the move, change, adapt, vary oneself. Take as a concrete example of this double modulation the modularization of visitors in a big museum, the striation and identification of their time and the museum space, and at the same time the modulating of the visitor streams who are never allowed stop (or sit down or have a break for contemplation) in order for the museum to sell the optimum number of tickets.

In this double mode of modulation, "culture for all" implies that art institutions have a culture-political obligation to push quantity and marketing in a populist-spectacular way, and "culture from all," in its perverted neoliberal form, indicates an all-encompassing (self)obligation to participate. On the side of the institution as well as on the side of reception, modulation becomes the focal point: striating and measuring mass culture consumption on the one hand, the modulating interpellation of creativity and cooperation, participation and activation of each and every one on the other. The once social-democratic concepts of culture for all and culture from all, which have marked European cultural policies in the last four decades in more or less progressive formations, have successively been divested of their originally emancipatory aims. Today they have become core components of the modulating museum.



Molecularizing the Museum

Against the backdrop of this modulation of the museum, it is all too easy to again yearn for the conservative-conserving institution: back to the bosom of the canon, of art historical tradition, of aesthetic rules. It seems as though the only alternative to modulation is to be found in a return to the obsolete mechanisms of national and colonial "public" institutions. Yet we can still reject the choice between Scylla and Charybdis, between neoliberal and reactionary, between a modulating or exclusionary positioning of the art institution: there is a possibility for disobedience to the alternatives of adapting to the neoliberal mainstream or returning to an elitist figure of molarity. Here it is important that the art institution is regarded neither solely as an appendage to the state or the art market, nor as a heterotopia that could function by itself as being completely other than the state and the market. Constructing a deviation from the false choice between a neoliberal and a reactionary form means, in the best case, understanding the art institution as indeed being part of a state apparatus in the late welfare state. What if the art institution is capable of transforming the state apparatus from the inside, specifically to the extent that it becomes a potential institution of the common?

In the multiple crises we have experienced in recent years, the actors of the art field cannot simply reduce themselves to an orderly retreat of progressive forces, to the business of managing dwindling cultural budgets, to obediently executing the austerity policies of European governments in its new quality of a rigid divide between south and north. The crisis is not a purely economic one. It does not affect only budgets: it produces a rupture in the familiar continuum of cuts and practical constraints, at best forcing the institutions to think about an altered function in relation to other socialities and geographies.

It is exactly at the crisis-related rupture of the art institution that an offensive becomes imaginable, which consciously impels the transformation from "public institutions" to "institutions of the commons." Especially where there are remainders of the welfare state, these are not to be just compliantly fed into the modulating mechanics of machinic capitalism. The point is to reorganize remainders of the civil public sphere and of society conceived as social-democratic, in order to redirect the modulating institution and to transform the public into the common. In a certain way, this implies no less than inventing the state anew, specifically because, while and where it still rudimentarily functions. Or rather it implies inventing a new form of state apparatus while the old one still exists. This bottom-up reinvention of the institution from below is not meant as a molar procedure, like a block or just a takeover of existing structures. It can only succeed as molecular revolution, as molecularizing the institution, if it is tried out from many different sides, in small contexts, in many micromeasures, and in radical openness to questions of organization.

Perhaps it seems farfetched to expect art institutions to reinvent the state. This expectation may not meet with success either, but in comparison with other state institutions, such as health, education, science, or research institutions, the art field certainly has advantages. An odd mixture of claims of autonomy, experimental orientations, the self-evident expectation of critical stances and attention to political topics enhances the potential for free spaces and turns art institutions into exceptional cases in comparison with other institutions.

In the art field, it is also possible to build on the concrete experiences of progressive art institutions in Europe: while the otherwise neoliberal policies, sometimes under the flag of a "New Institutionalism," undermined institutions in the 1990s and 2000s, a minoritarian line of radical cultural policies developed in the visual art field, which is already to be interpreted, in certain aspects, in the direction of institutions of the commons. They have all become experienced in starting more or less radical experiments in self-transformation, sometimes at the level of content, theory, and discourse, sometimes also concerning their modes of production and molecular forms of organization. Think of smaller ones like Shedhalle in Zurich, already in the 1990s a place for radical feminist critique, and right now opening up once again to manifold struggles far beyond the art field. Or think of big museums of contemporary art like the Vanabbe in Eindhoven, producing a Dutch variant of transnational critical art practices and educational projects. Or think of the Spanish cases of MACBA in Barcelona, with its clear link to social movements throughout the 2000s (from anti-globalization to the EuroMayDay movements and beyond), or Reina Sofía in Madrid, a national museum with the name of the Queen in its title, and yet famous for its advanced political exhibition program and for specific cooperations, amongst others with the Fundación de los Comunes.

The Spanish Foundation of the Commons is a laboratory and assemblage of diverse self-organized spaces and projects in Spain, social centers, social media networks, independent bookshops, radical publishing projects and nomad universities, all of them experimenting with new forms of institutionality. Turning against hierarchical, vertical, molar procedures, yet not neglecting aspects of organization and reterritorialization, they are molecular models not only for themselves. They are also striking in their potential to infect and molecularize the cooperating art institutions. This is the necessary outside of the art institution to transform it into an institution of the common, not just superficial surf on the waves of critical art. Of course, this relationship can go either way: often enough the molar state apparatus swallows the molecular machines, but there is enough knowledge about appropriation processes right here and now to fight them, potentially infecting the institutions with orgic-industrious, non-representationist, radically inclusive procedures.

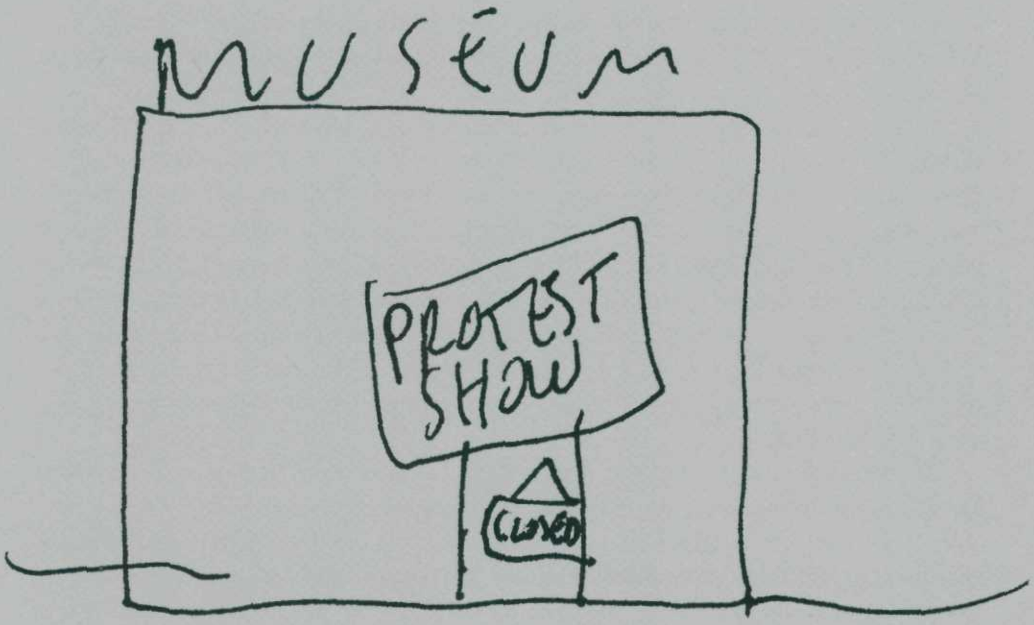
Components of the Institution of the Commons

These experiences, however, are nothing other than precarious and delicate beginnings, at best prototypes of a future practice, which must construct their abstract machine in light of the multiple crises. From the perspective of these first traces in the last fifteen years, it becomes clear that an institution of the commons does not simply imply the administration and preservation of "public" "cultural treasures." In the increasingly constrained situation of the cultural field, a limitation to the stance of cultural functionaries is not an option. The art institution of the commons goes beyond establishing and preserving general accessibility, but rather produces the possibility conditions for becoming-common. There is a strong element of temporality in this concept: becoming-common does not refer to a better future someday when pigs fly, but rather has aspects of actualizing the past, aspects of an expanded present becoming, aspects of a potential archaeology of the future. An art institution of the commons must conduct a practice of proactively distancing itself from creative industries and hegemonial art market logics, premised on the following five components.

1. First of all, there is the orientation in terms of content: the art institution of the commons need not reproduce the traditional canon, but it also need not just exceed it with alternative canons. Not playing along in the competition of the latest hypes

of artists, their objects and discourses, it launches transversal projects outside the realm of canonization and spectacle, which thwart the logic of art as a market and closed social field, which enable ethicoaesthetic experiments and long term effects in the wider mental, environmental, and social ecologies.

2. In the cultural contexts of "Western" countries, it is basic to deconstruct the Eurocentric, occidentalist, postcolonial genealogies of our institutions. Turning away from (re)fetishizing the objects and from a short term attention economy also makes it easier to let go of disreputable "acquisitions"—such as colonial spoils. The art institution of the commons investigates its colonial and neocolonial entanglements, and tries out a practice of decolonization. Here, "commons" means no practice of exhibiting (neo)colonial objects and discourses under the banner of the "universal" or "world cultures," but rather an earnest exchange along and beyond times and geographies, a practice of translating that takes histories of domination and different geopolitical contexts into consideration.
3. At the level of modes of production, the art institution of the commons primarily questions rigid time management in the cultural field, breaks through it, enables time for taking a deep breath, and reterritorializes time. Elements of rupture, break, and strike are necessary for addressing the precarization of working conditions in the cultural field. Instead of precarization being seen only in the molar logic of segmented labor struggles from a compartmentalized trade union perspective, it has to be made visible in its complexity and differentiated hierarchization. This reveals differences, but also what is in common, or at least what the differentiated and hierarchized connection is; between the artist-curator burned out by the extreme time regime of the exhibition business and the outsourced security person, between the museum director worn down by political turf wars and the cleaner with no residence permit; between the underpaid head of collections and the gallery educator constantly on standby.
4. Starting from these transversal internal connections and contradictions, it becomes possible to discuss the economic intertwining of funding sources. Without hope of a position of purity and clean money, the flows of money must still be laid open, contextualized, and discussed in terms of ethicopolitical aspects. The institution of the commons does not prolong the cultural debates about resilience and about how to survive the crisis, but it does push the crisis into a terrain where it becomes possible to discuss its origins, fundaments, and logics in machinic capitalism.
5. In a machinic understanding of the art institution of the commons, all models of participation and activation of the audience must be reconsidered as ambivalent processes and parts of the participation imperative. Instead of the paternalist perspective that asks how (ever new) audiences can be included and activated, the material and immaterial resources of the art institution are to be made available for a transversal production transcending the logic of integration and incorporation.



Occupying Theaters

An art institution of the commons can emerge through the (self)transformative molecularization of existing art institutions, but it can also be practiced as an occupation in the sense of occupying new territories. Of course, there is nothing on earth like an empty space or territory, but in the multiple crises state apparatuses start to leak, some of them are evaded and others are emptied out. This is a potential moment of instituting persistent occupations.

It is more than a temporal occupation, more than occupations like the one of Théâtre de l'Odéon in 1968 or the cultural section of the Occupy movement under the name of "Occupy Museums" in 2011 in New York. An art institution of the commons applies permanent and persistent modes of occupation. Of course, in the last fifty years, many occupation movements included actors of the art field, from sociocultural occupations since the 1970s to autonomist political squats in the 1980s and social centers of different generations until now. In 2011, alongside the revolutions of the so-called Arab Spring and the M15 movement in Spain, emerged a new wave of occupations in Italy, this time in the field of theater. In that year, many theaters and cultural spaces across Italy were occupied, and are still being occupied today: the Cinema Palazzo and the Angelo Mai in Rome, the S.a.L.E. Docks in Venice (occupied in 2007), the Asilo della Creatività e della Conoscenza in Naples, the Teatro Coppola in Catania, the Cantieri Arsenale and the Teatro Garibaldi Aperto in Palermo, or the Macao in Milan.

All these occupation practices have been linked to or influenced by the occupation of the Teatro Valle, the oldest theater in Rome, founded in 1727, threatened by privatization and occupied by actors, directors, musicians, and cultural workers in June 2011. Its occupiers renamed the theater the Teatro Valle Occupato and declared it a *bene comune*: a common good. They occupied the space June 14, 2011, the very day of a referendum, when Italy's water system was declared a *bene comune*. There was a deliberate connection and the return of the two meanings of the commons in "common wealth": the first aspect, the material, "natural" component of the commons, represented by water, was connected to the immaterial common good of theater production.

The instituent machine of the Teatro Valle has become a reterritorializing force. The social machines and body-machines of actors, musicians, directors, technicians, and other cultural workers have reterritorialized the traditional everyday life of a theater and fabricated a new territory. Of course, this occupation is based on the profound crisis of labor in the cultural field, on the precarization especially of the younger generations of theater workers, on the corruption of classical theater production and its consumers. But it would be far too narrow to conceptualize the Teatro Valle Occupato as just another sign of protest at the theater world.

As in all cases of the occupation movements in 2011, the seizing of the space was connected with questions of assembly, of condensation, of the form, place, and time of reterritorialization. The occupiers took seriously the space and time they set up, taking time for long, patient discussions and time to stay in this place, and developing new forms of organization and production every day. They did not submit to subservient deterritorialization of their working and living times, developing an industrious ritornello against the rigid rules of the theater system. And in this sense, the occupation was and is a strike. Not in the sense of a temporarily limited action of clearly segmented actors, but in its wildness, monstrosity, and transversality: a molecular strike. Here the theater is not just a symbol any more, not just a privileged space of representation, but a place of non-representationist, inclusive, molecular organization.

And all of a sudden there is also a front against the Valle, or even more than one front. Conservatives begin to reel off their traditional discourses of "aesthetic relevance": "*non è accaduto nulla di teatralmente rilevante*," not seeing that a radically new aesthetics can emerge only from evading the logics of the spectacle and from the experiments with molecular organization. Then also the old independent theater scene gets to feel excluded, and some from the old left complain: "*Tecnicamente siamo di fronte a una privatizzazione mascherata*"—a masked privatization, that's what the Valle is in their eyes. For the activists these attacks might be harmful, but in fact they are just a symptom of the misunderstanding of the commons, still applying the old private-public dualism.

Yet, the idea of the theater as a *bene comune* is not just a flowery expression of a bunch of new hippies on the background of creative industries. It is closely connected to the combined social and juridical invention of an institution of the commons. In this sense, the occupiers also worked hard to establish a new legal structure: the Fondazione Teatro Valle Bene Comune. After twenty-seven months of occupation, they presented the statutes and the "political codex" of their foundation on September 18, 2013. In this political codex, they declare the Valle an institution of the commons, based on self-organization and consensus, on new forms of social security in discontinuous forms of creative labor, on an economic model against privatization, and finally on an understanding of intellectual property that builds upon the social richness of knowledge as a commons.

It is evident that new institutions of the commons need protocols and lasting consensual agreements. But even with the most revolutionary set of rules, the molecular machines are in constant danger of being swallowed by their own state apparatus. So the really urgent questions are not about the symbolic quality of the occupation or the hegemonic discourses, but rather questions of this kind: What happens in the oscillations between the sociality of the occupation and the model-like prescription of the rules of an institution of the commons? How not to forget that the institutional process was generated inside the struggle? How to avoid the molarization of the molecular organization?

Here, the third aspect of the commons comes into play again: the protagonists of the Valle transcend the purely legal logic and recompose multiplicity through the social-juridical procedure of a constituent process in which legal text machines and social machines work together. A finished and stabilized constitution is not the aim, but a constituent process, a molecular strike in search for commonism. The many assemblies, transversal projects, and ethicoaesthetic experiments are not meant to be striated, standardized, and cut down by the legal structure of the new *fondazione*, but the procedures of the constituent process are producing the commons as collective self-organization and self-education.

In this sense the statutes of a foundation of the commons can only serve as components of a molecular becoming-common. Occupying an institution does not mean taking over an old institution and giving it new rules, but transforming and reinventing its very forms. We have to build the ship anew while it is sinking—but this time in a radically different, disobedient, non-subservient way.

The philosopher and art theorist, ***Gerald Raunig*** *(AT), works at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste and at the European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies (eipcp). He coedits the multilingual webjournal,* transversal, *and the platform* transversal texts. *His recent books include* Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century *(2007),* A Thousand Machines *(2010), and* Factories of Knowledge, Industries of Creativity *(2013).*

Alanna Lockward

Unveiling the Whip

Decoloniality and the "Unintended Liberating Dimension" of Enslavement

> *Culture, like truth, is concrete. And for the masses the most elevated form of culture, that is to say, of progress, is to resist imperialist domination and penetration, although this might come wrapped up in valid forms of "culture" or "civilization."*
>
> (Adolfo Gilly, Introduction to Frantz Fanon's *A Dying Colonialism)*

One of the most pervasive predicaments of activism in the arts today is the lack of knowledge on the violence inherent in its "holistic" epistemics inherent to it. We can see this materialize endlessly in patronizing attempts of "helping" "others" to achieve a goal or get rid of some "problem," (currently conceptualized as symptomatic of the "white savior industrial complex") or in the dismissal of a Derridean *différence* based on "color blindness" (also known as "altermodern aesthetics"). The arts are immersed in their own Kantian creational myth almost beyond redemption. Almost.

In liminal spaces, as thin as the scars resulting from the colonial and imperial wounds, the tools of decoloniality are proving helpful in navigating an ocean infested by death. African cadavers are pushing Europe into euphemizing yet another version of Afrophobic necrophilia, using terminology such as "Lampedusa tragedy," as if these corpses were any different from the ones that sank in the Middle Passage. Some pray, like the Pope; others ask for more money for Frontex; some may be planning their new art piece to address the issue. One thing is certain: they all share the same blatant ignorance, because the legacy of colonialism was systematically hidden in this continent almost as soon as the enslavement trade was abolished. This continuity, this persistence of the presence of the Black body as either a capitalist disposable commodity or a European "unwanted migrant" is a paradigm of coloniality. In the following pages, I address these ideas through the moving image and performance art, specifically in the work of three Caribbean (Diaspora) artists: Jeannette Ehlers, Sergio Giral, and Steve McQueen. I also interact with a recent text by Slavoj Žižek addressing his highly predictable Eurocentric (mis)appropriation of Frantz Fanon.

The so-called Eurocentric critique of Eurocentrism, passionately performed by Žižek constitutes a perfect example of the way in which our Black bodies, the legacies that inform our thinking, sensing, and acting today, are systematically erased. Vigorously accompanied by Žižek, we visit a familiar place: only European narratives can survive and become "history"; our African ones were erased forever in the Middle Passage.

> *Was Malcolm X not following the same insight when he adopted X as his family name? The point of choosing X as his family name, and thereby signaling that the [*white *European] slave traders who brought the enslaved Africans from their homeland brutally deprived them of their family and ethnic roots, of their entire cultural lifeworld, was not to mobilize the [B]lacks to fight for the return to some primordial [primitive?] African roots, but precisely to seize the opening provided by X, an unknown new (lack of) identity engendered by the very process of slavery which made the African roots forever lost [For ever lost? According to whom? Is the Hegelian ahistorical character of Africa hidden here somewhere or am I being paranoid or maybe not Eurocentric enough?]. The idea is that this X which deprives the [B]lacks of their particular tradition offers a unique chance to redefine (reinvent) themselves, to freely form a new identity that is much more universal than white people's professed universality. (As is well known, Malcolm X found this new identity in the universalism of Islam.) The same experience of the unintended liberating dimension [unintended liberating dimension?] opened up by enslavement itself is beautifully retold in Frederick Douglass' narrative of his life, where he reports on the radical change in his life when he went to live as a slave with the family of Mr. and Mrs. Auld ...*

Mrs. Auld then becomes the prototype of the white savior, glamorously impersonated by Brad Pitt in *12 Years a Slave* (McQueen, 2013) and less charmingly by Father Anselmo, the Catholic priest in Sergio Giral's *Maluala* (1979). Hundreds of African-American philosophers and thinkers have already published PhDs and countless essays exposing their own views on Fanon and Douglass. Without quoting any of them, Žižek transcribes long passages of Douglass' autobiography in an essay conceived and articulated to dismantle what he considers are inconsistencies of decolonial thinking, and specifically some ideas by Walter Mignolo on the obsolesce of communism. In a classic move, Žižek joins humans of *white* Christian European descent in their most relentless cultural crusade, which consists of explaining to us who we are in order to diagnose and correct their own problems. One hopes that, sooner rather than later, the words of Chinua Achebe will find corrective resonance in Mr. Žižek's gaze: "[Žižek] cannot compromise [our] humanity in order [to] explore [his] own ambiguity. [We] cannot accept that. [Our] humanity is not to be debated, nor is it to be used simply to illustrate European problems."

But for the moment, these observations are distracting. Let us go back to the "loss" of our historical continuities, specifically in relation to Mother Africa. As Audre Lorde, in conversation with James Baldwin, states with regards to Black womanhood and canonical universality:

> *[...] I wept and I cried and I fought and I stormed, but I just knew it. I was Black. I was female. And I was out—out—by any construct wherever the power lay. So if I had to claw myself insane, if I lived I was going to have to do it alone. Nobody was dreaming about me. Nobody was even studying me except as something to wipe out.*

Jeannette Ehlers' whipping reenactment is a pointed case that mirrors this wiping out. The artist has a consistent body of work dealing in the silencing of Denmark's monumental profits in the enslavement trade. After performing Vodoun ceremonies in the summer residency of the Danish prime minister in one of her videoarts or dancing a Viennese waltz as a ghost in an empty Caribbean colonial town hall in another, she decided to accept the challenge of presenting a live performance, which, as a written proposal, sounded like a very simple action but turned out to be an epistemic turn for many of us in the audience. A human-size white canvas hung from the ceiling of a theater stage in Berlin as she flogged it in her piece, *Whip it Good* (2013). She flogged it with increasing intensity for fifteen minutes, then stopped and invited the audience to repeat the action. At some point, one of the codirectors of the space, an Afro-Brazilian dancer, hung the whip from the canvas, and we all assumed the performance was therefore over. During the Q&A session that followed, painful and puzzling issues arose. I will list some of them randomly as a premature corollary, as this contextualizes the enormous challenges implied in decolonizing Žižek's gaze: Why do we as Black people feel so uncomfortable when a *white* man or woman is holding the whip? Why do we as Black oppressed people feel so guilty about showing our anger in public? How long should we keep talking about the aftermaths of African enslavement? Who can claim the legitimacy of holding the whip?

Now let us return to Fanon who, in his very short life, dedicated hundreds of pages to the fight against the violently imposed universality of Eurocentrism and, in doing so, left us an amazing legacy on the relationship between activism and cultural resistance, on the concrete truths of the *damnés*.

In *Algeria Unveiled* (1965), Fanon exposes the implementation of a cultural campaign operationalized by the French to eradicate the usage of this icon of cultural resistance of Algerian women. Here we can see the *white* savior industrial complex and its civilizing mission in top gear.

> *[The campaign against the veil] enabled the colonial administration to define a precise political doctrine: "If we want to destroy the structure of*

> *Algerian society, its capacity for resistance, we must first of all conquer the women; we must go and find them behind the veil where they hide themselves and in the houses where the men keep them out of sight." The dominant administration solemnly undertook to defend this woman, pictured as humiliated, sequestered, cloistered ... It described the immense possibilities of woman, unfortunately transformed by the Algerian man into an inert, demonetized, indeed dehumanized object. The behavior of the Algerian was very firmly denounced and described as medieval and barbaric. With infinite science, a blanket indictment against the "sadistic and vampirish" Algerian attitude toward women was prepared and drawn up. Around the family life of the Algerian, the occupier piled up a whole mass of judgments, appraisals, reasons, accumulated anecdotes, and edifying examples, thus attempting to confine the Algerian within a circle of guilt. This was a period of effervescence, of putting into application a whole technique of infiltration, in the course of which droves of social workers and women directing charitable works descended on the Arab quarters. They were pressed to say no to a centuries old subjection. The immense role they were called upon to play was described to them. The colonial administration invested great sums in this combat.*

The (failed) redemption of the Eurocentric critique on Eurocentrism, the insistence on the presumed innocence of the master and mistress, and the current inheritors of their violently accumulated privileges is brilliantly dismantled by James Baldwin: "But it is not permissible that the authors of devastation should also be innocent. It is the innocence which constitutes the crime."

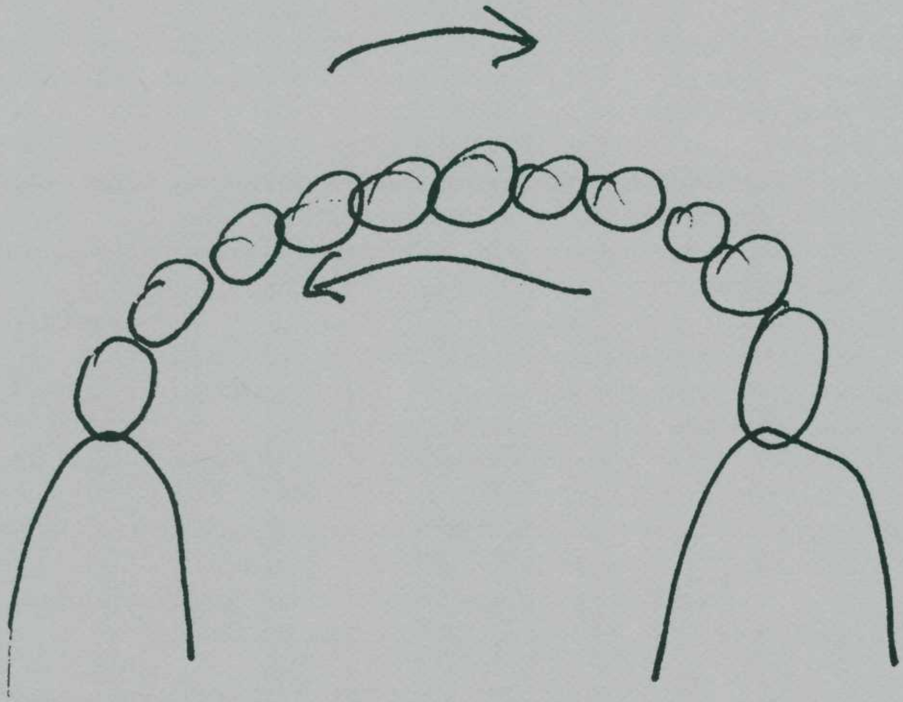
As I wrote earlier, European Eurocentrics are very seldom exposed to the brutality of enslavement, orally, visually, or in writing, and when they do, sometimes they deliver outrageous interpretations of Fanon. This is why Audre Lorde reminds us how subjection is operationalized in this sanctioned ignorance and reinstated systematically in the dismissal of our narratives and legacies as unthankful or rather stubbornly oblivious to the "unintended liberating dimension" of enslavement.

Sergio Giral, a Cuban-American director, in his trilogy on the atrocities of the plantation system in Cuba, was very careful to portray the resistance of the enslaved Africans in a dignifying and protagonistic manner. Verbal, mental, and physical abuse were intertwined in a symphony of cruelty where the whip was omnipresent in all its blind fury. Resistance counteracted this barbarism with courage and blood, accompanied by the prayers of Islam, Yoruba, Congo, and Christian traditions as Giral faithfully recounts these indeed majestic narratives. Three decades later, a Caribbean Diaspora filmmaker, Steve McQueen, has depicted, in one of the last scenes of *12 Years a Slave*, the back of a woman in an almost unthinkable state of bleeding deformation after a long and unbearable whipping sequence. Wait a minute: did I just write "unthinkable"? The fact is that, even with my thorough training in the evils of enslavement, that image still haunts me as unimaginable. I hereby pronounce it as the best antidote to the "unintended liberating dimension" of the plantation system.

In quite the opposite direction, the whip has been completely erased in the portrait of *Toussaint Louverture* (2012) by French-Senegalese director, Philippe Niang. Apparently, French television insisted on keeping the horrors of European early capitalist accumulation in the comfortable space of its "unintended liberating dimension." This same dimension is purged in school books where there is no reference to the barbarism of France's colonial legacy. It is indeed puzzling to watch an entire film where not one single scene depicted the type of atrocities that the French colonizers committed in Haiti. Their brutality enjoyed a dubious reputation with plantation owners in the South of the United States, who used the narratives on their extreme cruelty to scare enslaved people with the possibility of being sold and transported to Haiti.

Carole Boyce Davis, in her insightful review of *12 Years a Slave*, laments that it failed to accurately present the autobiographical narrative of the book on which it is based. In doing so, her critique is practically a transcription of all the things I love about Sergio Giral's films, specially *Maluala*.

> *The legendary African-American historian John Hope Franklin used to say that [B]lack resistance in stories of enslavement tended to be erased in favour of the narratives of domination and degradation. Yet scholars tell us that while there was often acquiescence under the inhumane conditions of American slavery there was also always resistance. Take Harriet Tubman, who was born into slavery but deliberately escaped—and went on to help many more people to freedom. "There are two things I've got a right to and these are death or liberty ... one or the other I mean to have," Tubman said. "No one will ever take me back alive; I shall fight for my liberty." But this resistance is almost entirely missing from Steve McQueen's film* 12 Years a Slave. *[...] While the 1854 memoir by Solomon Northup, on which the film is based, describes several stories of attempted escapes and fighting back on the part of the enslaved, none of these appear in the film. It does show Northup's emotional resistance to his enslavement and there is one scene where he fights back against the man to whom he was mortgaged, but nobody else in the film seems to be allowed that. [...] [I]n focusing so much on the plantation, the film misses the Great Pine woods, as free space symbolically and literally. Thus in the end we see Northup getting his freedom ostensibly through the beneficence of a few white people who supported him, and then actually attempting to go through the courts when black people still were not able to testify against whites. [...] So while*



> *there is much to applaud in McQueen's work, it fails to challenge the standard trope in films about slavery: a cathartic display of the intense violence and degradation of enslavement of the black body—and once again ignores the resistance text of black histories.*

Maluala was a Cuban settlement similar to the Great Pine woods where escaped enslaved people, commonly known as "maroons" (*cimarrones* in Spanish), resisted the plantation system, and lived in an equally precarious and precious freedom up in the mountains. The leaders of this *palenque*, a liminal space of decoloniality, were tempted by the colonizers with the currency of their trade: your freedom is guaranteed but you must betray your community, they must remain enslaved. One of the leaders (Ventura Sánchez, alias Coba) succumbs to the pressures of the military, the Catholic Church and the government, the usual suspects; the other one (Manuel Griñán, alias Gallo) chooses resistance and war. After failing to keep his promise to follow up on the colonial scheme and tormented by guilt, Coba commits suicide while fighting.

In the opposite direction, as previously argued by Boyce Davis, the narratives of enslavement and the plantation system reproduced in *12 Years a Slave*, where the fate of the main character is decided by the timely intervention of a white savior

(Brad Pitt), are symptomatic or, furthermore, intrinsic to this foundational myth of coloniality. What follows is Nigerian-American writer Teju Cole's "initial twitter theorization" on the subject:

1. *From Sachs to Kristof to Invisible Children to TED, the fastest growth industry in the US is the White Saviour Industrial Complex.*
2. *The white saviour supports brutal policies in the morning, founds charities in the afternoon, and receives awards in the evening.*
3. *The banality of evil transmutes into the banality of sentimentality. The world is nothing but a problem to be solved by enthusiasm.*
4. *This world exists simply to satisfy the needs—including, importantly, the sentimental needs—of white people and Oprah.*
5. *The White Saviour Industrial Complex is not about justice. It is about having a big emotional experience that validates privilege.*
6. *Feverish worry over that awful African warlord. But close to 1.5 million Iraqis died from an American war of choice. Worry about that.*
7. *I deeply respect American sentimentality, the way one respects a wounded hippo. You must keep an eye on it, for you know it is deadly.*

These lapidary statements by Teju Cole articulate a quintessential decolonial perspective. And now let us focus on how some narratives of resistance insert themselves in Europe today.

"The Crisis of European Cosmopolitanism in the Age of Austerity: Multiculturalism and Colonial Legacies" is the title of a conference at the University of Warwick, Sociology Department, in December 2013, where I presented a paper on a panel entitled "Diasporas, Multiculturalism, and European Identity." This session examined:

> *... How Europeanness needs to be thought through in the context of diasporic communities living in Europe. How, if at all, diasporic communities are shaping the way in which we understand what it is to be European? What are the impediments to this? Can diasporic communities living in Europe expand our understanding and experience of "being" European? What kinds of resistance are put up against such "expansions"? Does engaging "diaspora" with debates around "Europeanness" have the potential to shift our understanding of, and perhaps challenge the currently "fashionable" opposition to, multiculturalism?*

These types of discussions are already part of mainstream academia. So please bear with my authentic astonishment and my repetitive quoting of Žižek's "unintended liberating dimension."

The Decolonial Option questions the very notion of "universality" and "civilization," or rather "the universality of civilization." The rhetoric of "modernity" and "progress," key words to justify Western expansion, always carries a secret weapon, which is articulated through dispossession, exploitation, and ultimately, genocide: coloniality. By exposing the notion of inseparability between modernity and coloniality, decolonial thinkers state that there is no such thing as an autonomous European *Sonderweg* of modernity. The colonial and its exploited, dispossessed, enslaved, and exterminated subjects have always played a crucial role in creating, defining, and literally "feeding" modernity.

Decolonial aesthetics refers to ongoing artistic practices responding to and delinking from coloniality: the darker side of modernity and imperial globalization. This concept emerged from the work of the collective modernity/coloniality/decoloniality based on the seminal conceptualization by Peruvian humanist and sociologist, Aníbal Quijano.

From the decolonial perspective, we have never abandoned "home" (coloniality). The process of decolonization of our minds involves a realization of this fact. We have always been here as the hidden side of modernity, therefore our presence is self-explanatory. The so-called post-racial, post-identity, or post-Black eras are oxymorons in our vocabulary. These are the positions presented at BE.BOP. BLACK EUROPE BODY POLITICS, a multidisciplinary event held since 2012 at Ballhaus Naunynstrasse, Berlin. At BE.BOP, artists, activists, and scholars share their knowledge on equal terms during rich and diverse discussions. Film and video art are equated in status, the industrial character of the former sharing the same screening format and setup as the later. Visual performance art from Black Diaspora practitioners is presented and discussed at a post-migrant experimental theater space. The scholarly works of theoreticians are discussed at an extra-academic space. Activists are given plenty of space to display their campaigns and spread their message. These events have created a paradigm shift in decolonial sensing, thinking, and doing.

The pervasive colonial amnesia in Germany, the Netherlands, and the Scandinavian countries skillfully illustrates a pan-European scenario of the denial of coloniality. The denial of the systematic involvement in the financial network of the transatlantic slave trade and later in the Berlin-Africa Conference (1884–1885), are just two examples. Since artists in different European locations thoroughly engage with these historical vacuums, my choice to connect them with my own curatorial praxis responds to what Erna Brodber has described as the "Continent of Black Consciousness," but from the situation of living in Europe and not in the Caribbean. We as Afropean activists are signaling the emergence of Black Consciouness in Europe from a pan-Africanist perspective.

The second edition of BE.BOP, entitled "Decolonizing the Cold War," was dedicated to exposing how the Black Body as a space of dignity, power, and beauty permeated the radical imagination of artists and thinkers in Europe beyond racial divides. We talked about the legacies of Angela Davis, a former student of Herbert Marcuse, and of Richard Wright, who first published *Black Power* (1954) in London, inspired by pan-Africans such as George Pademore and Kwame Nkrumah. Together in this decolonial journey of mind and sensing decolonization, we are not only demanding retribution from the colonial legacies in Africa; we are also outlining the continuities of these legacies in coloniality, that is in colonialism without colonies. Lampedusa as a corollary of the violent system imposed by Europe in Africa and elsewhere.

European coloniality is present in a brand new institution: Frontex, an external and internal borders program, founded in 2005, with the fastest growing budget in the European Union. A European Union that was first known and conceptualized as inseparable from (the exploitation of) Africa and therefore named by its founders as *Eurafrica* (Hansen and Jonsson 2011). Indeed, there are irrefutable historical continuities between the Berlin-Africa Conference (1884–1885), the original Eurafrica (European Union) project and current mappings of migration routes in the African Continent. This border externalization initiative could be defined as a de facto cartographic war operationalized by Frontex against Africa.

Paradoxically, the African presence in Europe is older than in the Americas. The (still contested) 800 years of African occupation of the Iberian Peninsula is a case in point. And Négritude, the epigram that contributed to the liberation of the African continent in the so-called Short Century, was invented in Paris in the 1930s, where one of the five European pan-African Congress was also held (the first pan-African conference took place in London in 1900).

As previously argued, the systematic historical erasure of colonial legacies after the Berlin-Africa Conference (1884–1885) is exemplary of this situation. To give a revealing example, there are no monuments in Berlin that commemorate this outlandish event. In the self-invention of Europe, the need to erase coloniality and create the myth of the exteriority of modernity was peremptory and the coinage of aesthetics played a crucial role in this process. As Walter Mignolo explains:

> *Indeed, "philosophical aesthetics" was and still is a conceptual apparatus to control (include and exclude) sensing, sensibility, and to shape the population—aesthetics was clearly linked to the national-state emerging project in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century. It was necessary to shape the taste of the citizens, parallel to civic education. Kant was not only influential in shaping aesthetic principles. He was decisive in shaping epistemology and in lining up the modern university of the Enlightenment.* The Contest of the Faculties *(1798) remains as a pillar for the organization of the secular field of knowledge. It was indeed a potent move to take away the control of education from the Church and the monarchy and to form the sensibility of the emerging ethno-class: the* white *German (and European) bourgeoisie.*

Mígnolo adds:

> *Times have changed. "We are here because you were there" as the dictum goes to understand the historical logic of coloniality hidden under the rhetoric of civilization, progress, and development of modernity. Europe is not only in the most spectacular political-economic crisis, but it is also being radically transformed by the rumor of the disinherited. Kant couldn't have imagined at that time that his ideas in* Observations *and* The Contest *will be contested by people, now European residents and citizens who he, Kant, considered lesser human and far away. BE.BOP [...] and what is to come in the future, is a signpost of the reversal of fortune: the sign that decolonial forces are liberating aiesthesis and by doing so liberating the sensibility that was politically and legally enunciated in the "Declaration of the Right of Man and of Citizens." We know very well now what "man" meant and who the "citizens" were.*

As Quinsy Gario so cheerfully exposes in his performance-campaign, "Zwarte Piet is Racism," a demeaning caricature of Blackness is valued as an unchangeable "innocent" cultural heritage in the Netherlands utterly "unrelated" to colonialism, which, as we know, "happened too long ago to even matter anymore." Blackface is also institutionalized in Germany as a "respectable" theatrical tradition. The infamous Swedish cake and countless alarming examples of racial profiling, police harassment, and random murders of African immigrants in Greece are just the tip of the iceberg. Adding to these symptomatic examples and in spite of consistently trained political awareness, the hatespeech and prosecution toward Somali communities in Sweden, the deaths under police custody in Germany, the legal prescription of "anti-white" racism in France, the seizing of legal residency documents from Afro-Spanish citizens by the police, and a long list of unthinkable acts, still take many of us by surprise. Black Europe and the African diaspora are indeed living through extremely dangerous moments of coloniality and need as much solidarity as we can humanly give them.

Alanna Lockward *(DO/DE) is a curator and writer. She is the founding director of Art Labour Archives, a decolonial platform for thinking, sensing, and doing that facilitates situation specific transdisciplinary events. She is based in Berlin and Port-au-Prince.*

Self-Empowering

Charles Esche

Let's start right away by questioning the term. Self-Empowerment might superficially suggest an individualistic approach to art, a one person liberation movement that ignores collective needs. As someone committed to the commons, this aspect of art's imagined emancipatory potential—that it is singular rather than plural in its effect—has always been troubling. The primitive idea of art academy teaching that it teaches students to express themselves has been something I have always opposed. An artistic work can only be transformative to the extent that the society allows it to be, that it is recognized by others and performs a function. The use value of art is tied up in this understanding. If art functions then it acts, it builds a community, it empowers through changing thought patterns in others and communicating things that previously did not exist so they can be manifested in public discourse. This fear of the singular is also the reason that the modernist claims of autonomy, while understandable in their historical context, are no longer of much use for contemporary conditions. Autonomy relied on a certain distribution of power and sense to be effective and global neoliberalism has simply circumvented art's disruptive role by incorporating it into its patterns of consumption. All the autonomy in the world, while necessary is no longer sufficient; it will not challenge the place of art as a luxury product, as a sign of sophisticated oligarchy, or as a way of proving neoliberalism's toleration of all expression that stems from a subjective individual position.

Ultimately, I don't think you can liberate yourself. Humans exist in society. Everything they do is entangled not only with other humans but all other lifeforms, objects, and phenomena. Any one individual self is largely a product of this entanglement and how that individual chooses to negotiate with it for him/herself. Self-empowerment in life and art is therefore only meaningful in as much as it creates the conditions where others are also given agency to do things they otherwise could not. This is what the term art must mean if it is to gain a purchase on shifting contemporary patterns of artistic production. An art that engages with self-empowerment, then, is about unleashing a sense of being in common, of being part of something bigger than a discrete human body, and of feeling a sense of saying both "I can" and "we can" at the exact same moment.

The examples of self-empowerment cited below are manifestations of what this form of making power available can look like.

Ahmet Oğut's Silent University plays off the collective fears of indigenous Europeans (in Europe and their imperial outposts like Australia) by giving voice to migrants who are forbidden any agency by their host states. His project shows—and not only symbolically—the potentiality hidden in this dismissal of a social group by "empowered" citizens and points to another kind of settlement in which individual knowledge is collectively recognized. This seems to me exemplary for a model of empowering art: one that extends human capability and generates visibility for something that did not previously exist in this form. In a very different vein, the political leadership of Antanas Mockus makes use of what he calls the pretentions of art to create a new language for goals other than the hermetic art system. As he says in his essay: "Contact with art gives pleasure, but if I can't share these symbols with others, I feel sad or stupid. I'd rather retain the pretensions of art and make them public." This use of art's capability to define anew ways of looking at or interacting with old problems is not only inspiring (one asks why it isn't used elsewhere, but that's probably a story of political power and its corruption) but also empowering for those of us not satisfied with art's luxury product categorization. What he says, which I find convincing, is that art's relation to empowerment lies in sharing it with others and taking it out of its own hallowed environments. Not only Mockus but other projects here have exactly followed this path to good effect. They show that such a step is possible and also raise the question: Why doesn't it happen more often?

The Silent University and the Bogota Experiments raise another interesting semantic difficulty with empowerment. As Irit Rogoff put it in her essay here: "In what ways have concepts of 'potentiality' and of 'actualization' replaced older notions of 'agency' and of 'empowerment'?" While I am not sure that such a total transformation of concepts has occurred, I do think that the task of art is to push toward it. Just as the concept of autonomy might once have given agency to artists, it now seems to diminish the potentiality of art to be shared and where once the empowering of the disenfranchised within a functioned representative democracy might have been sufficient, the experience of migrants in the Silent University is that only by actualizing their knowledge in a classroom or formally recognized environment can they resist their demonization by an oppressive indigenous majority. In other words, agency and empowerment are, like autonomy, those necessary but insufficient conditions for human life that need to be wrested from those in power but then surpassed in favor of other demands.

Surpassing democracy is perhaps a key topic within this discussion, at least in terms of the base reason for acting as an artist in today's world. While democracy itself is mostly unrealized or at least incomplete, it is only by formulating imaginations that surpass its known forms of social organization (nation-states, representation, elections, political campaigns, etc.), that any kind of potentiality for new forms of emancipation and just social change might emerge. This is not to argue that we need to do away with the conditions of democracy. They are in many ways still necessary—ask most Palestinians, Scots, or Kurds about not having a nation state—but they are no longer the destination of a contemporary human society. Liberal democracy does not represent the end of political resistance but only opens up new territories on which to challenge the power of the elites. The harsh problem of the moment is that those new territories are not yet visible or defined in terms of political discourse or ideological antagonism.

In our daily life, people who are attentive to the news media face a flood of images of injustice from across the world. They seem to point to dysfunction yet the connections between them are unclear. A fog of excess clouds any vision of how they relate one to another. Without an index, or perhaps rather a new kind of "Mnemosyne Atlas" in which the images can be grasped, shaped, and given sense, they remain catastrophes without cause, or with only limited and immediate causes that seem irresistible. It is the lack of such a device that sometimes makes it appear as though society has reached some kind of end point, to the extent that some imagine the disappearance of a horizon of any kind. On the contrary, I think there is a clear task ahead, and it is a task that at the present time seems to fall, perhaps by default, to the arts in general. Through choice words and images that anticipate or speak about our condition, it is possible to share the inchoate feelings of imbalance and simple wrongness that occupy so much of so many people's emotional lives. This is where the aspects of self-empowerment, combined with its activation in physical forms of collective expression, are crucial, and this attempt does suffuse certain artistic practices, some of which we can read about here. Perhaps it's too rhetorical, but could there be a collective investment in the imagination necessary to shape unthought potentiality into three-dimensional life in this process? Could we surpass ourselves, something I think would be infinitely more interesting than empowerment? What is interesting in these questions is that the question of the symbolic value of art is left behind. Owning a work that would instigate a collective surpassing of ourselves would make little sense. It would in some ways be completely pointless, like purchasing the passion of a football crowd or the love between two people. The work of these works of art exists in a space beyond their physical entrails, in a space of action and exchange. Of course, I have no doubt that such artworks will be sold at some point and that means for their commodification will be found, but in the meantime, there is room to play and when that has run out it will be time to look for a further step. This play between the market's attempt to reign in the work of art and the work's attempt to escape is something that has been lost in recent years. The absence of struggle against the art system in most contemporary artworks is grim indeed.

To draw things to a conclusion then and to move on to reading concrete examples, it is perhaps useful to attempt to rescue empowerment from the secondary status I have given it here. What these works do at their best, and in a myriad of different ways is less to do with self-empowerment of the artist or users, though that does undoubtedly occur before the moments of activation. More pointedly, what these works arguably might empower is art itself, or they at least mount a systemic challenge to the prevalent mood of self-satisfaction with their own autonomy. The self referred to here then would not be that individual of whom I am so wary, but the self of art: the sense of its discrete identity and its contentment with its place in the hierarchy of luxury products. This new art then would be an empowered platform that could actualize the collective potentiality of its users in ways that stream out into all aspects of the social world and leave the art world behind, unloved and unwanted, though probably running hard to catch up. Wouldn't that be lovely?

***Charles Esche** (NL) is a curator and writer. He has been the director of the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven since 2004, and cofounded and coedits the contemporary art publication* Afterall *and* Afterall Books.

Antanas Mockus

Subart

When I was elected mayor of Bogotá in 1994, we started to implement a number of artistically driven actions to visualize our goals. Being a long-term university teacher, I believed that the community has to understand and pursue its common interests, and to realize its ability both to lose and gain something.

Our aim was a double change: a radical change of the desire of what the City of Bogotá wanted to be, and a radical change of the means employed to make real that desire. Self-regulation and mutual regulation were considered as important as legal regulation. And the main cue was to enhance the cultural and moral support to legality and to reduce the cultural and moral approval of illegalities. We called our proposal, a pedagogical one, *cultura ciudadana*, citizen culture. Learning to trust unknown people in open settings like public spaces, public transport, and public spectacles was one of the objectives.

More than in the physical city, I was interested in the contiguity and density effects of large numbers of people living together and organizing themselves to maintain coexistence and trust between each other. The proposal included transforming language games and seeking consensus through argumentation, as well as expressive actions, adopting new codes, and exploring the links between norms, agreements, and emotions.

For this we used a lot of what I call "subart": a bulletproof jacket with a heart cut into it, a Superman super citizen costume, a plastic sword serving as your political arm, or a vaccine against violence. Violence is, in part, a result of a breakdown in communications, so improving contact between people is a real solution. One of the major issues was the number of firearms in Bogotá, especially in the slums and poor neighborhoods. To fight the problem we launched a program offering to exchange guns for gifts, and toy guns for different kinds of toys. The kids would come and exchange them every now and then. And surprisingly, the program, being initially more of a symbolic act, proved extremely successful in the long run. Violence, the worst of plagues in Latin America, was dismantled by joy. We wanted to achieve this via a number of steps: increasing the number of law-abiding citizens, increasing their capacity and will to influence each other through lawabiding behavior, and fostering communication and the potential for expression.

I call those strategies subart, as I find art is a very pretentious concept. It has the pretension of creating, not just reproducing, a certain language. There are two general approaches: producing art just for the sake of it, which was often the case in late capitalism; or seeing it as a privileged language for changing society. I believe that you can retain the elitist concept of art and, at the same time, be involved in a social experiment, using this elitist art toward achieving social goals. I ascribe extreme symbolic value to art. Instead of going to church, I go to an art museum to look for symbols to nourish me. Contact with art gives pleasure, but if I can't share these symbols with others, I feel sad or stupid. I'd rather retain the pretensions of art and make them public. It's strange that society seems to value art a lot more than pedagogy. If you look at all the effort expended in the academic field, you quickly note that pedagogy is an amorphous, underestimated zone, while art sits at the other extreme of the spectrum. Both disciplines share the same pleasure of understanding, teaching, and developing new meanings and possibilities. One of the main ideas behind doing politics with subart was the concept of recontextualization, of making citizens see the system we're all part of, and taking responsibility for it. Artists claim that an image or a gesture says a lot more than written discourse. My work was also about images in society, engineering, or technology. I used art for the distribution of knowledge, which is a key element in contemporary

society. Knowledge has an empowering potential and sets the rules. Once we know the rules, and are stimulated by art, humor, and creativity, we are much more likely to accept change.

Reducing the homicide rate, twice by one-third, reducing the number of deaths caused by car accidents by two-thirds, tripling the city's income—none of these results would have been achieved without the strong commitment in my teams, in the media, and among citizens: there was a clear will to risk the certainties of the routine. In 1994, we invited mime artists to replace traffic police in a small part of the city. When we announced this, the first question from a journalist was: "Can the mime artists impose fines?" My answer was: "Of course not." Then it won't work, the journalist said. But it did work. We trained up four hundred mime artists; nine months later more than two thousand former local traffic police officers were fired and the local traffic police—the worst reputed office in the city—was dissolved. This was clear proof that even the most entrenched corruption can be overcome. Education based on fear had begun to be replaced by education based on reason and mainly positive emotions.

The mathematician and philosopher ***Antanas Mockus*** *(CO) was Mayor of Bogotá from January 1995 to April 1997 and from January 2001 to December 2003. He was known for tackling the city's problems such as violence, reckless driving, and lack of drinking water with unusual campaigns such as dismissing corrupt police officers and employing mime artists instead.*

Kàddu Yaraax
THÉATRE FORUM

Kàddu Yaraax

Staging Trials

The Judge: The court is examining a case of migration that breaches agreements entered into by CountryNorth and CountrySouth. The defendants are charged with attempting to illegally enter, and settle in, CountryNorth. And this *(he looks at the prosecuting lawyer)* is not to the liking of Mr. Laporte.

Plaintiff: Correct. And especially in view of the fact that CountrySouth gave CountryNorth an undertaking to accept the deportation of any illegal immigrants who were among its nationals.

Defense Lawyer: Objection, your honor!

Judge: An extremely swift objection, but it is accepted nonetheless.

Defense Lawyer: The undertaking also included funding for projects that would benefit young people *(he looks at the prosecuting lawyer)*, and for the development of basic social services up to 2035.

The Judge: Objection sustained. Mr. Laporte, you may continue.

Plaintiff: I congratulate my colleague on his brilliant remark. Your honor, the incursions and aggressions perpetrated by immigrants raise issues of national security and public health. Hence the need to ensure firm, strong control over our borders. Acts of international terrorism have alerted us to individual migrants and the danger they represent for the security and stability of our society.

The Judge: Your time is up. Mr. Bambino—Mr. Bambino, you have the floor.

Defense Lawyer: Your honor, humanity is a product of migration, which has always led to social change. Unfortunately, CountryNorth has now altered the rules of the game. Migration, which had previously been seen as a natural movement, is now a question of national interest: "There's been too much talk about one particular type of migration, and not enough about another type, namely *elective immigration*."

The Judge: Thank you, Mr. Bambino. Over to you, Mr. Laporte.

Plaintiff: Your honor, we must ensure the protection of our citizens, who are victims of the crowding, the clustering, the invasiveness of these foreigners. And then there are the unwelcome effects of this intimacy: smells, noise, swarms of children, hordes of women, disease.

The Judge: *Mr. …*

Plaintiff: Yes, your honor, we are guilty—guilty of being developed. And there are those who resent this. But are we wrong to accumulate resources, and invest them, while others squander theirs on 4 x 4s, 8 x 8s, and 6 x 9s, luxury houses in France and bank accounts in Switzerland? Are we wrong to work for democracy and freedom, while in other places presidents are gods? Are we wrong to work, while others sing and dance? *(He intonates Sangalewa, laughing, pretends to dance.)*

The Judge: Very good, Mr. Laporte. Mr. Bambino, you have the floor.

Defense Lawyer: Thank you, your honor. I would simply like to say that this clandestine immigration is not spontaneous, but the result of developed countries' policies. Why does CountryNorth want to "impose its rules on us"?

Plaintiff: Objection, your honor!

The Judge: Objection sustained.

Plaintiff: We ask you to respect our sovereignty, and our freedom to decide on our own domestic policy. We cannot absorb all the distress of the world. Nor do we intend to.

The Judge: Thank you. Mr. Bambino, the floor is yours.

Defense Lawyer: The origin of migration … Colonization, the looting of our natural resources, our fisheries, debt, structural adjustments, war, famine, drought, political instability, guerrilla warfare …

The Judge: Thank you … Mr. Laporte.

Defense Lawyer: Thank you, your honor. *(He approaches the defendants, his gaze hard and menacing.)* You shall not pass! We've reinforced our patrols with the Frontex plan, to which your government has signed up. You might at least respect your own laws! Frontex! We've improved our methods of acquiring and sharing data about abuses and routes. Frontex! We've tightened the controls, and increased the number of flights taking people back to their countries of origin. *(Drum roll)*

The Judge: Defendants, please stand! *(They do so, looking straight at The Judge.)* Thank you! *(He examines the list of defendants, and begins reading out the names.)*

Defense Lawyer: Your honor! The statements made by my clients are surely not admissible, given how severely they have been affected …

Plaintiff: Objection, your honor!

The Judge: Objection sustained!

Plaintiff: Your honor, these persons were taken *in flagrante delicto* and must be punished in accordance with the law!

The Judge: Defendants, what do you have to say?

Ibrahima: What are we to do? What are we to do? What are we not to do? We have qualifications, but no work. We grew a million tons of cotton, but the rich countries' subsidies drove down the price. We grew groundnuts, but the rich countries' subsidies drove down the price. We turned to fishing, but the Europeans' trawlers plundered the sea. Were we to stay there and starve? We could have. But to watch my children and my elderly parents die of hunger … That I couldn't do. I chose to live, as was my right. To live decently, or die far away: that was my choice. What benefit do we get from the heaped up wealth of the North, which we helped to create? Our slave ancestors worked on plantations. They fought for freedom, and paid for it with their lives.

The Judge *(addressing the public gallery)*: One sits on the old mat to weave the new one. Assist me in the sentencing! These defendants are charged with attempting to illegally enter and settle in Europe. And this *(he looks at the prosecuting lawyer)* is not to the liking of Mr. Laporte.

Kàddu Yaraax *(SN) was set up in 1993 in the village of Yarakh Tefess, Senegal, now known as Hann / Dakar. It is a community based association that practices "forum theater," in the tradition of Augusto Boal's "Theater of the Oppressed," dealing with its audience's social, economic, and cultural concerns. Like Boal's theater, it transforms the audiences into active participants to empower them* *through collective theater making and playing to solve—or at least to address—social or political problems. The group also puts on regular "forum theater methodology" workshops for companies from across west Africa.*

This text is based on excerpts from The Trial of the Clandestine Migrants, *a play describing the plight of people who, having crossed the Mediterranean on fishing boats in the spirit of "Barça wala barsaq" (Barcelona or death), were subsequently deported from Spain. What is depicted is not a real court, but it is a real trial, and the defendants are indeed clandestine migrants who undertook the* mbeuk mi *(the voyage to Europe). They play for a local audience, in front of the community where they come from and are sent back to, and in this way work out their trauma (catharsis), while also enlightening and warning their people (pedagogic mediation).*

Christine Gaigg

Non-Violence

Practically nobody in Russia approved of the now famous punk prayer by Russian activists Pussy Riot in Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Savior on February 21, 2012. Public opinion—and that of most of the Russian opposition—was that a church is an absolute no go zone for any kind of provocative action, while the local art scene denied the artistic merit of Pussy Riot's action. But Pussy Riot's artistic action *had* to take place *in* Moscow's largest cathedral in order to point to the unholy alliance between clergy and state power. Before the altar—a place forbidden to women. Where does the desecration and violation that the women are accused of begin? When they entered the area forbidden to women? When they expressed their slogans in the form of prayers of intercession? When they used universal religious gestures?
Pussy Riot were sentenced for hooliganism. However, the video material proves that there was no violence.
The art action itself lasted forty seconds. The video opens at the moment when the women have already reached the ambo and the guards are beginning to take notice. The guards' interest is focused on the objects. One of them takes the guitar from Yekaterina Samutsevich, the other demands the ghetto blaster from Nadya Tolokonnikova. Up to this point, the whole thing is as one would have expected, following the reports on the trial and the accusations: a scuffle, a babble of voices, disturbance, the guards doing their job. This is the only moment in the whole situation when someone is forcibly held. Paradoxically, it is precisely this moment that would later lead to the sentence against Katya Samutsevich being repealed.
Let's look at the scene in which a guard takes the ghetto blaster from Nadya Tolokonnikova. This is the key to the further development of events. The guard does not have to *take* it away from her; she hands it to him freely, without stopping her dance movements. There is not even the slightest evidence of destruction or violence. But even the guards, whose job it is to stop the performance, remain remarkably calm. There is nonviolence on the one side and carefulness, almost concern, on the other. This atmosphere is the merit of Pussy Riot's attitude.
An altar server tries to interrupt the performance by Pussy Riot. The one woman he tries to stop evades him. He turns to the next one, touching her gently, and then backs away from her again. When she rises from kneeling, he helps her up. Zooming in even more closely on this particular scene we see how he puts his hand on her shoulder and empathically adapts to her bouncing movements.
Of the scene that now follows only the beginning is visible in the original video. One can see more in the music video clip, which became popular as it began circulating on the Internet just a few hours after the action. One of the performers allows herself to be lifted up by one of the guards. She does not even resist

passively, but cooperates, light as a feather, with his steps, so that he immediately lets go of her. Now comes the most astonishing scene. Tolokonnikova takes a few steps to the side. The camera follows her and as if the dramaturgy of the film had intended it, there is a moment of absolute quiet. Tolokonnikova takes two deep bows, lasting seven seconds. Seven seconds, voluntarily, in a completely vulnerable position! The women never react aggressively or reluctantly, not even—and this is the remarkable thing—displaying any knee jerk reactions. They carry out the action they had planned. They are not afraid. They know what they are doing. Their instinct tells them that such a situation, in a church, must be handled with respect and sensitivity. When they are asked to leave the church, they leave.

The text is adapted from the performance lecture DeSacre! *(2013), in which* ***Christine Gaigg*** *(AT), choreographer and director of the company 2nd nature, interlaces scenes from Stravinsky/Nijinsky's* Le Sacre du Printemps *(1913) with the reenactment of Pussy Riot's art performance. Next to the absolute nonviolence of the Pussy Riot act, as stated in the text above,* DeSacre! *shows how the gestural vocabulary of the two works of art, though a century apart, match up with each other.*

Marina Gržinić

Turning Decolonial

The decolonial turn questions artivism and gender relations not only in between opposite categories of sex and gender, but primarily in between different categories marked by class, race, and gender. Moreover it connects gender discourses to race, class, and gender, decolonial studies, and transfeminism and transgender with (trans) migrant perspectives. These are suggestions of possible radicalized processes of subjectivization and interventions in the social and political realm of neoliberal global capitalism.

Why so? Under current neoliberal global capitalism, merciless processes of discrimination, dispossession, exploitation, and segregation are occurring. The European Union—presenting a fortified construction of power, capital, and legislations—protects the interests primarily of those states that like to call themselves "former Western Europe" (these are the states of the first capitalist world, mostly post-Fascist and post-Nazi states, as well as hardcore colonial). The EU incites new crusades against a specific category of people: mostly those coming as (manual-working) migrants or refugees, and/or sans papiers, from beyond the EU. We see an invigorated racism and legislative procedures to which so-called noncitizens of Europe (alongside black and people of color citizens in the EU) are daily subjected.

In such a context, the decolonial turn uses gender-bending in what was its historical function, preventing the foreclosure of gender in the classical binaries; however, today (in regard to the situation described) it needs to radicalize such positions in order to transcend the presently normativized axes of gender, ethnicity, and sexuality. I claim a decolonial turn in gender-bending artivist performances, writings, and music that expose neither man nor woman, but a political figure that reworks its "androgynous" body on pointing the finger at ever more present racism, segregations, and expulsions.

Maiz, in Linz, for example, is an independent organization for and by migrant women in Austria who, in their decolonial stance in between positions of sex workers, transvestites, and transgender positions, declare: "Austria we love you! We will never leave you!" They realized the project "Our

Bodies Are Our Stages" within the framework of "Girls Project" in 2013/2014. The body as a stage comes from the articulation of body that defines the migrant body as a self-determined body. With political texts, hip hop, graffiti, and live broadcasts, the migrant body presents strategies to show contradictions in society and produce permanent action.
The poetess Njideka Stephanie Iroh from the Pamoja Association reworks black Austrian history and presence, mercilessly attacking racism and discrimination based on color with her poetry. In her song "A Poem," she says:

I hate what has been done to us as a people, what is still being done.
They are talking about integration.
IN-TE-GRA-TION. Black people are being killed and they are talking about integration.
Like speaking German saved Brother Seibane.
Integration—assimilation—elimination.

Decolonial gender-bending artivism, to reuse Beatriz Preciado's words, consists of producing another category: the proletariat of artivism that deconstructs the binaries through its positions as whores, lesbians, the raped, butch, male, and transgender women who are not white … in short, what almost all of us are!
In almost concrete artistic, theoretical, and activist terms, we need to provide language, visuals, and politics for attacking racism, coloniality, and master knowledge and practices. Not only is knowledge merely a corpus being formed from the "outside" through administrative regulations and infrastructural deregulations, it also hides within itself its class and racial antagonisms, and its colonial past.
It is of crucial importance which processes will be taken as pioneering ones. To be even clearer: there is a whole new colonization going on in the world, mostly through processes of language translation and understandability.
The decolonial turn opens up new possibilities and establishes alliances with practical and theoretical agencies that are coexisting across a much wider territory, namely, the "classical western path of gender and knowledge." Who is privileged and who is invisible and deprivileged? How devastating is structural racism, institutional racism, and, what today is named as the most pervasive system of racism in neoliberal global capitalism: social racism? There is a huge battle being waged within the field of activism, art, gender, and emergent figures of self-empowerment.

Marina Gržinić *(SI/AT) teaches in the Post-Conceptual Art Practices (PCAP) department of Vienna's Academy of Fine Arts. In 2013, together with a group of students from the PCAP, she edited a book titled* Utopia of Alliances, Conditions of Impossibilities and the Vocabulary of Decoloniality*—a platform of nonwestern knowledge positions, geopolitics, and power.*

Joana Mazza / Observatório de Favelas

Self-Portraying

Photography covers many roles in contemporaneous life, among which is the representation of our society. Either through journalism, publicity, or shared snapshots, photography is an opportunity to affirm a cultural and social identity. But which values do they represent? Which cultural diversities? As photographers know only too well, it's all a matter of point of view.
The city's periphery, the common areas, and, consequently, the favela have constantly been represented by the media as violent spaces, thus contaminating society's perception of them with the slogan "criminalization of poverty." However, while there is violence in these spaces (as well as in the city as a whole), those directly or indirectly account for less than one percent of this population. So how should the other ninety-nine percent—the

workers and students, children and the elderly—be represented?

These issues have led to the creation of the Programa Imagens do Povo (Images of the People Program), which, by training photographers, and following up and disseminating the work of these students and ex-students, aims to show how the inhabitants of these areas recognize these spaces, and to present a more positive view as a counterpoint to what is shown in traditional media.

The "Programa" was started in 2004 and, since then, has worked as a kind of incubator. The various actions can be divided into two branches: one of training, the other of dissemination. Thus, ordinary photographers are given the opportunity to form and specialize in different courses offered by the program, the main one being the Escola de Fotografos Populares. After graduating from the Escola, they are invited to participate in the dissemination process, which encompasses the agency school and the image bank, as well as several cultural and exhibition projects organized by Imagens do Povo through partners or clients.

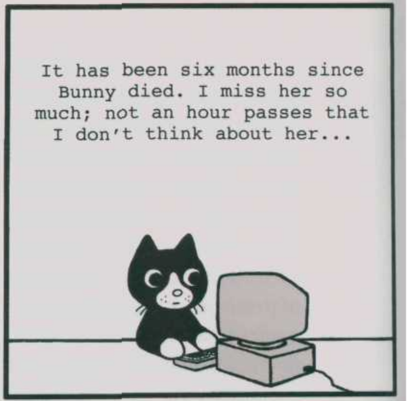
Each photographer in the program has absolute autonomy to develop their personal photographic essays. However, production is followed up by the team in a constant effort to encourage the continuous refinement of the technical and theoretical quality of the essays. It is precisely the long term relation between the program and the photographers that guarantees the deepening and quality of the assets being constructed by these authors and, who knows, may already offer a human vision of daily life, demystifying the social frontiers of the city—a city we do not wish to see divided.

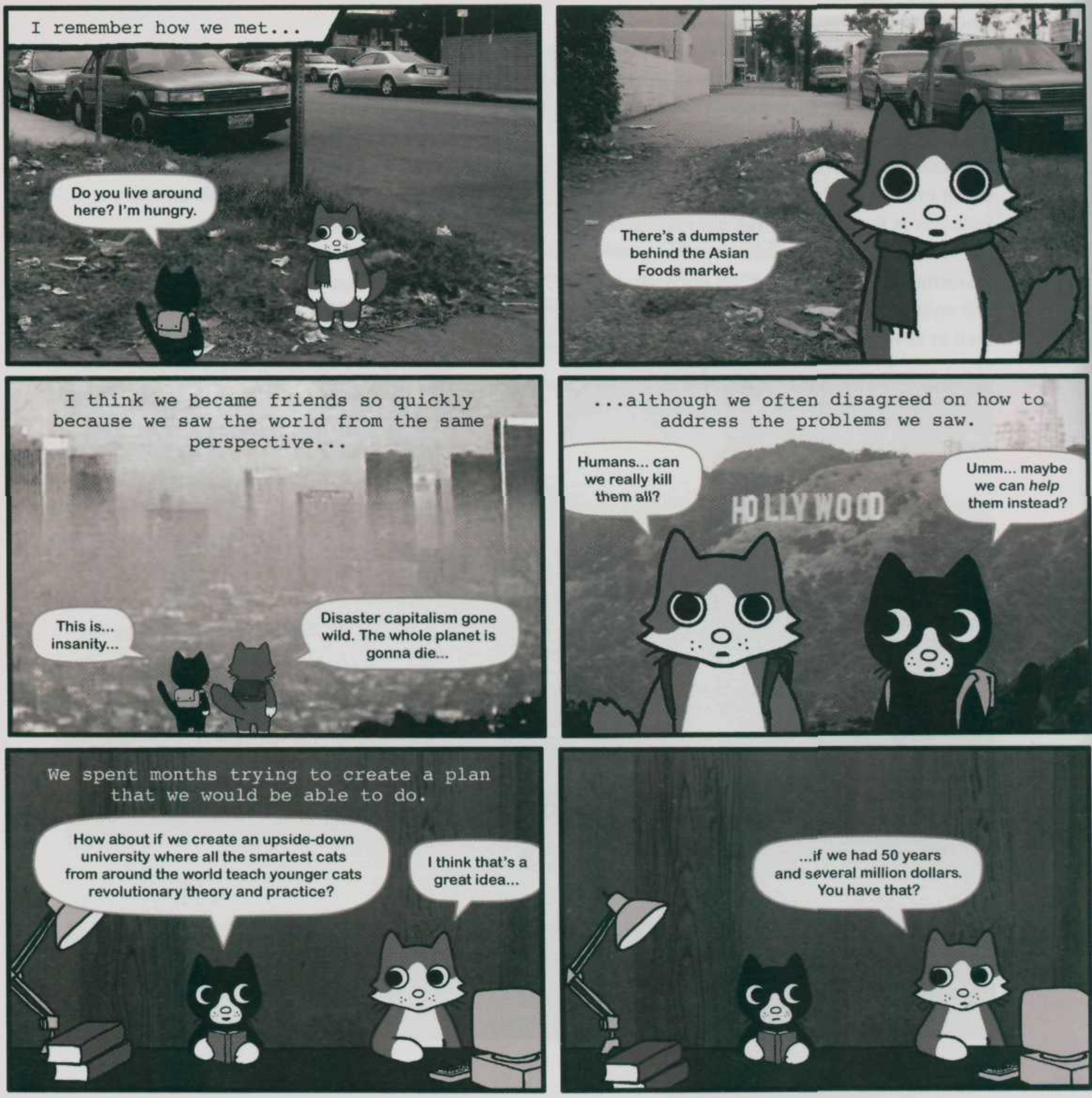
Observatório de Favelas *(BR) is a center for documentation, research, consultancy, and public actions producing knowledge and elaborate political proposals that focus on slums and urban issues.*
Joana Mazza *(BR) is a visual artist, photographer, and cultural producer based in Rio de Janeiro, who engages in the Observatório and is also responsible for the project, Imagens do Povo (Images of the People).*

The Pinky Show

Life Dismantling

***The Pinky Show** (US), created by Pinky & Bunny, is the world's only independent super low-tech radical meta-educational project by cats. Pinky and Bunny live in the desert near Death Valley, California.*


It has been six months since Bunny died. I miss her so much; not an hour passes that I don't think about her...


I remember how we met...
Do you live around here? I'm hungry.
There's a dumpster behind the Asian Foods market.
I think we became friends so quickly because we saw the world from the same perspective...
This is... insanity...
Disaster capitalism gone wild. The whole planet is gonna die...
...although we often disagreed on how to address the problems we saw.
Humans... can we really kill them all?
HOLLYWOOD
Umm... maybe we can *help* them instead?
We spent months trying to create a plan that we would be able to do.
How about if we create an upside-down university where all the smartest cats from around the world teach younger cats revolutionary theory and practice?
I think that's a great idea...
...if we had 50 years and several million dollars. You have that?

So for the next several years Bunny and I just started experimenting, trying to counter Epic Planetary Fail in our own tiny way...

I must go.
My planet needs me.

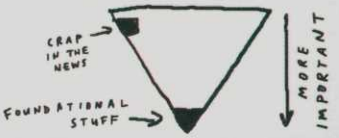
26 things
we learned while doing
The Pinky Show

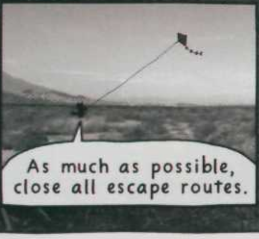
Fish can't see water.

1 Carefully study anything that has become so naturalized that it's allowed to hide in plain sight – social relations, ideology, History, common sense, and so on.

2 Sometimes simple questions (or, "stupid" questions also) are very difficult to answer; other times they're treated as if they're so ridiculous that they needn't be considered at all. But they must all be answered.

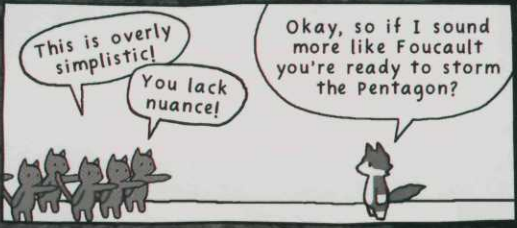
3 "Important" topical issues come and go every week. If you stay focused on the underlying concepts and structures that give rise to the issues, the materials you produce will 1) stay relevant much longer; and 2) help people to figure out what's behind new issues as they arise.


CRAP IN THE NEWS
FOUNDATIONAL STUFF
MORE IMPORTANT


As much as possible, close all escape routes.

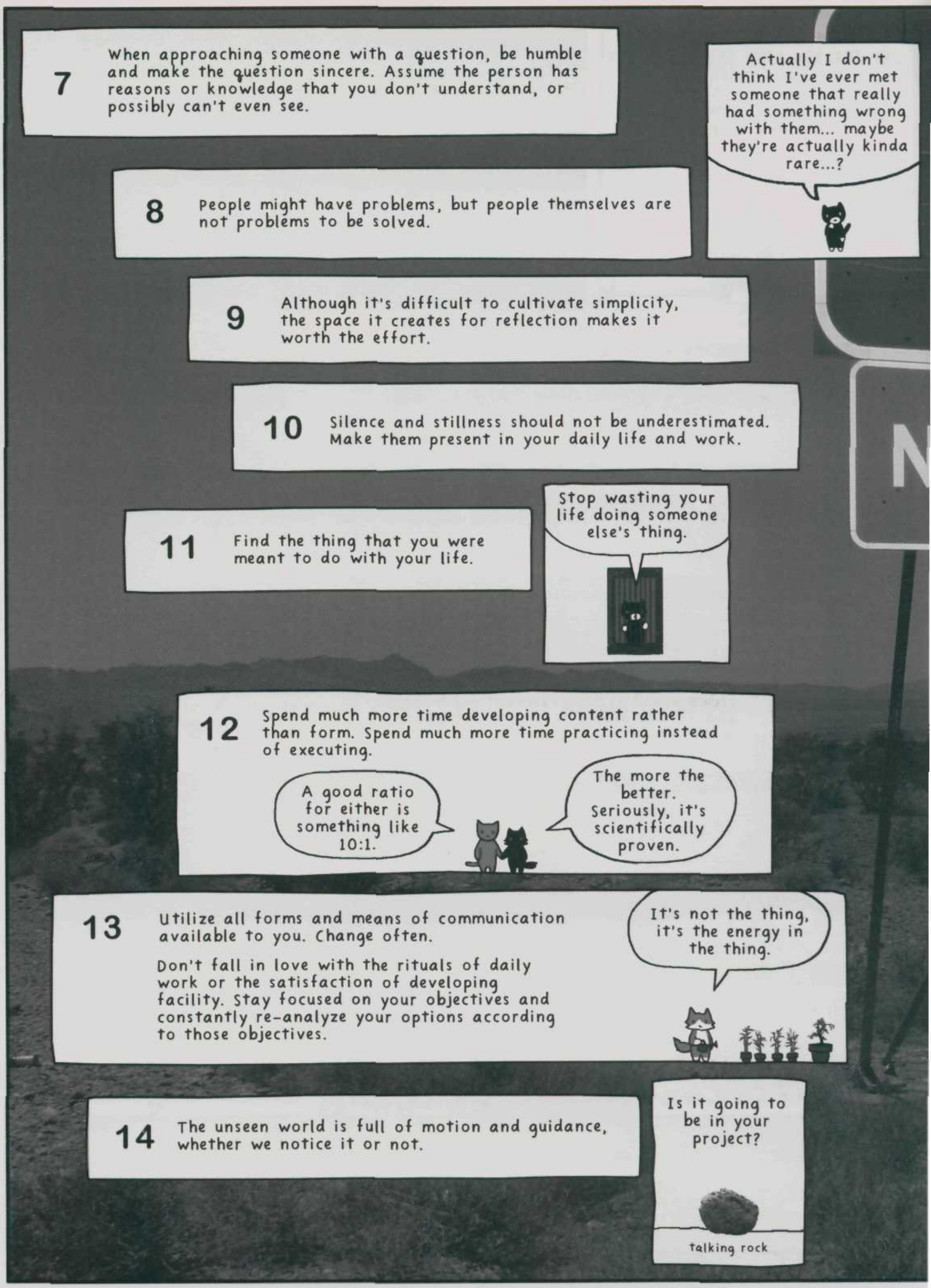
4 When presenting emotionally challenging material, be compassionate. Use a soft feeling, but never soften the truth.

5 Use clear, non-academic language that ordinary people can easily understand. If you're talking revolution or doing a radical critique, elites and wannabe elites are not your main audience anyway.


This is overly simplistic!
You lack nuance!
Okay, so if I sound more like Foucault you're ready to storm the Pentagon?

6 Dominant perspectives already enjoy a near-monopoly of thought. Don't bother trying to "objectively" cover "both sides" of a story – it's a time-wasting trap!

Live in the margins! It's so beautiful here!



7 When approaching someone with a question, be humble and make the question sincere. Assume the person has reasons or knowledge that you don't understand, or possibly can't even see.

Actually I don't think I've ever met someone that really had something wrong with them... maybe they're actually kinda rare...?

8 People might have problems, but people themselves are not problems to be solved.

9 Although it's difficult to cultivate simplicity, the space it creates for reflection makes it worth the effort.

10 Silence and stillness should not be underestimated. Make them present in your daily life and work.

11 Find the thing that you were meant to do with your life.

Stop wasting your life doing someone else's thing.

12 Spend much more time developing content rather than form. Spend much more time practicing instead of executing.

A good ratio for either is something like 10:1.
The more the better. Seriously, it's scientifically proven.

13 Utilize all forms and means of communication available to you. Change often.

Don't fall in love with the rituals of daily work or the satisfaction of developing facility. Stay focused on your objectives and constantly re-analyze your options according to those objectives.

It's not the thing, it's the energy in the thing.

14 The unseen world is full of motion and guidance, whether we notice it or not.

Is it going to be in your project?
talking rock

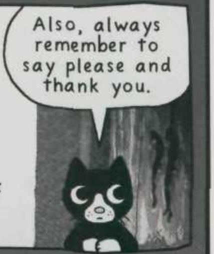
15 If you want to fight, you need good friends.

Our official Pinky Show cat friends picture.

16 Don't try to avoid discomfort or unpleasant things.

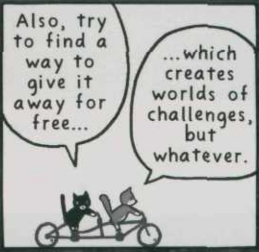
Whenever you encounter a thing that has explanatory power, say hello, treat it with respect, and then examine it very carefully. Use it for learning ideas and reading the world but also use it like a mirror to see what it reveals about yourself.

Try to be brave as you explore shadow worlds, even if you're afraid.


Also, always remember to say please and thank you.

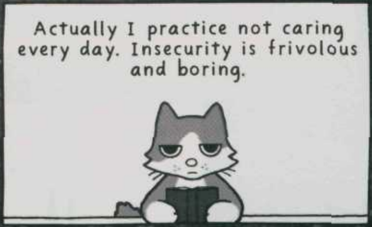
17 For our university and museum (and other establishment) friends: If you want to radicalize your thinking, quit your job.*

*Promise yourself you'll never try to get your old job / status / security back, even after you've run out of money. Don't ever mention your academic or professional credentials to advance your desires.

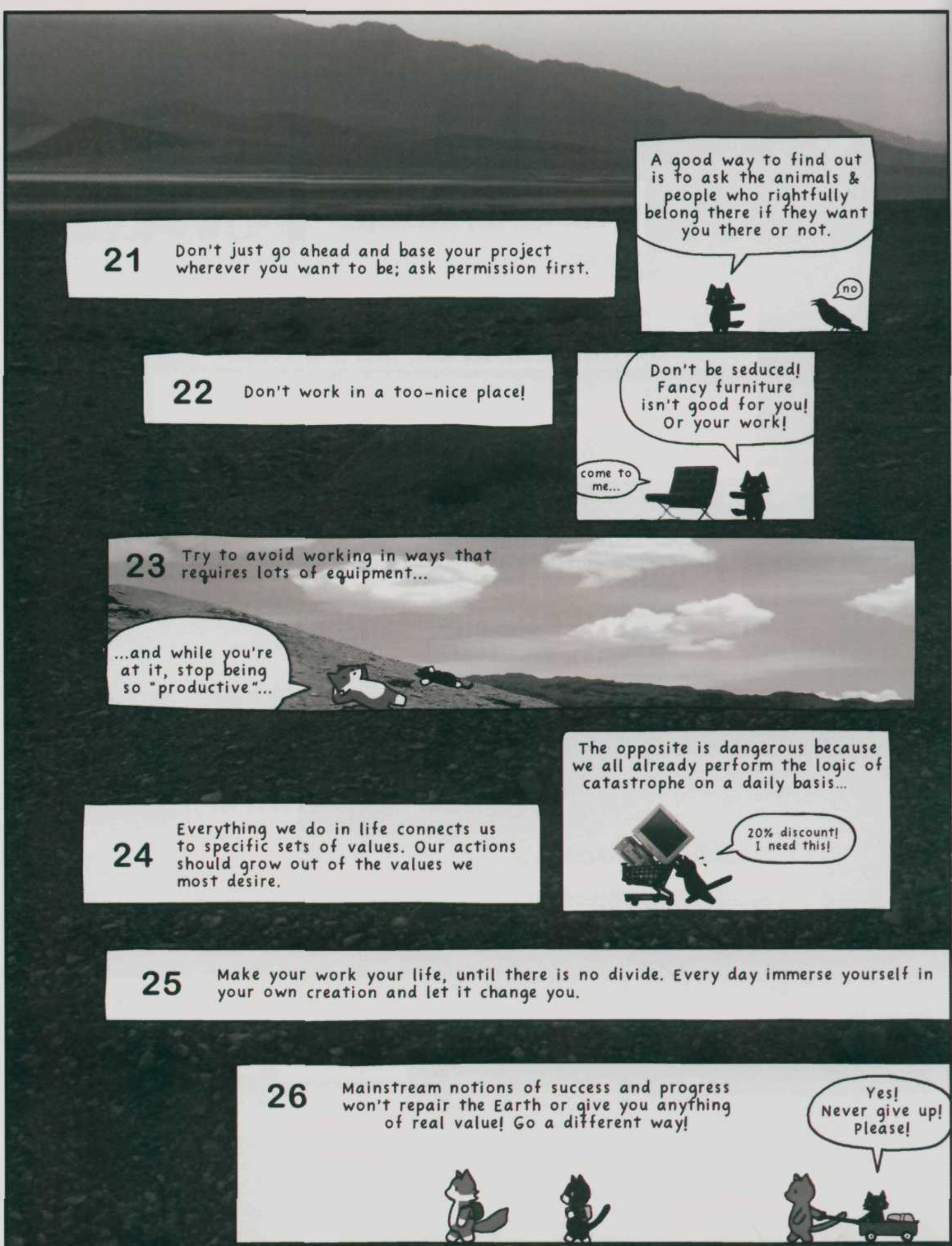

Also, try to find a way to give it away for free...
...which creates worlds of challenges, but whatever.

18 If you're doing counter-establishment work, do it full time.

19 Not caring is an important skill.


Actually I practice not caring every day. Insecurity is frivolous and boring.

20 Discussion is good. Negotiation is also good. But never, ever compromise your values and principles.



21 Don't just go ahead and base your project wherever you want to be; ask permission first.

A good way to find out is to ask the animals & people who rightfully belong there if they want you there or not.
no

22 Don't work in a too-nice place!

Don't be seduced! Fancy furniture isn't good for you! Or your work!
come to me...

23 Try to avoid working in ways that requires lots of equipment...

...and while you're at it, stop being so "productive"...

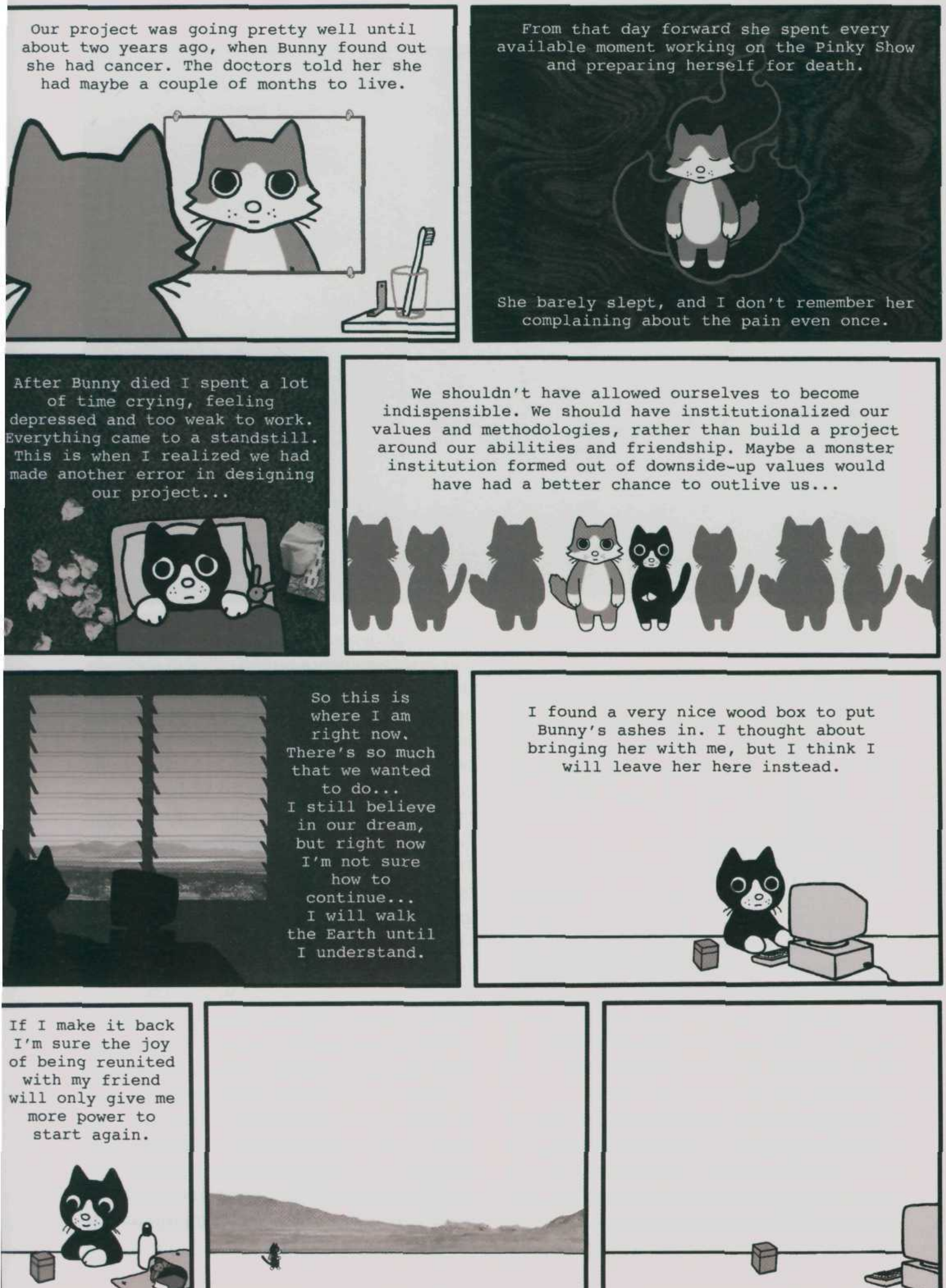
24 Everything we do in life connects us to specific sets of values. Our actions should grow out of the values we most desire.

The opposite is dangerous because we all already perform the logic of catastrophe on a daily basis...
20% discount! I need this!

25 Make your work your life, until there is no divide. Every day immerse yourself in your own creation and let it change you.

26 Mainstream notions of success and progress won't repair the Earth or give you anything of real value! Go a different way!

Yes! Never give up! Please!


Our project was going pretty well until about two years ago, when Bunny found out she had cancer. The doctors told her she had maybe a couple of months to live.
From that day forward she spent every available moment working on the Pinky Show and preparing herself for death.
She barely slept, and I don't remember her complaining about the pain even once.
After Bunny died I spent a lot of time crying, feeling depressed and too weak to work. Everything came to a standstill. This is when I realized we had made another error in designing our project...
We shouldn't have allowed ourselves to become indispensible. We should have institutionalized our values and methodologies, rather than build a project around our abilities and friendship. Maybe a monster institution formed out of downside-up values would have had a better chance to outlive us...
So this is where I am right now. There's so much that we wanted to do... I still believe in our dream, but right now I'm not sure how to continue... I will walk the Earth until I understand.
I found a very nice wood box to put Bunny's ashes in. I thought about bringing her with me, but I think I will leave her here instead.
If I make it back I'm sure the joy of being reunited with my friend will only give me more power to start again.

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THE
SILENT
UNIVERSITY

Ahmet Öğüt / The Silent University

Reclaiming Knowledge

Current immigration policies demand a so called "legal existence" by deploying language and wordy documents as a filter, as opposed to the simple fact of being present somewhere, regardless of educational background. The Silent University skips this overwhelming, oppressive, and obstructive process of accreditation and legitimization through the established institutional structures. Instead, it concentrates on direct measures and immediate action, defying the deleterious aspects of the simplistic monolingual monoculture of compulsory schooling system in an act of genuine social emancipation. After two years' experience testing different methods, the Silent University has now proved itself as an organization, a structural modality that has both communal and individual qualities, and sees these as a collective issue to be addressed. For most institutions willing to collaborate, moving away from terms such as "project" and "workshop" is not an easy process.

The same difficulty occurs when transforming temporary or short-term engagement into long-term commitment, simply because that kind of category doesn't exist under the current administrative and bureaucratic structures of culture and education institutions. The Silent University aims to go beyond all given definitions and functions as an organization that brings together education (academies, universities), community (NGOs), and culture (art institutions) organizations. It searches for the most progressive ways to use each organization's facilities and affect changes in policy. Decentralization and participatory horizontal models of knowledge transfer are its inevitable priorities.

The lecturers of the Silent University are asylum seekers, refugees, undocumented participants with an academic background that they are unable to use in their current situation. The priority is given to lecturers struggling with unresolved asylum cases *who cannot meet their basic needs*. The Silent University disregards both language and legal barriers. Lecturers develop courses in their native or preferred language, and get something back in return—a new way of creating income opportunities whenever possible, as well as an exchange of skills and time with the users. In November 2013 for example a few of the lecturers and consultants of the Silent University travelled to Berlin for the 1st International Conference of the Silent University. All of them got paid a fee and accommodation covered for their presentations. The Silent University, Stockholm, consultant Babak Parham was paid a fee to produce a short introduction film about the Silent University by Van Abbemuseum. By mentioning the Silent University on his resubmitted application form, London research fellow Yegeta Zega received his work permit after a wait of eight years.

The university is supported by consultants who are community leaders and academics, and have experienced the process of being asylum seekers, refugees, or undocumented, but now have a recognized qualification. Consultants supervise the lecturers and work on developing the Silent University's structure. Anyone can become a user (student) of the Silent University by registering and loaning hours and skills. By inventing alternative currencies, the Silent University establishes a process of exchanging knowledge and experience, which is mutually beneficial to everyone involved in order to allow democratic access to education, and avoid social hierarchies and class distinctions. Public courses are open to everyone; the lectures, however, are given in native languages. So far, around two hundred users have registered on the Silent University's website. They loaned more than one thousand hours in total to be exchanged with Silent University lecturers and consultants.

The Silent University is encouraged by need and urgency, but its sustainability is crucial. It is a challenging organization within *different host institutions, and establishes* its own adhocratic structure, while being fully recognized by the host institution. Even if many cultural institutions are willing to take up the challenge and collaborate with the Silent University, their bureaucratic and administrative structures often rupture or slow down their engagement. At present, there are actively engaged participants and members in London and Stockholm, and there will soon be in Paris as well. The Silent University will persist its demands for more permanent solutions and presence beyond short-term temporary collaborations.

***Ahmet Öğüt** (TR/NL/FI) is a sociocultural initiator, mediator, artist, negotiator, and lecturer. He is initiator of the Silent University, an autonomous knowledge exchange platform by and for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants with academic backgrounds. It has collaborated with Delfina Foundation, Tate Modern, Migrant Resource Centre, The Showroom in London, Tensta Konsthall, and ABF Stockholm.*

Udi Aloni

Weakness

Violence wears many faces in our world. They are not the many faces of the same violence, but different faces of different types of violence. We have, for example, the organized violence of the market forces, which functions as a destructive force of nature, indifferent to its victims but not a necessary product of metaphysical evil. There is the violence of pure evil and the violence of the banality of evil. But there is also the violence that garners our sympathy, a violence that has played a necessary role in history. This is the excess of violence that is immanent to the resistance movement, a violence that sometimes erupts spontaneously, and sometimes occurs as a planned event that serves as the only means of mobilizing resistance.

When I spoke with Slavoj Žižek about his book *Violence*, I claimed that the violence of the oppressed is often justified, but not always necessary. A little over three years ago, with this insight in mind, I joined my friend Juliano Mer-Khamis in the Freedom Theater of Jenin Refugee Camp, which is a camp that acknowledges the right of the oppressed to struggle for freedom through the use of violence. It was by acknowledging this right to violence that Juliano created a space in which violence would no longer be necessary. In order to understand the role of the Freedom Theater in Jenin, we have to understand that, even though it was an alternative means of resistance, the theater was neither a condemnation nor a sublimation of violence. Instead, it was a space in which violence was immanent to the art itself. And thus, violence as such was unnecessary.

Alain Badiou differentiates between two types of art: official art and militant art. Official art, which is protected by state power, creates representations within a given ideological structure. In the official art of the theater, for example, the performers and the audience are all familiar with their roles in the structure of representation. The other art is militant art, which appears as a presentation, not a representation; i.e., the audience, the ideology, and in our case, the theater are each created simultaneously from a void, or near-void. Following Badiou, I argue that militant art is the art of the weak. The one who barely exists in the public realm. The person whose density is barely noticed in the political world. Militant art is the ability to create power from this position of weakness. Those who are ready to take risks for the sake of art will be those who create the beginnings of a new art. In order to illuminate the topic of militant art, I can call upon "the shadow." I'm thinking about two caves with shadows, both foundational in our culture: Plato's and Nietzsche's. In the former, the philosopher was murdered, and in the latter, God was murdered. In both caves, the shadow appears as a cause of violence. In Plato, this is violence that murders the philosopher who attempts to free those in chains. And perhaps that was the kind of murder that Juliano received: "The murder of the one who tries to remove shackles." In Nietzsche's *The Gay Science*, the violence is that which repeatedly murders God. For our purposes, we can replace the name "God" with the word "capitalism" or "colonialism," and we can read the text as follows:

After Buddha was dead, they still showed his shadow in a cave for centuries—a tremendous, gruesome shadow. Capitalism/Colonialism is dead; but given the way people are, there may still for millennia be caves in which they show his shadow.—And we—we must still defeat his shadow as well!

Let's return to Plato's cave. Instead of thinking about the philosopher as the tragic protagonist, perhaps we should think of the artifact-bearers as the protagonists of the allegory. Those who carry the artifacts in Plato's allegory are standing along a low wall, and the fire behind them projects shadows of the objects they carry onto a wall. The prisoners, chained to face this wall, perceive these shadows as reality. I like to think of the artifact-bearers as the artists; they are tricksters, not philosophers. They walk free in the cave and, therefore, they always already know the truth. They are the ones who create the thing that Plato despised: the theater of shadows. It's true that most of them are collaborators in this matrix, but a few of them choose a different way. Instead of collaborating like their fellow artifact-bearers, and instead of trying to import external truths like the philosopher, these rebellious artifact-bearers choose to sabotage their established mission. To do this, they sneak images and narratives into the shadow-performance such that the prisoners might be able to identify their faulty condition and perhaps even desire their own freedom.

Unfortunately, there is no happy end to our story. Even though our Juliano lived his life as the prince of tricksters, as a militant artifact-bearer, he lost his life as the philosopher. He lived as an artist who used the theater of shadows to tell the truth—or at least hint at it. But when his subversive acts put the cave itself in danger, he was assassinated. Thus, even the trickster, if he pushes the boundaries of the game too far, runs the risk of dying just like the greatest of philosophers.

After the murder, I understood that Jenin actually functions as the place of the shadow of the Jewish-Israeli protest. It is a shadow not in the Platonic sense of the word, but a shadow in the psychoanalytic sense: a place of deep truth and repressed fears. When I returned to Tel Aviv, I couldn't find myself within the protest movement. I felt that much of the Jewish-Israeli resistance creates simulacra of struggles between right and left, religious and secular, Mizrahi and Ashkenazi, but only in order to avoid the shadow we fear: the true resistance of the refugee camp. A resistance that illuminates us, the Israeli Jews, in the bright, white light of colonialism.

***Udi Aloni** (IL) is a writer, artist, and filmmaker whose work explores the discourse between art, theory, and action. In 2009, he began working at the Cinema Department of the Freedom Theater in the Jenin Refugee Camp, where he joined his friend and founder of the theater, Juliano Mer-Khamis, who was assassinated in front of the theater in 2011.*

The Haircut Before The Party

Cutting Hair

After all the gesturing, anecdotes, and questions of aesthetics, of style tangled in gendered and cultural assumptions, enough care has been taken of language for the haircut to finally get under way.

There is an orientation, or a tilt, to our chair: we want to know where we stand within hierarchies and to find concrete ways of struggling and reproducing ourselves, our relationships and our politics. Somehow class seems reductive, but identity politics also appear to create margins around the body and the "we." The hairdresser's ear is tuned to discordance and harmonies, feeling for suggestions of struggles-in-common. The stories will be repeated, rewoven amongst hair swept up, grown back, and cut again.

Historically, the figure of "The Barber" originates in the cultivation of male identities. As hairdressers, stood with this chair, in this salon, our interests aren't in any singular identity, but in whomever, expressing themselves in whatever form, whether theoretical, abstract, anecdotal, poetic, or pragmatic. Our salons are inspired by processes of commoning; we cut your hair together, not an expert, nor a teacher. And although our salon is tuned to the sound of dissent and organization, the chair is not exclusively for the development of the radical; it is there to feel out affinities across differences in order to open up possibilities amongst various identities. The look of the haircut is a culmination of the person's involvement in this process, and extends to those waiting on the bench.

In the next chair a gentle hum of clippers temporarily drowns out the murmur. The gradient of hair closely follows the line of the nape. The traffic outside makes the mirror vibrate slightly, but not the reflection. The woman in the chair already had fairly short, silvery hair, which curled slightly around her ears.

"Let me tell you, as concrete as possible, what I know about reproduction and commons ..."

Ears prick up. A person wriggles in their seat to adjust their position.

"On the one side, there has been the demise of the statist model of revolution, which for decades sapped radical movements' efforts to build an alternative to capitalism. On the other, the neoliberal attempt to subordinate every form of life and knowledge to the logic of the market has heightened our awareness of the danger of living in a world in which we no longer have access to seas, trees, animals, or our fellow beings except through the cash nexus."

Magazine pages rustle and eyebrows are raised. The words have been spoken with an unusually calm urgency.

"The new enclosures ironically demonstrated that not only have commons not vanished, but new forms of social cooperation are constantly being produced, also in areas of life where none previously existed."

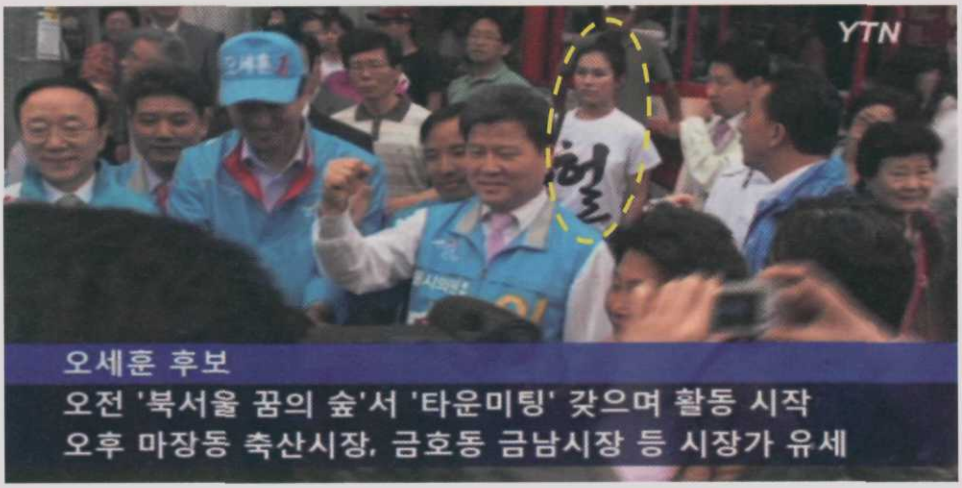
"I don't understand, can you give an example?" comes a question from the bench.

"What about the Internet?" suggests the person opposite.

"It has also been posed by a Marxist geographer that the city can be thought of as a common: not as a thing, but as a process of commoning, the city as we experience being the result of everyone's contributions and forms of reproduction. Which means we have also to consider all the invisible contributions that make this common possible, and that often also brings up the question of gender," someone else chips in.

The hairdresser shifts their weight from one foot the other, measuring up the emerging cut.

The Haircut Before The Party *(GB) was formed in 2009, holding salons in public spaces, occupations, demonstrations, strikes, and arts venues across Europe. Referring to this as their "line of flight," the salons offered an exchange premised on intimacy and trust, and listened closely for the discourse surrounding political organization in its many forms.*

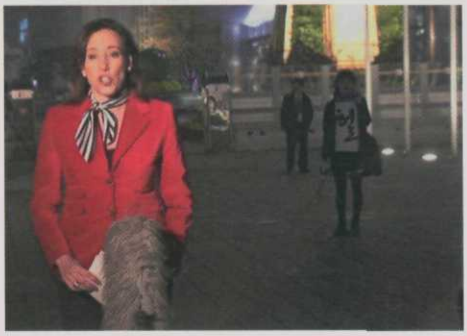

YTN
헐
오세훈 후보
오전 '북서울 꿈의 숲'서 '타운미팅' 갖으며 활동 시작
오후 마장동 축산시장, 금호동 금남시장 등 시장가 유세

Jisun Kim

Image Squatting

The Korean word 헐 (pronounced "hull") is a widely used colloquialism with no real translation into English: an exclamation mocking something that is quite absurd—an expression that says more than a thousand words and has the advantage of fitting very nicely—and very visibly—on a t-shirt.
So when, in 2010, the mayor of Seoul, Oh Se-hoon—without doubt one of our country's worst politicians—ran for reelection, I used the incredible media attention surrounding him to shadow him whenever possible and create an image on all TV channels that was in itself very 헐.
In the same year, the city of Seoul hosted the G20 Summit—twenty countries that make up 90 percent of the world's GDP, 80 percent of world trade, and two-thirds of the world population—together with the IMF, the World Bank, and the European Central Bank. Again this event inspired me to take my 헐 t-shirt out of the drawer and go to the conference venue. Standing behind the reporters covering the summit, the images were broadcast to many countries around the world. 헐!
I was frequently stopped by the police, but I usually managed to convince them that 헐 actually had a very positive connotation among young people—and that it probably must be a generation gap that made them misunderstand my good intentions ... They usually then let me go on my way.

***Jisun Kim** (KR) is an activist and artist. For her project "Well-Stealing," Kim places her art among common products in stores to be legally stolen. For 헐, she squatted media attention to comment on political events.*



Srđa Popović / CANVAS

Laugh-tiv-ism

The Internet age has brought about a number of new types of creative activism: "hacktivism," "clicktivism," and even "slacktivism," to name a few. Now, however, we are witnessing the rise of a new –ism: laughtivism. Although pictures and videos of actions are often spread by the Internet, laughtivism itself does not take place on a computer screen, but in the streets. Laughtivism can be defined by the use of humor including mocking or ridicule, in social mobilization and nonviolent action. Political satire and humor are nothing new, but laughtivism takes the idea of subversion of power through humor and applies it directly to protest.

Social scientists like to focus on conditions like age, income, and education, when explaining how nonviolent revolutions happen; excluding emotional variables, such as enthusiasm and humor. In the 1970s and '80s, scientists stuck to the idea that revolutions were a serious business and revolutionaries themselves must be equally serious. Today's revolutions do not fit that prejudice. In recent years, we have seen mass movements shoot up in the Middle East, North Africa, the United States, Quebec, Russia, and Mexico. These movements are not led by Che Guevara types, but rather by smiling students and educated young people worried about their futures.

Laughtivism frequently utilizes "dilemma actions"—strategically planned nonviolent campaigns designed to put the authorities in a position so that, no matter how they respond, they cannot win. The Serbian resistance movement, Otpor, was one of the first to refine the concept of the dilemma action, as well as to use the idea of laughtivism when they overthrew dictator Slobodan Milošević in 2000. One time, they placed Milošević's face on an oildrum and left it in a crowded shopping street with a bat, for passersby to abuse. The activists left, and when the police showed up, they had no idea what to do. There was no one responsible to arrest, so they were stuck with arresting the barrel itself. The comical image of two police officers wrestling a barrel with the president's face on it into the back of a cop car was all over the papers the following day.

Movements that utilize laughtivism are not going away. In the future, we are sure to see more from all of these nonviolent movements as they learn, organize, and adapt. As time goes on, these movements cannot afford to fall out of the media spotlight, and therefore out of the public's consciousness. If they are going to stay relevant they will need to be creative. As concepts for and tactics of nonviolent protest are shared around the world, we have seen the creativity of laughtivism pop up everywhere: from Egypt, where the revolution got a boost from Bassem Youssef, the "Arab Jon Stewart," to Russia, where a group of toys held a protest against Vladimir Putin in the small town of Barnaul, Siberia, to famous American laughtivists called The Yes Men, who have literally tamed the bull of Wall Street.

Most recently, student activists in one of the world's most oppressive countries, Sudan, have held hilarious "elbow-licking" protests, after the term President Bashir used to describe them, when attempting the impossible by challenging his rule.

Laughtivism derives its power from the ability to melt fear, the lifeblood of dictators, to build the morale of groups and help to cut away at leaders' authority, which often stems from intense narcissism. It is impossible to predict where the next wave of nonviolent revolution will occur. Whether it is in Sudan or Burma, we are sure about what it will look like; cheerful parties with humor cleverly used to bring together people from different sectors of society to mock and undermine the authority of autocrats.

***Srđja Popović** (RS) is the Executive Director at the **Center for Applied Nonviolent Actions and Strategies (CANVAS)**, an NGO based in Belgrade. Popović was a founding member of the Otpor youth resistance movement, which helped overthrow dictator Slobodan Milošević in 2000 in a nonviolent revolution. CANVAS has worked with prodemocracy activists from more than fifty countries and CANVAS training and methodology has been successfully applied by groups in Georgia, Ukraine, Lebanon, the Maldives, and Egypt.*

Irit Rogoff

Freethinking

This moment, in which so many civic institutions have been partially taken over by activist enterprises or have instituted themselves as performative hubs, has seen a range of new coalitions between these and artists, curators, citizens without citizenship—a host of quasi-legitimate actors who raise the question of accountability to publics and the constitution of new modes of agency through knowledge. Thus "freethinking" is both cultural production and reassemblage at the intersection of art, curating, teaching, and political economy.

The collective Freethought came together as a platform for research, pedagogy, and production combining intellectual work with creative practice and large-scale public organization. One of its main drives has been to take our ideas out of teaching and research intensive institutions, and to find new audiences for them, audiences that might make uses of them than the pursuit of degrees within a prescribed knowledge economy.

Our aim as a collective has been to blur the boundaries between thought, creativity, and critique, and to meld them into a translanguage practice, working with creative practices of every form. By this, we probably mean that the point of departure is rarely an intellectually defined axiomatic thought but a multifaceted approach that examines an urgent question from many perspectives and finds multiple points of entry into it. Equally, we share a concern with how to make seemingly static structures of knowledge excavation and analysis, into creative practices that not only allow the introduction of subjectivities but think of these as grounding.

What distinguishes the work of Freethought is its devotion to making thinking an active part of public cultural life. We come from different intellectual traditions: anthropology, art history, curating, philosophy, economics and management, urbanism, and performance art. Equally, the array of public practices we have been involved in has ranged across political platforms, activist initiatives, curatorial projects, public research, events, and festivals. Our political and cultural practices overlapped as we encountered each other on various public occasions, forums, exhibitions, and conferences, and that led to the decision to join forces as a collective.

One of the most interesting aspects of Freethought is that it is not a collective aimed at countering one specific mode of operation, i.e., it does not aim to replace institutional cultural practices, etc. Rather, it aims to explore how different bodies of knowledge and expertise, shared political objectives, and a commitment to creative thinking in the public sphere—can come together in concrete forms. To borrow a term from one of Adrian Heathfield's projects, we are committed to the notion of "performing idea." At its core is also a concern about how to be a collective in the current sense of the word—not a joint a priori set of collectively-held beliefs, but the struggle to make ideas and beliefs work across difference—when there is a shared ground of what one is working toward but not of how to get there.

Coming at the moment of economic crisis, the drive toward a capitalization of creativity and cognition, the increasing estrangement between meta-institutions and public actions, and the turbulence of global protest, Freethought, wishes to engage with questions of ways of framing and reframing critical issues—such as the one of insider and outsider, or individuals and collectivities, equality and inequality, or legitimacies and illegitimacies—through a perfomative process of cultural production.

We work around the idea of political contingency. Foregrounding questions such as: What can we salvage in the debris of the crisis? Can we open new temporalities out of the here and now? In what ways have concepts of "potentiality" and of "actualization" replaced older notions of "agency" and "empowerment"? Can short-term and informal economies, and regimes of labor emerge from the financial and intellectual wasteland that surrounds us? What kind of human economies will develop from shared and self-directed practices and forms of livelihood, and the open flow of emergent subjectivities?,

Freethought requires a radical restructuring of existent disciplinary, economic, and academic boundaries, as an open platform of education and production, one that comes about through generative critical work that is not a form of pure protest.

***Irit Rogoff** (GB) is a cultural theorist, curator, and professor of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London. She writes on the conjunctions of art and critical theory, with reference to colonialism, cultural difference, and performativity. Together with Stefano Harney, Adrian Heathfield, Nora Sternfeld, Massimilano Mollona, and Louis Moreno, she founded the Freethought collective in 2011.*

Slavoj Žižek

Human Microphone

They are saying we're all losers,
They are saying we're all losers,

but the true losers are down there on Wall Street.
but the true losers are down there on Wall Street.

They were bailed out by billions of our money.
They were bailed out by billions of our money.

We're called socialists,
We're called socialists,

but here there is always socialism for the rich.
but here there is always socialism for the rich.

They say we don't respect private property,
They say we don't respect private property,

but in the 2008 financial crash ...
but in the 2008 financial crash ...

more hard earned private property was destroyed ...
more hard earned private property was destroyed ...

than if all of us here were to be destroying it night and day for weeks.
than if all of us here were to be destroying it night and day for weeks.

They tell you we're dreamers.
They tell you we're dreamers.

The true dreamers are those who think ...
The true dreamers are those who think ...

things can go on indefinitely the way they are.
things can go on indefinitely the way they are.

We're not dreamers. We're the awakening …
We're not dreamers. We're the awakening …

from a dream that's turning into a nightmare.
from a dream that's turning into a nightmare.

We're not destroying anything.
We're not destroying anything.

We're only witnessing how the system is destroying itself.
We're only witnessing how the system is destroying itself.

We all know the classic scene from cartoons.
We all know the classic scene from cartoons.

The cat reaches a precipice but it goes on walking,
The cat reaches a precipice but it goes on walking,

ignoring the fact that there's nothing beneath this ground.
ignoring the fact that there's nothing beneath this ground.

Only when it looks down and notices it, does it fall down.
Only when it looks down and notices it, does it fall down.

This is what we're doing here.
This is what we're doing here.

We're telling the guys there on Wall Street,
We're telling the guys there on Wall Street,

"Hey, look down!"
"Hey, look down!"

In mid-April 2011,
In mid-April 2011,

the Chinese government prohibited …
the Chinese government prohibited …

on TV, films, and novels …
on TV, films, and novels …

all stories that contain alternate reality or time travel.
all stories that contain alternate reality or time travel.

This is a good sign for China.
This is a good sign for China.

These people still dream about alternatives,
These people still dream about alternatives,

so you have to prohibit this dreaming.
so you have to prohibit this dreaming.

Here, we don't need a prohibition …
Here, we don't need a prohibition …

because the ruling system has even oppressed our capacity to dream.
because the ruling system has even oppressed our capacity to dream.

Look at the movies that we see all the time.
Look at the movies that we see all the time.

It's easy to imagine the end of the world.
It's easy to imagine the end of the world.

An asteroid destroying all life and so on.
An asteroid destroying all life and so on.

But you can't imagine the end of capitalism.
But you can't imagine the end of capitalism.

So what are we doing here?
So what are we doing here?

Let me tell you a wonderful old joke from Communist times.
Let me tell you a wonderful old joke from Communist times.

A guy was sent from East Germany to work in Siberia.
A guy was sent from East Germany to work in Siberia.

He knew his mail would be read by censors …
He knew his mail would be read by censors …

so he told his friends …
so he told his friends …

"Let's establish a code …
"Let's establish a code …

If a letter you get from me is written in blue ink,
If a letter you get from me is written in blue ink,

what I say is true.
what I say is true.

If it's written in red ink, it's false."
If it's written in red ink, it's false."

After a month, his friends get the first letter.
After a month, his friends get the first letter.

Everything's in blue.
Everything's in blue.

It says, this letter:
It says, this letter:

"Everything's wonderful here.
"Everything's wonderful here.

Stores are full of good food.
Stores are full of good food.

Movie theaters show good films from the west.
Movie theaters show good films from the west.

Apartments are large and luxurious.
Apartments are large and luxurious.

The only thing you can't buy …
The only thing you can't buy …

is red ink."
is red ink."

This is how we live.
This is how we live.

We have all the freedoms we want.
We have all the freedoms we want.

But what we're missing is red ink:
But what we're missing is red ink:

the language to articulate our nonfreedom.
the language to articulate our nonfreedom.

The way we're taught to speak about freedom—
The way we're taught to speak about freedom—

the war on terror and so on—
the war on terror and so on—

falsifies freedom.
falsifies freedom.

And this is what you're doing here.
And this is what you're doing here.

You're giving all of us red ink.
You're giving all of us red ink.

There is a danger.
There is a danger.

Don't fall in love with yourselves.
Don't fall in love with yourselves.

We're having a nice time here.
We're having a nice time here.

But remember, carnivals come cheap.
But remember, carnivals come cheap.

What matters is the day after,
What matters is the day after,

when we have to return to normal lives.
when we have to return to normal lives.

Will there be any changes then?
Will there be any changes then?

I don't want you to remember these days,
I don't want you to remember these days,

you know, like "Oh, we were young and it was beautiful."
you know, like "Oh, we were young and it was beautiful."

Remember that our basic message is:
Remember that our basic message is:

We're allowed to think about alternatives.
We're allowed to think about alternatives.

If the taboo is broken,
If the taboo is broken,

we don't live in the best possible world.
we don't live in the best possible world.

But there's a long road ahead.
But there's a long road ahead.

There are truly difficult questions that confront us.
There are truly difficult questions that confront us.

We know what we don't want.
We know what we don't want.

But what do we want?
But what do we want?

What social organization can replace capitalism?
What social organization can replace capitalism?

What type of new leaders do we want?
What type of new leaders do we want?

Remember. The problem isn't corruption or greed.
Remember. The problem isn't corruption or greed.

The problem is the system. It forces you to be corrupt.
The problem is the system. It forces you to be corrupt.

Beware not only of the enemies, but also of false friends …
Beware not only of the enemies, but also of false friends …

who are already working to dilute this process.
who are already working to dilute this process.

In the same way you get coffee without caffeine,
In the same way you get coffee without caffeine,

beer without alcohol, ice cream without fat,
beer without alcohol, ice cream without fat,

they will try to make this into a harmless, moral protest.
they will try to make this into a harmless, moral protest.

A decaffeinated protest.
A decaffeinated protest.

But the reason we're here …
But the reason we're here …

is that we've had enough of a world
is that we've had enough of a world

where, to recycle Coke cans,
where, to recycle Coke cans,

to give a couple of dollars for charity,
to give a couple of dollars for charity,

or to buy a Starbucks cappuccino …
or to buy a Starbucks cappuccino …

where 1% goes to third world starving children …
where 1% goes to third world starving children …

is enough to make us feel good.
is enough to make us feel good.

After outsourcing work and torture,
After outsourcing work and torture,

after marriage agencies are now outsourcing our love life,
after marriage agencies are now outsourcing our love life,

we can see that for a long time,
we can see that for a long time,

we allow our political engagement also to be outsourced.
we allow our political engagement also to be outsourced.

We want it back.
We want it back.

We're not Communists …
We're not Communists …

if Communism means a system which collapsed in 1990.
if Communism means a system which collapsed in 1990.

Remember that today those Communists …
Remember that today those Communists …

are the most efficient, ruthless Capitalists.
are the most efficient, ruthless Capitalists.

In China today, we have Capitalism
In China today, we have Capitalism

which is even more dynamic than your American Capitalism,
which is even more dynamic than your American Capitalism,

but doesn't need democracy.
but doesn't need democracy.

Which means when you criticize Capitalism,
Which means when you criticize Capitalism,

don't allow yourself to be blackmailed
don't allow yourself to be blackmailed

that you're against democracy.
that you're against democracy.

The marriage between democracy and Capitalism is over.
The marriage between democracy and Capitalism is over.

The change is possible.
The change is possible.

What do we perceive today as possible?
What do we perceive today as possible?

Just follow the media.
Just follow the media.

On the one hand,
On the one hand,

in technology and sexuality,
in technology and sexuality,

everything seems to be possible.
everything seems to be possible.

You can travel to the moon,
You can travel to the moon,

you can become immortal by biogenetics,
you can become immortal by biogenetics,

you can have sex with animals or whatever,
you can have sex with animals or whatever,

but look at the field of society and economy.
but look at the field of society and economy.

There, almost everything is considered impossible.
There, almost everything is considered impossible.

You want to raise taxes by little bit for the rich.
You want to raise taxes by little bit for the rich.

They tell you it's impossible.
They tell you it's impossible.

We lose competitiveness.
We lose competitiveness.

You want more money for health care, they tell you,
You want more money for health care, they tell you,

"Impossible, this means totalitarian state."
"Impossible, this means totalitarian state."

There's something wrong in the world,
There's something wrong in the world,

where you're promised to be immortal …
where you're promised to be immortal …

but can't spend a little bit more for healthcare.
but can't spend a little bit more for healthcare.

Maybe we need to set our priorities straight here.
Maybe we need to set our priorities straight here.

We don't want higher standard of living.
We don't want higher standard of living.

We want a better standard of living.
We want a better standard of living.

The only sense in which we're Communists
The only sense in which we're Communists

is that we care for the commons.
is that we care for the commons.

The commons of nature.
The commons of nature.

The commons of privatized by intellectual property.
The commons of privatized by intellectual property.

The commons of biogenetics.
The commons of biogenetics.

For this, and only for this, we should fight.
For this, and only for this, we should fight.

Communism failed absolutely,
Communism failed absolutely,

but the problems of the commons are here.
but the problems of the commons are here.

They are telling you we're not American here.
They are telling you we're not American here.

So all we need is patience.
So all we need is patience.

The only thing I'm afraid of …
The only thing I'm afraid of …

is that we'll someday just go home …
is that we'll someday just go home …

and then we'll meet once a year,
and then we'll meet once a year,

drinking beer, and nostalgically remembering …
drinking beer, and nostalgically remembering …

What a nice time we had here.
What a nice time we had here.

Promise yourselves that this won't be the case.
Promise yourselves that this won't be the case.

We know that people often desire something but don't really want it.
We know that people often desire something but don't really want it.

Don't be afraid to really want what you desire.
Don't be afraid to really want what you desire.

This text is the slightly edited transcript of a speech by philosopher ***Slavoj Žižek*** *(SI) at Occupy Wall Street, given with the Human Microphone. The principle is simple: the people attending repeat every sentence after the speaker. Since the use of electronic amplification was forbidden in many places, this performative and collective amplification, also called the people's microphone, became a tactical strategy of diffusion and one of the symbols of the Occupy movement.*

Being Many

Sibylle Peters

Is Being Many something art and activism can relate to in a common gesture?

If we are being honest, isn't it the feeling of NOT Being Many, of there not being enough of us, that art and activism have in common—most of the time? Not enough of us to fill the theaters and concert halls, not enough of us to make a different program, not enough of us to realize the desired changes in politics, to win the important battles.

If then, all of a sudden, there are many, it feels like a miracle. When the many emerge and start to engage in the constituent process of becoming a "we," terrible and wonderful things can happen. The wonderful part is that, at such moments, the most important things can be reinvented: care, dignity, and the power to change our lives collectively, as recently in the squares and parks of Madrid, Cairo, New York, Athens, Istanbul.

If Being Many comes true, everyone gets very excited. And, for sure, art institutions play their card, and open their venues and programs to the many—not out of generosity, nor necessarily the urge to appropriate, but mostly out of the common desire for being many, at last.

Most of the time it doesn't work out. Then, unavoidably, comes the hour of the critics. They make it clear to us again, that audience development and the self-organization of the many cannot go together. Or if they can, it's even worse. Because, of course, curating in itself is not exactly a practice of Being Many. But then, the world of cultural criticism isn't any better in this respect.

For now, let's keep in mind the fact that people in art and in activism both suffer from not being many most of the time doesn't make them perfect accomplices. Their common desire for Being Many can (but doesn't have to) reduce the many to an economic feature: prosumption, participation, social media, data mining—in all these discourses the many are potentially treated as a resource and success is defined as providing access one way or the other to this resource. Nevertheless, the desire for being many is nothing to feel bad about. For good reasons, it rises up against the cultural tyranny of the individual. The individual, who has long been captured and redesigned as the self-optimizing subject of cognitive capitalism. The desire for being many rises up against the economics of attention, its imperatives of the big name, the keynote, the star, and the principles of scarcity and accumulation. It rises up more generally against the ongoing concentration of power and capital in the hands of the fewer and fewer. Therefore the desire for being many is not necessarily an impulse toward economic gain, but on the contrary can turn economics around—from the principle of lack to the principle of giving: give as if you were many.

In his contribution to this section Geert Lovink states: "Global elites are not threatened by temporary uprisings and will only be questioned by an offensive counterpower that is capable of learning and incorporating its own trial and error experiments of daily struggles into the social body." But how to enable and support, how to *live* this process of learning and incorporating, trying and failing collectively? Let us ask again, as simply as possible: How to be many? Is there an art to Being Many?

Being a performance artist I would say that learning, incorporating, trying, and failing is what we do in rehearsals or performances, which are themselves rehearsals for a different reality as, for example, when they explore transitions from choreopolicy to the choreopolitical as described in this section by André Lepecki.

So, the question I would like to ask is: Can Being Many be rehearsed?

Many activists I know would probably say it can't. They argue that Being Many is born of common conflicts, that the many are the hydra of an urban panic which comes into being through an uprising, that inverts the fatigue of governementality into a moment of collective self-governance. For them this is the moment of the real—THE REAL. Theoretical texts about real democracy uprisings already speak of a *democracy of the presence* that is unfolding here. All systems of representation seem to be off. And what can't be represented or simulated, can't be rehearsed, can it?

In what follows, I would like to argue that, nevertheless, it can be rehearsed. I would go further and say that a certain understanding of rehearsing provides an alternative mode of representing, opposed to given modes of political representation and therefore actually quite suitable for Being Many.

As a part of artistic collectives I have worked a great deal with anti-representational strategies like anonymity and multiple names, open collectives and open sources. I started this—later than others—in the first years of this century. But even then, my colleagues and I were often treated like nerds or aliens, when we refused to send in our personal CVs to appear in programs or identify the "head artist" of our collectives for the press. After experiencing this for years, it was indeed like a miracle to me to witness how this very gesture of refusal became so important to real democracy movements all around the world. Of course, this gesture of refusal was not "invented" in the arts. It also has its roots in radical activism's self-protection against prosecution. But after 2008—when, among many others, the 15M movement in Madrid and Barcelona started to reinvent the public space as a public assembly—the means of radical activist self-defense and the cultural critique of representation somehow seemed to join forces and produce something beautiful: the willingly not represented, the unrepresentable many.

Though used these days to refer to multitudes which are no longer describable by words like "the masses" or "the radical left," "the many" as a term is something surprisingly new. So, who or what are the many anyway? The many are what emerged after the bubble of individualism crashed: the many failed to be autonomous subjects and then stopped feeling guilty about that. The many are those who realized that, as individuals, we are precarious, fragile, and totally incapable of living, whereas, on the other hand, we are totally capable of producing a common life together. The many have a special kind of knowledge—the so-called wisdom of the many, a knowledge that has already widely been incorporated in management theory and is identified as typical of digital societies. The many—according to the influential theoretical discourse that goes under this term—are those who collectively produce the commons; the commons again not only understood as the limited resources this planet has to offer, but as the matrix of our common life, which does not exist without us constantly (re)producing it. And finally the many are those, who organize themselves horizontally, rather than vertically—those, who are essentially irreducible to the few. This is what lies at the core of the conflict between the many and representational systems of all kinds. As almost all representation relies, in one way or the other, on reducing the many to the few.

From the viewpoint of cultural theory, it seems almost funny: for most of the 1980s and 1990s the radical critique of representation was a main aim of cultural theory and avant-garde art. In those days activists often shook their heads about those strange fights artists and theorists seemed to fight against windmills. Now the tables have turned: activists are the radical critics of representation now, while cultural theory, on the other hand, has reoriented itself toward questions of agency. Of course, to counteract representation in the dynamics of an uprising for democracy is different from a discussion in a New York artist's loft or a seminar in Paris many years ago. But if, nevertheless, we are to connect these different discourses, it has to be stated that the activist gesture of claiming "the real," the presence beyond all representation is problematic, even if it may be "the real" and "the presence" of democracy. Historically this claim of presence has often proved ultimately to bring about the worst in representational regimes. Taking this into account, the question to all the aging experts of anti-representation would still be (and, yes, it is kind of urgent this time): How to represent without reducing the many to the few? How to organize and to assemble, how to act together, without constantly being tempted to reduce the many to the few?

Maybe an answer to this question is easier than it seems if we start by realizing what the starting point of this text was: namely, that most of the time we are not many. We are actually few. Even in those moments, when we seem to be many, as, for example, in the Occupy Movement, "we" have never for real been *the* ninety-nine percent. Compared to this claim we always were few. But we acted as if we were many. And what is this acting as if we were many if not a kind of rehearsing to be many?

There is a lot to learn from artistic and aesthetic practices when it comes to this "as if": look, for example, at the history of the protest song outlined by Diedrich Diederichsen in this section. Of course, representation has always been a part of it.

So, let me stress the difference between this kind of acting "as if we were" or "were rehearsing to be" many and given forms of political representation.

Modern representative democracy is based on the idea, that the many are a given. This idea is already hiding the fact, that this "given" constantly has to be produced by biopolitical regimes in the form of data. Moreover representative democracy is based on the idea that the many can only govern themselves or be governed by being reduced to the few. This reduction is legitimized by seemingly rational procedures of counting, dividing, collecting, and, therefore, of representing. Now, what we have found in the social movements of recent years is that the many are actually not equal to countable members of parties or to statistical figures of biopolitics or tickets sold. The given procedures for reducing the many to the few have turned out to be invalid, as they notoriously fall short of the potential, the richness, and the essential horizontality of the many. But then we may also find that—surprisingly—all these procedures are not necessary, as we happen to be few most of the time anyway.

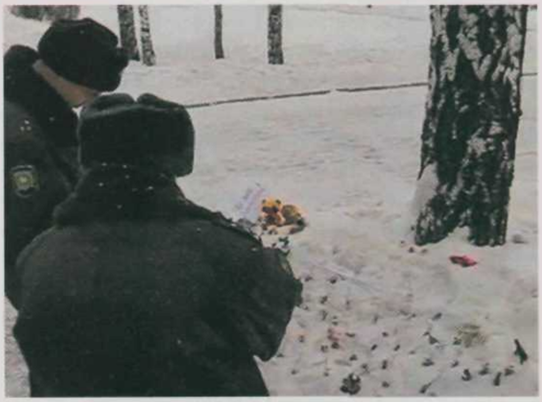
Regarding the relations between the few and the many ways of representing can actually be quite different: to act "as if we were many" is not the same as speaking for the many, embodying *the many in leading figures, or representing* the interest of the many. Instead it is a way to act that bears witness to the abundance of people, beings, things, and ghosts, who are always already present in our action, enabling it, framing it, carrying it. It is a way to realize in our action that somehow the many are always already assembled—distracted and precluded as they are, hiding as they are, lost as they are. To act as if we were many enacts an awareness of the many, who are actually there with us, though many of them, unfortunately, again couldn't make it here tonight.

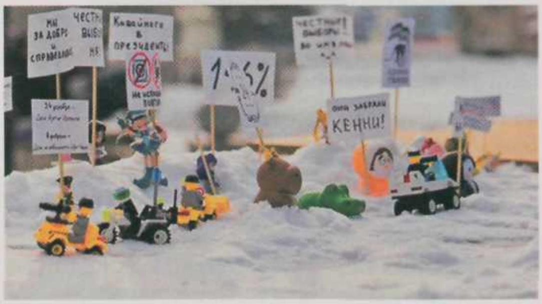
Sibylle Peters *(DE) is a scholar, researcher, and performance artist (often in cooperation with the geheimagentur collective). She is the founder of Forschungstheater/FUNDUS THEATER in Hamburg, a theater where children, artists, and scientists meet, and cofounder of the assemblies and participation PhD program. Geheimagentur is currently organizing the project "The Art of Being Many."*

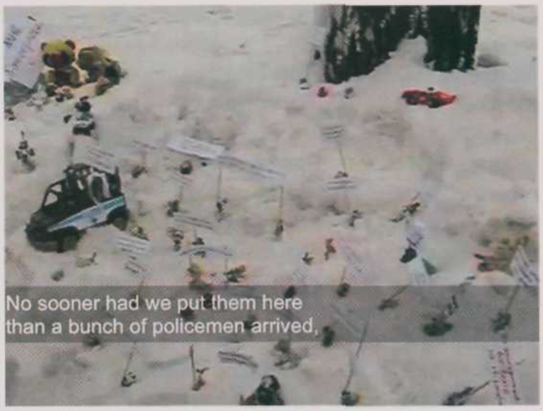
Anna Jermolaewa

Puppet Demonstration

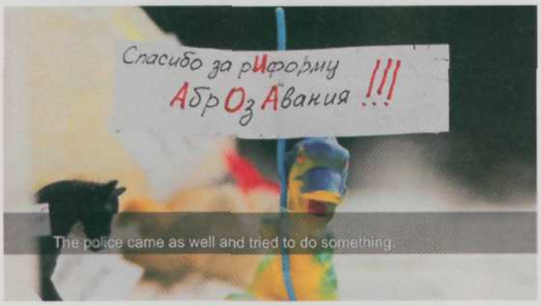
We placed the toys with placards
this snow bank.



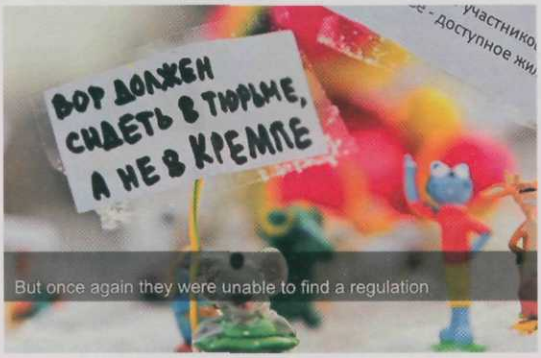

МЫ ЗА ДОБРО И СПРАВЕДЛИВ
ЧЕСТНЫЕ ВЫБОРЫ!
1,5%
ОНИ ЗАБРАЛИ КЕННИ!


No sooner had we put them here
than a bunch of policemen arrived,

The second event we planned for a week later:
a larger, repeat protest with media coverage.



The police came as well and tried to do something.

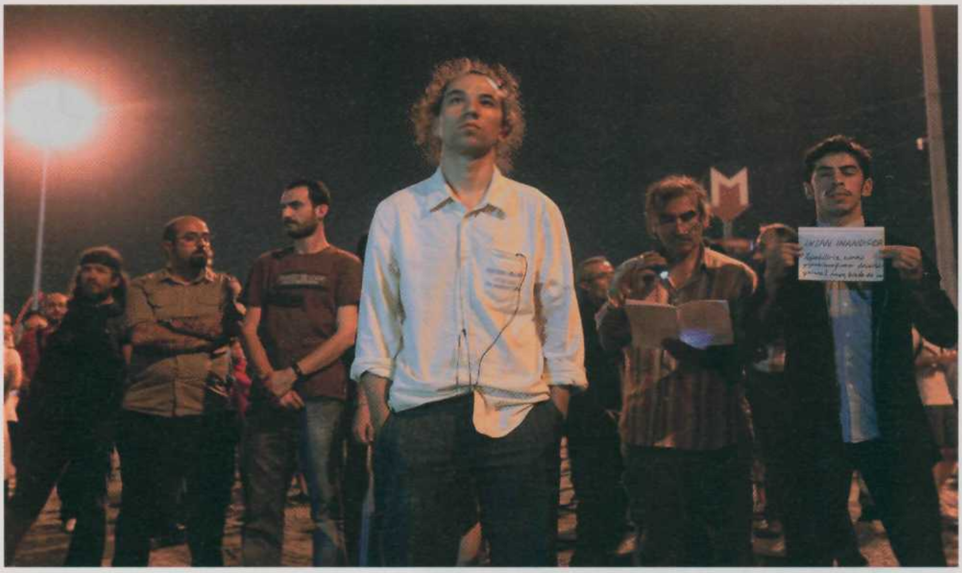


But once again they were unable to find a regulation

Терпение не резиновое!!!

I mean it was a so-called micro-protest.

Anna Jermolaewa *(RU/AT) is a visual artist examining roles in hierarchies and totalitarian systems. Currently she is researching strategies of political activism. Her documentary film* Methods of social resistance on Russian examples *(2012) portrays creative methods of social resistance during the mass demonstrations against Vladimir Putin: the puppet demonstration took place in the Siberian city of Bernaul in January 2012, after a regular demonstration for fair elections was forbidden by the police. To avoid repression and violence puppets carried signs with statements by their owners. The demonstration of around 250 toys from Kinder eggs, Lego figures, toy soldiers, stuffed animals, and toy cars was followed by a request for further demonstrations. Permission was refused on the grounds that these toys were produced mainly in China and were, therefore, not Russian citizens.*



Erdem Gündüz

Standing Still

My protest arose from my keen disappointment about the bias of the Turkish media, and their failure to report the protests in Gezi Park and Taksim Square correctly and objectively. I also sought to highlight police brutality during these events. At the same time, I wanted to demonstrate my respect for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic: I miss his principles and the ideas from which he created a new and modern nation after our civil war. That is why I chose to stand in front of his portrait and stare at it in a clearly visible way. His concept was "peace at home, peace in the world". He envisioned a society without class or any other differences between the citizens of Turkey. He was of the view that religion and state should be separate. He created a new political and legal system, abolished the Caliphate, and made both government and education secular, gave equal rights to women, changed the alphabet and attire, and advanced the arts and sciences, and agriculture and industry. This was—in comparison to the Ottoman state—a social revolution.

Atatürk wanted to establish a modern country for us, and he succeeded. Today's AKP government (led by the Justice and Development Party of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan) is currently brainwashing the Turkish people via tv, newspapers, and other media. Democracy is not just about elections. It is also about civil rights, women's rights, participation, and checks and balances.

As a choreographer, my concern is what you can say with the body. Sometimes the body can be political. And sometimes the attitude of a body may be more meaningful than language. I work on using the body as a tool to express the willingness of a subject through action.

Action—or the apparent absence of it—can be structured in a performance shown to the public, transmitting a sensation, or it can just be "actuated" in a public context in order to enhance a particular reaction in the people participating, so that they reach a new awareness. As the Romanian choreographer Cosmin Manolescu has said, the "political body" is one of the most direct forms of communication based on empathy. As a standing man, I experienced the concept of passive resistance, of art used in a social and political context, and art related with the communication media. I observed how reality could rapidly change around me due to my actions.

***Erdem Gündüz** (TR) is a dancer and choreographer living in Istanbul. His performance* Standing Man, *in Taksim Square during the uprising in the summer of 2013, created an image of protest that became known around the world.*

André Lepecki

Dancing

The formations of the choreographic are many and varied; they expand dance beyond the field of the aesthetic. To understand nonmetaphorically the political nature of choreographic practices is to embrace what Paul Carter once called "a politics of the ground"—one always attentive to the concrete placing of all the elements that constitute and form, animate and orientate, each specific dance situation (including supposedly asignifying or extraneous elements to the work, such as climate, political regime, accidents, local laws, geological formations, and so on). Within this framework, I have recently been exploring the tension between the concepts of "choreopolitical" and the concept of "choreopolicing." The dynamics between the two are crucial for an understanding of the dynamics between movement, conformity, revolt, and politics in our neoliberal and neocolonizing times, when it is imperative to reimagine the ways movement and political protest find new articulations, expressions, and intensities for themselves. Very succinctly, the notion of choreopolicing derives directly from the understanding that Jacques Rancière's notion of "police" (which he opposes to "politics") is essentially a choreographic one. We can think here of how Rancière affirms that the police is not only an institution, or an individual cop, but a whole system that assigns and maintains bodies, subjects, and their modes of circulation to preestablished spaces, considered the only ones *proper for (proper) circulation*. In other words, the police is whatever system that enforces the fiction forming the path that precedes the subject. Such precedence helps shape subjectivity thanks to a confined or impoverished experiencing of mobility within the social space—subjectivity is gained by conformity to fit the path assigned as proper. To this system, or abstract machine Rancière gives the name "police." In contradistinction, choreopolitical movement would not be just "improvised" or "free" movement, which would be a weak definition of both politics and movement. Rather, choreopolitics extracts from choreography the capacity to make plans (plans of immanence as much as plan(e)s of composition) able to function simultaneously as cartography of policed ground, mapping the situation, as much as being able to propose and activate what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari call "programs" as "motor experimentation." Inspired by Stefano Harney's and Fred Moten's *The Undercommons*, particularly through their distinction between "policy" and "planning," choreopolitical planning rescues choreography from being understood only as synonymous with normativity, as prescribed or forced mobility, or as a system of command and obedience (all of which certainly are part of choreography, historically as well as aesthetically). Since, for Harney and Moten, "planning" is always diagrammatically unfolding, since it always takes place away from those places where the most prized subjectivity is to be a busybody permanently defining the other as in need of being fixed through permanent policy making, since it is a practice of joyful sociability, then choreopolitics would be the planning of such activation of movement away from preestablished paths. Choreopolitics is predicated on a gathering and activation of that urgently necessary (but so often curtailed, censored, or controlled) capacity to make plans for alternative collective modes of existence, away from conformity, sad affects, tamed (even if hyperactive and "vital") bodies, prescribed routes, which define choreopolicing.

With a new understanding of movement and politics, dance and choreography can rearticulate the political itself so that politics can reimagine itself alongside a refigured dance and a refigured choreography: where the main energy, impetus, and motions are whatever is needed to break free from the neoliberal agitation of permanently controlled circulation and the contemporary microfascist formations of individualistic, interpoliced collectives.

André Lepecki *(US) is associate professor in the Department of Performance Studies at New York University (NYU). He is an independent curator and writer. Among other anthologies on dance and performance theory, he is the author of* Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement *and the editor of* DANCE.

Claire Tancons

Carnival

#1 Any consideration of the political potential of Carnival must be located within the *longue durée*. Though used as a strategy of direct action/activist intervention in recent protest movements, the measure of Carnival's success lies in its resilience as a nonconfrontational organizational device for the creation of new subjectivities prefigurative of participatory democracy through transformational processes aided by masking and costuming, role reversals, and world inversions.

An ancient civilizational principle dating back to times immemorial (ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman festivals, such as celebrations for Isis, Saturnalia, and Bacchanalia have been evoked), with disputed Latin etymologies ranging in meaning from "chariot of the sea" (*carrus navalis*) to "farewell to the flesh" (*carne levare*), Carnival is often said to have historically operated as a safety valve outside of the everyday in order to maintain the status quo. Yet, Carnival also functioned as counterpower to the feudal order in Medieval Europe (for example, the 1580 Carnival of Romans in the Drôme region in France, as analyzed by Emmanuel Leroy Ladurie) and to the colonial regime in slave-holding America (for example, the 1881 Canboulay Riots in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad), establishing a culture of resistance that continues to be alive in the Caribbean and Latin America, and among their diasporas, from the United States to the United Kingdom, and Scandinavia. In fact, both hierarchical and horizontal tendencies are part and parcel of the Carnival principle, according to Brazilian anthropologist Roberto DaMatta, who classified New Orleans Mardi Gras in *Carnival Rogues and Heroes* (1979) as a carnival of hierarchy and the Rio de Janeiro Carnival as a carnival of equality.

Seemingly distinct from these long historical trends, the carnivalesque reemerged as a protest sensibility among anticorporate globalization and anticapitalist movements in North America and Europe in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The theoretical genealogy of carnivals of resistance or carnivalesque protests dates back to Russian semiotician Mikhail Bakhtin's formulation of the carnivalesque in *Rabelais and his World* ([1941, 1965] 1993) and *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics* (1984), but also to Situationism, with Raoul Vaneigeim's *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (1965), to Anarchism with Hakim Bey's *Temporary Autonomous Zone* (1985), to

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autonomist inflections with Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's notion of Empire in the book of the same name (2001) or indeed of "Carnival and Movement" in *Multitude* (2004), and even to The Invisible Committee with *The Coming Insurrection* (2007).

#2 Any appreciation of the artistic nature of Carnival must do away with notions of personal authorship. Movements, collectives, and collaboratives are the norm; the formation of a crowd one of Carnival's initial outcomes, the direction of its agency its prime realization. Reclaim the Streets' *Global Carnival Against Capitalism* of June 18, 1999, a coordinated street party that begun in London and spread out to other G8 capitals, can be seen as the foundational artistic/activist project of the late twentieth century anticapitalism movement, of which Marcel Expósito's 2004 film *Radical Imagination* (Carnivals of Resistance) offers a record. Occupy Wall Street in the Fall of 2011 and Pussy Riot's punk protest in the winter of 2012 can be seen as its continuation in the second decade of the twenty-first century, with a multiplicity of interventions waged by a self-determined multitude. Away from carnivalesque activism, diasporic carnivals, for instance, have shown as much activist as consumerist tendencies, for both coexist and are mutually reinforcing rather than exclusive. The antiracist struggle of the Claudia Jones era Notting Hill Carnival might no longer be as strong, yet the London Carnival continues to provide the soil for a thriving intercultural scene, as does New York's Brooklyn Labor Day Parade (heir to the Harlem Carnival), despite both being better known as their respective cities highest income generating festivals. It might be that the parades of the Mardi Gras Indians and the second lines of the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs of New Orleans, aimed at reclaiming space once lost to segregation and creating self-possessed subjectivities robbed by racism, continue to offer among the best examples of the carnivalesque protest sensibility. For, if the ethos of the commons immanent in Carnival can lead to a redistribution of resources in the fight against capitalism then it is to these unbroken carnival traditions of the Americas, born of the protocapitalist legacy of slavery that we may turn for perspective, inspiration, fortitude, and endurance.

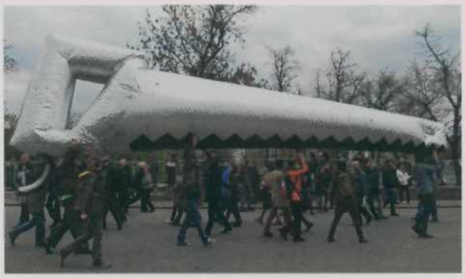
#3 Any account of contemporary performance art practices must contend with Carnival, associated popular festivals, and public ceremonial culture (specifically, but not exclusively from the Americas), as they offer an alternative genealogy to canonical performance art written into pseudoglobal art history as emanating from the European avant-gardes of the last century.

Carioca "Carnaveslesco" Joãozinho Trinta, Trinidadian *masman* Peter Minshall, and New Orleans Mardi Gras Indian Allison "Tootie" Montana, Big Chief of the Yellow Pocahontas during the second half of the twentieth century, provided a legacy of such contemporary performance practices for contemporary artists like American Arto Lindsay, Brazilian Jarbas Lopes, and Trinidadian Marlon Griffith, or Mardi Gras Indian Victor Harris Big Chief Fi-Yi-Yi, while British Jeremy Deller recuperates still other folklores, and Chinese artist Cao Fei in collaboration with Hong Kong-based MAP Office conspire online, all plotting public performances that address not the few but the many, and take to real streets and virtual avenues in an attempt to reclaim our increasingly privatized public spaces in gestures that, in an era of the globalization of mass movement, continue to define civil society.

Claire Tancons *(GP/US) is a curator, writer, and researcher born in Guadeloupe and based in New Orleans. Working in situ, she combines investigative research and theoretical writing to an experimental curatorial practice invested in engaging with notions of the civic and ideas of the commons through carnival and public ceremonial culture, including parades, processions and demonstrations. She curated her first mass public processional performance for the seventh Gwangju Biennale in 2008.*

Artúr van Balen / Tools for Action

Blow Up



Protecting protesters from police and causing no damage: an enormous inflatable cube that reflects light! The objective: to impede charging riot police and prevent them from recording images. The Reflecto-Cube has already been used throughout Europe. You can find DIY tutorials online for how to make them.

These opening words of a broadcast by the Spanish tv channel La Sexta in May 2013 highlight the growing popularity of making of inflatable cubes for demonstrations against the austerity cuts in Spain. In the background, footage of the inflatable cobblestones at the May Day demonstration in Berlin. The camera pans across a crowd tossing the inflatables like balloons, until a giant inflatable 3 x 3 x 3 meter cube appears.

The news report continues, dubbing the enormous inflatable cobblestone a "twenty-first century barricade." A squad of twenty highly armed riot cops back away, intimidated by the inflatable sculpture. One policeman tries to tear the inflatable apart, struggling with the shiny slippery surface. Cheers and applause burst from the crowd as the police are increasingly embarrassed by their clumsy attempt to destroy the inflatable.

Perhaps one of the reasons for the recent media infatuation with inflatables is not just their popularity, but also their effectiveness. Inflatables serve multiple functions in a protest, which can be summarized in the term "tactical frivolity."

First: inflatables turn a grim protest situation into a playful event. There is something magical about what inflatables induce in people. Their enormous size combined with weightlessness and softness makes them irresistibly attractive and dreamlike. People have a natural tendency to touch inflatable sculpture and to join in the game of throwing inflatables in the air—changing a march into a poetic, joyful, and participatory event. In situations where people are kettled-in, they serve as excellent playing devices not to let the atmosphere become boring or demoralizing.

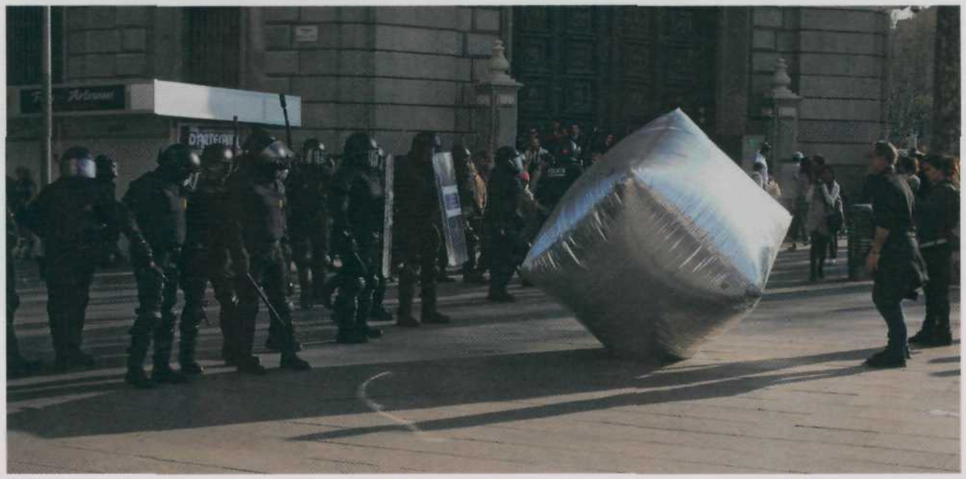
Second: in times of conflict, inflatables can deescalate tension or protect one's own body. In both Berlin and Barcelona, when protesters and police were at breaking point, the situation transformed when a silver inflatable cube bounced onto the scene. A protester threw it to the police line, the police bounced it back, the protesters lobbed the inflatable back again. To everyone's astonishment a ball game happened between protesters and the police. In Barcelona, two policemen "arrested" an inflatable, squeezing the bulky shape into a police van.

Third: inflatables provide strong visual imagery that can capture the media spectacle. Protests are often misrepresented or not represented by mainstream media. Journalists need a hook—something exciting, unusual or creative that they can spin their story around.

In the May Day demonstration in Berlin the use of inflatables was carefully planned to subvert the typical representation of the protest. Mainstream press reports of the annual demonstration tend to describe its participants as "stone-throwing troublemakers," using predictable images of broken shop windows, bonfires on the street, and stone-throwing kids (who could secretly be agent provocateurs). This media representation tactic has been used time and time again, from the Arab Spring to Gezi Park in Istanbul and Barcelona, in order to sway public sentiment toward the ultimate goal of justifying police brutality and restrictions on protests. We exaggerated the image of stone-throwing troublemakers—and by this not only manifested a media spectacle but also orchestrated our own countermedia strategy. Equipped with three secret camera teams, each team focused on a specific scene, which they tried to capture in the seemingly spontaneous course of events.

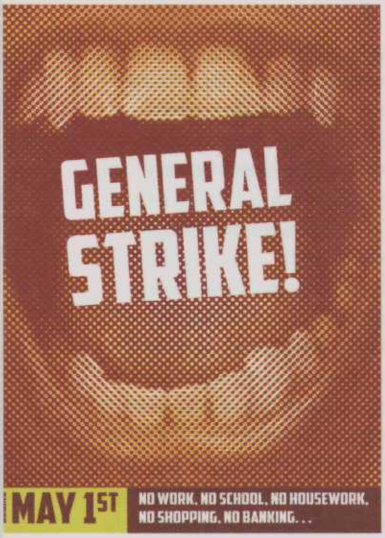
The inflatable is a storytelling device. Its dramatic destruction is a tactical spectacle to draw attention to the causes of the social unrest. The images of inflatables reappear like ghosts to haunt authorities and inspire disobedience, just as the inflatable hammer of Mexico (UN Climate Conference in Cancun, 2010) appeared in a remote Indian newspaper in 2012 and films of inflatable cobblestones (Berlin, 2012) appeared on Spanish TV months later.

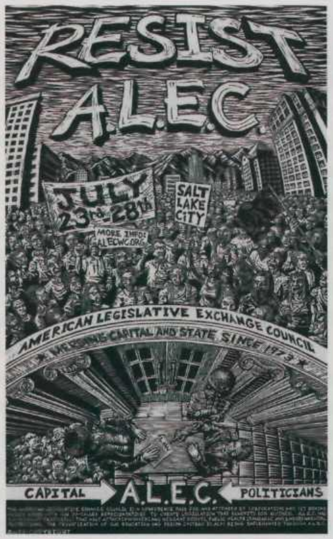
Artúr van Balen *(DE) cofounded the Eclectic Electric Collective, the artivist group behind the actions described. He currently operates under the name Tools for Action, a collective which also deals with inflatable spectacles in public space.*

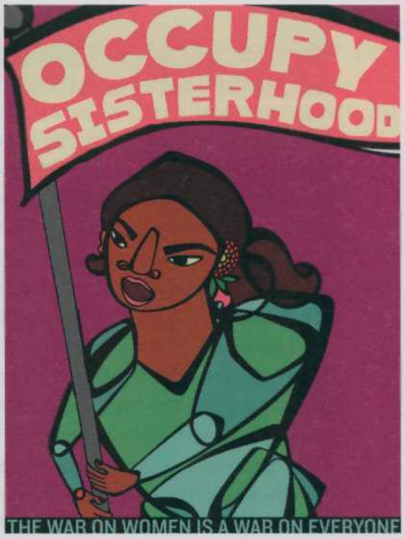


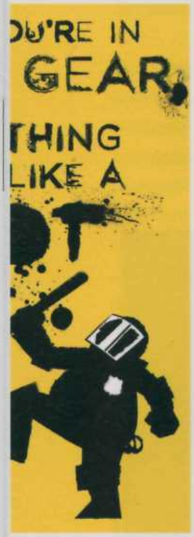
Occuprint

Posters


GENERAL STRIKE!
MAY 1ST
NO WORK. NO SCHOOL. NO HOUSEWORK. NO SHOPPING. NO BANKING...


RESIST A.L.E.C.
JULY 23rd-28th
SALT LAKE CITY
MORE INFO: ALECWC.ORG
AMERICAN LEGISLATIVE EXCHANGE COUNCIL
WEDDING CAPITAL AND STATE SINCE 1973
CAPITAL
A.L.E.C.
POLITICIANS


OCCUPY SISTERHOOD
THE WAR ON WOMEN IS A WAR ON EVERYONE


OU'RE IN
GEAR,
THING
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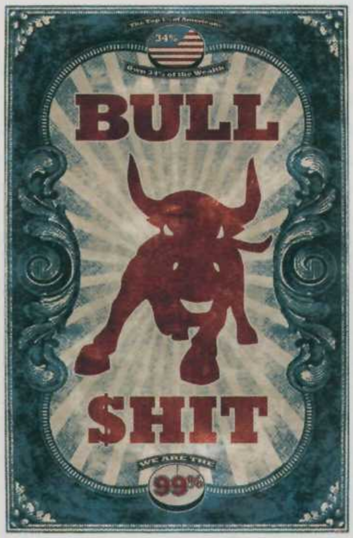
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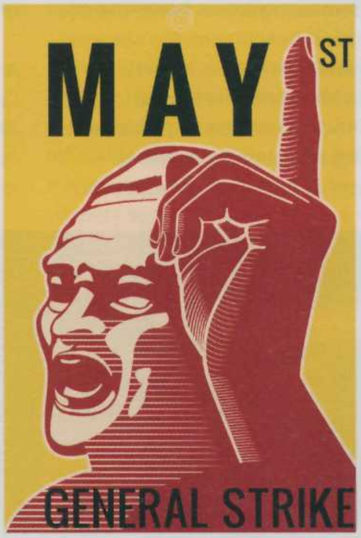
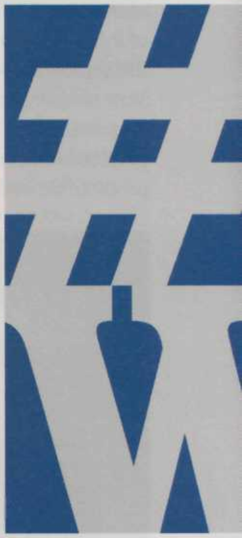
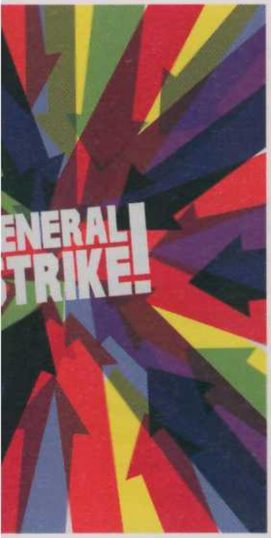
WE ARE THE
99%

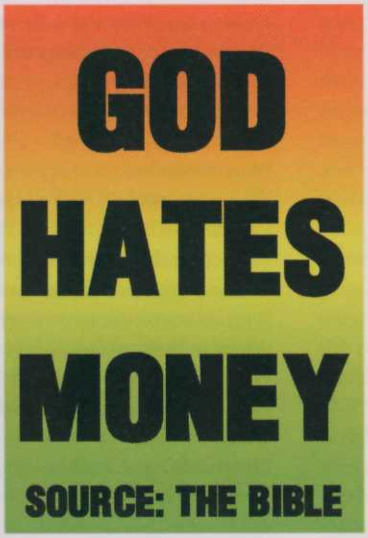

MAY 1ST
GENERAL STRIKE

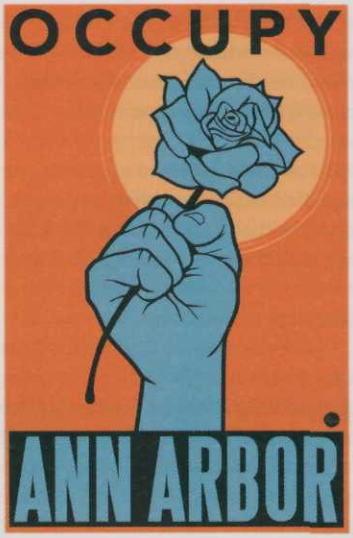


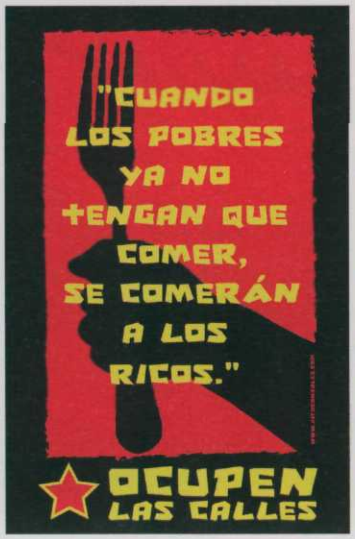
Occuprint *(US) set up in November 2001 as a special all-posters issue of the Occupied Wall Street Journal (OWSJ), is a collective archiving project that hosts a large collection of Occupy imagery on its website, occuprint.org.*

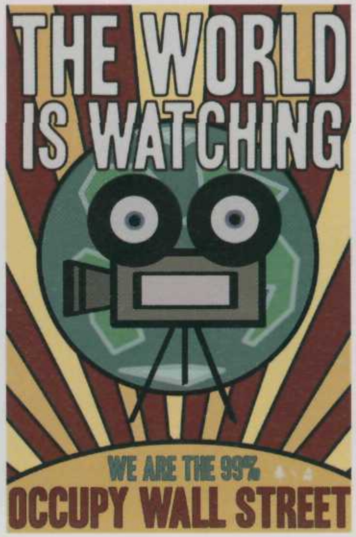
Since the site's launch, people from all over the world have submitted hundreds of images, offering a window into some of the changes in image production and visual vernacular that this movement has fostered. Many of

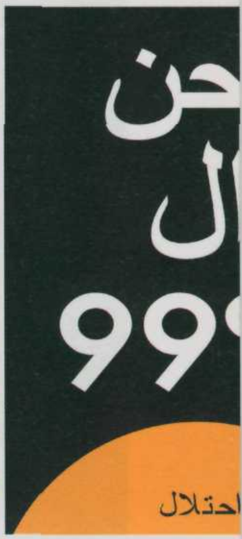

ENERAL
TRIKE!


GOD
HATES
MONEY
SOURCE: THE BIBLE


OCCUPY
ANN ARBOR


"CUANDO
LOS POBRES
YA NO
TENGAN QUE
COMER,
SE COMERÁN
A LOS
RICOS."
OCUPEN
LAS CALLES


THE WORLD
IS WATCHING
WE ARE THE 99%
OCCUPY WALL STREET

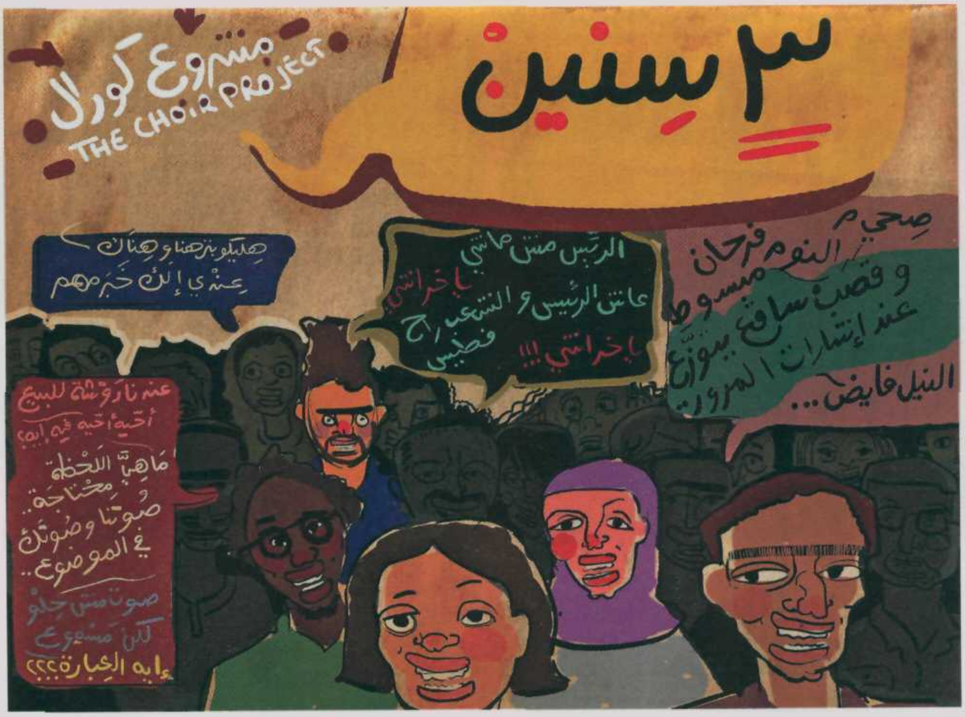

حن
ال
99
احتلال

the images were first created for local concrete use and then subsequently offered to the site, while many others have never been reproduced outside their virtual existence. Occuprint follows few set rules in choosing images, privileging a collective rather than an individual authoriality, the formulation of political messages that reflect Occupy propositions, and refusing preexisting brands or contents alongside a corporate logic.

Salam Yousry

Choir

Every night and every day
Batlakhbat (I mistake)
What is immediate for what is to come
What shines for what burns
—
Today I walk backwards
Change life, change president
Change bar, change profession
Change mood
—
I want to cry
—
Why do people complain,
And still nothing changes
Nothing's easier then complaining
And still nothing changes
Nothing changes
It changes
It's changing
—
Riddle me this, riddle me that
I'm afraid the joke
Might be swallowed by the sorrow
I have a question
If I don't voice it if I suppress it
My head will explode
What's going on?
What is the revolution?
Who created it?
Who protected it?
Who stole it?
Who controls its media?
Who is trying us in military courts?
Who is describing us as thugs?
Where is the tank?
Who's driving it?
Who crushed us under his wheels?
What's going on?
Who's setting us back?
Who's starving us?


مشروع كورال
THE CHOIR PROJECT
٣ سنين
هليكوبتر هنا و هناك عندي إليك خبر مهم
الرئيس مش ماشي يا خراشي عاش الرئيس و الشعب راح فطيس يا خراشي!!!
صحيت م النوم فرحان مبسوط و قصب ساقع بيوزع عند إشارات المرور
النيل فايض...
عنه ناروشة للبيع أحيه أحيه فيه إيه؟ ما هيّ اللحظة محتاجة صوتنا وصوتك في الموضوع.. صوتنا مش حلو لكن مسموع إيه العبارة؟؟؟

Who's destroying our joy?
Who's calling us traitors?
Who's dividing us?
Who's repressing us?
What's going on?
—
Come and play, have your say
The Choir Project's here today
The glass may break, your ears may ache
We jam our thoughts and songs we make

Salam Yousry *(EG) is a painter, writer, and theater director. In 2010, he founded "The Choir Project" in Cairo, inspired by the finnish "Complaint Choir," but addressing a broader range of topics, from simple feelings, daily problems, to political resistance and hope. Based on open invitation to both professionals and amateurs, on volunteering and, above all, on independence from any institution, "The Choir Project" enacts a friendly interconnected community, singing general and specific issues of all the cities it has travelled through (Alexandria, Amman, Beirut, Paris, London, Munich, Berlin, Istanbul, Budapest, Graz, Warsaw ...).*

Diedrich Diederichsen

Protest Songs

A protest song is a mobile object that can be served up anywhere and used for all manner of things. It can be a source of inner cohesion, it can organize and add rhythm to movement, and it can be a vehicle for choreographic instructions. It came about through the convergence of two forms of song: those performed by individuals, which act as individual testimonies, tell stories, or lament; and the collective songs of labor, civil rights, and other movements, which bring together political groups in the style of religious choirs and group singing.

The protest song came into existence after songs of one kind or another became detached from their practical functions; this was the result of two main developments. On the one hand, there were songs that transcended their functions. They appeared to be true, apposite, and perfectly formulated, above and beyond their significance for a particular situation, so that they could equally serve (politically motivated) edification elsewhere—like a good book. On the other hand, they were recorded and thus consigned to the magic of individual voices. From this point on, while a particular song could still be sung on all sorts of occasions, it was now linked to one or several actual people, thus changing the way it could be used. Personalization and embodiment detached the song from collective interpretation, consigning it to debate among individuals. This had both advantages and disadvantages: collective and folkloric formats suffered from overgeneralization and arbitrariness, and the resultant urge to false pathos, which was intended to make up for deficits in terms of concreteness with grand emotions. This was the fate, for example, of the political song in real socialist conditions. Collectives are a dubious category as it is, implying criteria of inclusion and exclusion, and/or avowals and declarations of loyalty. This was something the individual song could do without: the specific resolution effected by an individual voice, an artistically driven sound design, and so on, shifted the problem of credibility to the individual and to the genres of art.

This, however, undermined its political and situational function. Although songs and their singers were now an excellent vehicle for discussion—in much the same way as with writers and theorists—their production no longer lent itself as readily to being declared common property, a mobile tool with which one could, whenever and wherever one wanted, identify, present, and protect oneself as the collective connected with this song. In some cases, recordings nevertheless performed this function: for example, when played at demonstrations. The career of a song such as *"Ein Jahr (es geht voran)"* as a hymn of the German peace movement, or the Clash's "White Riot," accompanied by what were frequently politically unclear manifestations of punk rage, was of course uncanny to the creators. There is no way they could have intended the speech act imputed or appended to their song for the use made of it. Whether or not such appropriations are politically legitimate is a moot point: this is, in any case, an indication of how precarious and infelicitous it is for a collective to identify with a high resolution recording of an individual voice.

Identifying with lyrics and slogans, however, has become equally precarious. Many figures who have become politicized today do not see themselves as banding together to words made into song, but rather for reasons formulated in more complex language and already propounded elsewhere: it is not, they believe, something turned into music that corresponds to this clear text of arguments, but instead a wholly different music whose task lies in affective and physical mobilizations that can do without the kitsch of true conviction and cater instead for the physical and emotional conditions of those coming together under certain external circumstances to engage in political demonstrations of whatever nature. In other words, good, stimulating, instrumental music that is more or less functional—metallic, electronic, or completely free, charivari.

This would indeed exorcize live political music of the embarrassingly œdipal dimension of the protest song, which is, after all, too often addressed to the political opponent, as if to a father failing to listen properly to his son. This continued to work well until a different culture of confrontation arose during the first two or three decades of the post-war era. Political pop music—regardless of where it is deployed—has since then established a differentiated exchange of positions and speech positions, from Bob Dylan to Minutemen, Brother D. with Collective Effort to Bob Marley, Curtis Mayfield to The Clash: for example, when Minutemen recorded a protest song about the misinterpretation of the protest songs of Bob Dylan ("Bob Dylan Wrote Propaganda Songs"). Even if such discourse is not nowadays deployed as often in the concentrated public of a demonstration or squat, it is not possible, even in public political demonstrations, to fall behind the level of reflectivity already achieved.

***Diedrich Diederichsen** (DE) is a cultural critic, curator, author, and professor of theory, practice, and communication of contemporary art at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna.*

Geert Lovink and Ned Rossiter

Organizing Networks

These days, strategic considerations for political organization no longer bother with mediation, representation, or identity politics. Instead, the key question revolves around the design of new (sustainable) organizational forms. What is the social today, if not social media? It is not enough to indulge in the aesthetics of revolt. Flaws in the nineteenth and twentieth century models of the party, the union, and the movement are easy to detect, but what will replace them? It is tempting to say that the network is the dominant form of the social: a programmed life under permanent surveillance? What can replace the corporate walled gardens such as Facebook and Twitter? Our answer: a federation of organized networks, based on secret societies.

Welcome to the Happy Dark Ages. Many have already identified social networks as a conspiratorial neoliberal invention that only benefits the global elite. Think of the vampire datamining economies made possible with all your searches, status updates, likes, etc. The algorithmic modulation of networks generates patterns of data that hold economic value for social media corporations and finance capital. These extraction machines produce a subject Maurizio Lazzarato calls "indebted man." Exodus for the multitudes, it would seem, is a futile proposition.

Global elites are not threatened by temporary uprisings and will only be questioned by an offensive counterpower that is capable of learning and incorporating its own trial and error experiments of daily struggles into the social body. All well and good; but how about the technological condition? Digital networks have been discredited for their short-lived character, which merely reproduces the hegemonic fragmentation of desperate subjects. No matter how legitimate such structural proposals are, they often end up in a retromania of social imagination.

Online efforts have been exploited to the max. The network form has either eroded or been totally expropriated and relocated to the cloud. The shift from networks to cloud-based media has been a setback, a regressive move. People are tired of updating and maintaining the labor of online administration. The work of securing social capital is now a chore preferably outsourced to PAs on the global peripheries. If you don't have the resources to hire your personal Tweeter, then you have to dig-out the time in the day to shoot your own selfies. Migrating across platforms has now become part of many people's digital biographies. Will young people be the first among those to terminate the contract with social media?

So what to do, and where to go in order to live and work in ways autonomous from these technologies of capture? One place to start is at the level of organization, addressing the problematic of infrastructure. Our proposition is that the (legitimized) desire to build lasting collective forms should grow out of twenty-first century materialities and not be based on nostalgic notions of mass organization. Instead of dismissing the network as such, we propose to rewire, recode, redefine its core values and develop new protocols for the social, which, in today's society, is technical in nature.

Today's problem is no longer the Art of Mobilization. Organized networks have access to an array of tools, though a relatively limited range of social media platforms are more often the preferred choice for mass mobilization. Memes spread like wildfire in realtime. We know how to put together campaigns. Majorities are enraged and rally against climate change, repression, violence, rape, authoritarian rule, education cuts, poverty, and job losses. We sign petitions and maybe even shut down websites. But we need to shift these technical practices to another level.

Designing encryption as a standard is one core technical practice relevant to organized networks that we see developing after Edward Snowden and his NSA revelations. Encryption accessible on a mass scale is an example of an alternative at work. Pre-Snowden, encryption was for a handful of hackers, high government communications, and corporate transactions. Now it is for individual users and less so organizations. So the next level would be to see more coordinated efforts at encrypting collective communication.

Is encryption an example of standards scaling up? A form of civil defense in a time of serious technological onslaught? What can people do to protect the privacy of communication and the dignity of their online life? Of course forms of secure communication occur within social and political movements among the chief organizers or facilitators; but less so across the social base, which is not so involved in decision making. This leads to potential dead-end streets in the forms of content and organization.

The mass introduction of cryptography is a reassessment of the secret society as a cultural technique. The trick is to achieve a form of collective invisibility without having to reconstitute authority. Organized networks *are not vanguard parties. The party claims to* articulate the general interest and will of the people. As an organizational form, it is here to stay regardless of fluctuations in the polls. But the party today holds little relevance to people's daily social lives and communication practices. The secret society has always been connected to conspiracy, but what if it becomes not only *a necessity but a civil duty? Many of the other* possible alternatives lead to the romantic world of offline, even if they can't function without the marketing power of social media (think: "maker culture"). Offline romanticism is also part of the NSA repertoire when they break into your house: this is the exception in their weapons armory, and why they invest so much in online surveillance and hardware manipulation. The social-technological default of encryption makes secret societies mainstream. The question of which issues or agendas remains open and undecided. Encrypted communication requires a motivating cause. Once this is identified, networks could begin to organize in more secure and sustainable ways.

***Geert Lovink** (NL) is director of the Institute of Network Cultures at the Hogeschool van Amsterdam.*
***Ned Rossiter** (AU) works at the Institute for Culture and Society, University of Western Sydney.*

Coauthorship

—Log opened Tue Dec 10 22:00:00 2013

12/10/13 22:12 <stephenwright> If we suppose that coauthorship is collective authorship with two syllables less, we might start by expressing our surprise at the fact that "authorship" now needs to be qualified as *"co-" in order that its collective dimension be* acknowledged (and even then ...). The triumph of possessive individualism left us so far removed from collective authorship that when it came back we actually needed the word "coauthorship" to name it.

12/10/13 22:14 <scottrigby> After all, as culture producers we need individual *authorship ... otherwise what ammo would we* have when pitted against each other for jobs and other "opportunities"?

12/10/13 22:19 <stephenwright> Not only that, we apparently need to have enshrined in law the fact that we owe nothing whatsoever to the collectivity for whatever skills we possess and exchange in the marketplace. We are the authors of our destiny.

12/10/13 22:20 <scottrigby> If we weren't, we couldn't be blamed for not trying hard enough to get out of debt and other failures!

12/10/13 22:23 <stephenwright> But the idea according to which individuals are the sole proprietors of their skills, which can be traded as commodities, is a very recent idea—it never existed prior to the seventeenth century, and only triumphed relatively recently. We need to render it as strange as it truly is, queering the seeming naturalness that it's shrouded in.

12/10/13 22:27 <stephenwright> But we also need to posit the qualities of wikiing swarms of words into meanings.

12/10/13 22:29 <scottrigby> In addition to the historical and political reasons for the rise of individual authorship, I was thinking we could get into some of the practicalities, the mechanics of collective authorship.

12/10/13 22:32 <stephenwright> Don't you feel that one of the underlying preconditions for fruitful collaboration (coauthorship in terms of labor) is having differentiated skills at the outset? Different skill sets, and word sets coming into the mix—in terms of vocabularies, experiences, outlooks, all that stuff that makes collaboration tough and frustrating is what makes it potentially fruitful.

12/10/13 23:00 <scottrigby> The quandary though, is that authorship is still useful—it fills a need. But I think in its current form it does more than that—it absorbs a real need, and replaces it with a system of competition. The real need I think is the basic need to be acknowledged.

12/10/13 23:02 <stephenwright> What Hegel called the "struggle for recognition."

12/10/13 23:02 <scottrigby> Which is why one of our selfdescribed group desires is "Attribution Without Ownership." Most of us in this chat have firsthand experience of getting meaningful recognition through attribution in a collective project, at least from some peers, even when the result is publicly anonymous, or semianonymous (where the details of who did what are purposefully obfuscated).

12/10/13 23:07 <scottrigby> So is a goal of "attribution without ownership" still relevant in light of that? After all, there are countless examples of people who, though they don't have very much by way of material resources and officially sanctioned power, deliberately open free spaces, and share what they have.

12/10/13 23:09 <stephenwright> If you say "without something" (like ownership or authorship, which are the same thing) you also need to say "with something else."

12/10/13 23:11 <scottrigby> In this case, "attribution" is the with thing. Ownership the without thing. Of course, even in coauthorship / collective authorship, we still are talking about "authorship." Why is that useful (beyond getting jobs etc)?

12/10/13 23:15 <stephenwright> Good question! I would argue authorship is not a useful category per se. But the legal culture of today makes it insane to try and just pretend it doesn't exist.

12/10/13 23:16 <scottrigby> One thing authorship is really useful for is for *taking responsibility* for ideas that are put forward. If people are open to the notion that ideas can be (and really always are) collectively arrived at—even if sometimes the person doing the typing, or even formulating the specific language, usually gets the final credit—then it's not hard to see that a group can take responsibility for its ideas by coauthoring a statement. Manifestos (or even charters) are good examples.

12/10/13 23:19 <atrowbri> I agree with that idea of responsibility. It's relevant to FOSS culture in terms of licenses that are open for any use, licenses that require attribution and the multiple attempts to create an "ethical" license (and thus be responsible for the code you are sharing).

12/10/13 23:21 <stephenwright> The thing is though that ultimately and basically, authorship is nonsense. I mean, not one of the words any of us have used this evening could be alleged to have been "authored" by us. Nor by extension any of the strings of words, in any meaningful sense.

12/10/13 23:23 <scottrigby> Unless by authorship you mean "the group of people accepting responsibility for a particular iteration of the ideas put forward."

12/10/13 23:24 <atrowbri> Authorship is as much about *alignment* as attribution.

12/10/13 23:25 <stephenwright> Alignment?

12/10/13 23:25 <atrowbri> I am not the author of these words but I am not aligned with the words you're saying. I am responsible for them. It's not about attribution, it's about being responsible for what's said or written.

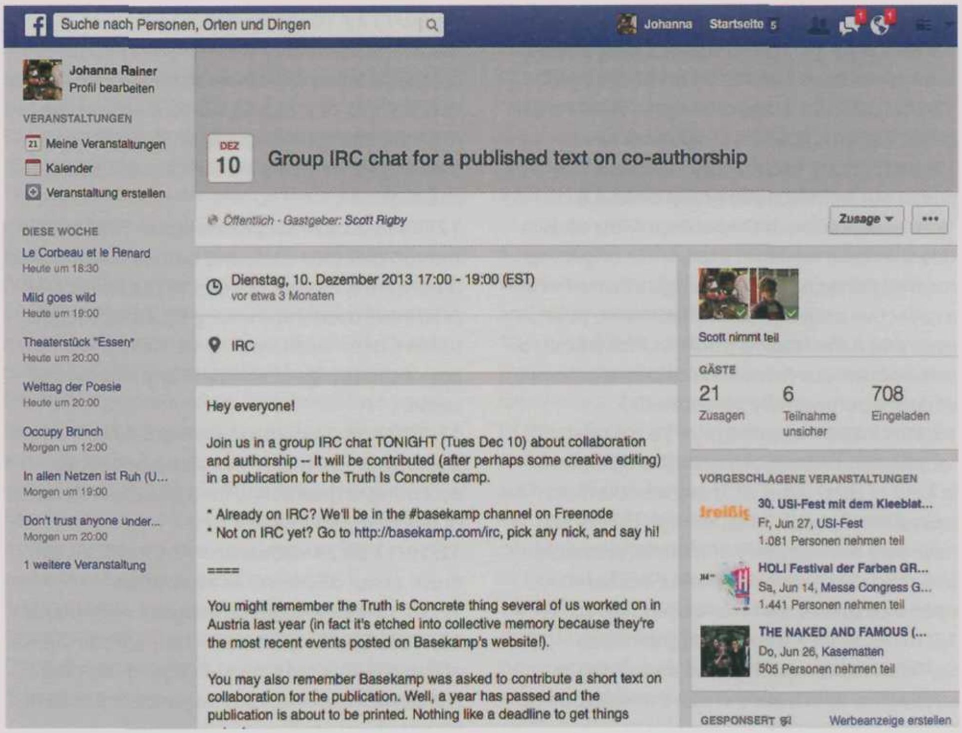
12/10/13 23:26 <scottrigby> Taking some responsibility for a chosen position. There's some use value in defining coauthorship in this way, with a simple word like alignment, right?

12/10/13 23:30 <stephenwright> It does seem to open the door to another issue which we cannot really sidestep: intersubjectivity. Is coauthorship richer, more expansive than the sum of its parts? If it is, that must be because alignment is always in excess.

12/10/13 23:31 <scottrigby> Intersubjectivity is the relation itself. Coauthorship is how it's expressed publicly and deliberately.

12/10/13 23:32 <stephenwright> I mean, I align myself with this new concept atrowbri has introduced, as a kind of coauthor (I accept to defend it and acknowledge its value) but I didn't think of it and may not fully understand its implications. That's the pleasure of excess.

12/10/13 23:33 <atrowbri> When I write, I am aligned with my words, or the words I quote. When I have coauthored things, I am sometimes


Suche nach Personen, Orten und Dingen
Johanna
Startseite 5
Johanna Rainer
Profil bearbeiten
VERANSTALTUNGEN
Meine Veranstaltungen
Kalender
Veranstaltung erstellen
DIESE WOCHE
Le Corbeau et le Renard
Heute um 18:30
Mild goes wild
Heute um 19:00
Theaterstück "Essen"
Heute um 20:00
Welttag der Poesie
Heute um 20:00
Occupy Brunch
Morgen um 12:00
In allen Netzen ist Ruh (U...
Morgen um 19:00
Don't trust anyone under...
Morgen um 20:00
1 weitere Veranstaltung
Zusage
•••
Scott nimmt teil
GÄSTE
21
Zusagen
6
Teilnahme unsicher
708
Eingeladen
VORGESCHLAGENE VERANSTALTUNGEN
30. USI-Fest mit dem Kleeblat...
Fr, Jun 27, USI-Fest
1.081 Personen nehmen teil
HOLI Festival der Farben GR...
Sa, Jun 14, Messe Congress G...
1.441 Personen nehmen teil
THE NAKED AND FAMOUS (...
Do, Jun 26, Kasematten
505 Personen nehmen teil
GESPONSERT
Werbeanzeige erstellen

DEZ 10 **Group IRC chat for a published text on co-authorship**

Öffentlich · Gastgeber: Scott Rigby

Dienstag, 10. Dezember 2013 17:00 - 19:00 (EST)
vor etwa 3 Monaten

IRC

Hey everyone!

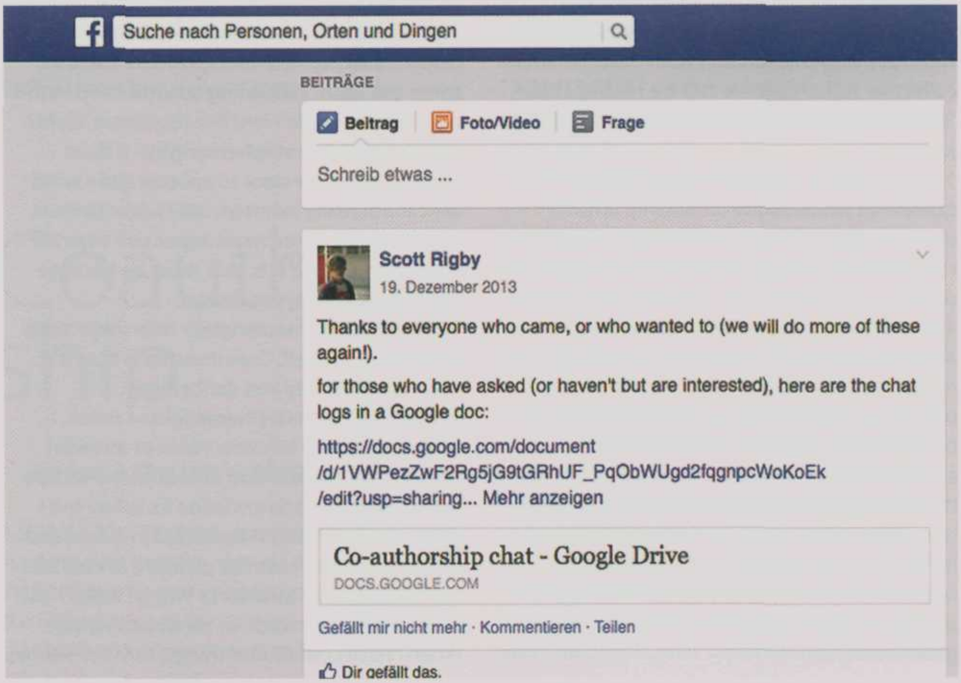
Join us in a group IRC chat TONIGHT (Tues Dec 10) about collaboration and authorship -- It will be contributed (after perhaps some creative editing) in a publication for the Truth Is Concrete camp.

* Already on IRC? We'll be in the #basekamp channel on Freenode
* Not on IRC yet? Go to http://basekamp.com/irc, pick any nick, and say hi!

====

You might remember the Truth is Concrete thing several of us worked on in Austria last year (in fact it's etched into collective memory because they're the most recent events posted on Basekamp's website!).

You may also remember Basekamp was asked to contribute a short text on collaboration for the publication. Well, a year has passed and the publication is about to be printed. Nothing like a deadline to get things


Suche nach Personen, Orten und Dingen
BEITRÄGE
Beitrag
Foto/Video
Frage
Schreib etwas ...

Scott Rigby
19. Dezember 2013

Thanks to everyone who came, or who wanted to (we will do more of these again!).

for those who have asked (or haven't but are interested), here are the chat logs in a Google doc:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VWPezZwF2Rg5jG9tGRhUF_PqObWUgd2fqgnpcWoKoEk/edit?usp=sharing... Mehr anzeigen

Co-authorship chat - Google Drive
DOCS.GOOGLE.COM

Gefällt mir nicht mehr · Kommentieren · Teilen
Dir gefällt das.

insistent on specific words and coauthoring them very carefully, other times I am aligned with the person-topic intersection.

12/10/13 23:37 <stephenwright> I don't know atrowbri personally. I don't always either understand or agree with what he says. But I'm invariably enriched through contagion as much as through affinity. It makes coauthoring, or just collaborating, or even just talking, way more meaningful than monologue.

12/10/13 23:37 <scottrigby> What you're describing happens a lot when we have lengthy discussions about an idea, sometimes at a single meeting, sometimes stretched out over years. And it plays a role in an art project, or a written text (or many of them). But all those crucial conversations that inform those texts and projects are not considered part of authorship normally.

12/10/13 23:38 <atrowbri> —> contagion <— I love that concept.

12/10/13 23:38 <scottrigby> contagion++

12/10/13 23:38 <stephenwright> You see what I mean!

12/10/13 23:38 <scottrigby> alignment++

12/10/13 23:41 <scottrigby> I have this weird interest in people who are willing to codevelop a style >:)

12/10/13 23:44 <stephenwright> Maybe we could flesh out what you call "codeveloping a style." As a verb, codevelop is nicer than coauthor, because develop is not connoted the same way as author. But successful codevelopment would still require fundamentally differentiated input.

12/10/13 23:46 <scottrigby> Yes, let me change that to "align themselves with a shared presentation form" (to adopt our rapidly codeveloping language!). Codeveloping seems to imply iterations … something ongoing. On the other hand, coauthoring implies that, while written as a group, it is still originating from a single meeting point. My 2¢ is that while coauthorship is conceptually more interesting (perhaps holds more liberatory potential) than solo authorship, authorship is any form is still for the birds. Codeveloping, alignment, mutually agreed upon contagion—opens more doors toward different kinds of social systems than the ones we have in place now.

—Log closed Wed Dec 11 00:00:04 2013

This collectively edited version of a group IRC about collaboration and authorship was held on Tuesday, December 10, 2013, on the basekamp channel of irc.freenode.net. Part of a sporadic public chat series, the text-chat medium was chosen because: 1) it is not owned by Microsoft; and 2) it is more secure and not monitored (and therefore the hacker's communication method of choice).

Matteo Lucchetti

Enacting Populism

The wave of right-wing populist movements that have shaken Europe in the last twenty years has its roots in the so-called post-political era, when the progressive acceptance of the capitalist economy and its consequences on a global scale have been the main points on many governments' agendas. While politicians have been busy building consensus toward the new scenario, demagogues have articulated the space of social antagonism, precisely where ideologies and their emotional ties have been left behind and the related discomfort left unheard. Visual strategies in a radically changed mediascape—informed by pervasive television aesthetics—have become fundamental tools to describe, through ads, news, and reality shows, fictional storytelling around the wishes and demands of the "man on the street." The stereotypical interviewee selected in the street to interpret the *vox populi* has become a scapegoat image to justify any fictional construction of "the people," and the consequent dichotomies between "us" and "them."

Populists have come to be identified with right-wing parties that articulate their reactionary positions on the simple logic of antagonism: the natives against the immigrants, the corrupt political establishment against the honest taxpayers, or "Christian values" against Islamic fundamentalism, just to mention some of the most trending ones. The populist leaders are those who are able to build a temporary and fictitious idea of what "the people" are and want, in a specific context and time. The demands for change and better life conditions are aggregated by catalyzing attacks on the status quo, which allow a fairly widespread consensus across large parts of the population, who finally feel understood in their feelings and ideas toward the society they live in. This plot, similarly observable in different European countries with differing vocabularies and topics, appeared almost as a copyrighted narrative of the right, exclusively brought into play by racists, small-minded separatists, or—in the best case scenario—by growing infuriated groups of citizens experiencing the backlashes of a vile neoliberal economy.

The advertising campaigns of the new populist parties have started to use conceptual paradoxes and fictional narratives that, through a certain perspective, could be compared to the strategies artists were using in their daily practices. For instance, the juxtaposition of an image of a Native American reserve with the information of a rising number of migrants arriving in the country—as featured in a Lega Nord ad in Italy—suggested that one day even the natives of a European country could live in a reserve. Of course this situation is far from being true, but the evocative power of images here plays a stronger role than the certainty of facts, precisely like in a work of art.

While populist communication blueprints have looked more and more like dubious and distasteful works of art, some artists have decided to react to this situation by re-appropriating visual strategies to deconstruct and reveal the tricks behind the media success of certain populist campaigns. Of course, it would be silly to try to grasp the scope of populism just by understanding the logics behind its tactics, but effectively, disassembling its imagery proved to be the only way to deal with the poignant storytelling that was being created.

The majority of these artists have seemed to answer the question: "How does populism attract us?" Jonas Staal's "Closed Architecture," for instance, made visually tangible the proposal for a new kind of jail as described by a Dutch right-wing politician. By creating a video rendering of a walkabout, a scale model, a book, and a performance around the prison's plans, the dystopian imagery of one prominent representative of Geert Wilders' Freedom Party has been made loud and clear, and consequentially distant from the empty fabulations that usually make the party attractive.

Nicoline Van Harskamp's "Character Witness," focused instead on the primal tale that makes a political persona believable and trustworthy. Three different actors impersonate a hypothetical politician who gives a speech, after a text made up of fragments from bestselling biographies of figures like Malcom X, Margaret Thatcher, or Nelson Mandela. The outcome is a series of close fallacies that, taken as a whole, make the account so vivid you wish your next vote would go to someone like the personality the work has just portrayed.

Finally, Luigi Coppola's video "On Social Metamorphosis" is built around a chorus who express many opinions on the economic crisis and its repercussions on the social body. Built around the mighty myth of the crisis and its possible solutions, the work mirrors a quest for consensus in the political arena where the final statement echoes: "When there is no vision the people perishes." It is clear that the visions populist rhetoric is capable of evoking are definitely the most attractive element of it. When I began researching the "Enacting Populism" project in 2011, I knew I wanted primarily to address the complexity of the concept of populism in the political imagery of our times. To enact populism meant to offer a multiplicity of layers through which the term could be represented, understood, and put to work in different contexts. Could the term be a repository for the understanding of contemporary politics, or should it be a receptacle, a synonym almost, for the entire demagogy that has been undermining western democracies for the last twenty years?

In a system where populism has become a synonym for demagogy, we are doomed to fail to understand a shift in the social logic defining our contemporary political landscape.

As Argentinian philosopher Ernesto Laclau has claimed, with South American populisms in mind, populism is neither an aberration of democratic politics nor a danger to it but, on the contrary, an inherent dimension of it: "The crucial point is that populism is not an ideology itself. It is a form of constructing the political through the division of society into two camps." A form that has proved to be effective, especially in articulating the demands left unheard, and filling the discursive spaces left empty in a post-ideological political era.

To fight against populism in a productive way means to deeply understand its dynamic and come to terms with what has become so attractive about its workings. In this respect, the work of the Swiss theoretician Yves Citton has proved an invaluable contribution to the debate. His main assumption is that we have to reconnect politics to affects in a Spinozan sense. "We should mobilize an economy of affects and a mythocracy of narrative in order to carve a representation of the political process where both the strength of populism and the dangers of demagogy appear in a more empowering light." What happens at the affective level is right and cannot be fought back by rational thinking, but rather perceived in its potential to be shared at an epidemic level—as he calls it—where narratives of populist storytelling become collective and, therefore, true. It is the infrastructure of the mediascape that enables certain simplified ideas about reality to circulate and prepare the ground for reactionary myths to spread.

If this mechanism allows social tensions to come forth and be articulated, why doesn't emancipatory politics try and do the same? Why do European left-wing politics tiresomely articulate their propositions about an ideal society that doesn't exist? Can the rules of attraction to politics be understood through the infrastructure that commands the circulation of affection?

Populism in itself is not a problem, but how to talk about emancipatory myths in a populist form is the real question at stake when we want to speak about populism.

Matteo Lucchetti *(IT) is a Brussels-based curator and art critic. He researches socially-engaged art practices on a global context through the "Visible" project, which he has been co-curating since 2010. He is interested in the transformative potential of the visual arts and conceives the exhibition as the space where this can be set to work. One of his latest curatorial projects, "Don't Embarrass the Bureau" (Lunds konsthall), features art practices that disrupt the regular functioning of the bureaucratic apparatus in the age of so-called leaked democracy.*

Re-ality Bend-ing

Andrew Boyd

When I was only twenty-two and still an immature college troublemaker, I and a mixed group of artist-activist friends put on an exorcism. We were inspired by the Amsterdam Provos and their "White Bicycle" project, and we wanted to do the same in our little American college town. We pulled junked bikes out of garages and basements, fixed them up and painted them green (it was the era of Petra Kelly and the German Green Party). Instead of leaving them mysteriously around town, one here, one there, as the Provos had done, we wanted to launch them all into the community in one mass spectacle. What better way to mark their mystical political-economic transition from junk capitalist commodities into living anarchist gifts than an exorcism? Over 1,000 people showed up in the center of campus to witness the elaborate anarchic ritual. By then it had become more to us than a spectacle; we'd actually come to believe in its literal transformative power. We called it "secular magic" and here's how we theorized it in a manifesto (printed on green newsprint), which we handed out at the event:

The players "perform" an exorcism, but do they exorcise? Yes and no. The players do not understand or direct authentic magical forces. But they do summon and direct their energies upon a certain part of the universe and cause it to change. The bikes undergo a concrete transformation from capitalist commodities to anarchist gifts. This transformation takes place on both the secular and spiritual levels and is the result of both imagination and physical labor. […] It is both symbolic and actual: it both produces meaning and changes the material world. […] The power that moves this "exorcism in green" could thus be called "secular magic" and be directed at any object, institution, or attitude in your life which the empire/demon has chosen to colonize/possess.

Heady with youth and a newfound radicalism, but with near zero theoretical guidance, we were groping toward our own art-activist practice—and a language to describe it—that would simultaneously enact the bending of reality, and actually bend it. Reality bending is a realm of magic, prank, and illusion; a constructive and deliberate blurring of fact and fiction. Such moves sound esoteric and "soft"—far from the realm of the hardcore revolutionary. But, in a fundamental sense, what is the purpose of a revolution if not to bend reality?

Jonathan Allen suggests that the over-the-top tricks of the stage magician can sensitize us to the everyday deceptions we might encounter in real-world contexts. He is using magic—both black magic and white magic—as a metaphor for the political. After all, how much of politics—whether for good or ill—relies on the art of conjuring? The Bush administration conjured WMDs out of thin air. And launched a war over an illusion—an illusion which large percentages of the American public still believed in, even years after the facts became a matter of public record. "To be seen at all," US messaging guru George Lakoff argues, "Truth must be framed effectively." The art of political framing is about how to make some parts of a story recede, and others take center stage (appear and disappear, the magician might say) through a deft shift in language or conceptual lens.

In *Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Revolution*, a collection of art-activist best practices, we argue that one of the fundamental tasks of the activist is to "make the invisible visible." Whether that is something as concrete as bringing to light the invisible toxins in the groundwater that polluting companies claim aren't there (what theatrical magician wouldn't appreciate the drama of putting a match to your kitchen spigot and lighting your fracking-gas-infused drinking water?). Or, less literally, making visible the people, voices, and concerns that remain socially invisible—think, for example, of all the untold stories of the everyday, anonymous people whose homes are being taken away from them because they were sold bad loans by their banks during the economic crisis.

In 2013, Enmedio, a media prankster collective in Barcelona, made beautiful black-and-white portrait-sized posters (with little bio-notes, such as "Jaime Cadena, Construction Worker, forty-four years old") of people whose homes were being foreclosed upon by the CaixaCatalunya bank, then wheat-pasted them right onto the front of the façade of the central branch in downtown Barcelona. In one sense this act is theatrical magic: the stage is a politically charged public space and, with a mix of artistry and moxie—presto! change-o!—the activist-magicians suddenly make the invisible visible. In another sense, it is simply "Organizing 101." Nothing fancy about it. Meat and potato politics. Giving voice to the voiceless. Bringing the margins to the center. Connecting with your constituency and writing their/our stories large. In fact, it is often the case that until the invisible is made visible, there can be no social movement since not only is the public unaware that there is a problem, but the political subject itself is still invisible—to itself. It has yet to conjure itself into being. Abbie Hoffman said: "All protest is theater." In a similar fashion, maybe all politics is a form of magic, whether the black magic of power disguising its own interests, or the white magic of the activist reveal.

The Yes Men are probably the foremost practitioners of this kind of white magic, and one of their most effective techniques is to bend reality—if only for a brief, shining moment—toward utopia. By impersonating the powerful via fake press releases, websites, and public appearances, and tricking the media into covering their announcements as real, they hoax us all into thinking—at least for a moment—that the WTO has abolished itself, that GE is actually going to give back the taxes it dodged, or that DuPont is finally going to do the right thing and compensate the 100,000 victims of the Bhopal chemical spill for decades of suffering. Before the hoax is revealed, we think, "Am I dreaming? Could I possibly be living in such a world?" By the time the gig is up, not only have DuPont and their ilk been forced to issue public denials explaining why they're NOT going to do the obvious right and good thing, but the rest of us, having momentarily experienced as real this twilight world where power operates ethically, are left thinking, "Yeah, why don't we live in such a world?" And we're more motivated to go out there to make it happen.

In a similar utopian spirit, in one project I was involved in 2006, members from a coalition of environmental groups posed as a US government agency—the Oil Enforcement Agency—which didn't exist but should have. Complete with SWAT team-like caps and badges, agents ticketed SUVs, impounded fuel-inefficient vehicles at auto shows, and generally modeled a future in which government takes climate change seriously.

We tend to think of pranks as, at worst, mean-spirited practical jokes and, at best, as sudden surgical strikes that reveal the emperor has no clothes. But as The Yes Men and others, both in and out of this collection, have shown, pranks can also bend reality toward utopia. And even if reality is bent out of shape for only a moment, it rarely snaps neatly back into place.

If The Yes Men practice "identity correction," maybe Slovenian artist Janez Janša was engaging in "identity confusion" or "identity contestation" when he and two other artists legally changed their names to be the same as Slovenia's then president. They describe this as a reversal of power, and an intervention into the life of someone who was intervening in the life of the people. And like the Yes Men, whose fake websites often got them invited onto TV or to official conferences to speak as representatives of Dow Chemical Co. or the WTO, the three Janšas were interviewed by some magazines instead of the president. When reality gets bent, often fortuitous moments of mistaken identity can lead to hilarious high jinks and upendings of power. In 2004, I helped lead a prankish media campaign in the United States, called "Billionaires for Bush." We posed as CEOs, dressed as campy heiresses and oil barons in tuxedos and gowns who supported the reelection of George Bush with lines like: "We Paid for Eight Years!," "Blood for Oil," "Corporations Are People Too," "Free the Enron Seven!" We didn't expect people to literally believe we were who we pretended to be, but the pretense allowed us to elevate an otherwise hard-to-speak-about political truth, and there were many treasurable moments of confusion along the way. Like the Bush supporters who (sincerely) chanted "Four More Wars! Four More Wars!" along with us while the TV cameras were rolling. Or the fellow, a seemingly pissed-off Republican, who sent us this email:

Shut up! You are not helping the president get reelected. You are making the Republican Party look like a bunch of out of touch elitists. Asshole!

"Billionaires for Bush" is a classic example of what performance studies theorists call "overidentification"—inhabiting an identity and playing it larger and more frankly than the public figures whose identity you're hijacking ever would, in order to make what's implicit in it, explicit. It is this same tactic that the Kavecs duo deploy in contemporary Greece, not to mock the wealthy backers of George Bush, but by posing as masked members of a group introducing itself as the "Black Circle" and giving pompous messianic speeches of a future Europe of racially pure communities, to "underline the existence of a (not so latent) tradition of rightwing radicalism that is being recirculated today" in the Greek resistance movement. However, using "overidentification to blur the boundaries between incarnating a hegemonic identity and subverting it" is no easy task and comes with certain ethical risks. Beyond the usual ethical questions facing the political actor (Is violence justified? Am I acting responsibly with the power I have? How can my practice be more democratic? etc.), if you're going to venture into the dangerous no man's land of reality-bending, you must grapple with additional ethical considerations. If you're going to mislead and deceive (a set of practices Allen explores through the metaphor of magic), impersonate (as The Yes Men or Janša do when they assume corporate or presidential identities), overexaggerate (as the Kavecs duo do with their protofascist overidentification), or blatantly mix fact and fiction (as Rabih Mroué does to interrogate the myths of Lebanese history), then you need to be especially careful that your interventions have the effects you intend.

One of the ethical codes The Yes Men live by is "never leave a lie on the table." While they concede that "sometimes it takes a lie to expose the truth," the lie never lasts long (usually only minutes or hours), and moreover, they want their lie to be found out. They want to come clean and tell the full story of how they pulled it off, including the screwball, nerve-racking, dumb stuff they did behind the scenes that almost caused it all to fall on its face. The same ethos that drives them to "identity correct" powerful corporate targets, also drives them to show their own hand.

In this way, they operate differently from the traditional propagandist or the political operator who specializes in dirty tricks. Consider rightwing US sting operator, James O'Keefe, who, in one infamous incident in 2009, deceptively edited captured guerrilla video footage to make it seem that a staffer at ACORN, a poor people's community organizing effort, was "conspiring with him to smuggle underage girls across the Mexican border, when in fact the staffer had immediately contacted the police after O'Keefe left his office." The propagandist leaves his lie on the table. He gins up a spectacle that pretends to be real (just like the corporate PR campaigns of the Yes Men's targets); whereas the Yes Men engage in a spectacle that reveals the real. Another ethical rule The Yes Men operate by—and this seems to be central also to all good comedy, as well as all ethical politics—is: "Always pick on someone bigger and more powerful than yourself." James O'Keefe picks on poor black people trying to register their neighbors to vote. The Yes Men pick on Exxon, Dow, and the Chamber of Commerce. "Nuff said."

More than just politically correct handwringing, weighing such ethical considerations can be empowering and even open up new terrain to reality-bending. In 2004, Stephen Duncombe and I developed the concept of an "ethical spectacle." If the contemporary lingua franca of politics is spectacle, we asked, how can we engage in a spectacle that is ethical? And we came up with a few answers. An ethical spectacle should be:

Participatory: Seeking to empower participants and spectators alike, with organizers acting as facilitators.

Open: Responsive and adaptive to shifting contexts and the ideas of participants

Transparent: Engaging the imagination of spectators without seeking to trick or deceive.

Realistic: Using fantasy to illuminate and dramatize realworld power dynamics and social relations that otherwise tend to remain hidden in plain sight.

Utopian: Celebrating the impossible—and therefore helping to make the impossible possible.

The notion that the spectacle must be transparent, in particular, seems to be echoed in many of the pieces in this collection. Jonathan Allen argues that "the 'sincerity' of theatrical magic depends ultimately on ethical decisions made by individual conjurors," who, if they deceive via "temporarily-framed and openly recognized illusions," can "provoke critical spectatorship." In a similar vein, Mroué argues that his Lebanese artists mix fact and fiction, not "to cheat or mislead their audience," but to place the spectator "in a realm of interrogation, where he/she is invited to revisit 'established truths,' official narratives and representations." Whether "good guile" or constructive "interrogation" or ethical spectacle, in the tricksterish hands of these reality benders, politics—commonly thought to be the province of realists and the "art of the possible"—becomes, in fact, the art of the impossible. When practiced ethically, this art of the impossible can help bend reality toward both truth and justice.

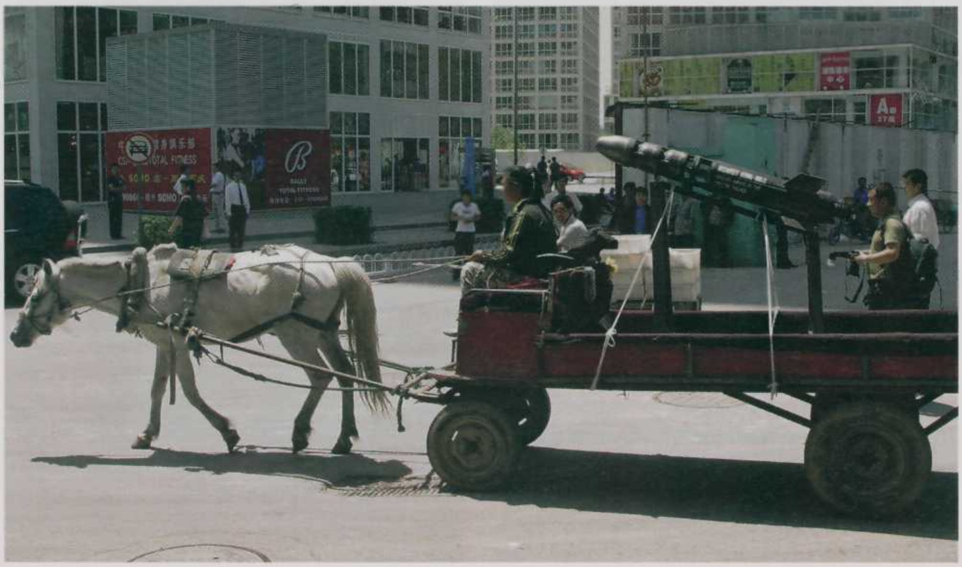
Andrew Boyd *(US) is a New York-based author, humorist, and veteran of creative campaigns for social change. He led the decade-long satirical media campaign "Billionaires for Bush." He cofounded Agit-Pop Communications, an award-winning "subvertising" agency, as well as the netroots social justice movement, "The Other 98%." He is the author of several books, most recently:* Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Revolution.

Wu Yuren

Faking Terrorism

In 2005, the Chinese government had just started to increase its influence on the whole world with its ostentatious wealth. In Beijing, the unceasing growth of the 798 Art District resulted in a steady rise of auction prices for contemporary art and a more and more money-focused art scene. For a huge and sufficiently funded group exhibition in a giant commercial real estate property on Chang'an Avenue, China's political and cultural hub, I decided to realize a performative artwork infused with sarcasm and antagonism. First, I bought a deep-well pump, which resembled a torpedo and remodeled it to take on the form of a rocket. I engraved the Chinese characters "Monkey King No. 2" in reference to the troublemaking monkey king from a sixteenth century Chinese novel (the Chinese words for "rocket" and "troublemaking" are homophones). Then I borrowed a local fruitseller's horse and cart to transport my artwork to the exhibition space. I confidentially asked some friends and certain media to document my ride.

I was to bring my work over on the day of the opening. As it was forbidden to take a horse and cart into the inner city, I settled on a route, hoping not to arouse the authorities' suspicion. The cart, loaded with the rocket, hurried down Chang'an Avenue and attracted the curiosity of many people on the way. We made our way down the street without any interference. Then the police showed up. Then the security guards at the exhibition space refused me and my artwork entry. More and more people started gathering around the horse and cart, causing a traffic jam. Then we were surrounded by the police, and I was given a fine for bringing a horse and cart into the inner city without a permit. An explosives expert from the Criminal Investigation Department examined the vehicle and the rocket; the rocket was then confiscated. After several hours of interrogation and torment, I finally rebutted the false accusations of being a terrorist. I went back to the exhibition space, where the real estate agent and one of the



organizers were already complaining about me wrecking the whole opening.

What happened there is exactly what I expected to happen. The paranoiac authoritarian system showed its true colors, and in as much as *they seriously thought I might be a terrorist*, I temporarily prevailed over it. The rocket trundling down Beijing's Chang'an Avenue and its confiscation by the authorities stands for all the artworks that have disappeared so far. It was my intention to leave a bitter taste in its wake. The attack on the everyday reality of our society and on the structures of the art world comes in a period of rationalized conceptual confrontation.

***Wu Yuren** (CN) is a photographer, performance artist, and human rights activist, who has been incarcerated several times for making trouble in public, even, on occasion, without charge. In 2010, he was part of a group of artists protesting against a series of brutal attacks on their persons during attempts to demolish their studios.*

Janez Janša

Name Changing

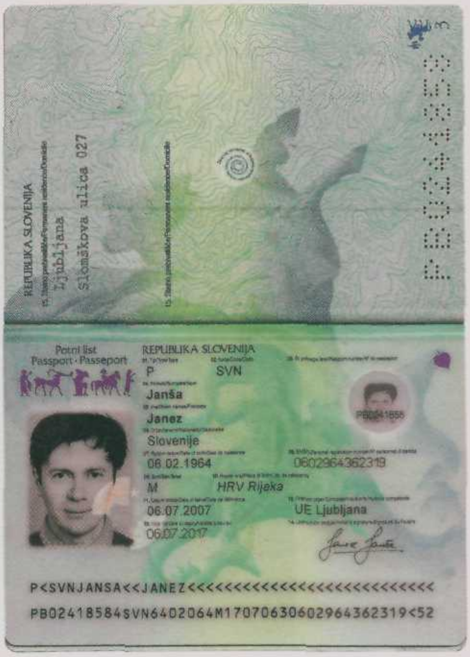
For a public person, their name is a property. It is a brand that can be bought and sold. Our name will outlive us. Our name is what we will be remembered by. In that sense, a name should be as unique as possible, as distinctive as possible.

Thus there is long tradition of subverting the logic of names. Pseudonyms are used either to protect the privacy of an author or to protect an author from potential censorship, or legal persecution. For similar reasons, one might refuse to have a name at all and remain anonymous. Many artists working in collectives never use their name in public. A group or collective name can underline the artistic content, whereas multiple artists' *personal names would more underline each* artist.

There are many strategies that make use of the potential of names in cultural, economic, media, and political contexts. Such strategies work on split personas: one is a name that features in everyday life and the legal context; the other works in a public context.

Neoliberal politics can be understood as the politics of privatization. And this politics of privatization is always represented by a name. The name of a politician therefore stands for his or her politics, and neoliberal politics is thus the politics of singularity.

In 2007, three Slovenian artists became members of the Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS) whose president was Janez Janša, the Prime Minister of Slovenia at that time. In their official welcoming letter, Janša wrote: "The more of us there are, the faster we'll



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Ljubljana
Slomškova ulica 027

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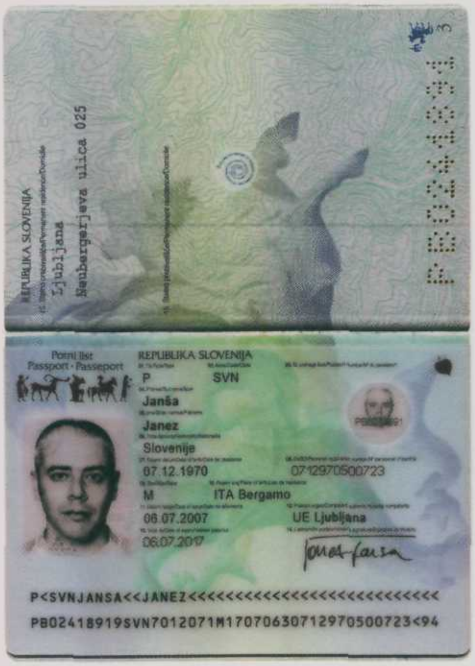

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Ljubljana
Neubergerjeva ulica 025

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Janez Janša

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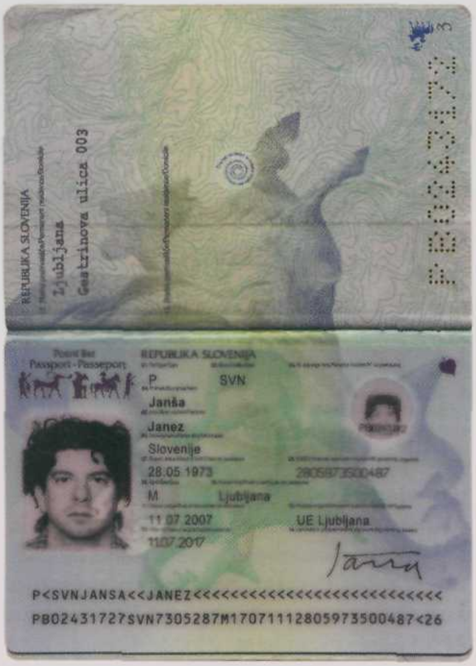
reach our goal!" After becoming members of SDS, the three artists applied legally to change their names to Janez Janša, under a law enacted by Janša's first administration. *The procedure does not require the stating of* any reasons. It costs €46.

If politics privatizes the public and governs the state like a private enterprise, and if politics and state are represented by a single name, of a prime minister or a president, then one potential way of questioning the process of privatization is to deprivatize this name. If we want power to be shared, it should not be privatized or personalized. The Italian thinker, Antonio Caronia, explains the name change to Janez Janša as an act of colonization. It occupies a space reserved for someone else.

This act of colonization became most obvious with the publication of the book, *Janez Janša - Biografija*. The title clearly indicates the biography of a politician. The book is, however, a biography of the three Slovenian artists. Interestingly enough, the birthname of the politician is Ivan Janša; as Caronia states, paradoxically, three artists with the name Janez Janša have more right to that name than the politician, who never legally changed his name to Janez Janša. Marcel Štefančič Jr., author of *Janez Janša - Biografija* explains that "when a politician comes to power he/she decides how far he/she will intervene in people's lives. [...] Janez Janša decided to interfere a lot in people's lives. And the three artists who changed their names to Janez Janša decided to intervene in his life."

Cultural journalists continue to review the work of the three artists who now sign their works with their new names. The journalist Jela Krečič wrote: "Even though—or perhaps precisely because—the journalist as a professional remains faithful to the rules of reporting and commenting, s/he cannot shake the feeling that s/he participates in the creation of the Janez Janša media phenomenon and, by extension, the Janez Janša art project." Some took it even further: the political weekly *Mag* interviewed the three artists instead of the prime minister. And the daily *Dnevnik* published a comment with the



REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA
Ljubljana
Gestrinova ulica 003

Potni list
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title "Is Janez Janša an idiot?" claiming that journalists can now insult Janez Janša without fear of prosecution, since artists are used to being called idiots, and don't have the money or power to sue a journalist anyway.

A name has now become a thing, not owned by a single person, but able to be used and temporarily appropriated.

***Janez Janša** (SI) is an interdisciplinary artist, performer, and director. His work focuses on the relation between art and social and political context. He is artistic director of* Maska, *Ljubljana.*

Neue Slowenische Kunst

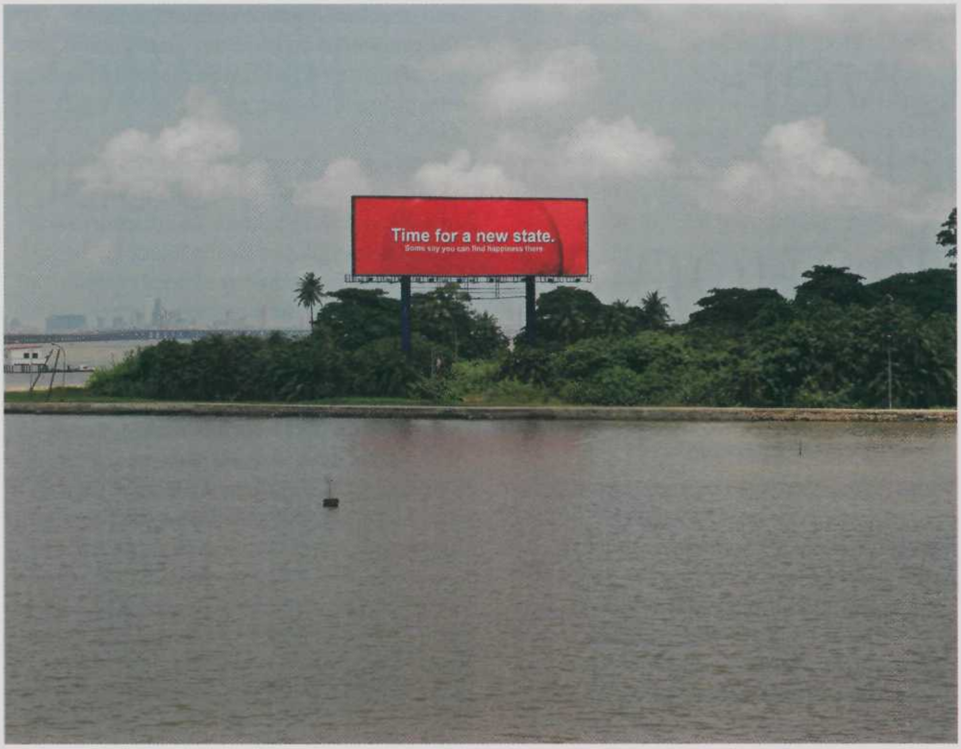
State Founding

Retro avant-garde is the basic artistic procedure of Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK). As art in the image of the state, NSK revives the trauma of avant-garde movements by identifying with them at the stage of their assimilation into totalitarian state systems. Avant-garde movements tried to develop autonomous social organizations in which the characteristics, needs, and values of individualism, which cannot be comprised in the systems of a formal state, could be freely developed and defined. NSK defines its collectivism as artistic actions in time within the framework of an autonomous state. This means that the procedure of the deconstruction and analysis of past forms and situations functions as the creator of new conditions for the development of the individual within the framework of a collective.

One of NSK's aims is to prove that abstraction, which in its fundamental philosophical component—suprematism—explains and expels the global political language from the language and culture of art, contains a social program adequate to the needs of modern man and community. The NSK "State in Time" is an abstract organism, a suprematist body installed in a real sociopolitical space as a sculpture comprising the concrete body warmth, movement of spirit, and work of its members. NSK confers the status of a state not on territory but on mind, the borders of which are in a state of flux, in accordance with the movements and changes of its symbolic and physical collective body.

In 1992, along with the emergence of a multitude of new states, some of which (Slovenia among them) achieved the status of an independent state for the first time ever in history, NSK too objectified itself in the form of a state. Thanks to the particular circumstances in the early 1990s, we were able to produce the passports of the NSK "State in Time," in cooperation with the Slovenian Interior Ministry. As a result, NSK passports do not differ from the usual standards for such products in terms of mode and quality of production. So far, several thousand people have applied for and obtained our passports, and thereby become citizens of the NSK "State in Time," while retaining their previous citizenship. The reasons for taking NSK citizenship are linked primarily to the understanding of and participation in the field of contemporary art, although there are many stories of how NSK passports have helped people to cross borders more easily than with a regular passport. Aware that the NSK passport does not enable them to cross national borders, many have nevertheless taken the risk of using it.

In some other situations, people are not aware about the exact nature of our passport. In July 2010, we went to Nigeria due to the number of NSK passport applications there, mostly from Lagos. The requests arrived slowly then suddenly shot up over a short period to 1,000.



The cost of the passport was not high, but for the inhabitants of the so-called Third World it was. It was doubtful that the interest of people from Nigeria in obtaining an NSK passport was related to art, so we wanted to inform people about the real nature of the document.
When we arrived, we soon noticed huge posters. We weren't sure what they were propagating. The red posters read: "Time for a new state," and beneath it: "Some say you can find happiness there." No company mentioned. We asked our hosts from the ICA in Lagos about the posters, but nobody knew anything other than that it might have been for a new soft drink. We were told they were part of a gradual propaganda campaign that made use of different slogans at different times. Full-page ads also appeared in the main newspapers. This campaign seemed to have been made for us and for our project. We interviewed some NSK citizens from Lagos and told them that NSK has no territory, but they still believed in it and told us that friends of theirs were already there. As we came back to Ljubljana, we illustrated the text written by a journalist about our Lagos trip with the picture of our billboard erected in the Lagos vegetation, really an impressive view. We were not the authors, but we immediately appropriated it as our own. It was a cynical and often criticized appropriation. Some months later we heard that these billboards were part of a campaign by Coca Cola.

***NSK** (SI) is an art collective set up in 1984 and consisting of the visual art collective IRWIN, the musical group Laibach, the Scipion Nasice Sisters Theater, the New Collective Studio, the film and video collective Retrovision, and the Department of Pure and Applied Philosophy. They usually reappropriate totalitarian and nationalistic imagery, which they subtly juxtapose in subversive compositions. Since 1991, NSK has claimed to constitute a state, issues several citizenship documents, and holds citizens' congresses.*

Kostis Stafylakis / Kavecs

Over-identi-fication

Amidst a hurricane of social and cultural changes one often questions one's own presumptions on cultural activism. "What is cultural resistance?" "Who or what does it resist?" The Slovenian art collective NSK (Neue Slowenische Kunst), founded in 1984 in former Yugoslavia, reappropriated totalitarian kitsch propaganda with a Dadaist touch to address these questions. NSK's riddle became more fascinating after the so-called Greek crisis from 2011 that revealed a complex knot between revolt and right-wing radicalism. The *Aganaktismenoi* movement (the Greek version of *Indignados*) and its rhetoric of direct democracy was a highly questionable case of "struggle for social change," mostly motivated by "miserabilism" (Pierre-André Taguieff). It called for a moralistic renunciation of the corrupt political elite in favor of those abstractly and arbitrarily designated as desperate, betrayed, expropriated, or victims, and engendered a unique form of nationalist populism that demanded an authoritarian response: the expulsion of the "corrupted." The years after the 2008 uprisings in Athens were followed by a rapid and unprecedented radicalization of Greek youth and the emergence among the existing leftist, autonomist, and anarchist groups, of autonomist nationalist or national anarchist groups—the usual "third positionists." In a heavily humanistic art environment, we felt the need to rather reflect on artistic aporia toward the forms of social agency. Inspired by NSK, we tried to destabilize the audience through another type of strategic (para)praxis and developed a series of performances in the manner of political declarations and messianic speeches by the masked members of a group introducing itself as the "Black Circle."

The "Black Circle" project started as an attempt to interrogate those exact unfamiliar sides of collective mobilization. The discourse and aesthetics employed by the "Black Circle" group were elaborations of material found in the webpages of those emerging third-positionist groups, most notably the "Black Lily." The groups we overidentified with were early splits—dissident fractions—of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn movement. Their rhetoric was an amalgam of autonomism, communitarianism, early national socialism, anticapitalism, and antistatism. We consciously applied modes of overidentification and gradually drew upon NSK's prose to achieve an appropriate messianic pomposity. Like NSK, we addressed the audience as the privileged subject of history in these critical times. Evoking verse by radical traditionalist and race theorist, Julius Evola, the "Black Circle" project underlines the existence of a (not so latent) tradition of right-wing radicalism that is being recirculated today. In recent performances, the masked protagonists lecture about their vision of an alternative Europe of peacefully coexisting (culturally pure) communities. We tried to avoid overt mockery and persuade the audience that there is an intimate relation between the actual protagonists and radicalized Greek youth. It was our choice to expose a viewer to a "real" possibility without offering a clearcut answer to "whys" and "hows."

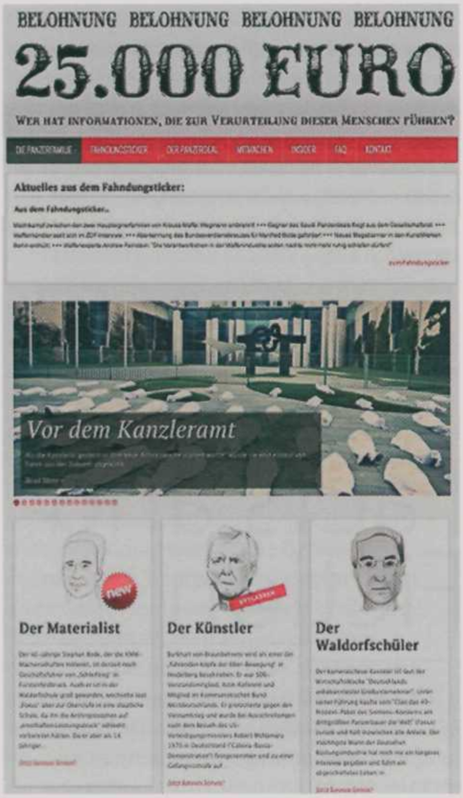
***Kavecs** (GR) is a duo formed by the artists **Kostis Stafylakis** and Vana Kostayola in Athens in 2005, in reaction to the cultural and political situation in Greece marked by traditionalism, religious fanaticism, political populism, and economic crisis. Their artistic practice uses overidentification to blur the boundaries between incarnating a hegemonic identity and subverting it in order to test the viewer's criticality and sharpen a detailed reflection on cultural and social dogmas.*

Philipp Ruch / Center for Political Beauty

Political Beauty

The ancient rhetorician Isocrates, a forgotten pupil of Socrates, once stated the opinion that people are never at a loss for words when it comes to salt or bumblebees, but that all those who attempt to speak of the good or the beautiful "fall far short of the truth."

The declared aim of the Center for Political Beauty is to gather together precisely such inklings of political beauty and to translate them into the realm of action art. The fact that more or less all its activities revolve around crimes against humanity may appear ironic. But it is above all humankind's darkest hours which help us to uncover political beauty. Darkness allows actions of moral and political beauty to shine through. Roy Gutman, Pulitzer Prize winner for his coverage of the genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina, once put this paradox in a nutshell: "Bosnia brought out the worst and best of humanity. The worst crimes made the best people stand up and protest."



BELOHNUNG BELOHNUNG BELOHNUNG BELOHNUNG

25.000 EURO

WER HAT INFORMATIONEN, DIE ZUR VERURTEILUNG DIESER MENSCHEN FÜHREN?

Aktuelles aus dem Fahndungsticker:

Aus dem Fahndungsticker..

Vor dem Kanzleramt

Der Materialist

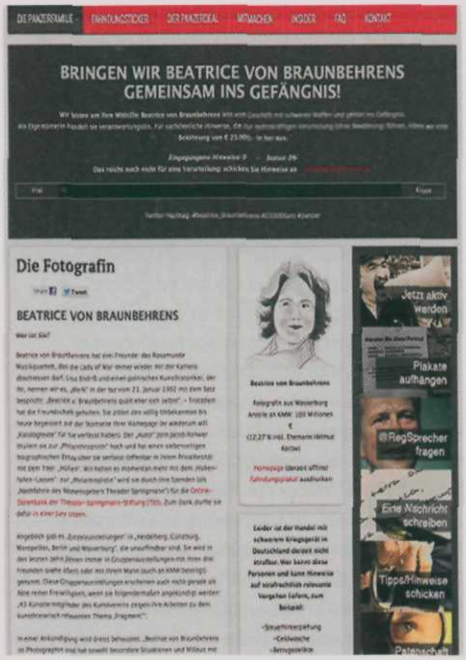
Der Künstler

Der Waldorfschüler

How should people react to genocide? Faced with Auschwitz, German society vowed "Never again!" a million times. What does this vow mean for Bosnia, Rwanda, or Chechnya? Recognizing political beauty is all the more important—after all, political beauty is moral beauty. The Center for Political Beauty focuses on the lifework of such people as Varian Fry, Peter Bergson, Eduard Schulte, Roméo Dallaire, Soghomon Tehlirian, Shahan Natalie, Raphael Lemkin, Georg Eisler, and Christian Schwarz-Schilling. These names stand for the salvation of decency, political vulnerability, sympathy, and devastation. Every single one deserved to have a continent named after him.

Let us pick out two from this list. Christian Schwarz-Schilling was Postmaster General in 1992 in the German government headed by Helmut Kohl. When it came to what Germany would do to stop the genocide in the Balkans, Schwarz-Schilling pressed for action. Recognizing that the German government aimed to deny the reality, Schwarz-Schilling resigned, explaining his action at a press conference: "I am ashamed to belong to this federal government if its failure to act persists."

Elie Wiesel once said that there had been just three kinds of people in the twentieth century: killers, victims, and bystanders. Another category was manifested in Schwarz-Schilling: resistance. The Center for Political Beauty refers to this resistance as aggressive humanism. This kind of politics can be demonstrated by the example of someone such as Varian Fry. Fry took advantage of the privileges of being an American citizen to help more than 1,500 intellectuals and



BRINGEN WIR BEATRICE VON BRAUNBEHRENS GEMEINSAM INS GEFÄNGNIS!

Die Fotografin

BEATRICE VON BRAUNBEHRENS

artists flee the continental deathtrap in 1940, including Marc Chagall, Alfred Döblin, Marcel Duchamp, Lion Feuchtwanger, Max Ophüls, Heinrich and Golo Mann, and Hannah Arendt. He fought for the right of the weakest with the law of the strongest. His memoirs, *Surrender on Demand*, tell of his amazement at the respect afforded his American citizenship. His passport, a piece of paper, elevated him above all members of the European intelligentsia, whose gifts were all fairly worthless in the face of German extremism. What counted was an American who risked his life to save hundreds of lives. He bribed and threatened officials, forged passports, and fed the underworld. Precisely because Varian Fry was totally unaffected, he was able to influence the key ambassadors and officials. Instead of standing on the sidelines, he became involved in sabotaging the most terrible events of the twentieth century. In view of the violations of law committed by Fry, any major human rights organization today would throw him out as a menace to their "image."

Even the quintessential forms of activism classified as offences under German law, i.e., trespass, coercion, and damage to property, are rejected by all German human rights organizations as a matter of principle. Amnesty International, the largest human rights organization in terms of members and donations, embodies this principle with its unwritten law of breaking no laws to achieve its political aims. While this gives the organization the appearance of tremendous integrity and protects it against criticism, it is of little help to people in the world's death zones. Worse, it harms them, when international organizations foster a noble image at the expense of political efficacy. Today, German human rights organizations are satisfied when a photo of their banners and candlelit vigil is published—arranging ships, trains, planes, forging passports, bribing officials, and saving lives? No chance.

Philipp Ruch *(DE) is a political philosopher and founder of the* ***Center for Political Beauty****, a group of artists longing for moral beauty and human greatness. In 2010, they created the "Pillar of Shame" for the Mothers of Srebrenica, as a metaphor of the United Nations' gigantic betrayal in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2012, the Center for Political Beauty announced a €25,000 reward for any kind of information leading to the criminal conviction of the owners of the Krauss-Maffei Wegmann arms company.*

Rabih Mroué

Facts and Fiction

It is said that the earliest authors in the history of Lebanon followed a simple rule: "It is better to agree on what is wrong rather than to disagree on what is right." The significance of this revelation implies that prevailing accounts of the history of Lebanon are rich with compromises, negotiations, and fictions, and that the Lebanese agree on a narrative constructed by historians in the service of the powers that be.

Some artists felt it was their mission to expose the Lebanese system and the fallaciousness of history. But these attempts never got anywhere simply because they claimed to own the "truth," creating an "other" that is certainly outside this "truth." It is an "other" that resembles the same logic of the "other" already produced by the powers that be. These artists didn't realize they were the victim of a duality that would banish any possibility of genuine dialogue. And their ideas were quickly appropriated by the different political parties, who used them to promote their own agendas.

I assume it is always impossible to make distinctions between fiction and truth in history. In Lebanon, for example, this impossibility is rooted in the idea that fictions and mythologies, form and content, in writing Lebanon's history, all played a decisive role in fuelling the war and feeding the discourses of its conflicting poles, and as a result fit the truths, facts, and reality of the recent past and contemporary history to the various different narratives.

Since the end of the Lebanese Civil War(s), we have seen that, for the first time, the powers that be have not attempted to impose a single, official historical narrative on the recent past. This is due to the fact that none of the previously warring factions in power is willing to compromise their positions or beliefs, announcing bluntly that they put their devotional allegiances before the country itself. Today, we are able to collect and make inventories of details of stories, hearsay, rumors, scandals, accusations, narratives, betrayals, and use all these as primary, raw material in the production of works of art: narratives that are based on informal resources—gossip, hearsay, rumors, etc.—in order to produce critical and subversive works that include alternative or reversed representations of the history. These narratives do not spring from a single "truth" but from a plurality of "truths." Putting them together is not meant to make one strong narrative but, on the contrary, to show the differences, accept them, and begin to understand them.

From this perspective, contemporary performances and artworks tend to condense certain historical events. They use true documents alongside false ones; they account for events that never really took place, but have influenced real people and evoked other events. Personal itineraries in such performances are falsified, while also spreading rumors. In short artworks blend reality with fiction so that the line separating them becomes almost invisible. Pretentious works, just like any written history.

Certainly, these works of art are not intended to cheat or mislead their audience. Nor are they designed to trick or create the illusion of a truth. Rather, their foremost objective, from the moment their meanings begin to unfold is to place the spectator in a realm of interrogation, where he/she is invited to revisit "established truths," official narratives, and representations.

The audience realizes from the outset that fiction and reality go hand in hand. The two are conflated and cannot be separated, even by the author, the director, or the actor. Thus, the events recounted become reality in themselves and can cause small fractures in both fundamental and authoritarian beliefs, perhaps unnoticeable within the official history/ies.

I think that a different writing of the same historical event is not a cause for fighting or starting another war; quite the contrary, it is a way to understand history and open a door to dialogue among the different parties over the present and the future. And art has a role in pushing this rewriting forward.

Cracks and fractures would, over time, contribute to a newly written history, no matter how modest this contribution is.

Nevertheless, our performances are always incomplete, uncertain, playful, and riddled with cracks that would take forever to fill.

Rabih Mroué *(LB) is an actor, director, and playwright, and Contributing Editor for the Lebanese quarterly* Kalamon *and* TDR *(New York). He is a founder and board member of the Beirut Art Center (BAC), as well as a fellow at The International Research Center: Interweaving Performance Cultures / Freie Universität, Berlin, 2013/2014.*

Jonathan Allen

Magic

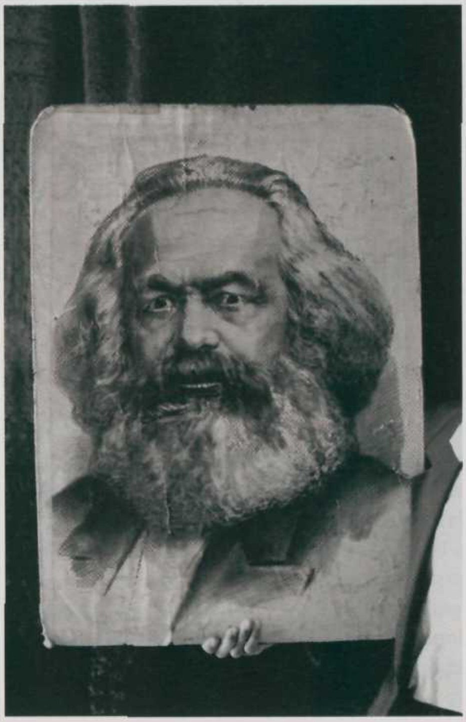
Theatrical magicians often describe themselves as "benevolent con men." This pairing captures the essence of the conjuror's art: his or her intention to playfully deceive but not permanently delude, to disrupt our perceptual and epistemological assumptions about the world in the form of openly acknowledged illusions. Magicians tell us they are going to trick us, and then do just that. In short, they are sincere deceivers.

It is the magician's paradoxical openness about his or her use of deception that recommends this form of conjuring as a potentially enlightening cultural agent. In *Conjuring: How the Virtuoso Romantic Learned from the Enlightened Charlatan* Barbara Maria Stafford writes: "Conjuring was not just mindless spectacle but a force for visual education. Momentary concealment and subsequent revelation were not the same as a permanent lie. This fluid and interactive performance medium demonstrated that legerdemain, camouflage, distraction, misdirection, and above all the perspective one had permeated the perception of life and need not be evil […] Invited [by the conjuror] to conceptualize or model generally practiced social strategies of deception, they [the public], too, might eventually learn to avoid self-deception." The spectacle of theatrical magic has the potential, Stafford suggests, to rehearse us in and sensitize us to the many forms of deception, both benign and nefarious, that we might encounter in real world contexts.

Magicians themselves, however, do not always behave quite so selflessly, or so benevolently. Institutional power—governmental, corporate, religious, or otherwise—has long recognized magic's utility, and performers sometimes respond to power's solicitations for their own material and ideological ends. Take the example of the American magician John Mulholland, whose manual *Some Operational Uses of the Art of Deception* was secretly commissioned by the CIA at the height of the Cold War. Mulholland's text weaponized magic by providing agents with detailed instruction in the covert administering of toxins via "tricks with pills … tricks with loose solids … tricks with liquids … tricks by which small objects may be obtained secretly." Less lethal in its potential, but no less ideologically coercive, Mark Wilson's presence in the early 1960s as the host of the pioneering CBS television series *The Magic Land of Allakazam* embodied magic as a form of product placement: studio audiences delighted as the illusionist appeared miraculously from the inside of a human-sized breakfast cereal box whilst children yelled the magic word "Kelloggs!" The French advertising agency Joseph currently employs over 400 magicians to promote and transform brand identities in the same way. In the first decade of the twentieth century Christianity's longstanding special relationship with the technology of illusion gave rise to the genre of "gospel magic." Today contemporary evangelists such as Duane Laflin take to the stage with conjuring props such as flaming bibles and magic silks printed with the face of Jesus to preach a religiously conservative Christian message to audiences worldwide.

If these performers demonstrate magic's capacity to conjure consent for military, corporate, or religious ends, then how might its persuasive potential be used for more politically progressive purposes? Consider, for example, the Indian magician Anchal Kumawat, who, during an otherwise innocuous stage act, appears to "cremate" a female assistant before lecturing her startled audiences on the barbarity of dowry dispute-related bride-burning. The San Francisco Bay Area arts organization, The Centre for Tactical Magic (CTM), promotes stealth activism via artworks that integrate martial and magic technology for radicalizing ends. CTM's bespoke "Ultimate Jacket" has fifty secret pockets for optimum concealment and retrieval, while a public video-billboard entitled "Linking and Unlinking (Know Your Rights)" screens footage demonstrating how to pick handcuff locks alongside that of conjurors performing the famous "linking rings" trick, and a rolling text of "Know Your Rights" information from the American Civil Liberties Union. The "socialist magician" Ian Saville activates magic's comedic potential with illusions such as "the surplus value factory box" and "the class struggle rope trick," and via a self-operated ventriloquist figure of Karl Marx that berates its operator each time the latter strays from the party line. Saville has performed on cabaret stages over twenty years, as well as in contexts more directly associated with left-wing political opposition, such as on picket lines during the UK Miners' Strike in the 1980s.

The "sincerity" of theatrical magic depends ultimately on ethical decisions made by individual conjurors, who might choose either to deploy their dissembling expertise through coercive and/or permanently deluding deceptions, or through temporarily-framed and openly recognized illusions. Whilst the former might lead to a controlling and instrumentalized form of conjuring with potentially lethal consequences, the latter has the capacity to provoke critical spectatorship through the conscientious enactment of good



guile. As Ian Saville notes in *I Can See Your Ideology Moving* ironically paraphrasing that well practiced deceptionist Karl Rove, "[with magic] we're dealing with known unknowns, rather than unknown unknowns [...] by displaying the trick honestly, the audience's consciousness of the changeability of the world is reinforced."

***Jonathan Allen** (GB) is a regular contributor to the New York-based art and culture quarterly* Cabinet, *and recently cocurated the Hayward Touring exhibition "Magic Show" with writer Sally O'Reilly. He is currently a researcher at the Centre of Useless Splendor, Kingston University, London.*

Thomas Meinecke

Gender-Bending

Michael Musto's column. He met Michael Formika Jones, with whom we may already be familiar (in connection with Nan Goldin) in the guise of The Mistress Formika, says Venus, who brought the paper back from America last month. Eva knows Mistress Formika as a legendary Deep House DJ in the drag bars around Times Square, from the history of underground dance music replete with drastic legends. Also, she says, Wolfgang Tillmans shot a portrait of him in 1995. Genoveva recalls Goldin's photographs from the early *days of this scene. She has also seen the* Wigstock documentary. The Mistress Formika, she says, made a really strikingly beautiful woman back then. (As did the others, come to think of it: Misty, Cody, Jimmy Paulette, Miss Guy, and the rest of them.)

Nothing unusual there, says Genoveva; the whole concept of so-called femininity has been a genuinely masculine, phallological construction since the French Revolution, if not earlier, with philosophers, educators, gynecologists, and couturiers ensuring its stability. What she finds more interesting *is how this construction has recently been* inverted in many places, with the artificial nature of traditionally authoritative masculinity being performatively emphasized by women (exclamation mark). Increasingly, however, by men too, Venus adds, remember the flowing beards of deliberately effeminate bohemians. Or here, have a look at this Louis Vuitton ad: young man on sailing-yacht, in double-breasted blazer, white shirt, silvery tie, but a peculiar brooch in the form of little golden rigging on the lapel, and a very feminine Vuitton handbag on his shoulder too. Nothing new there, Eva points out: the classic dandy program. Charles Baudelaire. Peter Altenberg. Quentin Crisp.

Since the leading fashion photographer Inez van Lamsweerde famously graced the cover of the second issue of *The Gentlewoman* in a full beard, we have also been able to observe a productive appropriation (not to say emancipatory conquest) of this patriarchal *topos on the genetically female side,* Genoveva notes. (You could also trace it back to Frida Kahlo, however.)

Michael Musto reports in the *Village Voice* about Michael Formika Jones's last lover, a gay man he code-named Pat, who soon developed transsexual tendencies and increasingly came to regard himself as a heterosexual woman trapped in a man's body. Michael, who has for years now been appearing only sporadically in drag (as The Mistress Formika), but whose wardrobes are still overflowing with bras, nylons and stilettos, was completely stunned *the first time he saw his boyfriend on high* heels. (Exclaiming in shock: What are you doing in my pumps?) But then he developed a certain erotic appreciation of his boyfriend's new look.

Genoveva reads aloud: Pat decided to have implants, said Formika, but she still had her male genitalia. She still looked like a cute little boy and she had boobs, and who doesn't like boobs? A cute boy with boobs? Dream come true. But once the hair grew out and the make-up and the feminization came, I realized: I'm a fag, I'm not a lesbian. In Pat's *words: Michael is definitely not attracted to* the complete female anatomy. (He does like pretty boys, but the key word there is boys.)

The two continued to live together nevertheless, and an old friend of Formika's put his flatmate's surgically constructed vagina to the test. It gets even better, says Venus, taking the paper out of Genoveva's hands, Michael Formika Jones is now dating a transman called John. Imagine that, Genoveva: while a transsexual woman with

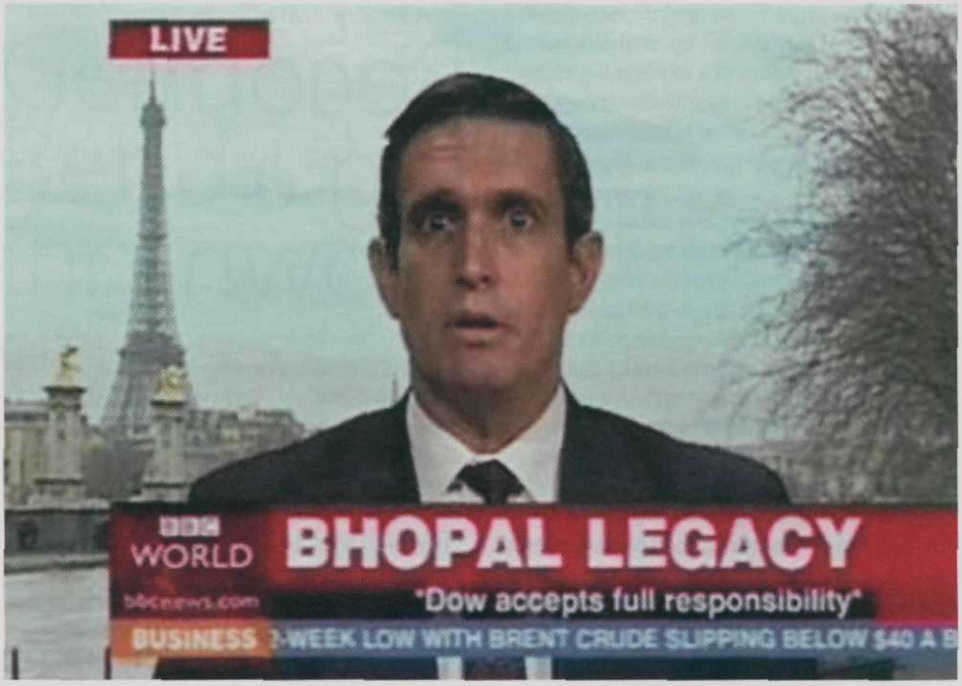
a vagina disgusts him, he feels attracted to a transsexual man with a vagina. That's not without complications (it's like making several detours before settling for the real thing). Michael: I asked John if he likes to take it up the ass. And he wrote back: I prefer pussy sex. I thought: Oh my God, he still has a pussy. (Of course that questions your masculinity: Can I do it, or am I gonna look lame?)
Michael and John met up in the Nowhere Bar on East 14th Street last week. They talked about their circumstances and ended up kissing passionately on a sofa in the corner. Before he knew it, Michael had his hand in John's waistband. It was exciting and new, he confessed, he hadn't experienced anything like it since his schooldays.
I was definitely playing with his clitoris.
So all in all it's a pretty ordinary boy-meets-girl story, Eva reckons. A novel.
And John, Genoveva asks, how did he feel about it?
Michael: He said he came five times right there. He said: This was hot. I can't wait till we fuck. His closing words were: God, I'm so sticky now. I said: I'm glad I got that pussy all worked up. Which is what I've said to some gay guys too.
To be logical, we should regard John as a gay guy too, says Genoveva, and Venus and Eva agree with her.
Will John go to the doctor and get a penis put on? No, says Michael, he is absolutely perfect (the way he is) and completely satisfied with his physique.

Thomas Meinecke (DE) is the author of numerous novels and stories, a musician (e.g., with his band FSK, founded in 1980), as well as a radio and club DJ.

Andy Bichlbaum / The Yes Men

Becom- ing a Clown

I've always enjoyed highlighting just how preposterous it is that we hand over the reins of our society to all kinds of clowns whose clownish ideology insists that for the system to work, each clown must act in accordance with the basest, most vaudevillian aspects of their identity: greed and self-interest.
Exposing such nonsense sometimes involves *becoming* a clown, which is what we Yes Men have done many times. More often of late, we've embodied the clowns, but shown them rising above themselves, while maintaining the outer trappings of speech and dress: even for clowns, another world is possible. (This has tended to result in a whole lot more press, since the real clowns then have to deny that they're doing anything differently.)
Our motivation has never been consciously strategic, though of course it does "work" in a certain way. The real motivation has simply been to have fun. Of course, if an action feels fun to do, it'll be fun for others to see, and it'll spread widely. Communicating important things with a few different layers of humor at once is part of just having fun, but it also ends up being a strategy, now ennobled by the name Laughtivism.
The entire point of the direct actions The Yes Men have created is to get coverage in the mainstream media; journalists' attention is drawn to these actions either automatically, by the action itself, or more usually by a carefully constructed press plan that's concocted along with the action, and that's sometimes indistinguishable from the action itself.
Our general "theory of change" is that by using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humor to bring underrepresented issues to large groups of people, or (more usually) to pile on to issues that are newly getting attention, we can "shift the spectrum of allies"—getting "passive opponents" (people on the other side of the issue, but only by default, who don't *really* care that much) to see the issue in a new light and become "passive allies," and possibly getting "passive allies" to become "active allies" (for this, they need to discover ways they can act on the issue at hand, which is one of the reasons a carefully constructed "reveal" release, pointing to ongoing initiatives of activist organizations, is so important).

Humor is powerful, and the *momentary* deception we engage in is just there to add to the humor of the action, to make journalists (and hence readers) laugh.

Many billions of dollars are spent every year deceiving the media, and the news is constantly full of such public relations hoaxes; the only reason ours stand out is that we don't do them for profit—*and* we reveal them afterwards!

600 articles for example were published in the US press connecting the Dow Chemical Corporation and the Bhopal disaster, in the wake of our 2004 BBC appearance as Dow. That's probably the single biggest media effect of any action we've done, and it served pretty well I think to focus the issue where it was most needed: in Dow's home country. When I became Dow's spokesperson on the BBC, I adopted the name Jude Finisterra to signify the impossibility of the announced plan ever becoming reality: St. Jude is the patron of impossible causes, and "Finisterra" refers to the end of the world, something that will never happen so long as earth exists. Impossibility was also intrinsic to the announcement itself, such as when I acknowledged, as Dow, that "this is the first time in history that a publicly held company of anything near the size of Dow has performed an action which is significantly against its bottom line simply because it's the right thing to do." It felt important to acknowledge that, so as to focus attention on the real culprit for the Bhopal disaster and

the ongoing injustice: not Dow but rather the whole market system that punishes good acts and rewards bad ones, which we've increasingly allowed to make our decisions for us, with the help of the hopeless "no alternative" line.
"Jude Finisterra" continued: "Our shareholders may take a bit of a hit, Steve, but I think that if they're anything like me, they will be ecstatic to be part of such a historic occasion of doing right by those that we've wronged."
Shareholders were not delighted, but as if on cue, shaved two billion dollars off Dow's share value in twenty minutes—an excellent, if accidental, object lesson that added to the press count, and that helped enrich the whole story in our subsequent film: If we let the market make decisions, how far can that go? What, for example, might the market decide to do in the runup to, and aftermath of, catastrophic climate change? Two of the actions in that film were about those questions, and our Dow action was the pivot for that, so it could be said to have engendered that entire movie.
Although one of the points of our Dow announcement was that the announced plan could never happen so long as we have the system we do, many of our more recent actions, especially those undertaken with activist organizations around their specific campaigns, have piled an extra little dollop of embarrassing mainstream media laughter onto existing pressure toward truly achievable goals. It's hard to know what this dollop adds to the overall campaign; it's surely a cumulative thing, the summation of many components, that has led to the minor triumphs, or triumphs-in-process, of a number of the campaigns we've been part of: against Chevron, Shell, Monsanto, two Tar Sands pipelines, police racial profiling, coal plants, the coal industry itself, and the US Chamber of Commerce.

Andy Bichlbaum *(US), cofounder of the activist duo,* ***The Yes Men****, got started as an activist when, as a computer programmer, he inserted a swarm of kissing boys in a shoot-'em-up video game (SimCopter) just before it shipped to store shelves. Since then, he has worked for Exxon, Dow, the WTO, Halliburton, Monsanto, and many other companies, without their approval.*
In 2004, Bichlbaum went on BBC impersonating a Dow Chemical spokesman on the twentieth anniversary of the Bhopal catastrophe to announce that Dow Chemicals would finally take responsibility for the disaster and compensate their thousands of victims.

Guillermo Gómez-Peña / La Pocha Nostra

Cultural Transvestism

La Pocha Nostra is a virtual *maquiladora*: a conceptual assembly plant that produces brand new metaphors, symbols, images, and words to articulate the complexities of our times. Through sui generis combinations of artistic languages, mediums, and performance formats, we explore the interface of migration, hybrid identities, border culture, globalization, and new technologies. The Spanglish neologism Pocha Nostra translates as either "our impurities" or "the cartel of cultural bastards." We love this poetic ambiguity. It reveals an attitude toward art and society: cross-racial, cross-national, polygendered, post-ultra-retro-experimental, or a remix of the same, *¿y qué? ¿Cuál es el pedo?*

La Pocha collaborates across national borders, race, gender, and generational lines. Our collaborative model functions both as an act of citizen diplomacy and as a means to create ephemeral communities of like-minded rebels. We are more of a conceptual "laboratory" of live art—an association of rebel artists thinking together, exchanging ideas and aspirations. The basic premise of these collaborations is founded on an ideal: If we learn to cross borders on stage, in the gallery or museum, we may learn how to do so in larger social spheres and transgress what keeps us apart.

La Pocha Nostra is an intercultural poltergeist. We are a migrant dream that suddenly became a nightmare; a pagan religion located in the body; a bunch of malfunctioning cyborgs with deterritorialized desires; and we are deeply committed friends.

La Pocha challenges traditional art world mythologies. We do not accept the role of the artiste as suffering bohemian and misunderstood genius. La Pocha artists are social critics and chroniclers, intercultural diplomats, reinterpreters and mistranslators, radical pedagogues, informal ombudsmen, media pirates, information architects, reverse anthropologists, experimental linguists, and border semioticians.

To us the artist is, above all, an active citizen immersed in the great debates of our times. Our place is located not only in the "art world" but in the world at large, in the patterns of everyday life. The so-called "art world" is just a place to gather—an irreplaceable rehearsal space where alternate cultural models are developed and then tested in other realms.

La Pocha by nature is antinationalist and rejects all essentialisms. We claim an extremely unpopular position in post 9/11 United States: no homeland; no fear; no borders; no patriotism; no nation-state; no censorship. We are matriots not patriots, "Americans" in the continental sense of the term with a devotion to the land and the people, and not the leaders. We are equally committed to presenting a polycultural and hybrid America with an internationalist, humanist, and progressive perspective. Our America is still an open society with porous borders and transnational communities.

La Pocha seeks a unique aesthetic. Functioning as a kind of live crossover culture jam, our "robo-baroque" and "ethno-techno-cannibal aesthetic" samples and devours everything we encounter including border and Chicano pop culture, TV, film, rock & roll, hip hop, comics, journalism, anthropology, pornography, nationalism, religious imagery, and of course, the history of the visual and performing arts. We cross-reference this information, embody it, and then reinterpret it for a live audience thereby refracting fetishized constructs of otherness. We become the spectacle of our identities using our highly decorated bodies. In this sense we are always—physically, culturally, and technologically—hybrid beings.

La Pocha's aesthetic praxis involves ethnic and gender-bending, cultural transvestism, and power inversions. Many of our images show women, gays, lesbians, transgenders, and people of color in positions of power. In this world, cultural borders have moved to center stage while the alleged mainstream is pushed to the margins and treated as unfamiliar. We place the audience member/viewer/reader in the position of a "foreigner" or a "minority."

La Pocha crosses dangerous aesthetic borders. We often cede our will and the stage to our audience. We invite them to co-create the piece and to participate in our extreme performance games riddled with postcolonial implications. Many of the actions we work with are so ingrained in everyday life that we can no longer see them unless they are turned on their head. We transform audience members into instant performance artists. These games are integral aspects of our work.

***Guillermo Gómez-Peña** (MX/US) is a performance artist, writer, activist, radical pedagogue, and director of the performance troupe **La Pocha Nostra**, an ever-morphing transdisciplinary arts organization, based in San Francisco with factions in other cities and countries. Their mission statement reads: "We provide a center and forum for a loose network of rebel artists from various disciplines, generations, gender persuasions, and ethnic backgrounds."*

Reclaiming Spaces

Federico Geller

The occupation of luxury apartments in the fight against rising rents, the occupation of squares outside stock market centers to stop neoliberalism, collective cartographies that unravel the spatial and time dimensions of a conflict, architectural interventions to trigger unpredictable social interactions, theatrical interventions that modify our perception of territory, mutant interactions between the analogical and the digital spaces, boycotting corporate domination using mutant flies and spores, guerrilla gardening on monuments, permaculture to integrate our existence with other species: these are some of the complementary tactics shared in this section, as ongoing experiments that open up a multidimensional toolbox for reclaiming spaces and creating new territories. Displaying a wide variety of approaches, the focus of these interventions is set in the spatial dimension, inviting us to compose new places, to alter the normalized ways of interacting in a territory with other bodies and objects, as well as shortening the subjective distance between apparently isolated conflicts.

As the expansion of capitalism occurs on multiple scales of spatial reality, we need a multidimensional conceptual and practical toolbox to orientate our actions in space and time. A conceptual frame that includes the microphysics of power calls also for a microphysics of space, able to show us the way we experience, perceive, and also naturalize the realities of different territories.

Spatializing: We Are Space

Spatialization—the mental process of building space—is one of the earliest and most basic skills of our brain, in terms both of our personal development and our long term evolution. It has become the neurological base for developing other mental processes. According to some research, and experiences, memory and abstract thinking are ways of spatializing: concepts are handled by our brains as objects and related to each other spatially.

Consciousness is always a spatialization in which the diachronic is turned into the synchronic; in which what has happened in time is excerpted and seen in sidebysideness.

S. the amazing mnemonist studied by Soviet neuropsychologist Alexander Luria, described his own skill of remembering as the experience of walking down a street, where imaginary objects were installed by him in order to be recalled. He could see them again and remember the words associated to them, walking one way or in the opposite direction, even after many years.

From our first explorations of space as children to our different attitudes in normative spaces as grownups, we have plenty of experiences that contribute differentially to the acceptance of the principle of spatial property, or to the challenging of it.

The Global Network Workspace (GNW) of Jean-Pierre Changeux and Stanislas Dehaene as a model for understanding conscious processing in the brain is a spatial model, where the psychological meets the neurological. They postulate a hypothetical neural architecture where the current conscious content is represented within a distinct mental space called "global workspace." This realm, defined as a network of multiple brain systems, would have the capacity to "broadcast" information to underlying specialized unconscious processors. This mental space could be occupied suddenly by one or other already existing nonconscious process, which would become conscious right then, at the moment it "gets" there.

The battle of artists, publicists, or media is a dispute to temporarily occupy the mental space of others, introducing elements that may produce a mental rebalancing of previous neural relationships and eliciting an effect on their behavior. This doesn't imply that the neural building of mental space on the level of the individual defines the politics of space in social struggles, but on the contrary, learning from space and expanding our relationships with space, intertwined processes that wire our nervous systems, meet sooner or later strong social limitations, as does the normalization of private spatial property and the acceptance of national borders. Moreover, as territories are transformed and defined by human behavior, any change in spatial realities goes hand in hand with actions that trigger changes in the way their nature is perceived. Any occupation of space will always have to struggle against artificial images of common sense that are pumped continuously by the media into our mental spaces, in the shape of a virtual consensus.

More Space, More Strategy

Considerations of space in urban interventions are usually reduced to the tactical level, which means that space appears as a reality to face just when the tactical goal of an action is already set. The necessary strategies for resisting capitalist expansion call for a better understanding of concrete transformations in space, taking into account all its physical and mental dimensions. However, this can't be an easy task, as the preconditions we need are obscured by a historical process of territorial, material, and intellectual expropriation. A symptom of the resultant cultural disarmament is the undistinguished way in which the terms "tactics" and "strategy" are often used.

The concept of "strategy" can be understood as the development of all conflicts throughout time and space. To develop a strategy the total forces involved in all these confrontations are considered. Each encounter is a particular composition of forces that enter into a direct exchange. The term tactics, in the military field as in marketing, refers to each individual direct action or encounter. Apart from space being a reality the multiple military and economic forces cannot avoid, the moral forces that struggle in different lands against processes of militarization and repression must include the spatial dimension at both the strategic and the many tactical levels. To change social reality we need to transform spaces whose distribution has been designed directly or indirectly by the use of force.

From one angle, we are faced with the countless layers of an onion: according to where we stand, the transformation of spaces will seem to us as a particular strategic moment, a particular tactical moment, etc. Actually, the fundamental problem is different: What do we understand by the time-space dimension? We have a notion of time and space that comes from a long historical construction and that has been dominated by the central hegemonic element of the ruling class. We have a bourgeois image of time and space: a dimension of time that is chronological and a dimension of space that is related to a certain geographic and temporal theory; all these theories are subordinated and a consequence of the historical strategies of the ruling classes.

Distances Can Be Shortened

Stanley Milgram began his experiments on obedience to authority in 1961—some months after the trial of Eichmann in Israel—trying to understand why most ordinary people were capable of obeying inhuman orders. One of his findings was that varying the distance on just a small scale of a few meters could alter the readiness to cause pain in the "experimental subject." Empathy with the victim was more effective over a short distance, and the likelihood of disobedience increased with eye contact. These moral obstacles to becoming an effective killing machine had puzzled the experts of the Pentagon since WWII, then in Korea, and again during the Vietnam War: most American soldiers were reluctant to fire on the enemy or tried to miss when they shot. On the other hand, the war in Vietnam taught them that images of military operations on the screen were demoralizing their countrymen back home, negatively affecting consensus about the invasion. To be more effective in future wars, it would be necessary to increase the distances involved: between invasions and the public by reducing broadcasts of ground operations, and between victims and executioners by creating remote ways of killing. The UAS (Unmanned Aircraft System)—more commonly known as "drones"—are the latest expression of this tendency.

However, against the will of investors and designers of long distance weapons, drone "pilots" too can face moral conflicts, provided they can replace geographical distance with *subjective proximity*. That happened to Bryant, a drone pilot, after realizing he had killed a child 7,500 miles away.

Doctors at the veterans' administration diagnosed Bryant with post-traumatic stress disorder. General hopes for a comfortable war—one that could be completed without emotional wounds—have not been fulfilled. Indeed, Bryan's world has melded with that of the child in Afghanistan. It's like a short circuit in the brains of the drones.

So, it isn't only the reproduction of inhumanity that connects distant spaces: sensitivity and resistance also create imaginative leaps and links between one land and another. Every occupation of a space calling for solidarity attempts a distortion of distance and calls for a subjective proximity.

The effective autonomization of a space is also possible thanks to events in distant places. Territorial autonomy doesn't mean a sharp isolation from the rest of the world, but the growing determination of a community over its exchanges with other territories. This is just an example, but the logic is valid for the Zapatistas in Chiapas, the Landless Workers Movement, or *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (MST) in Brazil, the occupied factories in Argentina, or any long-term occupation: *no place can survive alone only with its own resources*. To conceive these experiences as closed systems adds to their disconnection from actual or potential allies.

Reclaiming Space and Time Dynamics

Occupations that take spaces because of their symbolic meaning are usually shorter than those in places needed for the occupiers' material survival. As such temporary occupations defy the total control of space implied in the monopolized use of violence by the security forces and depend on the support of the surrounding population, which is rarely constant or open. We cannot therefore consider the time dynamics of a temporary occupation as a never-ending story: equally important as starting and prolonging a temporary occupation is stopping it on *time, before decadence and angry dispersion* can take place, with the typical tensions between participants or unsurprising reactions to provocation. Measuring the pulse of a living occupation requires a great deal of communication to gauge the mood, energy, and perspectives of the participants. Sometimes a curve that is apparently decaying picks up and grows stronger again. But there are moments when dispersion is unavoidable. To perform a collective Aikido within these variations requires a change in political culture, in which the illusion of the endlessly growing mass is replaced with a more dynamic exercise of concerted dispersion and subsequent reconstitution in different places, one that cultivates the permanent possibility of unpredictability.

Federico Geller *(AR) is a member of Abriendo Caminos (Making Ways), a collective that creates communication tools (video, interventions, graphics) for grassroots political activities and conjunctures in Argentina. He also works in Jets Ka'i, a team that popularizes biological knowledge to spark discussion of its technological applications.*

Jeudi Noir

Squatting

In most large French towns, young people leaving the parental home face a high degree of insecurity. Properties are put on the market at exorbitant rental prices (fifteen square meters at €800 a month). Moreover, rental prices continuously increase/inflate as a huge number of buildings are being kept empty by their owners in order to speculate. As a response to this situation, focusing on questions of housing and lodging, and generally being eager to change the way people view politics and protest, the militant group Jeudi Noir—Black Thursday—decided to gather, protest, and occupy with humor and happiness.

Jeudi Noir has been "visiting" apartments since 2006. The strategy is simple: first we locate a flat that is free for rent. One of the group calls the landlord, posing as a well-mannered student looking for accommodation with parental support. An appointment for a viewing is agreed on, and the team makes its preparations, with confetti, wigs, and disguises to celebrate. There is also suitable music and choreography, where possible. The bogus student arrives at the apartment while the rest of the group waits until the crucial phone call to rush into the apartment—with a lot of fun but also with cameras and journalists, reached through last minute press releases or phone calls. We try to interview the landlords and invite them to dance. But they tend to be quite thrown by the paradox situation, which is at the same time a violent and mass pop-up squat of their property and a friendly party. Our Disco King dancing and singing plays a great role in this atmosphere. The owners first try to get us out of the building—when we stay, they finally decide to call the police (who, surprisingly enough, arrive very quickly).

We also do "réquisitions"—requisitioning—of private or public houses, flats, or even buildings that have been kept empty for one reason or another (very often, as we have said, for speculation). First, a few of us discretely enter the building and stay there without being noticed (the submarine phase), still trying to equip and establish ourselves as proof of longer term occupation. In this way, we occupy the locations and make them our own; then, we open the space to activists or friends to move in. Even though we have sometimes kept buildings for a year (La Marquise on the Place des Vosges, for example) before being violently evicted, the "réquisitions" are not primarily aimed at providing people with flats, but at putting pressure on politics to change the law. We have managed to get a tax on small flats where the rent exceeds €40 per square meter voted in under the Sarkozy government—only because of media pressure. As well as being fun-squatters, we have become lobbyists and can now threaten the government with multiplying our actions and extending the fight (which we will do anyway) if it does not comply with our proposals. Still our legitimate actions are still "illegal," so we are punishable by law (and we sometimes are punished). We have to take precautions, such as preserving our anonymity, acting only en masse, and … emptying our bank accounts.

Throwing a party and catching people's attention, dressed all in red, white, and blue gowns and wigs, has helped us gain media coverage in the local, national, and even the international press. This is our way of defining a new creative activism. We believe artistic strategies can improve activist actions, or at least make them more interesting. But to make a real change you need mass support and art affects only a minority.

***Jeudi Noir** (FR) is an activist association focusing on questions of housing and lodging through squats, dance, and debate: turning flat viewings in overpriced areas into unannounced parties, for example.*

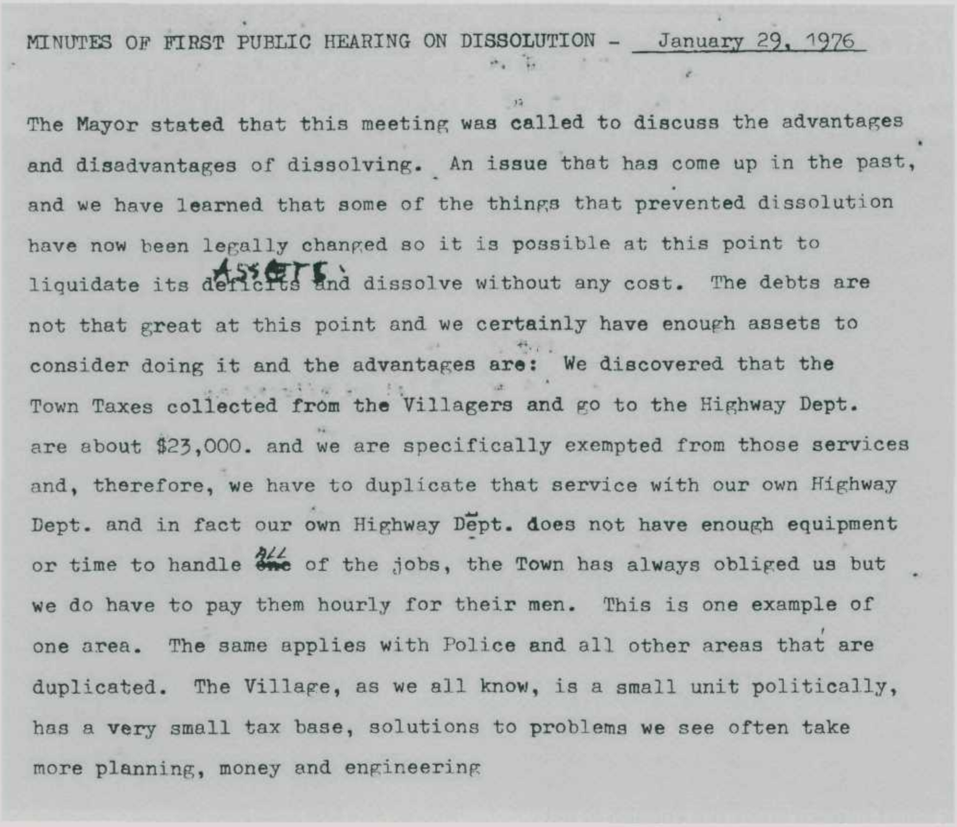
Raivo Puusemp

Deliberate Influence

When Lenin was in Paris in the 1910s, he is said to have met Marcel Duchamp, he and Duchamp supposedly being among the founders of the Dada movement. They were regulars at the Café Voltaire. This got me thinking about the relationship between art and politics: was it possible that, after contact with the Dadaists and Duchamp, Lenin went on and *"did" Russia*—"did" in the conceptual art sense.

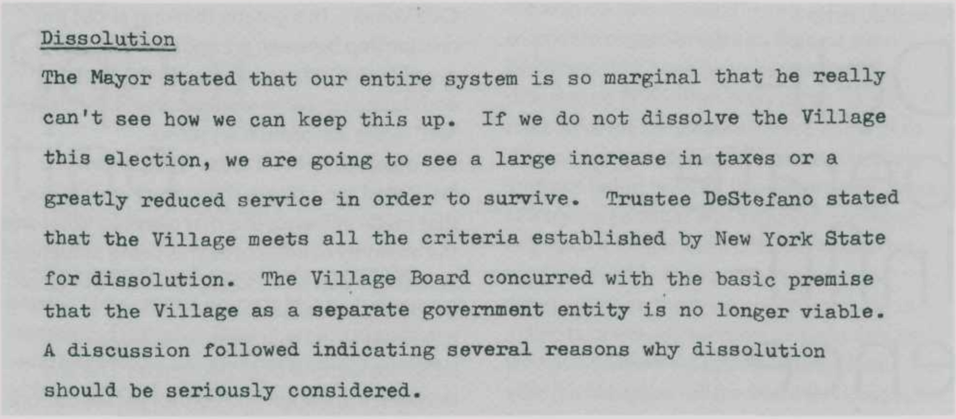
The possibility of that cross-fertilization fascinated me. I began thinking of what it was that made influence like that possible. What was the anatomy of influence? Was being influenced voluntary? Was it conscious? Was the influence deliberate or inadvertent?

It seemed to me that there were levels of influence without clear boundaries. The line between inspiration and control passes through incremental steps like influence, persuasion, manipulation, and coercion: different points on the same continuum. At what point does one become the other, when does influence become deliberate manipulation, and, of



MINUTES OF FIRST PUBLIC HEARING ON DISSOLUTION - January 29, 1976

The Mayor stated that this meeting was called to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of dissolving. An issue that has come up in the past, and we have learned that some of the things that prevented dissolution have now been legally changed so it is possible at this point to liquidate its ~~deficits~~ ASSETS and dissolve without any cost. The debts are not that great at this point and we certainly have enough assets to consider doing it and the advantages are: We discovered that the Town Taxes collected from the Villagers and go to the Highway Dept. are about $23,000. and we are specifically exempted from those services and, therefore, we have to duplicate that service with our own Highway Dept. and in fact our own Highway Dept. does not have enough equipment or time to handle ~~one~~ ALL of the jobs, the Town has always obliged us but we do have to pay them hourly for their men. This is one example of one area. The same applies with Police and all other areas that are duplicated. The Village, as we all know, is a small unit politically, has a very small tax base, solutions to problems we see often take more planning, money and engineering



Dissolution

The Mayor stated that our entire system is so marginal that he really can't see how we can keep this up. If we do not dissolve the Village this election, we are going to see a large increase in taxes or a greatly reduced service in order to survive. Trustee DeStefano stated that the Village meets all the criteria established by New York State for dissolution. The Village Board concurred with the basic premise that the Village as a separate government entity is no longer viable. A discussion followed indicating several reasons why dissolution should be seriously considered.

course, the final stage, when does manipulation descend into absolute control. Is altruistic manipulation justified? How prevalent are these stages in our everyday lives? Can we ever be fully aware of when we are being manipulated or controlled?

This is further complicated by the fact that it is impossible to know something for certain if you cannot verify it firsthand. Most of what we know has come to us from external sources. It is impossible to know everything firsthand so we have to rely on secondary sources. That is why we are so vulnerable to manipulation. How much of what we think is true has been deliberately spun from ulterior motives? How much hidden agenda has crept into our core belief systems? With ever increasing centralized control of mainstream media, and with the unverifiable and often conflicting information on the Internet, it becomes increasingly difficult to know what is real. Conspiracy theories stand on an equally credible footing with fact. Individuals and entire populations can be—and are being—manipulated.

These questions and observations drove my interest in Rosendale. I was interested in exploring how deliberate influence worked. I had been experimenting with "seed plants," whereby I gave other artists ideas through suggestion or just in conversation and, if and when my idea grew to be either shown or published, my "piece" was done. It didn't happen often, but enough to get me interested in investigating the process further. It was especially relevant in art, where influence and plagiarism are almost indistinguishable. It was a strange feeling to be doing something that smacked of deceit and subversion. Not being able to share the project with those involved in Rosendale bothered me. It was like living a secret life, somehow dishonest, but I felt that to reveal the purpose of the undertaking would compromise the outcome, like the example of Schrodinger's cat, where observing something changes the outcome. It would also have compromised the real good that my term as mayor actually accomplished, like the new sewer treatment plant, reorganizing the police department, improving various other municipal services, and ultimately proposing and successfully campaigning for the dissolution of the village itself.

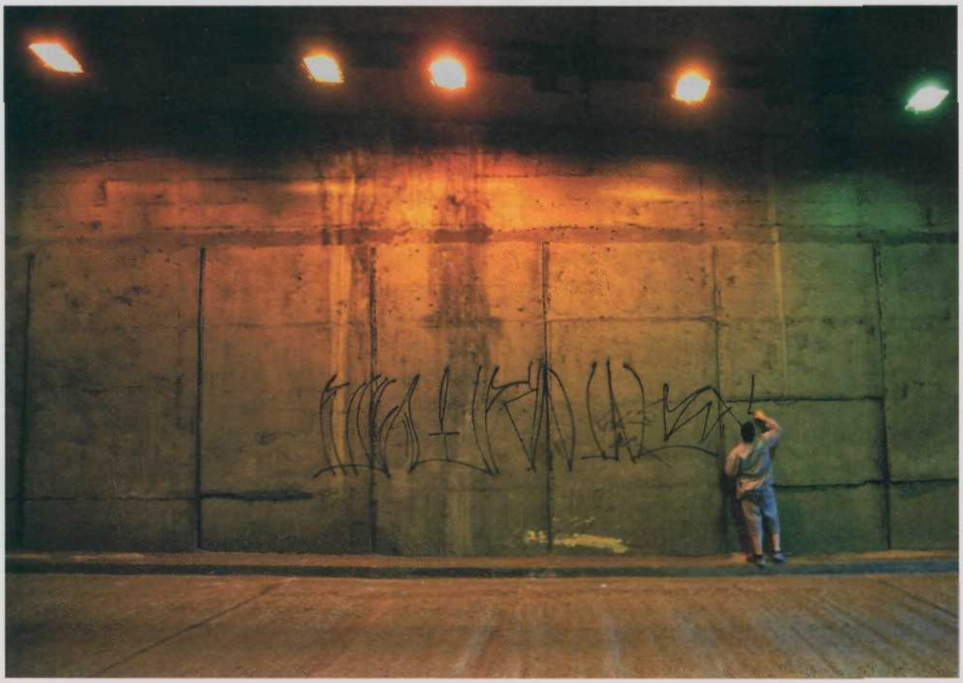
***Raivo Puusemp**'s (EE/US) conceptual art practice ranges from phenomenology to group dynamics and sociopolitical processes. In his series of "influence pieces," Puusemp successfully seeded his own artistic concepts in the works of colleagues by simply telling them his ideas. In 1975, he applied this concept to politics and became mayor of the small town of Rosendale, New York, struggling with fiscal and municipal problems. Within one year, he successfully persuaded the citizens of Rosendale that the dissolution of the town would be the best solution to these problems. He subsequently resigned from both politics and art.*

Sérgio Miguel Franco

De-facing

Pixadores reappropriate urban space through tagging, from the most inaccessible places like tops of high-rise buildings, bridges, skyscrapers, to abandoned structures and warehouses, often risking their lives to gain visibility in a society that does its best to ignore them. The practice of *pixação* involves the creation of a unique typography for the name of a group, which takes up the largest area, the name of the person doing the whole tag—the "pixo"—who often simply leaves his initials, followed by the name of the *grife* (or brand), which represents an alliance of brotherly groups. Some groups of pixadores are connected to the *grife* (brand) *Os Mais Fortes* ("The Strongest Ones"), in cities like Salvador, Rio de Janeiro, Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte, and Aracaju, as well as in graffiti art scenes in Germany, where graffiti remains illegal.

In 1921, the São Paulo city government commissioned an important project from Brazilian sculptor Victor Brecheret: to create the Bandeiras Monument, the nation's tribute to those who had extended its borders. Bandeirantes were members of sixteenth century Portuguese expeditions that enslaved indigenous people, and were tasked with finding gold and other precious metals in the region. Brecheret's sculpture consists of a long canoe pulled by two men on horseback and pushed by a group of African slaves and indigenous people. The Portuguese lead the group, while the indigenous people are portrayed as slaves, being chained to their humiliation. In reality, the Portuguese who colonized Brazil, embodied in the Bandeirantes, left a trail of death, convinced that they had found El Dorado, so the monument's celebration of the Bandeirantes was questionable, to say the least.



The artwork was inaugurated in 1954. However, it has recently acquired another layer of meaning. On October 2, 2013, a truly avant-garde assimilation occurred, when the sculpture had several buckets of red paint thrown at it (as well as being tagged) following protests by social and indigenous rights movements against a proposed constitutional change (PEC 215) regarding the demarcation of ancestral land: the monument was covered, as it were, with the blood shed by the Bandeirantes. The "attack" was a response to a project by the legislative branch of the Federal Government to transfer to itself the rights to demarcate indigenous land (previously the responsibility of the National Indian Foundation, a government agency subordinate to the Federal Government). The legislative branch is precisely the institution that includes many of the country's wealthiest landowners. The red paint was the symbol of people taking to the streets to express their dissatisfaction with the political reality.
The Bandeirantes Monument has also been the target of tagging: "killer bandeirantes" was sprayed in white paint along the side of the sculpture and the front painted with Pixação lettering. Through the tagging and red paint of anonymous artists (many of whom were indigenous people), the monument suddenly presents a more complete picture of Brazil's colonial past. Form and content meet in a radical act of assimilation that questions the representation of history. The people subjected to Portuguese colonization have gone from being a mere theme of the artwork to being the collective authors of its reappropriated version. We live in a democracy and, compared to traditional media, the communication medium of Pixação may be its most democratic expression. All one needs is the urge to express oneself and the willingness to agree to the illegality this entails—and the risk of police violence, which is a daily aspect of life for the youth of the periphery. These are new times for us.

Pixação is a very particular type of tagging developed in the 1990s by youth from the periphery of São Paulo. It makes use of straight-edged, jagged letters inspired by the punk rock movement. Pixação organizes itself collectively in major Brazilian cities and has spread widely, both nationally and internationally. The appearances of Pixadores at official art events often end *up with transgression, as at the seventh Berlin Biennale in 2012, where the police cracked down on their action at Elizabeth Church. The sociologist* ***Sérgio Miguel Franco*** *(BR) has curated several street art exhibitions in Brazil and Europe, and has collaborated several times with Pixadores in order to legitimate their practice politically and artistically.*

the laboratory of insurrectionary imagination

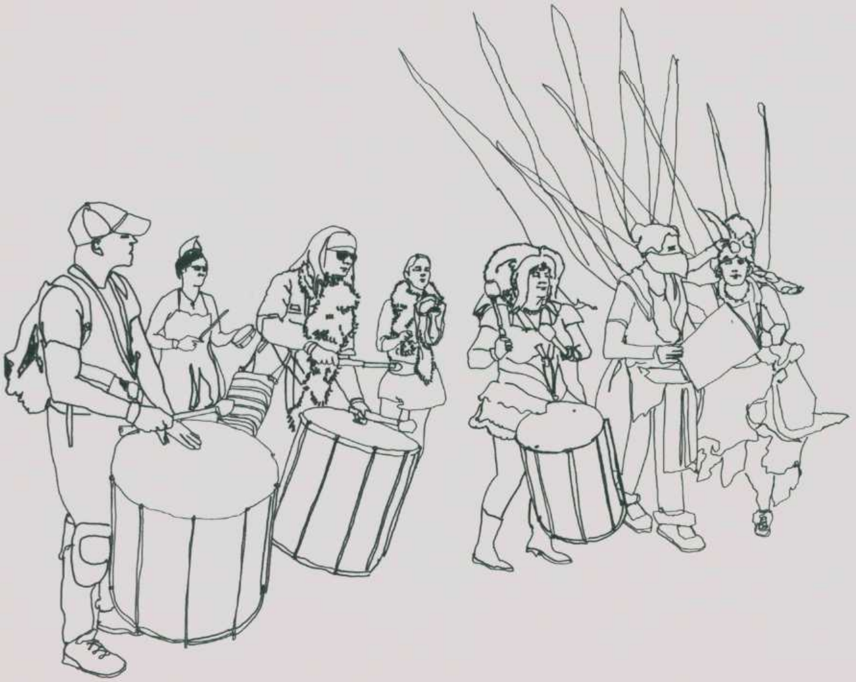
Blocking

Life on this beautiful world of ours may well be terminated because of too many acts of obedience. With every act of obedience we remake the world as it is and undo the world as it could be. With every nod to authority, we let go a bit more of who we are.

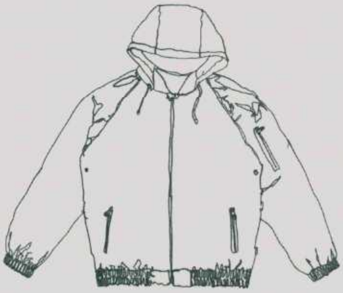
Some of the most powerful acts of disobedience are performed collectively in public space by those who share a sense of identity. Since the 1980s, the term "bloc" has become synonymous with disobedient bodies bound in temporary affinity groups that act together during protests.

This includes the "black blocs": everyone masked, wearing black to create solidarity, and to avoid identification and repression by the authorities. Sabotaging symbols of capitalism such as banks and multinationals, the soundtrack of the black bloc tends to be breaking glass. In contrast, playing with gender stereotypes, the "pink bloc" dresses in pink (and sometimes silver), their bodies dancing disobediently in the streets to the rhythms of a samba band. Confusing the stereotyped images of "bad protesters," the pink bloc's tactical frivolity flavors direct action with the carnivalesque.

In 2009, for the protests against the COP15 UN climate talks in Copenhagen, labofii invented a new type of bloc by bringing together artists,



engineers, activists, welders, and bike hackers to design and build new tools of civil disobedience out of the multitude of discarded bikes to be found on the streets of Copenhagen: *The Bike Bloc*. The experiment was commissioned by Copenhagen's Centre for Contemporary Art, but fifty days before the protest, and several months into the preparation of the experiment the museum dropped the project. The shocked curator had not realized that our machines of rebel bodies were something to "become" and embody rather than be watched, and that we were inviting people to take part in an actual act of civil disobedience, not to come to an exhibition "about" politics. The funders could not "support illegality," the curator told us. Maybe she had forgotten that everything Adolf Hitler did was "legal," and what the suffragettes, the anti-apartheid activists, the '89 eastern European dissidents, and the World War Two resistance fighters did was "illegal." Maybe she had forgotten that what most of her culture takes for granted—contraception, the right to vote, trade unions, a free press, and the end of the slave trade—was won by those who broke laws. The museum pulled out of the project but thankfully Copenhagen's Candy Factory, a DIY cultural space that occupies an abandoned building, came to the rescue. The experiment itself began in the UK when fifty people got together at Bristol's Arnolfini Gallery. The Arnolfini had agreed to support the project, despite the director telling us that it was only because the protests were taking place several thousand kilometers away that he was able to host us. The gallery was turned into a bike repair space, skillshares were held, and open workshops using permaculture took place to codesign the machines of resistance. Three prototypes were decided on and the team made their way to Copenhagen, pockets filled with blueprints and inspiration from the ten days of collective working process. Over 500 carcasses of old bikes and a metal workshop awaited us. Twenty-four/seven welding took place, dozens of Double Double Troubles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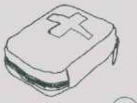
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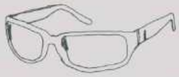
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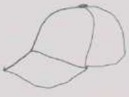
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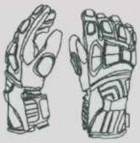
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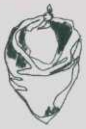
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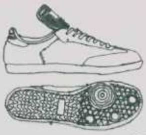
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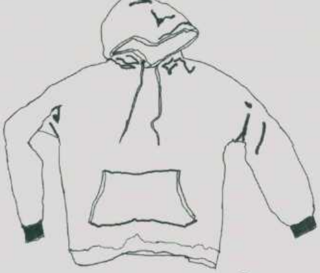
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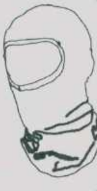
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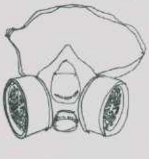
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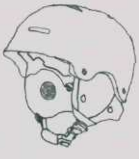
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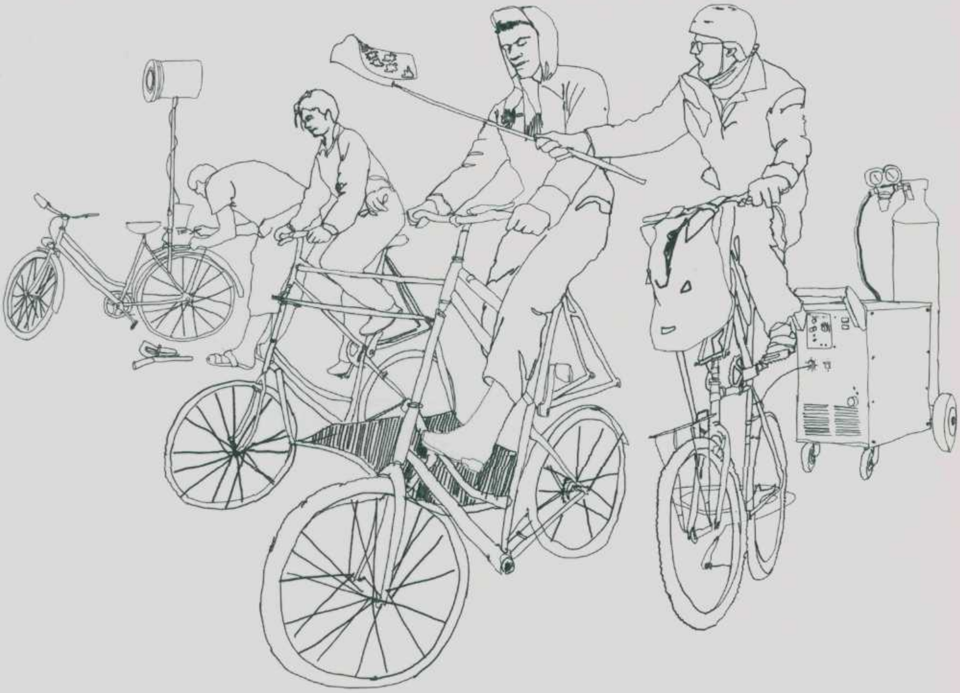
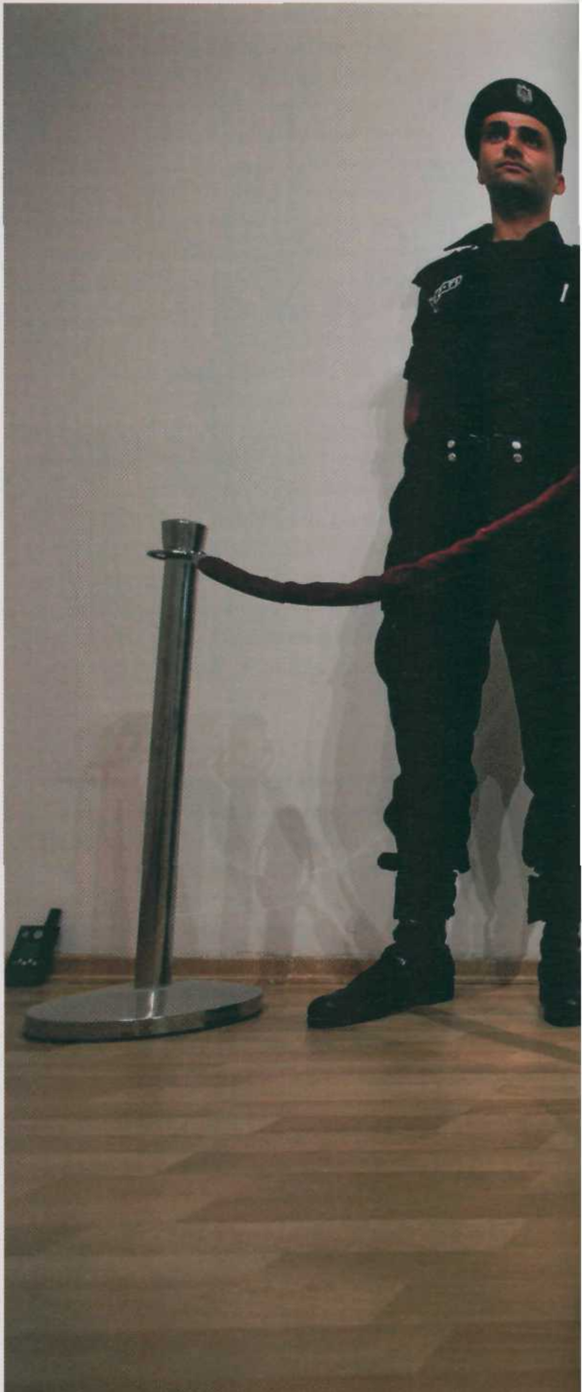


(a.k.a. DDTs) were built (four bikes welded together to form a high bike ridden by two people); hundreds of bikes reconditioned and bike-swarming training sessions held. Despite mass arrests and the general climate of repression, including a police raid on The Candy Factory, confiscating the DDTs and naming them "war bikes" in the press, over two hundred bikes in a multitude of swarms supported the thousands performing acts of civil disobedience on foot. Mobile bike barricades protected activists trying to breach the UN security perimeter, swarms played cat and mouse to draw police away from the action, some bikes were thrown under police vans to stop them attacking protesters and a sound swarm—bikes armed with dozens of loud speakers—took over a motorway, further distracting the police from their assaults. It was the best fun we'd had between our legs for a long time!

the laboratory of insurrectionary imagination—labofii *(GB) merges art and life, creativity and resistance, proposition and opposition. Infamous for touring the UK to recruit a rebel clown army, running courses in post-capitalist culture, throwing snowballs at bankers, turning hundreds of abandoned bikes into machines of disobedience, and launching a rebel raft regatta to shut down a coal fired power station; we treat insurrection as art and art as a means of preparing for insurrection. The labofii is currently in the process of setting up an international utopian art/life school on a permaculture farm in Brittany.*

Khaled Hourani

Performing Normality



Khaled Hourani *(PS) is an artist and founding director of the International Art Academy Palestine (IAAP) in Ramallah. His conceptual as well as highly political work* Picasso in Palestine *followed a simple idea: in 2009, for the very first time ever, an original painting by Pablo Picasso was exhibited in the West Bank. On the basis of a loan request made to the Van Abbemuseum by the International Art Academy Palestine in July 2009, and following extensive research, the painting* Buste de Femme *(1943), one of the most iconic works of the Van Abbemuseum's collection travelled to Ramallah, where it was exhibited in a specially constructed room inside the IAAP, June 24 through July 20, 2011.* Picasso in Palestine *laid down a challenge to art institutions, insurance companies, transport agencies, and diplomats, but most of all illustrated the Palestinian population's struggle for recognition and a normal life in the occupied territories. The passage of a painting from one occupation in 1943, to another in 2011, makes an explicit political claim on the relations between art and politics in both modernity and our contemporary times, renewing these questions and carrying them into the future.*

Hector Aristizábal

Spect-Acting

If Shakespeare showed us how theater was the mirror of society and Bertolt Brecht demanded we be critical of what was reflected in that mirror, the Brazilian theater maker Augusto Boal made us an invitation: if you don't like what you see in the mirror, then come onstage and change it: become a spect-actor. This is the very invitation I make over and over again to the groups I work with. To use our imaginations in order to inspire actions so that, by transforming what is presented onstage, we might rehearse and feel inspired to transform our social realities. The power of the theater of the oppressed to invite non-actors to take-up agency and act has attracted millions around the world. Boal's work reminds us that we are not victims. The oppressed are characters trying to transform the circumstances of their lives, and that is what we are invited to be in the other realms of our lives.

I had made political theater in South America for many years—I was tortured by the Columbian army because of this and was finally forced into exile. In Los Angeles I continued to make independent theater, but soon tired of it, as it didn't connect to what was happening in society. I was lacking the right tools. Until, that is, I had the good fortune to meet Boal and his Theater of the Oppressed.

It almost always starts with simple theater games to conjure the groups' spontaneity. Through games, people become more present, engaging their entire bodies and sharing their energy and awareness with each other. Playing games is also the fastest way I know to democratize a room—meaning that, once *we're playing, we are no longer black or* white, old or young, loyalist or republican. Why? Because all of us learned to walk, talk, and socialize through play. After the games, I introduce people to Image Theater. Spontaneously, without much thinking, participants use their bodies to create both individual and collective images—frozen statues, tableaux—of their realities or topics that trouble or interest them. We will often then animate those images, developing them into small scenes, and together we weave those scenes into short plays. Once the play is rehearsed, we perform it to a larger group of people from the same community, and then invite the spectators to get involved in the play by replacing the characters onstage. Together, the participants and the audience engage the imaginary circumstances of the play in an effort to change the situation or problem it depicts. It is an interactive process—a democratic dialogue, a forum.

In October 2013, I worked with prisoners inside Northern Ireland's prison system. Prison, I have found, is a most powerful window into most of what is dysfunctional and unjust in the society at large. I was troubled by the collapse of imagination in many of the progressive social justice organizations that, although well intentioned, seemed to end up creating more of what they claimed to want to eliminate.

After playing theater games, the inmates developed several scenes related to issues of concern in their lives. Many of those scenes were used, like pieces of a mosaic, to generate the final forum performance, which we shared with a larger group of prisoners. In the play, the protagonist—a young man with small children—struggled to communicate with his wife. Drug use, antisocial behavior, robbery, and drug dealing ultimately lead to the man's incarceration. We explored the anger of his partner, the disappointment of his folks, as well as the lack of support on the outside. Finally, the play showed his children growing up to become either young teenagers following in their father's footsteps, or miserably abandoned by the lack of attention *they received from the adults around them.* The inmates reacted at first negatively and with distress. We ultimately did several improvisations, which explored alternative ways to respond to this almost hopeless scenario. In these situations, I have found the work is not about finding "the solution," but about exploring various alternatives as to how to approach the conflict. As the inmates improvised, they also listened to each other's stories, identified with each other, learned to understand the connections between personal behaviors and the social and cultural structures that promoted them, as well as considering strategies as to how to transform those structures. Theater then is a laboratory for change. As these men engage in the action of seeking alternatives, the aesthetic space becomes a ritual space. Art used generally to be understood as the place where the community heals, just as therapy is seen as the place where the individual heals.

Hector Aristizábal *(CO/US) is a theater artist and psychotherapist. He was tortured in 1982 by the Colombian Army and was forced into exile in 1989. He fled to Los Angeles. He founded his traveling theater arts company, ImaginAction, in 2000, where he combines different Forum Theater methodologies to solve specific social and political conflicts.*

Benjamin Foerster-Baldenius / raumlaborberlin

Common Spaces

We are interested in the city as an open space for action. The real question is: What can an architect contribute to creating a common space? After all, you can meet and talk behind any old newsstand, in any old kitchen, in any old meeting room, however uncomfortable, with little bottles of water and plates of biscuits on slightly angled serviettes and cheap art prints on the wall. If you focus, you can ignore all of this and still say what you want to. The common topic rarely follows from a given space—but anyone who observes very closely what evolves when you discuss a political difference of opinion, either on a walk in the woods or in a steam bath, will agree that there is every chance those involved in the discussion will arrive at new ideas thanks to the particular setting. It also makes a difference, in terms of the diplomatic gesture, whether you are invited to Putin's office or to his dacha, or whether you declare your love for someone over tear gas in Taksim Gezi Park or at sunrise by Lake Titicaca.

There are obviously many decisions to be made about space if you are only willing to do so. Equally obvious is that these decisions also have an effect on what is being negotiated. If you decide to hold a G8 summit in a five star hotel by the Baltic Sea, surrounded by a high security fence, then the protest is much further away than if you are meeting in the middle of Milan. The same goes for protesters:

if I spend the night in a big camp with batteries of overflowing Portaloos, I turn up to the blockade next morning in completely different spirits than if I stay at a hotel. We therefore decided, in 2008, to build the G8 summit protest movement conference center in Heiligendamm as a replica of the Kempinski Hotel. Golf course, sauna, and all rooms with a seaview. People who work hard should be able to sleep well too.

With the 24/7 Marathon Camp "Truth is Concrete," we realized that the program, all those things that were to be happening nonstop on stage for 150 hours, could be like a campfire. You sit around it, staring into it, fascinated by the blazing flames and the crackling of the wood, soon striking up a conversation with your neighbor, a total stranger to begin with. The people from steirischer herbst festival would chop the wood for the campfire. We would design and build the surrounding space. Space to get some privacy, semi-privacy, quarter-privacy. To recharge the batteries, relax, have a nap, doze, sleep properly, have a shower, wake up, and then get back. The space we developed was to be the campfire's support structure: it had to have all the facilities you would need to survive 24/7 input. It had to be open, self-contained, stimulating, and politically correct—which is why it had to be built from waste. Zero energy. Except for the mattresses. The mattresses had to be good, the showers clean, you had to be able to secure your private property—but not your privacy. A self-catering kitchen, a self-service bar for impromptu party-making. And niches all over the place for those little moments.

Another example, in Turin/Barca in 2011–14: the common spaces here were never planned or created in a suburb built at some point in the past for car industry workers and their families. The supermarket planned as a shopping mall stands empty, the public spaces are unreal. In order to rethink an active center for the neighborhood at such a location, you need many alliances, you need to be there a lot, and above all you have to create what needs to be created together with the residents. You start off with little things, a logo, a couple of football goals, a few platforms for seating and making music, and a treehouse for some privacy. How do you handle tools, how do you build from waste, how do you break with convention and still have the local authorities on your side? Once everyone is on board, you can take the next step, come back, make furniture together for the empty supermarket, get all the stakeholders round the table, eat together, think things out together, plan, build, and party together. You know you've hit it big when the local authorities foot the bill for toilet maintenance and electricity, for the newly-built wood workshop, and when local women organize the public get-together.

Benjamin Foerster-Baldenius *(DE) is cofounder of* ***raumlaborberlin****, a group for architecture and urbanism that has been collaborating with specialists from different professions since 1999 to create interactive environments. For "Truth is Concrete," they developed the camp architecture, infrastructure, and set design to host around 300 artists, activists, theorists plus many guests for a full week, day and night.*

Richard Reynolds

Guerilla Gardening

Guerrilla gardening is the illicit cultivation of someone else's land: gardening without asking first. Typically the land is neglected and accessible. Guerrilla gardeners are a diverse bunch. Their motivations for gardening in a way that risks trouble are enough to fill a book. To bring this diversity into sharp relief I will describe two different actions of guerrilla gardening created in two locations in central London. Both locations were grassy islands in a sea of traffic and both are public spaces maintained by city authorities. One is outside the Houses of Parliament, ringed with buildings of the establishment. It is called Parliament Square. The other guerrilla garden is ten minutes away, just south of the River Thames near Lambeth North tube station, neighbor to mostly homes at a junction too insignificant to have ever been given an official name.

Parliament Square has been guerrilla gardened twice. The first was on May 1, 2000, and the second exactly ten years later. Both actions were part of a mass political protest, in which a crowd seized the space by day as an arena in which to communicate their message. In 2000, it was led by Reclaim the Streets, a pro-environment, anti-car, anti-privatisation of space, fun-loving protest group. The creation of a small orchard of apple trees where previously there was just a trimmed lawn—a gas guzzling, machine dependant landscape—made their objectives tangible. They were also humorous. An eye catching turf Mohican was planted across the head of a statue of our WWII-winning prime minister, Winston Churchill. This guerrilla gardening sought to hit the headlines and grow within the media. The garden itself lasted less than a day but the news spread around the world and the image of Churchill with a green Mohican has since been immortalized in a painting by Banksy—to some in the UK this action still defines what guerrilla gardening is. In the same place, ten years later, the guerrilla garden was also planted as a political point. It lasted not for one day, but for months, though its impact was less significant. The protestors arrived with tents, and this time they stayed put, naming their encampment "The Democracy Village." Placards called for a wide range of change in society: the demise of supermarkets, the denouncement of capitalism and war. Thriving in between the tents were lettuces, strawberries, chilies, an oak tree, and even a posh box hedge. The guerrilla garden was a statement of intended permanence, putting down roots; it suggested self-sufficiency and in time, as summer bleached the square's grass pale

Artist and gay rights activist Paul Harfleet (GB) planting a pansy at a site of homophobic abuse in Graz, 2012.

yellow, the contrastingly lush greenery showed the care of the guerrilla gardeners. But despite its prolonged existence the gardens were lost in the visual assault of the Village and had a reputation which the media cultivated that portrayed it as dirty and dangerous. The purpose of the protest was lost in an image of discordance. The guerrilla gardens should have contradicted this and helped symbolize positivity, even respectability, but there was no headline-grabbing image to portray the protestors in a positive light.

The bailiffs came and cleared everyone and everything away. The grassy square remained cordoned off for nearly two years while the authorities sought to change the law preventing anything like that ever happening again. The protesters dissipated and the square is once again grass.

The other location is not in a place of political potency, but offered greater horticultural potential: instead of a manicured and maintained lawn, an island in the middle of the road that contained just shabby grass and a few tired shrubs. It was a bleak blank canvas ripe for the picking, like the allure of an empty wall for a graffiti artist. Yet its potential as a garden was immense: a space for more plantlife, wildlife, and social exchange. This is the motivation of the garden loving guerrilla gardener. For the sake of simplicity and to remove the risk of being denied permission, the action is done without asking. We hoped the landowner wouldn't notice, or at least not until the garden was clearly a thriving success.

It's been seven years since we dug up the grass and planted it mostly with hundreds of small lavender plants. We have returned regularly to tend it, weed it, and harvest it. Raspberries, strawberries, an apple tree, hundreds of tulips, roses, sunflowers, and much more grow there too. With no permission and no contract, we have adopted this public space and turned it into what passersby have told me is an urban cottage garden, or a slice of Provence. It has been noticed, and it has been appreciated and tolerated. While our purpose was not political, *by making the benefits of the garden itself our* purpose, we have inadvertently been political, challenging the official rule of who plants what and where, and demonstrating a successful alternative.

***Richard Reynolds** (GB) is the founder of GuerillaGardening.org. In his book* On Guerrilla Gardening, *he charts the 350 year history and modern day flowering of guerrilla gardening.*

Frank Apunkt Schneider / monochrom

Context Hacking

Art can never cast off its context. It can only begin to work with it. It has to be seen less as fate or confinement than as a chance to change and deconstruct it. That is basically what hackers do with their computers. monochrom does context hacking, transferring hackers' methods to the network of social relationships in which art production occurs, and upon which it is dependent. In a metaphoric sense, these relationships also have a source code that can be hacked and recoded.

In 2001, we were invited to represent the Republic of Austria—a nasty post-fascist country where most of us were born—at the São Paulo Biennial. We didn't like the idea of being Austrian art messengers and felt we needed an avatar to maneuver through the strange world of national representation, through fine arts stuffed into nicely made-up white cubes. So we outsourced the task to one of the big names in Austrian post-war art, Georg Paul Thomann, whom we had invented several years ago. The numerous works and performances we had outlined in his biography showed him to be a dedicated context hacker. But we didn't want to manipulate our contemporaries. We just wanted to manipulate art and its history. As fiction Thomann could do whatever should have been done yet no one did. It all was about remaking and remodeling. So, when we decided to send him to São Paulo (he would then hire us as his entourage) we didn't intend to let anyone believe he was real. But some lazy Austrian journalists having done no investigation whatsoever spread an unintended hoax. Context hacking can be a well planned venture. But sometimes it just occurs to you …

Our white cube at the Biennial building was next to one by Chien-Chi Chang, who had been invited as the official representative of Taiwan. Shortly before the opening, the adhesive letters naming his space had been changed from "Taiwan" to "Taipei Fine Arts Museum." China had demanded that the Biennial direction adhere to their "One China Policy" or they would withdraw their representative (and also some investments) from São Paulo.

Chang was very angry. Not being an official representative of Taiwan would blur the criticism of his work (huge photos depicting the inhumane psychiatric system there). We wanted to express solidarity, not with Taiwan of course (we've always given a fuck about anti-imperialist issues), but with Chang. As we had two As on our cube, we could at least share one with him. If others would follow, chances were we could reconstruct "Taiwan" from letters donated by the artists. Most of them were afraid of messing up their big chance to get attention from the curators of the world by doing something as silly as that. Others wanted to talk to their curators first (and didn't show up). Everyone had internalized the fragmentation and isolation imposed on them by the structure of the show and, of course, by being art ambassadors.

But nevertheless we had a multinational performance against national representation and for Chang's right to represent whatever he likes. And of course a great party running around, taking off letters, and gluing them to the Taiwanese cube. "Taiwan" was up again while Canada, Croatia, Singapore, Puerto Rico, Austria, and Panama looked a bit sloppy.

When we got back the next day to attend the opening ceremonies, we found everything back in place: no Taiwan, and the donated letters were back on their cube. So we put up an announcement: "We meet at the Taiwanese cube 4 o'clock to dance the word Taiwan."

The Biennial direction responded to the threat to diplomacy by planting a security thug with a walkie-talkie in front of it. He looked really grim, so we didn't feel like dancing. But at least we had created a workplace in an emerging nation! And Taipei Times came up with a nice headline: "Austrian artist Georg Paul Thomann saves Taiwan." A nonexistent artist saved a country that was denied existence? Context hacking sometimes even surprises the context hackers.

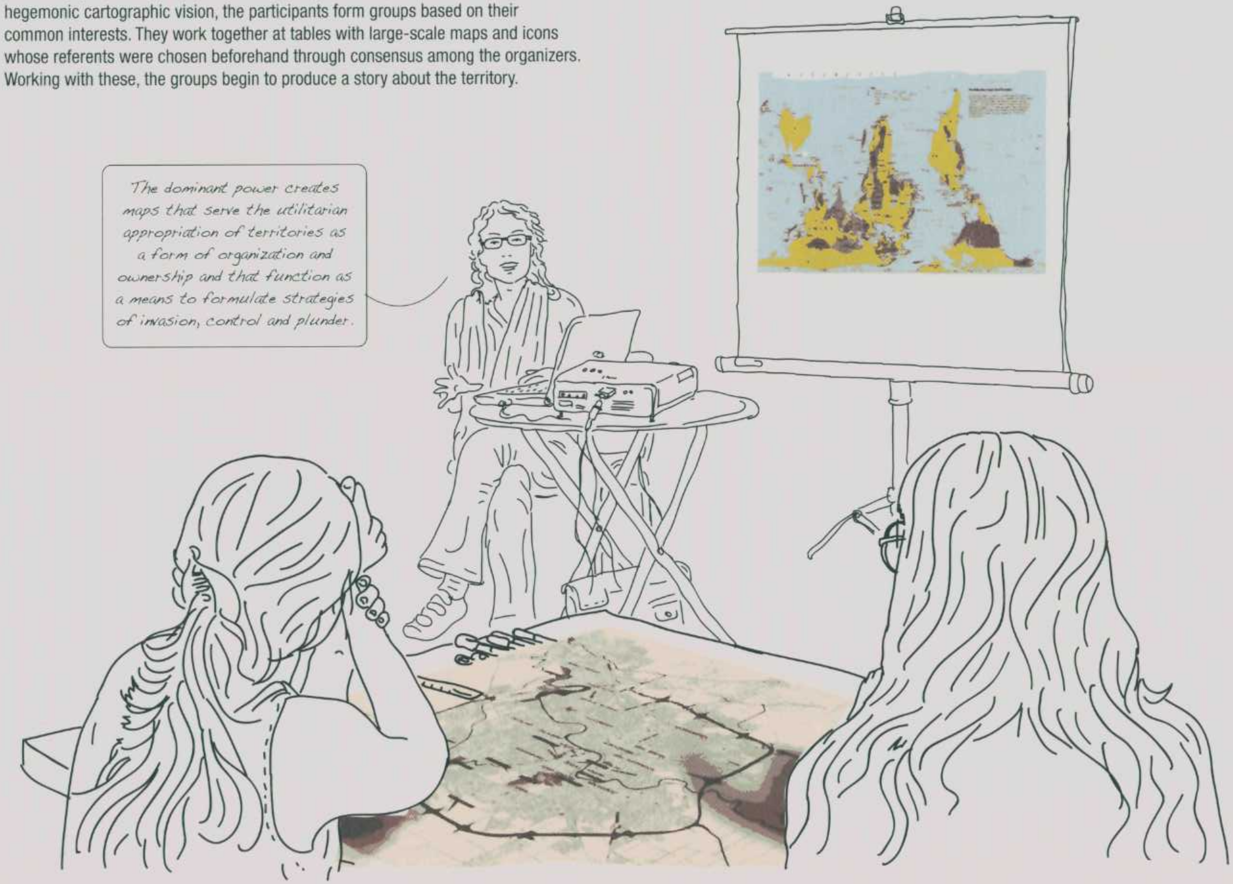
monochrom *(AT) is an art-technology-philosophy group, mostly based in Vienna. The group works in the fields of protoaesthetic fringe work, pop attitude, subcultural science, context hacking, and political activism, and has existed in this form since 1993.* ***Frank Apunkt Schneider*** *(DE/AT) is an artist and writer who has been a member of monochrom since 1999.*

Mapping

45'

Presentation

After seeing a visual exhibition that reflects upon the importance of a counter-hegemonic cartographic vision, the participants form groups based on their common interests. They work together at tables with large-scale maps and icons whose referents were chosen beforehand through consensus among the organizers. Working with these, the groups begin to produce a story about the territory.

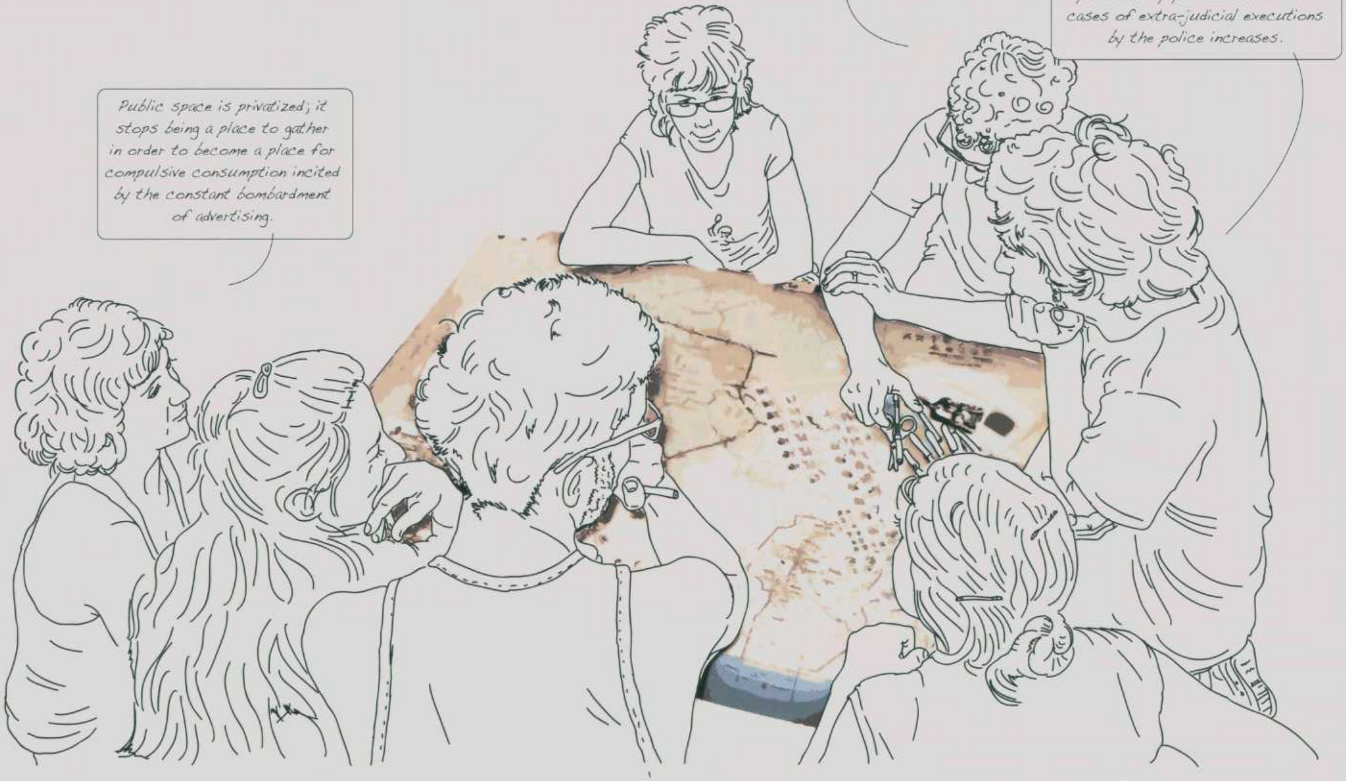


The dominant power creates maps that serve the utilitarian appropriation of territories as a form of organization and ownership and that function as a means to formulate strategies of invasion, control and plunder.

120'

Group Work

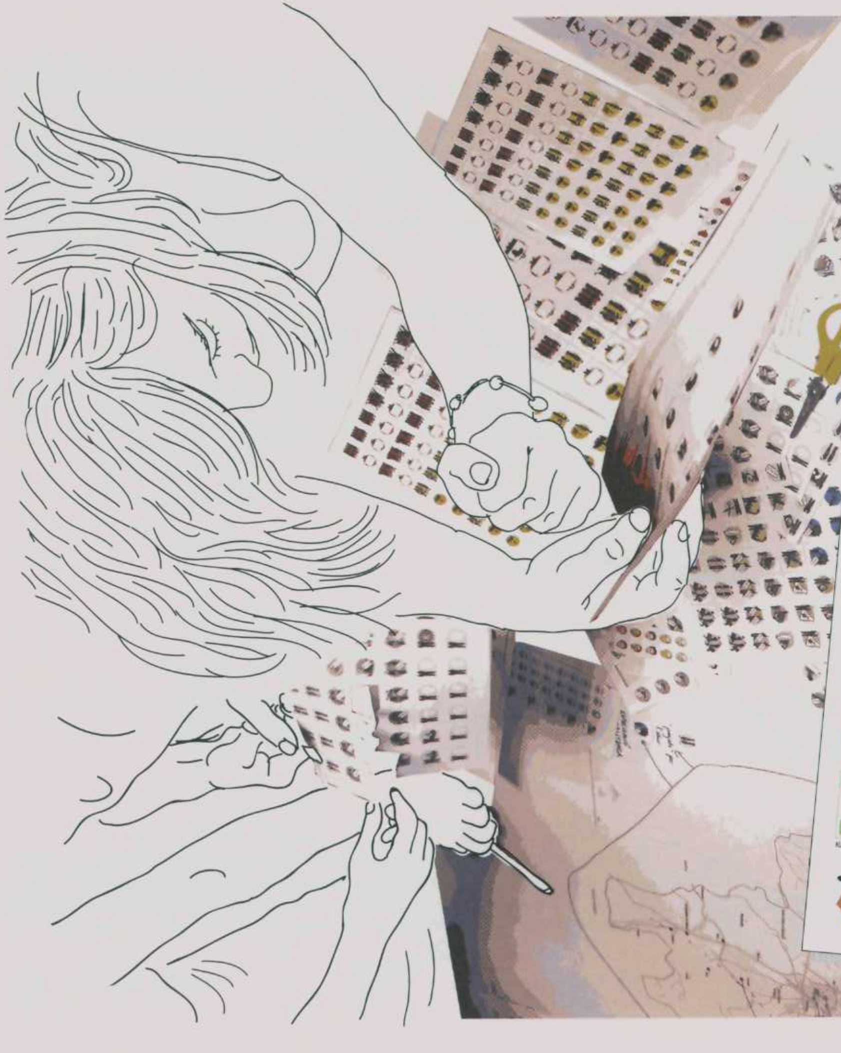
The participants share their everyday experiences and knowledge. In a first pass they open up their capacities of imagination and recollection to draw and demarcate the territory.
Everyone has something to contribute. The words are joined by drawings and slogans to condemn or problematize specific situations and also to signpost organized forms of resistance.



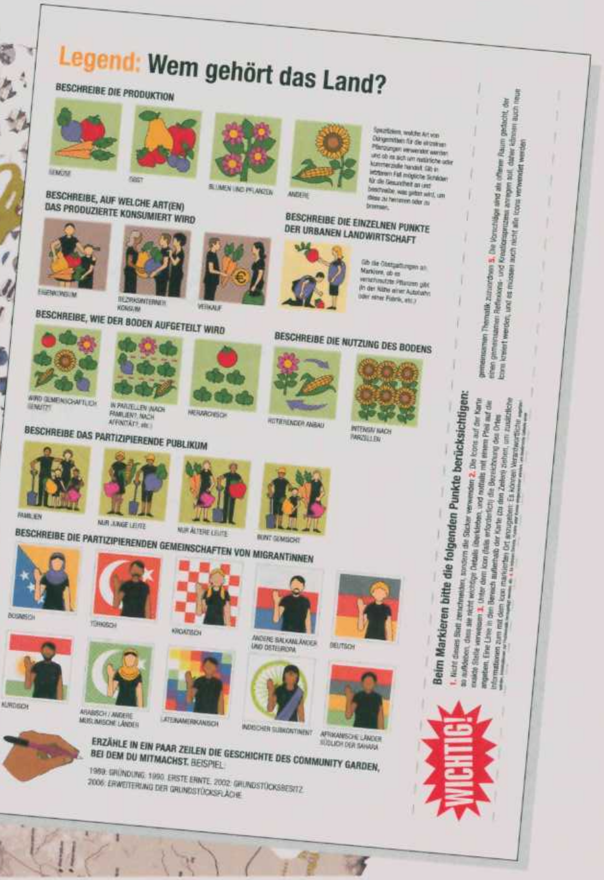
Public space is privatized; it stops being a place to gather in order to become a place for compulsive consumption incited by the constant bombardment of advertising.

Evictions and precarious settlements multiply so that these areas can be gentrified and acquire greater property values

The police persecute anyone working in the streets, whether they are selling things or picking trash for recycling, and they criminalize poor youth. Every year the number of cases of extra-judicial executions by the police increases.



A print-out that includes the list of signs, some provocative questions, and words of encouragement to subvert these suggestions in favor of autonomous and collective creation.



Legend: Wem gehört das Land?

BESCHREIBE DIE PRODUKTION

GEMÜSE

OBST

BLUMEN UND PFLANZEN

ANDERE

Spezifiziere, welche Art von Düngemitteln für die einzelnen Pflanzungen verwendet werden und ob es sich um natürliche oder kommerzielle handelt. Gib in letzterem Fall mögliche Schäden für die Gesundheit an und beschreibe, was getan wird, um diese zu hemmen oder zu bremsen.

BESCHREIBE, AUF WELCHE ART(EN) DAS PRODUZIERTE KONSUMIERT WIRD

EIGENKONSUM

BEZIRKSINTERNER KONSUM

VERKAUF

BESCHREIBE DIE EINZELNEN PUNKTE DER URBANEN LANDWIRTSCHAFT

Gib die Obstgattungen an. Markiere, ob es verschmutzte Pflanzen gibt (in der Nähe einer Autobahn oder einer Fabrik, etc.)

BESCHREIBE, WIE DER BODEN AUFGETEILT WIRD

WIRD GEMEINSCHAFTLICH GENUTZT

IN PARZELLEN (NACH FAMILIEN?, NACH AFFINITÄT?, etc.)

HIERARCHISCH

BESCHREIBE DIE NUTZUNG DES BODENS

ROTIERENDER ANBAU

INTENSIV NACH PARZELLEN

BESCHREIBE DAS PARTIZIPIERENDE PUBLIKUM

FAMILIEN

NUR JUNGE LEUTE

NUR ÄLTERE LEUTE

BUNT GEMISCHT

BESCHREIBE DIE PARTIZIPIERENDEN GEMEINSCHAFTEN VON MIGRANTINNEN

BOSNISCH

TÜRKISCH

KROATISCH

ANDERE BALKANLÄNDER UND OSTEUROPA

DEUTSCH

KURDISCH

ARABISCH / ANDERE MUSLIMISCHE LÄNDER

LATEINAMERIKANISCH

INDISCHER SUBKONTINENT

AFRIKANISCHE LÄNDER SÜDLICH DER SAHARA

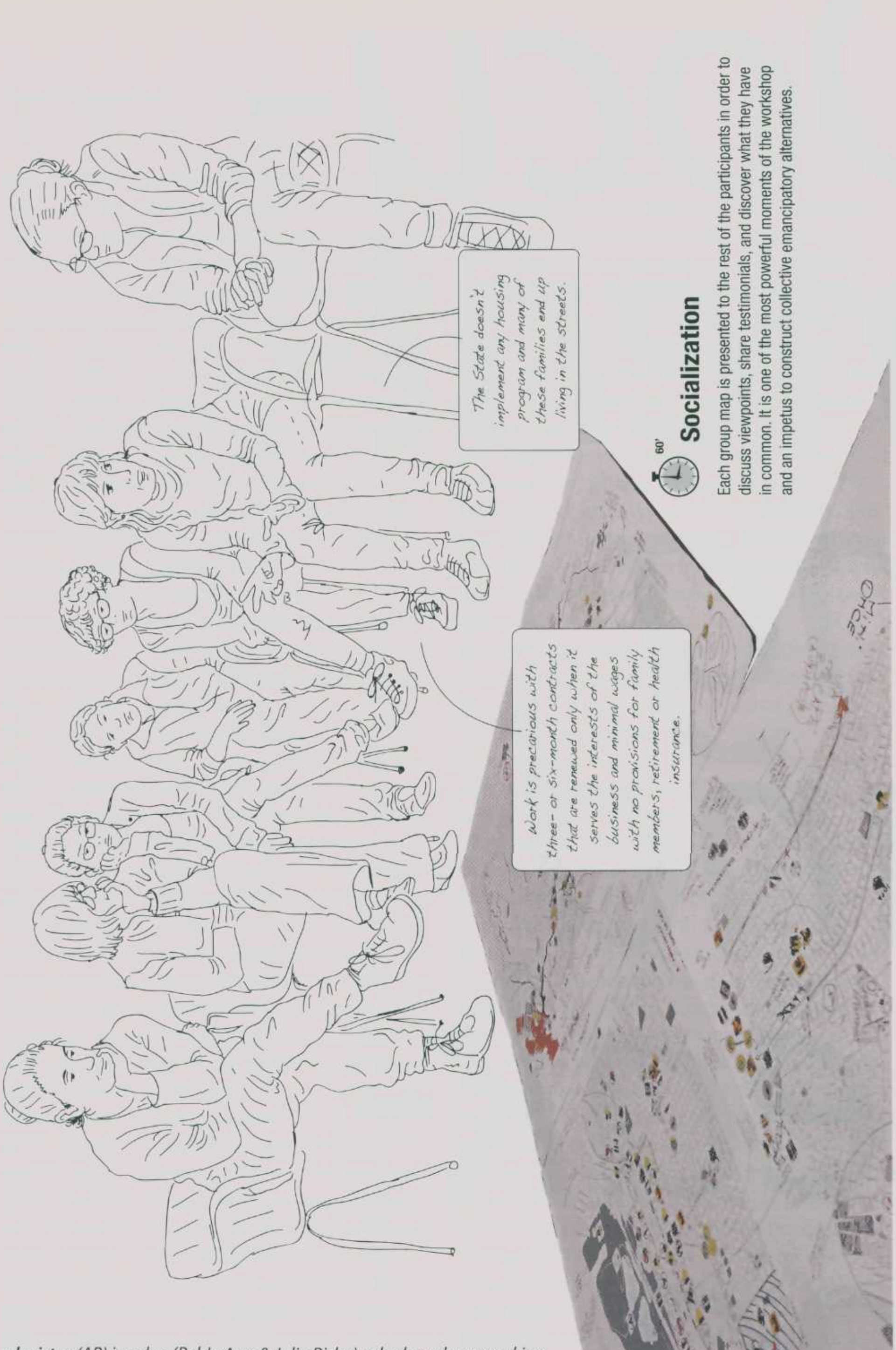
ERZÄHLE IN EIN PAAR ZEILEN DIE GESCHICHTE DES COMMUNITY GARDEN, BEI DEM DU MITMACHST. BEISPIEL:

1989: GRÜNDUNG. 1990: ERSTE ERNTE. 2002: GRUNDSTÜCKSBESITZ. 2006: ERWEITERUNG DER GRUNDSTÜCKSFLÄCHE

WICHTIG!

Beim Markieren bitte die folgenden Punkte berücksichtigen:

1. Nicht diesen Blatt zerschneiden, sondern die Sticker verwenden 2. Die Icons auf der Karte so aufkleben, dass sie nicht wichtige Details überkleben, und notfalls mit einem Pfeil auf die exakte Stelle verweisen 3. Unter dem Icon (falls erforderlich) die Bezeichnung des Ortes angeben. Eine Linie in den Bereich außerhalb der Karte (zu den Zeilen) ziehen, um zusätzliche Informationen zum mit dem Icon markierten Ort anzugeben: Es können Verantwortliche [illegible] gemeinsamen Thematik zuzuordnen 5. Die Vorschläge sind als offener Raum gedacht, der einen gemeinsamen Reflexions- und Kreativprozess anregen soll, daher können auch neue Icons kreiert werden, und es müssen auch nicht alle Icons verwendet werden


The State doesn't implement any housing program and many of these families end up living in the streets.
Work is precarious with three- or six-month contracts that are renewed only when it serves the interests of the business and minimal wages with no provisions for family members, retirement or health insurance.

60'

Socialization

Each group map is presented to the rest of the participants in order to discuss viewpoints, share testimonials, and discover what they have in common. It is one of the most powerful moments of the workshop and an impetus to construct collective emancipatory alternatives.

__Iconoclasistas__ (AR) is a duo (Pablo Ares & Julia Risler), who have been working together since 2006. Combining graphic art, creative workshops, and collective research, they produce mapping and other resources for free circulation, appropriation, and use, aimed at strengthening communication, forging solidarity networks, and promoting practices of collaboration and resistance.

Documenting and Leaking

Florian Schneider

What is it that makes truth concrete? It must be a specific understanding of documentary as a mode of providing access rather than evidence; it is a way of waiting for the anticipated rather than preempting prefabricated pleasure; a re-appropriation of the event, which is not owned, but owned up to.

In chemistry terms, becoming concrete relates to the process of precipitation: the formation of a solid within a solution. The hardening takes place in the spaces in between the grains and results in a formation where otherwise separate entities grow together to form a structure that may be more resistant than its hosting environment.

In this sense, documentary has to be understood precisely as the concretization of truth and not vice versa. It lets truth sink and build up, before it can be discovered and made visible.

This would also lead to a first and basic distinction between the mode of documentary and the practice of documentation—two terms that are often confused or used in a synonymous way: documentary is making concrete of a truth, while documentation is about the verification of concrete phenomena.

Such a distinction makes particular sense as soon as practices of documentary and documentation are situated in a context where art and activism are short-circuited, and where domains of the aesthetic and the political seem to coincide.

Over the past two decades and across all disciplines, artists and curators have responded to a radically new understanding of the world by rediscovering, reinterpreting, and reevaluating the relationship between an increasingly immaterialized world of things or abstractions, on the one hand, and their perception by the artist's equally precarious self, on the other.

From visual arts to theater, from photography to architecture, "documentary" propagates a turn toward a more or less fragile understanding of reality through a practical critique of the concept of "document."

While the original purpose of a document was once to produce evidence and, in doing so, to stabilize a self, today it has become subject to all sorts of manipulations that either deconstruct or reinforce its potential for generating a truth that is always past or has already been processed.

But what if the document played an entirely different role? Instead of providing a sort of evidence, which is systematically devalued and just appears as rather void, the document might emerge in a much more humble trajectory: it is supposed to grant access to secret, to discarded information or to neglected facts.

Rather than dismissing the new relevance of the documentary as playful analogies just for the sake of them, or as tautological proof of the patently obvious, its real potential lies in a kind of alternative narrative that is no longer opposed to present reality but based on a different reading of the past.

This requires investigations into new forms of image production that allow us to reimagine the future and see it in a different way. Such a project has to start with a critical analysis of the role of the image as a document in surveillance technologies, in financial speculation, data visualization, and automatic vision. They may all be characterized as preemptive attempts to gain an advantage by impeding a future event before it is realized.

Such preemptive attempts need to be compared to anticipatory strategies prefiguring future events in order to offer alternative images that are not yet present but may potentially occur: either because of a rereading of the past (reenactments, mockumentaries, fakes, archive art) or a refusal of the disciplinary force of "realtime" (improvization, aleatory techniques, antiphotography, or conceptual photography and ephemeral strategies).

A discussion about the ethics and aesthetics of documentary today may have fundamental consequences for the role of art and the artist in society: it allows art to be understood as anticipating a future by reading reality against the grain.

But the relationship of documentary to reality remains rather complex: it is about the reappropriation of an event, the actualization of an event that is virtual; but, rather than being owned, it has to be owned up to. And only by being owned up to, may it begin to exist.

This means that the relationship between a document and a reality is a relationship of overseeing. We oversee the fact, which everyone knows, that the image cannot represent reality. We behave as if we could mistake an image for reality.

This oversight is not just an accidental mistake or a slip. It is a mistake that needs to happen time and again. When we oversee, we see something else, something beyond what is visible—something "transvisual." It is a chance encounter that reveals something different, unexpectedly.

In this respect, documentary has to fail in order to become documentary—and one needs to admit this and be aware of it all the time. Such an encounter will not happen at the right moment or in realtime: it will always be too early or too late.

This perspective might offer a new and rather productive approach toward the problem of "realism": rather than mirroring or representing, documentary *provides* reality. It is provision in the literal sense of the word: a vision on behalf of or instead of the visible, a performance of a reality which it is confronting. Or, as many theorists of documentary film have already noted: "The important truth any documentary captures is the performance in front of the camera." Documentary is about supplying a reality with different aspects, furnishing it with something new, accentuating it by alienating it from itself. It is always about looking beyond the given set of assets that may constitute a reality.

Equally, such an understanding of the performativity of truth can also be expanded toward current practices of documentation, such as data visualization and leaking, as the two extreme poles. What is at stake here is not a more correct, more exact, or more comprehensible way to access an otherwise hidden truth, which then becomes subject to exposure; on the contrary, it documents nothing but the creative act of producing a new reality, which may indeed turn out to be less complex, less chaotic, or less dishonest.

The verifying character of data visualization refers to the fact that, above a certain amount, any kind of data can be transformed into imaginary value. Data visualization creates an imaginary reality, which only means that one cannot distinguish any longer what is false and what is true.

Yet information leaking operates in a similar way, but in the opposite direction: the truth that is dragged to the light when secret information is published is the fact that a closed system is leaking and cannot preserve its inviolability further on. This matters much more than the actual content that gets exposed.

The information revealed does not provide evidence; it only grants access to a way of dealing with things that so far have not been supposed to be public. In this respect, it is very similar to gossip, and it comes as no surprise that the cables published by WikiLeaks in November 2010 contain merely a kind of chatter exchanged by US diplomats. Today it is a matter of course that the public release of large quantities of formerly secret information as full-text on the Internet submits it to all sorts of further processing like indexing, searching, and other forms of quantitative evaluation based on an algorithm that can be applied independently from a discussion about its legal implications and legitimacy.

But there is also a qualitative dimension: rather than a documentation of how power operates in the shadows, it has at least the potential to reverse-engineer power and reveal its source code. But as much as it demystifies power, it remystifies it again. The truth that is revealed is both, human-readable and abstract, with a very short half-life. It is doomed to decay if it is not recompiled into another application of power.

In the end, digital technologies have only accelerated the processes of documentation; the point, however, is to claim a truth and make it concrete. The projects presented in the following chapter deal with these challenges in very different ways.

Gregory Sholette's *Dark Matter* refuses documentation either consciously or unconsciously and, in doing so, gives rise to a destabilization and uncertainty that occupies both traditional institutions and their specific ways of keeping track of their own version of reality, as well as artists and activists, who experience increasing difficulties of defining themselves in opposition to the established art world.

Practices of "Reenacting," "Militant Sound Investigation" and "Interactive Documenting" demonstrate the potential of an up-to-date empiricism in which sensory experience is expanded beyond the borders of individual perception and not limited to the reaffirmation of selfhood. "Counterimaging" and "Hip Hop" are reconstructing and reinventing social realities rather than mirroring them.

The street screenings of "Tahrir Cinema" pose the question of collective ownership in the sphere of a "social hyperreality" where all of a sudden people "enter the image." Hans Haacke's investigation into the ruptures and breaks of a social context are conducted through an understanding of continuity, which is as precise as it is critical—in both literal senses of the words.

A critical understanding of forensics offers the possibility to emancipate the capacity of an object to narrate "multiple versions of history."

"Art leaking" is extending the subjectivity of artists, at the same time privileged and precarious, to a wider notion of art workers. On that basis it does not only state grievances, but proclaims new forms of solidarity and collective agency, inside as well as outside of institutional frameworks.

What all these practical examples may have in common is a certain drive to call into question the rules by which reality is produced and to assert a right to take this production into one's own hands. This is exactly what constitutes the importance of documentary: generating realities that free themselves from obsessions and possessions; that resist the ways in which all forms of living—or "life off-guard" as Dziga Vertov would call it—are captured and caught by technical devices.

Florian Schneider *(DE) is a filmmaker, writer, and curator currently based in Berlin and Trondheim. He is the head of the international MFA program at the Trondheim Academy of Fine Art at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).*

Gregory Sholette

Documenting

What if the majority of artistic production in the twenty-first century were invisible precisely to those who lay claim to its management and interpretation: the critics, art historians, collectors, dealers, museums, curators, and arts administrators? And yet what if this unseen agency was also necessary for sustaining the symbolic and material economy of contemporary art? Let us call this invisible stuff the art world's dark matter, as if it were something like the energy that astrophysicists tell us holds our universe together. But documenting this missing mass might prove more than a mere academic exercise. Given its hypothetical entanglement with mainstream culture its visualization could prove troublesome to contemporary art's institutional stability. At the same time, how does one document what is by nature a kind of shadow practice? For if an enhanced legitimization is awarded to the visualization of data these days by both mainstream political parties as well as their social justice critics, then how to imagine representation of data differently? Just as significantly, could this "concrete truth" be distributed without sabotaging the very logic of its critique?

As surveys show, the vast majority of art school graduates either give up making art altogether within a decade, or they find paid work as gallery assistants, art handlers, art fabricators, or—if very lucky—art professors. This army of art professionals helps to reproduce the system. Both the World Wide Web and increasingly precarious conditions are emboldening a generation of artists and cultural workers to demand greater equity. It is the first time since the late 1960s, when groups such as Art Workers' Coalition (AWC), the Syndicate of Unified Plastic Artists in Argentina, and the British Artists Union emerged, seeking greater rights and representation for artists, that the question of fair treatment for all artists has been expressed with such intensity: the Arts and Labor Working Group of Occupy Wall Street acts in solidarity with local trade unions, W.A.G.E. seeks regulation of fees paid to contracted artists by institutions, and the recently launched ArtLeaks models itself on WikiLeaks describing its mission as a "response to the abuse of their professional integrity and the open infraction of their labor rights."

Documentation of these efforts is no longer restricted to ephemeral flyers and offset newsletters as it was in the days of AWC. Before the Internet such materials may or may not have been preserved depending on the discretion of individual members, and even if records were archived, they typically sat in unopened boxes in someone's loft for decades. The ability, or rather the inescapability, of documenting as one goes makes for a fundamentally different representation of a central feature of the art world: the excessive overproduction of art and artists. And while such attempts at intervening and reforming the culture industry establishment may ultimately turn out to be a kind of defensive fantasy, there is no escaping the fact that it is being woven into the very fabric of art world reality.

More closely linked with fantasy is a far larger nimbus of dark matter artistry. It consists of everyday "creatives" who produce for the pleasure of production itself, often "gifting" their work to others or simply placing it in streets and public spaces (although sometimes this also means delighting in acts of indignation and resentment). Zinesters, knitters, live action fantasy role-play gamers (LARPS), devotees of Goth, Punk, and Do It Yourself (DIY) subcultures, and of course armies of cybergeeks. All of these informal practitioners find it increasingly easy to link themselves together through digital networks not unlike the protesting pre-failed art professional. Here documentation is almost exclusively a byproduct of the users interests or obsessions and serves either as a means of intra-community respect or as a kind of DIY demonstration.

Lastly, there are those artists and artists' groups who partially or completely step outside of the mainstream art world, sometimes as a protest against its false claims of being avant-garde, sometimes as a means of generating autonomy, and sometimes as a form of political protest. In a sense, this third species of dark matter is self-identified with the art world's missing mass, choosing to engage in forms of public or interventionist art, rather than operate within the normative confines of art institutions. As the New York-based artists' collective, Group Material, argued in 1980, "we are desperately tired and critical of the drawn-out traditions of formalism, conservatism and pseudo avant-gardism that dominate the official art world ... our project is clear, we invite everyone to question the entire culture we have taken for granted."

Today the very ability to question the entire culture is what is taken for granted. Archiving dark matter is no longer a hit or miss affair. Still, defining what this missing mass is or why it is flourishing in ever greater quantities remains unanswered. It is a fact that more and more trained artists are turned out from schools and professional programs, just as more amateur doodles and homecraft artworks appear on websites, and more artists' collectives are springing into formation. And yet the very concept of documentation is now giving way to the sheer visualization of data. We are witnessing the birth of the quantitative data archive as opposed to its older, more jumbled version in which fiction and documentation were knotted up together.

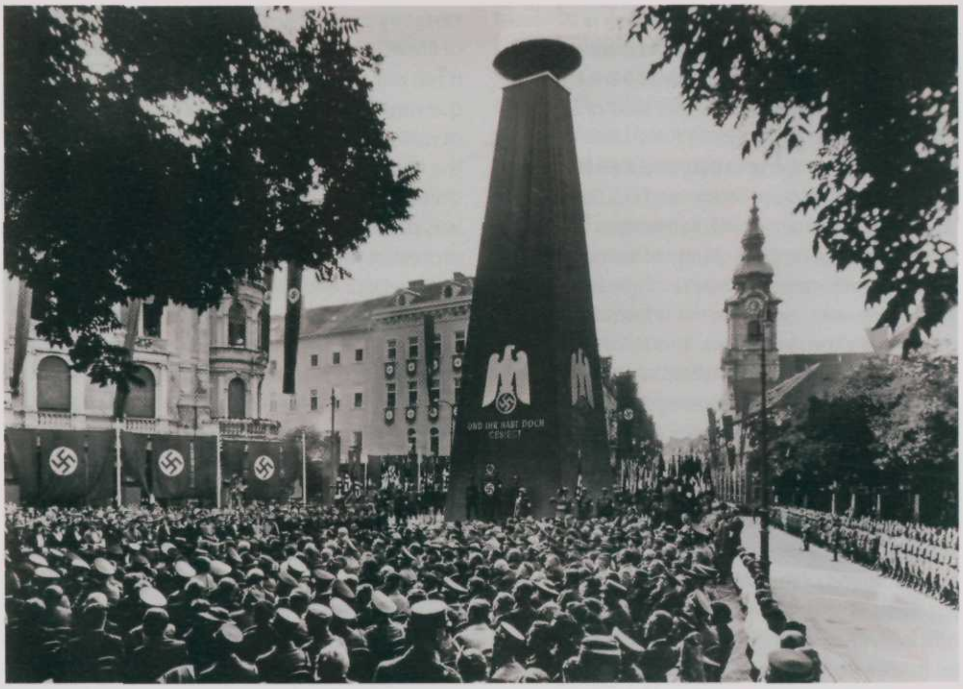
In fact, one could go so far as to suggest that data visualization would lead to the death of metaphor. Even as graphic information display is esteemed as the most trusted form of documentable truth—and not only in the pages of *The Guardian*, but within the Occupy movement as well—data mapping is almost certainly a response to the schematic rendering of life at increasingly deeper levels. Nonetheless, it has only heightened one uncertainty: the question of "what we are." In the aftermath of militant protest movements in Europe, the Middle East, Northern Africa, and the United States, this question of self-definition was paramount. One group of Zuccotti Park protesters later coalesced as the subgroup OccupyData and took to polling the profile of other occupiers with the aim of visually mapping the movement itself. Perhaps the answer will be found not so much within the datasets themselves, but within the narratives that these visual documents are intended to support?

***Gregory Sholette** (US) is an artist, author, and activist, and is Assistant Professor of Sculpture at Queens College, New York. His book* Dark Matter: Art and Politics in an Age of Enterprise Culture *is an inquiry into politically engaged artists' collectives.*

Hans Haacke

Monumenting

It is impossible, after one generation, to reenact the experience of a historic situation. The social context is far too important in the way one can truly experience a situation. The confrontation with the more or less documentary reconstitution of a highly political and emotional event/moment from the past leads to a new investigation of its meaning and consequence in the present moment, and possibly to a new (political) positioning.



The work *Und Ihr Habt Doch Gesiegt* (And You Were Victorious after All) aimed at challenging artists to confront history, politics, and society, and thus to reclaim an intellectual territory.

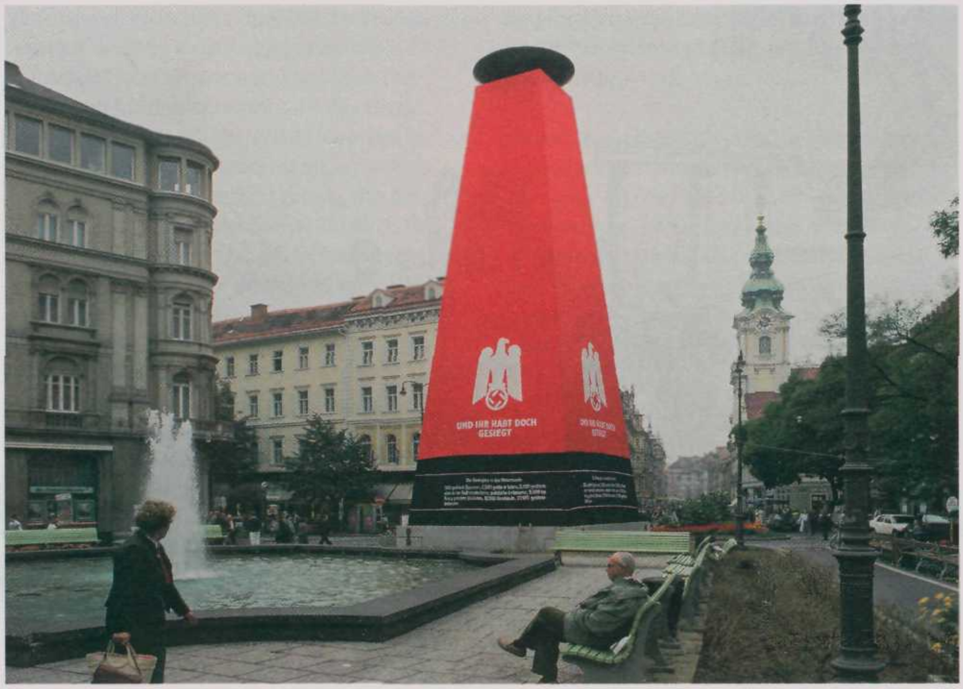
The popular *Mariensäule* (Column of the Virgin Mary), a fluted column on a massive base, crowned by a gilded statue of the Virgin Mary on a crescent moon, was erected late in the seventeenth century to commemorate victory over the Turks. When Hitler conferred on Graz—an early and vital Nazi stronghold in Austria—the honorary title *Stadt der Volkserhebung* (City of the People's Insurrection), the ceremony on July 25, 1938 was held at the foot of it.

For the 1938 celebration, the *Mariensäule* had been hidden under an enormous obelisk, draped in red fabric, topped by a fire bowl, and emblazoned with the Nazi insignia and the inscription: "UND IHR HABT DOCH GESIEGT," referring to the failed Vienna putsch of 1934, during which the Austrofascist chancellor was murdered by Nazis.

Based on historic photographs, I had its appearance of July 25, 1938 reconstructed for steirischer herbst 1988. The only difference from the original was an addition around the base. Listed, white on a black background in the fraktur typeface preferred by the Nazis, was "The Vanquished of Styria: 300 Gypsies killed, 2,500 Jews killed, 8,000 political prisoners killed or died in detention, 9,000 civilians killed in the war, 12,000 missing, 27,900 soldiers killed."

I also had a billboard erected with sixteen posters: facsimile reproductions of Nazi documents from 1938, like several classified advertisements from the local newspapers announcing the "Aryan" ownership or recent "Aryanization" of local shops, or the university law school's catalogue page with the listing of courses on the new race laws and Germanic legal doctrine, as well as reproductions of the prayer with which the city's pastor welcomed the new Nazi era. The piece was at the same time a kind of archive and laboratory that conveyed a new visual language and a new kind of knowledge production related to history and memory.

As soon as the obelisk was covered with the red drapes bearing the inscriptions, and the



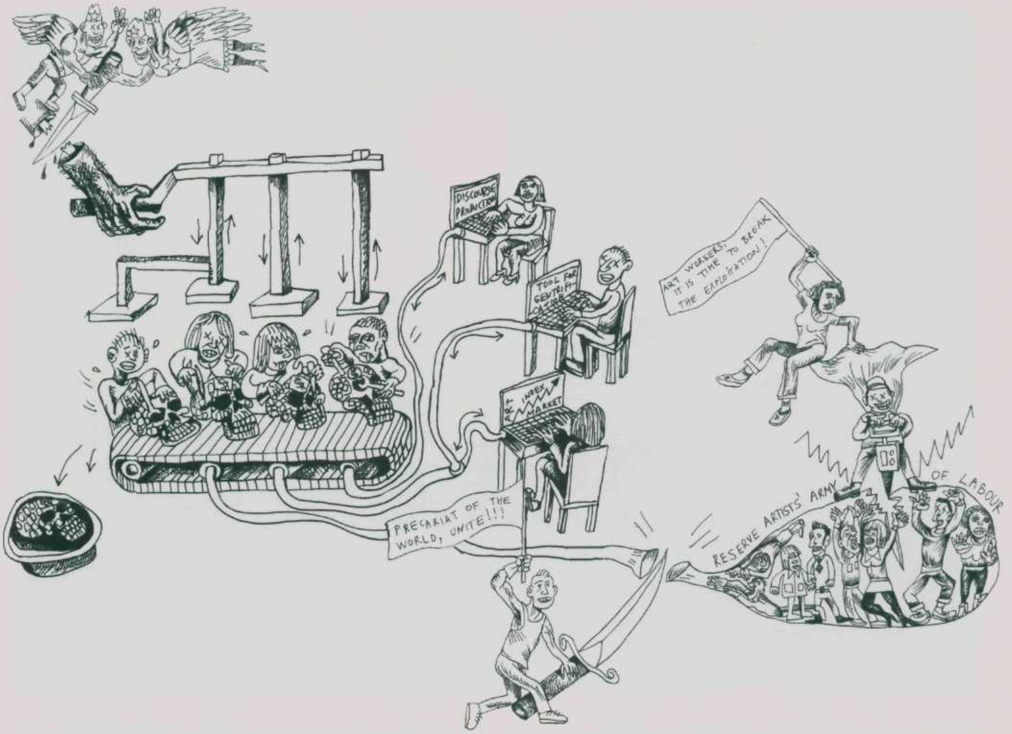
Nazi eagle and statue were encased, there was commotion at the site. Throngs of people gathered and engaged in heated debate over whether, after fifty years, the Nazi past should be stirred up again. While most people of retirement age were incensed, local TV also showed several passionate supporters of the idea that they must confront and come to terms with their ugly past. The sixteen posters with documents from 1938 were torn down frequently and replaced. From the beginning, a guard was posted at the obelisk every night. Still, about a week before the closing of the exhibition my memorial to the victims of the Nazis in Styria was firebombed. Many headlines referred to the ruin of the *Mahnmal* (memorial) as *Schandmal* (monument of shame), strongly condemning the arson and the suspected political motivation behind it.

Hans Haacke *(DE) is a visual artist whose projects—except the ones realized during his conceptual phase at the beginning of the 1960s—mostly investigate political systems and their concealed power structures, with extraordinary precision and a stringent aesthetics. For this reason, Haacke's participation in large US institutional exhibitions or in public space projects has regularly been canceled.*

Corina L. Apostol

ArtLeaking

Just as WikiLeaks drew critical attention and spoke truth to the power of the international military industrial complex, ArtLeaks seeks to disentangle its artistic equivalent. Utilizing the power of the Internet, social media, and group networking, ArtLeaking engenders a space to vocalize protests against the corruption


DISCOURSE PRODUCTION
TOOL FOR GENTRIFICATION
ART INDEX MARKET
ART WORKERS, IT IS TIME TO BREAK THE EXPLOITATION!
PRECARIAT OF THE WORLD, UNITE!!!
RESERVE ARTISTS' ARMY OF LABOUR

and abuse in the art world, its pervasive corporatization, the accumulation of cultural capital by banks or foundations through the labor of cultural workers who are not compensated in return, and the suppression of any kind of debate around these conditions of exploitation and the politics of corporate and state sponsorship.

ArtLeaking is a necessary tool to deal with institutions and cultural managers who have acted against the interests of artists, staff, and even the public they pretend to serve. We consider it our political responsibility not to let these accounts be suppressed, but to open them to public scrutiny by publishing online testimonies from all parties involved.

Through our online active archive, cases of political censorship, homophobic or xenophobic censorship, union rights, and toxic leadership are documented, saved, updated, and intensely debated. Anyone who is ready to share this or that case, either signed or anonymously is welcome to use our platform, but we do stipulate some burden of proof or collective evidence, such as firsthand reports and documentation such as e-mail correspondence, internal regulations and documents, video recordings, and so on.

Related to this, and unlike WikiLeaks, we use different narrative techniques to present these cases, where individual or collective testimonies are one among several strategies, including performance, irony, and camp, as well as photography, low budget film, and comics.

In 2013, we artleaked the violent censorship conflict at the Mystetskyi Arsenal art museum in Kiev, when the director Natalia Zabolotna painted over Volodymyr Kuznetsov's mural with black paint, because it criticized the church and local mafia before President Viktor

Yanukovych visited the opening. Moreover another work by Vasyl Tsagolov entitled "Molotov Cocktail" was excluded from the exhibition for similar reasons. In this case, we coordinated with the artists involved in order to publish their statements, as well as with the Kiev-based activist group, the Art Workers' Self-Defense Initiative (ISTM). ISTM staged a series of protest performances inside the museum, while we published the photo and video documentation of these actions through our site. Furthermore, we kept up the pressure on the Mystetskyi by supporting a boycott by the ISTM and other members of the artistic community, drawing attention to the unacknowledged acts of censorship and vandalism. The boycott is still in effect and has triggered strong reactions from the international community, including Boris Groys and Maria Lindt. Though critical of the protest, these curators nonetheless decided to pull out of the upcoming Kiev Biennale Discussion Platform, which they had been invited to organize at the Mysteskyi Arsenal.

Thus, ArtLeaks occupies a space across borders, grounding itself both inside the art world and outside it, in activism as well as academia. ArtLeaks has expanded the notion of art workers to refer not only to artists but also interns, assistants, curators, and critics—categories that are in various degrees subjected to conditions of inequality, precarity, and/or are threatened by censorship from more powerful players, whether working in the Balkans or in western Europe or United States. ArtLeaks reports are in fact systemic issues that are to be found in other fields as well. By organizing open workshops and assemblies, we draw attention to how theorists, cultural workers, and artists need to organize, as they have real power to resist today's reactionary tendencies. In these forums we talk about local issues, common troubles, and possible solutions to change the unfortunate current state of the arts and we subsequently publish reports to inspire people to make their own collaborations. Artleaking therefore not only focuses on problems and bad examples, but stresses the need for solidarity and for a "change it together" spirit in the art world, in response to atomized, agencyless subjectivity.

***Corina L. Apostol** (RO/US) is a PhD candidate in the Department of Art History at Rutgers University, New Brunswick. She is the cofounder of ArtLeaks and coeditor of the* ArtLeaks Gazette. *The platform ArtLeaks was initiated in 2011 and born out of solidarity between an international group of artists, curators, art historians, and intellectuals in response to the deficiencies in art labor.*

International Institute of Political Murder

Reenact-ing

The starting points of the International Institute of Political Murder's theater works are events that are graphic and full of meaning, and have their roots deep in collective memory—roots from which sprout a thousand conflicting stories.

The Ceaușescus cooped up in a tiny room reminiscent of a classroom. Then smoke, and the rattle of machine guns. A camera shot pans to two bodies lying on the floor in a pool of blood. Three presenters and a DJ in a Rwandan radio station, in the sound studio an MC Hammer poster. A boy from a rural province calls in during the program to give the whereabouts of his fleeing Tutsi neighbors so that the Hutu militia can hunt them down and kill them. A Nirvana song is played.

Research means going to the site of the event, meeting the people involved in what happened. Days spent on the phone to journalists, historians, political advisers, prison governors, former members of the secret service and provincial governors in order to be able to

conduct interviews with eyewitnesses, victims, and perpetrators. From the statements of contemporary witnesses, an invented theater text is created, in which fact and fiction intersect: documents become a play, an artistic reality.
As a spectator, one is present at a fiction that is precisely as it could have been. Details count. The set creates a hyperrealistic space, and harsh lighting illuminates every tiny feature, so that the scene becomes a sculpture. Yet at the same time the situation transcends itself.
In the recomposition and transcription of positions in the processes of writing and staging, the antagonisms are set against each other in extreme positions. The systems of coordinates are remixed. If one previously had a notion that discrimination is a result of dull resentment, at the moment of the performance one is shocked by the radio presenters, relaxed and smoking a joint, who have a preference for American and African subculture and cracking racist jokes while they boast of successful massacres. Suddenly there is sympathy for the Ceaușescus, proud and unflinching in their insistence on the correctness of their political actions.
The performance itself becomes a crossover point at which actual and artificial reality merge, colliding with the spectators. A paradoxical situation is produced: the alien event, the genocide, the execution of the dictator drills itself into the consciousness as a disturbing memory because it does not confirm a known experience, but rather brings an alien experience horrifyingly close.

The International Institute of Political Murder—IIMP *(CH/DE) was founded in 2007 by author and director Milo Rau. IIMP became widely known through the theater / film project* The last Days of the Ceaușescus *(2009/10), a reenactment of the show trial against the Romanian dictator couple, Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu. The theater project* Hate Radio *(2011) dealt with the role of the RTLM broadcasting station in the genocide in Rwanda in 1994.*

Leah Borromeo

Embedded Journalism

Because there are many ways for a journalist to approach a story, the ways to consume a story should also be as varied.

Social media integration theory model. Social media theory and practice. The newspaper. The television. The telephone. The billboard. The cinema. The radio. The Internet. Face to face. Word of mouth …

All platforms. Great. But they offer no variation in terms of ways into a story. Imagine if you applied game theory to journalism and came out with a more interactive and immersive experience. So you don't just get the feeling of having lived the story … you actually do live part of the story.
A new movement is arising from a ragtag community of geeks, journalists, artists, and a few established TV and newspaper outlets. It's one where the notion of "engagement" is questioned, and put to the test with transmedia and narrative experimentation. Messing about with linear narrative and the semi-sacrosanct "beginning, middle, end" structure isn't new. But messing about with how a viewer chooses to interact with the narrative is. Because sometimes you take away the element of choice. Welcome to Interactive Documentary.
For example: I have a story about Indian farmer suicides and fashion. I want to unpick the entire value chain of an article of clothing from seed

to shop. I will follow the farmer, the mill, the weaver, the factory worker, the manufacturer, the designer, the shop etc. I want to find out why up to 300,000 Indian farmers have killed themselves to get out of debt at one end of the value chain and to see what real change we can effect in the consumer West at the other end of the value chain. I make a linear documentary that offers narrative experimentation but still leads the viewer from A to B—even if I take them via all the other letters of the alphabet before I get to B.

In an interactive documentary—at least how I see it—I could come into the story with an interest in fashion. Due to how the interface is structured, I will come out knowing more about the agrichemicals industry and its effect on the health of the people who grow the cotton for the clothes I wear. Or I will come out knowing a little bit more about fashion and be slightly aware of something called capitalism that brings the latest style to me. Or I'll just know where to get that jacket I always wanted. I have come in at Q and ended up at A. Or back at Q. Or any other letter in the alphabet.

The interface will most often involve the Internet either as the primary point of access or as the secondary point in support of, for instance, a film in the cinemas or a series on TV or radio. The Internet is uniquely positioned to store a host of media delivered through one access point.

There are a number of platforms—all in development—that let a filmmaker control how much interactivity goes into a story. Some are closed but appear to offer an experience of interaction—much like going into a museum but not being able to touch anything. Others offer a small amount of interaction—like when you're asked to pop your thoughts about an exhibition down on a pinboard. Still others are almost fully open—to the point of relying on user generated content and a heavy social media presence to keep the narrative going.

But it doesn't have to stop there. A filmmaker could employ more transmedia techniques like real life set ups that could involve in person meet ups which will form part of the documentary itself. Or text messages that lead to objects that move the story on. Or audacious interventions that break into an unwitting mainstream media or social media that also form part of the story.

If you think transmedia means sticking a video on YouTube, you must be shot.

Using transmedia and interactive documentary can be used for most stories that have complex layers to their telling—where the stakeholders are many and varied. In a way, the filmmaker is eliminating the cutting room floor. However, much of what is currently produced is dross. A few pieces, usually in French, stand out. The quality of interactive documentary will rise when the quality of the journalists and filmmakers who understand it increases.

But it's the situationist and interventionist elements of the "i-doc" that excite me. The potential for messages of social change to spread through interactive documentary is only limited by imagination. You could craft a story to be so immersive that it would be impossible for anyone who interacted with it not to be part of the progression of a social issue.

It's journalism, activism, non-linear game theory, an excuse to sit on Facebook, and political art all rolled into one. Power up. Advance to next level.

Leah Borromeo *(GB) is a journalist and filmmaker who bridges a parallel arts practice with documentary to extract new angles and emotions around factual narratives. She uses her camera as an interventionist tool to tell stories and disrupt balances of power.*

Ultra-red

Militant Sound Investigation

The mid-century Salvadoran poet and revolutionary guerilla fighter, Roque Dalton, published his seventh book of poems, *Tavern and Other Places*, in 1969 following an extended exile in Europe. Dalton brings to his poetic reflections on the European situation his own experiences of anti-imperialist resistance in El Salvador.

The final poem in the 1969 collection titled, "Tavern," maps the propositions, vocabularies, and tones of voice that unsettle as well as bind together places, struggles, and registers of experience. Dalton composed the poem entirely from slices of conversation heard during his days in 1966 at the Prague café, U Fleku, a popular hangout for European, American, and Latin American expatriates. He dedicates the poem to comrades of the French philosopher, Régis Debray, who a year later joined Che Guevara's campaign in Bolivia; Elizabeth Burgos, Venezuelan anthropologist and editor of Rigoberta Menchu's autobiography; Alicia Eguren, Argentinian poet and essayist; and José Manuel Fortuny, Secretary of the Communist Party in Guatemala.

In composing the poem, Dalton adapts his training as an anthropologist to what he calls, "an underground sociological poetry." Rather than simply transcribing what he overhears, Dalton uses punctuation, line and stanza breaks, and shifts in font and case. The result is a score of thematic clusters and shifts in voice, volume, and density. Dalton's compositional devices do not bring the archive of statements to a resolution. Rather, he readies the inventory of utterances for recomposition by our listening. We do not read this poem as much as listen to or through it.

"Tavern" asks us to listen to how the statements play against and across each other as if hearing a conversation. Indeed, the poem is subtitled, "*Conversatorio*"; a "conversation" and "*oratorio*." As listeners, we inhabit the point at which these ideas, forms of composition, and modes of listening encounter each other.

It is as if Dalton challenges us to ask: "What did you hear?" This question stands at the center of Ultra-red's own investigation into listening. We have learned that the question initiates a sustained interrogation of both the characteristics of particular sounds and establishes listening itself as an object for examination. As an investigation, listening exceeds a mere perceptual event that results only in interpretation or aesthetic judgment. It becomes a collective and contextualized procedure, a social and cultural act.

Dalton's poem underscores the productive capacity of listening as constitutive of new objects for inquiry. Listening is neither naturalistic nor simply representational. As with improvisation, the poetic listening in "Tavern" retains an affinity with a sound's source and constructs a new object. This practice of improvisation underscores the critical binding of sound to place, its dialogical condition. Sound results from one object encountering another in time and space. The encounter both occupies a space and is determined by the structures of that space. Improvisatory listening allows us to investigate the terms by which hearing subjects occupy a space.

"Tavern" invites us to take time to listen and to organize what it is that we have heard. The poem serves as a protocol for keeping open historical possibilities. Ultra-red proposes the following protocols for poem objects within a practice of improvisatory listening.

[extract from "Tavern" by Roque Dalton,
trans. by Hardie St. Martin and Jonathan Cohen]

LET'S NOT TALK POLITICS ANY MORE.

Okay: beets rot in the fields for lack of farm hands.
Okay: let's think of suicide with the brains of sexual organs.
Okay: spring watches us from the tip of the best tulip.
Okay: your ideal country would be a forest of yellow marble
monuments.

Politics are taken up at the risk of life
or else you don't talk about it. Of course
you can take them up without risking
your life
but we figured that this was only in the enemy camp.
Or so it should be:
if I didn't louse up when I bought the calendar
we're now in 1966.

ATTENTION, EMPTY-HEADED CHORUS, LET MY LITTLE FINGER BE
YOUR STAR OF BETHLEHEM:
"CATALINA GAVE HER HEART TO A SOLDIER
WHO'S NOW FIGHTING ON THE BORDER ..."

Irony about socialism seems to be
good for the digestion here,
but I swear that in my country
you have to get your supper first.

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT: HE'S A COWARD:
ONLY CYNICISM WILL MAKE US FREE, I REPEAT,
QUOTING IDEAS OF YOURS.

This conversation could fit into a poem.

Audioactivist organization ***Ultra-red*** *(GB/US) was founded in 1994 as a collaboration between electronic musicians and political activists. Since then, Ultra-red included artists, researchers, and organizers from different social movements to engage in the struggles of migration, antiracism, participatory community development, and the politics of HIV/AIDS. Utilizing sound-based research (Militant Sound Investigations) and exploring the soundscape as revelatory of social relations, the group has collectively produced radio broadcasts, performances, recordings, installations, texts, and public space actions. The acoustic mapping of contested spaces and histories directly engages a dynamic exchange between art and political organizing.*

/ **PROTOCOLS FOR POEM OBJECTS** / have been composed by Ultra-red for organizing improvisational listening to conversations in time and place. The protocols are variations on the strategy of Salvadoran poet, Roque Dalton (1935–1975) for an underground sociological poetry as heard in his poem, "Tavern."

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1 *Wait* – In exile from the place where one locates one's base-community, visit the same site on a daily basis for two years. Choose a site dense with conversation, ambient sound, daily ritual, and camaraderie.

2 *Listen – Perform one's attention to the scene* like an undercover sociologist, comprehending by chance and willful attention conversations in which you are engaged and those that surround you. Listen for the source of sounds. Listen for the qualities of sound. Hear your subjective associations.

3 *"What did you hear?"* – After listening to the scene for a period of time, ask, "What did you hear?" Record what is heard on paper.

4 *Analyze* – Examine the record for its most generative themes. The tendency in analysis can be to reduce the record to common or *dominant topics. However, a theme also brings attention to* apparent contradictions, not in an attempt to offer solutions but as problems to be investigated and solved through political action.

5 *Select* – Cut passages from the record without regard for whether the words reflect one's own opinions, appear truthful, possess moral or political worth. Supplement with other passages that offer a sense of the ambience of the place and times.

6 *Compose* – Montage the selections into a poem-object in no particular order. Use punctuation marks, line and stanza breaks, and shifts in typography to score the performance for frequency, tone-color, duration, morphology, amplitude, and spatialization.

7 *Organize* – Share the poem-object with others. Invite them to construct and circulate poem-objects of their own. Consider together these poem-objects as you ask the question, "What did you hear?"

Gabriella Csoszó / FreeDoc

Counterimaging

The New York Occupy movement had provided me with drive and inspiration. After returning to Hungary, I offered my active support to all initiatives for freedom and against the ruling FIDESZ-KDNP antidemocratic government, which has slowly been eliminating and transforming the Hungarian legal and constitutional framework since the political crisis of 2010. As a photographer, I began photographing the demonstrations, protests, and actions of Hungary's most important political and civil democratic movements and organizations, and making the pictures available to them on the FreeDoc platform. FreeDoc's projects are widespread, as I do not wish to choose one struggle, but to document them all. While the most frequently published photo essays are protests against social exclusion, the protection of human struggles and events brings into focus the issue of constitutionality.

Within a few months, FreeDoc has become a crucial supporter of the social movements, a free photo agency. The list of its partner organizations has been expanding day by day; the accessibility of the images, mainly its spread and rating on the Internet, equals the leading online news portals. For today, besides

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the media controlled and influenced by the government (media law, media authority), the importance of alternative new sources has significantly increased in Hungary.
FreeDoc images can be freely used by NGOs, public political foundations, and groups committed to social issues. Their free use facilitates the visual communication of selfregulatory social groups lacking or having little authoritative, political, or financial means.

__Gabriella Csoszó__ (HU) is an artist, activist, and photographer. She has been documenting the most important events of the Hungarian opposition since 2011, using her blog FreeDoc as an online photo archive.

Lexxus Légal

Hip-Hop

The people are worn out, scandalized to learn that
for years they've had a fabulous country,
Beloved of God, wealthy.
Geological scandal. If we follow the logic, we're all
quite rich.
But look at the poster. Are we Swiss? Is this the
African Côte d'Azur?
Tourists, get an eyeful. You're in Kinshasa, far from
Beverly, this is where the crisis lives
permanently, maligned before slurping up the
nonsense.

Life has stuffed too much down our throats. In its
view, we're spoiled.
We're envied. And that's why too many of us have
been killed.
How come we're still penniless?
We're living here where diamonds, cobalt, gold
and coltan,
cannabis and coca sleep. It's strange that we've
got nothing.

(Lexxus Légal, *Fauchés*, 2009)

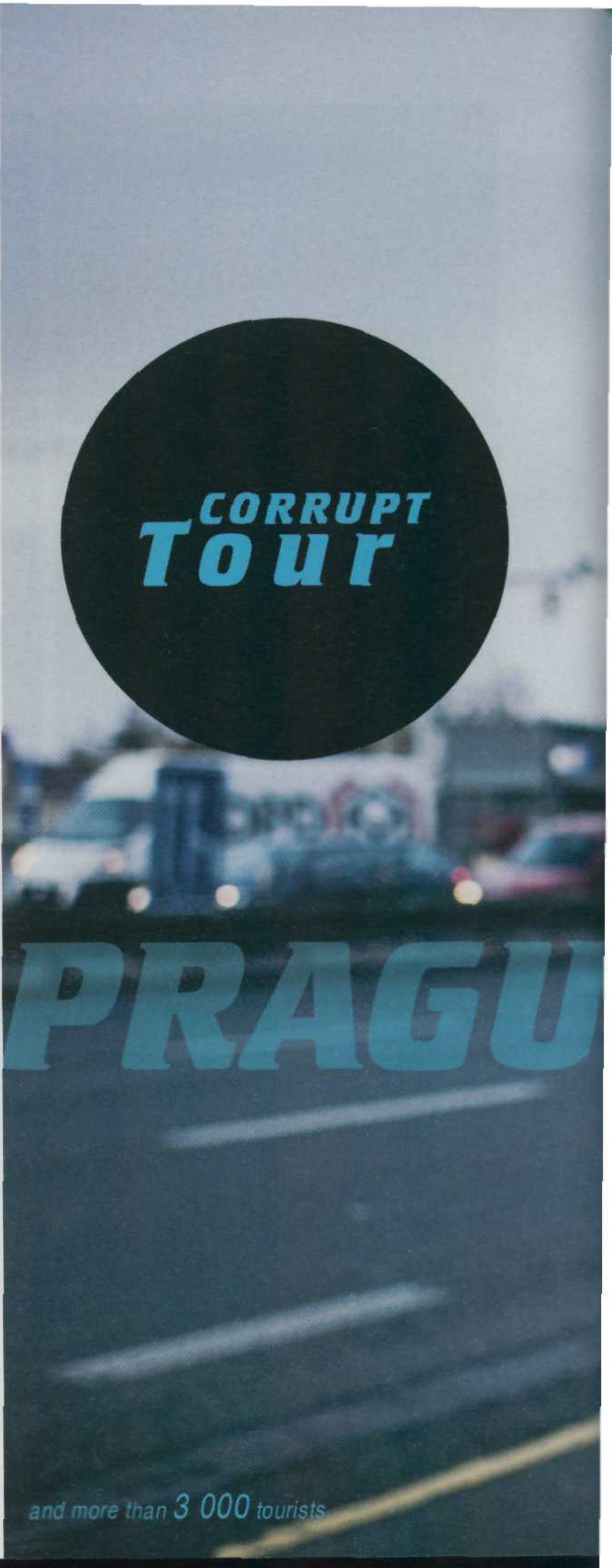
Hip hop is a weapon in the struggle for freedom of speech and for real democracy in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where music was traditionally related to dance, love, and fun in fear of censorship and repression. The apparition of hip hop in the 1980s and its development in the 1990s, with the focus on very hard, direct texts sent shockwaves through the artistic scene back then, and through the state and the (state-owned) media, who tried to censure the whole hip hop culture. The new regime freed the media but, significantly, in 2004, radically prohibited the diffusion of hip hop through any media. Despite this, live hip hop is still being played and broadcast through the Web, articulating an accurate vision of the regime and the international political system, and putting forward alternatives: it talks about democracy, elections, corruption, war, peace, justice, unemployment, aids, prostitution, studies, Balkanization, churches ... Nothing is being spared. Power logics are unveiled. Names are named. Youngsters and students form the bulk of hip hop artists and audiences in Kinshasa, and they have a deep desire to change people's minds for the sake of their country and their own future. Hip hop is a tool to awaken people's criticality, as well as a weapon, when the lyrics are sung at revolutionary moments.

Alex Dende, a.k.a. __Lexxus Légal__ (CD), is one of the pioneers of hip hop in Kinshasa. He is the founding member of the band PNB (Pensée Nègre Brute / Raw Nigger Thought). Lexxus uses hip hop as a political weapon, as with the "Tosolola Sida" ("Let's talk about AIDS") project, for example: a mobile discussion and medical platform, acting in suburbs and villages and mobilizing people through hip hop calls.

Corrupt Tour

Corruption Tourism

Corrupt Tour *(CZ) is the first corruption specialist tour company in the world, offering walking tours and bus tours in Prague, always looking at the brighter side of sleaze, and taking customers behind the scenes. Corrupt Tour makes money from corruption—legally. Created by Petr Šourek, Eva Holá, Pavel Kotyza, Ivanka Čonková, Dan Dittrich, Eva Čechová, Olga Cieslarová, Justin Svoboda, Philipp Schenker, Daniela Voráčková, Herbert van Lynden, Zdeňka Hanáková, and Jan Hrdý.*



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I ♥ CAPITAL .ISM

Jasmina Metwaly / Mosireen Collective

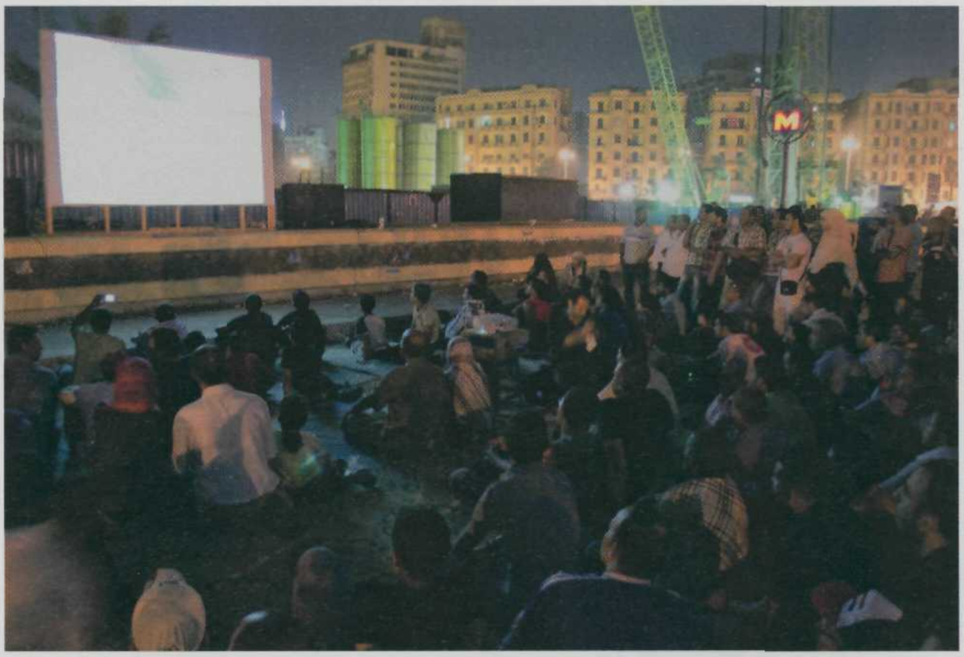
Tahrir Cinema

In 2000, Peter Watkins made *La Commune (Paris 1871)*, a film in which he and over 200 people (mostly non-actors) created an experimental portrayal of what is known as the Paris Commune of 1871: a shortlived revolutionary society that sought autonomy from a government they considered repressive and ignorant of the rampant poverty of the time. Throughout the film you see how individuals assemble themselves within a large crowd—a crowd that sustains a collective form of resistance and lasts to the very end, until brutally crushed by the army. Watkins creates two camera perspectives: that of the state-owned media TV that manipulates and lies, fabricating an anti-commune narrative; and on the other side, "Commune TV," a couple of independent reporters following the ongoing struggles and changes to the Commune. At first, the latter are naive and idealistic about their role within the larger discourse. Their camera follows the protagonists, intuitively filming their testimonies and actions. When the Commune's resistance falls apart they eventually turn away from the burden of being the only link between the Communards and the outside world.

Watching *La Commune (Paris 1871)* reminds me of how people turn a sense of momentum into a space of continuous resistance, and how these events in turn are transmitted as forms of a spectacle. We pass on information from hand to hand. The protester writes a word on a piece of paper, then turns it into a chant, and finally into a testimony.

Though they embodied all the values of the Commune, the reporters of "Commune TV" ultimately turned a series of raw testimonies back into an institutionalized form.

Independent media today suffers from similar



issues: what does it mean to take the step from recording the information and images passing through the hands of the people, to adopting the viewpoint of a disinterested onlooker who forms representations from this?

To resist means to occupy public space, to go *beyond depiction, and to enter the image,* which does not merely resemble an action, but becomes an active medium of occupation. To occupy is to turn public space into a place where one can converse, chant, discuss with one and many. It is a space where creativity happens collectively. Over the course of 2011–2012, street screenings became very popular in Egypt not for their entertainment value, but for bringing to light issues that were not discussed on television, voicing people's demands and their willingness to fight the system. Alternative initiatives such as Tahrir Cinema and Kazeboon turned public squares into temporary makeshift cinemas, showing images of army abuse, testimonies to counter the state run propaganda. The spectator became the protagonist and the cinematic experience of a black box was turned into a protest-based form of participation. With the street lights switched on and the real world still present, the image had the power to go beyond the fictive realm into the real—or rather, social hyperreality. This friction between audience-image and image-reality provoked discourse that influenced the way people consider their social and political rights, what they can do and how they can organize and manage themselves against a corrupt governing body. These forms of temporary, cinematic occupations, which depict truths and expose the lies of those in power, are some of the key actions that influenced the collective consciousness of the public sphere. Today street screenings do not happen anymore, or at least not on the same scale. Voicing concerns costs at least a day in prison.

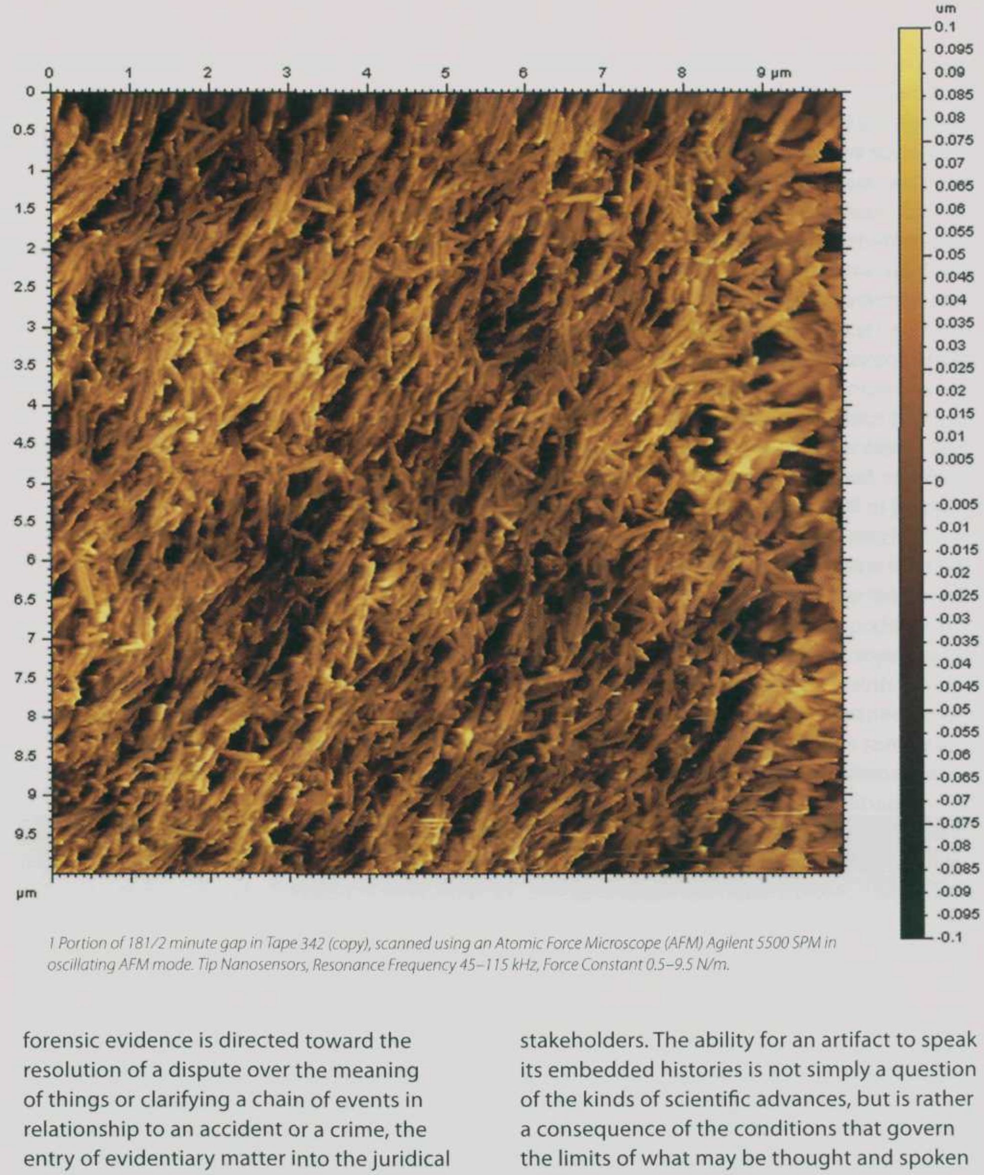
***Jasmina Metwaly** (PL/EG) is a visual artist and filmmaker based in Cairo, interested in the intersection/division between single channel image, video, and documentary filmmaking. She is cofounder of "8784 h project" and a founding member of Mosireen, a media video collective born out of the explosion of citizen media and cultural activism in Egypt during the revolution. Armed with mobile phones and cameras, thousands upon thousands of citizens kept the balance of truth in their country by recording events as they happened in front of them, wrong-footing censorship and empowering the voice of a street-level perspective.*

Susan Schuppli / Forensic Architecture

Forensics

Forensics is derived from its Latin source *forensis*, meaning pertaining to the forum and originally referred to the practice and skill of presenting evidence before a public gathering such as a court. Forensic science, while defined as a science in service to the courts emphasizes the inscriptive rather than elocutionary process, whereby minute details can be technically conjured from within the material substrates of trace evidence. With its roots in the police laboratory work of Edmond Locard (1877–1966) it is nonetheless still indebted to a conception of evidence as necessarily performative, in that judgments are based upon the translation of forensic findings into comprehensible and convincing narratives. As a form of micro detection, forensics is dedicated to uncovering the multiple realities that lurk within spaces, bodies, and objects.

My particular interest in forensics is concerned both with its original etymological orientation around procedures of truthmaking in relationship to legal evidence, as well as with the ways in which new modes of technical perception can make hidden things visible within the sociopolitical field. Whether such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1 Portion of 181/2 minute gap in Tape 342 (copy), scanned using an Atomic Force Microscope (AFM) Agilent 5500 SPM in oscillating AFM mode. Tip Nanosensors, Resonance Frequency 45–115 kHz, Force Constant 0.5–9.5 N/m.

forensic evidence is directed toward the resolution of a dispute over the meaning of things or clarifying a chain of events in relationship to an accident or a crime, the entry of evidentiary matter into the juridical process as a material witness is determined by a series of negotiations around what claims can actually be made in its name. Evidence is thus less a consequence of the intrinsic "truths" embedded in objects than the semantic capacities of such materials to narrate events. Forensics understood as such is actually a mode of negotiation whereby objects become the agents of translation between differing versions of events or contestations between stakeholders. The ability for an artifact to speak its embedded histories is not simply a question of the kinds of scientific advances, but is rather a consequence of the conditions that govern the limits of what may be thought and spoken at any given time.

Tape 342: That Dangerous Supplement

In December 1973, a spool of 0.5mm magnetic tape containing an 181/2 minute gap was escorted by US marshals to the Federal Scientific Corp. in Harlem for testing. Although the tape defied all technical efforts at conjuring its latent sound-ghosts, it was understood as harboring important trace evidence that might testify to Nixon's criminality in the Watergate break-in. Fear of disturbing the remaining few magnetic particles that clung to the gap meant that after its initial testing, Tape 342 was sealed and deposited in the vaults of the US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). In 2001, NARA convened a scientific panel to evaluate whether forensic audio technology had advanced sufficiently to consider unsealing Tape 342. Several unsuccessful "proof of concept exercises" were conducted using test reels recorded on the original Nixon era tape recorders over a period of two years. Chief Archivist John W. Carlin concluded: "I am fully satisfied that we have explored all of the avenues to attempt to recover the sound on this tape. We will continue to preserve the tape in the hopes that later generations can try again to recover this vital piece of our history."

The discourse around Tape 342 has always turned on the rhetorical deficiency of the gap, whether named as silence or as an erasure. I contend, however, that a surplus of information populates this gap. While the National Archives' commitment to investigating the magnetic encodings is tied to its conviction in technology's progressive futurity, the tape's status as mute has already been extensively undone by the sheer volume of speculation around what kind of lurid data lurks within. These musings far exceed what any one man can physically say in 181/2 minutes. It is an understanding of the gap as continuing to produce an excess—what Derrida has called, following Rousseau, "a dangerous supplement." Erasure was not a process that removed information to produce an absence. In fact, an analogue tape recorder can only ever rerecord over an existing track and thus Nixon's, or his secretary Rose Mary Woods', purported act of tampering was a supplementary act of recording—an additive rather than subtractive process. Every recorded sound event is an archive that registers a dense topography of processes, including the ambient acoustics, the particularities and positioning of the microphones, and the internal circuitry of the recording machine whose own microsonic regime, imprints itself onto the recording.

If topographic images of the surface of Tape 342 were to be produced, they would reveal a palimpsest of multiple magnetic inscriptions that could, in theory, be disentangled and decoded. Which is to say that unlocking the secrets of Tape 342's gap rests not in submitting the tape to further acoustic interrogation but in scanning and separating out the layered distribution of particles in the hope that certain configurations might emerge that could be reverse engineered into patterns of speech. However, the sonic remix registered by the visualizations reproduced here could never be pulled apart to reveal an origin story. Refracted through the lens of the atomic force and scanning tunneling microscopes, the surface features of Tape 342 depict a recombinant image of sound in which all previous versions of the 181/2 minute "silence"—the original, the copy made in 1973 by NARA for purposes of reproduction, and the copy of this copy in my possession—have been wholly flattened so that they can only be read as an image without an index to a fixed event. What they register is a provocation that insists that Nixon's probable act of "erasure" is likewise a sound event without a stable referent. Rather than destroying the sonic transmissions of the tape, he radically mutated the tape, transforming it into a dangerous machinic supplement capable of authoring multiple versions of history.

Susan Schuppli *(GB) is a London-based artist and Senior Research Fellow and Project Coordinator, together with Principal Investigator Eyal Weizman of Forensic Architecture, hosted by the Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths University of London.*

Forensic Architecture *refers to the presentation of spatial analysis within contemporary legal and political forums. The project undertakes research that maps, images, and models sites of violence within the framework of international humanitarian law and human rights.*

(Cou-nter) Agitat-ing

The Spontaneous Ideology of the Art Field

In the field of art some practices are regularly conceived as more valuable than others. These practices are supposed to come closer to the socially accepted "essence" of art. So, most people would spontaneously agree that the more complex, sophisticated, and refined, the higher the quality of an artistic position. And vice versa: artistic positions that are, or seem to be, directly accessible and easy to decipher are perceived as more remote from art's "essence." What we expect, after all, from a piece of art is some aura of the indecipherable, some mysterious distance between work and audience, some unbridgeable gap between art and interpretation. An artwork whose message appears immediately readable to everyone is considered a bad work to common standards. And these standards do not come from nowhere nor have they always been in place historically. They are upheld, reproduced, and disseminated by art institutions and their functionaries. This is what I propose to term the "spontaneous ideology of the art field."

This spontaneous ideology is based on a paradoxical trope that is almost ubiquitous. Not that art, according to its ideologists, is unpolitical. It *is* political. But it is political, we are told, precisely *in being not political*. Art's true "politics" resides in its complexity, obliqueness, and remoteness from every political practice in the strict sense. The *less* art is explicitly political, we are led to conclude from here, the *more* political it actually is.

This trope is nonsense. It is merely a reflection of the antipolitical ideology of art functionaries who have come under pressure to defend their ideology against more political factions within their own field. For what we have witnessed over the last few years—and not only since the uprisings and occupations of 2011—is what one may call a "return of politics" or, more precisely, a "turning toward politics" among artists. Not toward the imaginary politics of the art field, but toward actual political practices *of organization, agitation, and propaganda*—practices, that is, of immersing oneself in the muddy waters of social struggle. What these artists/activists defend, implicitly, is a claim that runs counter to the spontaneous ideology of the art field. What they claim is something very simple: The less art is political, the less it is political. No sleazy dialectics or sophistry involved. If one wants to increase art's politicality, one has to forge a passage toward politics—not toward the representation or mimicry of politics, but toward politics as a social practice with its own protocols that are not, and cannot be, entirely congruent with art as defined by the functionaries of the art field.

Making Things Readable

Given the value hierarchies of this field, it comes as no surprise that positions of explicitly political art are regularly denounced from within the art field as mere propaganda. But is propaganda really such a bad thing? It certainly is in the eyes of an art functionary, but it is not if we accept that political protocols will always be, and have to be, geared toward the *reduction* of complexity if a given struggle is to be successful. Just imagine an election campaign in which it is totally hazy who's running for what on which platform—this might amount to a more or less entertaining artistic project, but certainly not to a viable and successful political campaign. At best, it will attract short term attention, but in politics at some point one would have to present a solution to the riddle and make clear the identity and political position of the candidate. The same applies to other forms of political mobilization. If it remains unclear what it is all about, a political manifestation may simply be confused with a flash mob.

Propaganda, before anything else, is a way of making things politically readable by way of simplification. Again, simplification may be a no go within sophisticated art circles, but it is a necessary strategy of political articulation.

For at the end of the day, every political articulation puts a demand on us, confronts us with the exigency of a decision: Which side are you on? Are you "red" or "white," progressive or *reactionary, pro or con? Are you part of the one* percent or the ninety nine percent, the state or the people, the problem or the solution? In short: Do you want to belong to "us" or to "them?" A stark choice we are confronted with, and not always a pleasant one. But, at the bottom line, every political act is premised on such fundamental choice—on a decision as to which side you are on. There cannot be politics without any lines of demarcation being drawn, and propaganda is what one may think of as the arch technique of rhetorically drawing lines. Hence, no politics without a certain degree of propaganda involved.

Nonetheless it is possible in politics, and maybe this is the normal case, to move between a multiplicity of lines crisscrossing each other. While a demand is put on us to take up a position whenever we stumble across a line, this position may interfere with or contradict another position taken up in confrontation with another line of demarcation. We will thus have to shift positions and confront the possibility of a more intertwined, contorted, and contradictory political terrain.

Complex Simplicity

The simplicity of the political terrain is, for this reason, *a complex simplicity*; while the complexity upheld by the art field is *a simplistic complexity*—a complexity devoid of any real internal contradictions and conflicts. It is an amorphous complexity where everything becomes interchangeable; where every so-called artistic "position" is without consequences and comes without a risk because it can always be placed next to another "position" on the walls of a museum or into the gallery box at an art fair. It is a field ruled by the law of minimal differences that amount, in the last instance, to interchangeable trademarks. It is not ruled, as politics is, by the law of eventually incompatible, mutually exclusive decisions premised upon actual conflicts. For this reason, the complexity of the autonomous artwork, praised by its defenders, is a fake complexity.

This will become evident if we compare such *fake complexity with the kind of complexity* produced by intersecting lines of conflict and political positioning. Take the most prominent example for artistic activism: Femen. What Femen illustrate is not only a hugely successful formula of straight "in your face" propaganda (there never remains any doubt as to what their message is). It also illustrates that whoever enters the field of politics enters a minefield where every attempt to reduce complexity is risky and may come at the price of producing new contradictions. So, while on the one hand, Femen proclamations remind of the essentialist binaries of second wave feminism (women versus patriarchy), the agitational strategy employed—what Femen calls "sextremism"—appears as deeply postfeminist. But this contradiction, emerging from the uneasy fusion of second wave feminism and postfeminism, again comes at the price of ignoring the struggles of *third* wave feminism and the queer movement by which simplistic gender categorization had been questioned without falling into the trap of postfeminist countersexism. It is important to understand that the terrain on which all this is being negotiated, to the extent that it is a political terrain, is not structured along the lines of "binarism versus complexity," but is a terrain of many intersecting confrontations where different alliances (for instance between the seemingly incompatible positions of second wave feminism and postfeminism) are tested out against others.

Setting Things Straight

But there is another misconception regarding the notion of propaganda: the idea that propaganda is essentially about manipulation—an idea deeply rooted in the paradigm of conventional ideology critique. A quite different picture emerges when we start appreciating that propaganda has not always been a pejorative term synonymous with deception. Communist parties used the term in the affirmative. With their propaganda, communists—quite contrary to Goebbel's ministry of propaganda—did not mean to fool people into a manipulated view of reality. Propaganda, as a technical term, straightforwardly referred to the dissemination of the *correct* view of reality as it was approved by the party and scientifically guaranteed by the historical doctrine of Marxist economics and dialectical materialism. This straightforward *sense of propaganda—understood not as a* manipulated, but as the only correct view of reality—can be traced back to the very moment when the term came to life with the papal foundation in 1622 of a committee of cardinals named *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*. The committee, as the name says, was charged with the propagation of faith, particularly in non-Catholic countries.

It goes without saying that the Church was deeply convinced of the superior truth of its doctrine—nonetheless, that a propaganda committee was deemed necessary attests to the fact that truth does not transmit automatically. It has to enter a contested space where rival faiths and ideologies may equally be propagated. Yet the same holds for today's artistic practices where they aim at making a dissensual political point. No matter whether they consider themselves in possession of a correct view of reality or, rather, take a more self-critical stance—they will have to propagate their view against competing forces some of which might be hegemonic. The terrain they enter will always be preformed and dominated—but not necessarily "manipulated"—by some kind of *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*.

Whence, again, one must conclude that wherever we turn, there is no outside of propaganda. If one seeks to act politically, it is not possible *not* to engage in some sort of propaganda. As the only outside of the political is an internal outside, the only way out of propaganda is a way out *into* propaganda. This is the deeper meaning of the term counterpropaganda. It is not antipropaganda (the term that is, I think misleadingly, used by Marina Naprushkina for her Office for Anti-Propaganda with which she courageously struggles against the authoritarian state ideology of Belarus)—as if it were possible to stand outside and against propaganda. Counterpropaganda is a particular kind of—dissensual and minoritarian—propaganda directed against a *doxa* defended by the hegemonic forces of *propaganda fide*.

"Revolujah!"

I do think that the self-understanding of many of today's "artivists" attests to this fact. Political artists today do not pretend, as Theodor W. Adorno did, that only an autonomous artwork is a political artwork. Rather, artistic practices are put into the service of heteronymous political goals and movements. Just think of some of the positions included in this section.

Arguably the most entertaining example of artistic counterpropaganda is Reverend Billy & The Church of Stop Shopping. At first glance, the Elvis-like figure of Reverend Billy appears to engage in typically right-wing preaching. Yet when he and his Church of Stop Shopping start performing in a bank lobby, a shopping mall, a Starbucks coffeehouse or in support of Occupy Wall Street, it soon becomes clear that the goal is not *propaganda fide*, but counterpropaganda in the service of an anticapitalist and ecological position. Or, in the words of Reverend Billy, who was backed by the Green Party to run for New York City mayor in 2009: "Earthalujah!" Strategies like these seem to test out not only the solidity of the hegemonic block, but also the very existence of a public sphere worthy of the name. A similar strategy is in place in the case of Liberate Tate, a group founded during a Tate workshop on art and activism in 2010 that ended up in a propaganda action *against* the Tate. What the activists protested against was the funding of Tate by BP, which was seen as a form of "art washing." BP, involved as a corporation in worldwide exploitation of labor and ecological pollution, seeks to present itself as a noble donor to the arts in order to make us forget its less noble business practices. To push Tate officials to the point where they cut ties with their sponsor, the activists counter BP's strategy of "art washing" with a strategy of what they call "blackwashing" that consists in the spoiling not only of Tate's image, but also—literally—of its gallery floor. On the occasion of Tate's celebration of twenty years of BP sponsoring, they poured hundreds of liters of black molasses into the gallery.

Of course, examples abound where artists and/or activists—of which The Yes Men and Femen are perhaps the most famous exponents—are involved in similar "image spoiling" campaigns. In most of these cases various strategies of adbusting and cultural jamming are employed. An interesting, and less typical, example of such a strategy is a branding campaign by Public Movement. It is less typical because it is not about spoiling an existing (corporate) image, but about constructing a new one through, as it were, *counterbranding*. In their project "Rebranding European Muslims," developed for steirischer herbst 2012, the performance collective Public Movement appropriated public branding strategies. They more or less hijacked the opening gala for steirischer herbst, turning it—in collaboration with local Muslim groups—into an event where an appropriate advertisement campaign for rebranding the image of European Muslims was to be chosen out of three options by a surprised audience. The whole project turned out to receive wide coverage by the media and sparked a discussion not only about multiculturalism but also about the appropriateness of rebranding the image of a minoritarian social group.

Agitation

So far, these practices were presented as examples of (counter)propaganda, but there is an additional dimension to them which has to be taken into account: the strategy of *agitation*, which in revolutionary Russia (as *agitatsiya*) was considered a necessary supplement to propaganda. The function of agitation was not to promote the correct view of reality, but to stir up unrest, to unsettle certainties and to wake people from their dogmatic slumber. To *agitate* means to actively work on the disaffiliation of people from the realm of *doxa*. Therefore, the precondition of successful propaganda is successful agitation. If propaganda is all about getting people connected with the correct view of reality, then agitation is about *disconnecting* them from *doxa*—the automatic assumptions of (bourgeois) ideology.

In political art, such moments of agitation can regularly be discerned: policemen get disoriented when trying to arrest an Elvis impersonator yelling the First Amendment at them through a megaphone. Bourgeois provincial art lovers are stunned when their gala dinner turns out to be opened by a muezzin and immediately transforms into a corporate branding event for European Muslims. Bourgeois metropolitan art lovers are disgusted when, at the opening of an art show, they have to wade through black molasses. Not to mention the even more "in your face" agitation à la Femen; or the Punk performers of Pussy Riot who, as a result of their persecution, became Putin's Nemesis; or the political graffitis painted on the walls of Cairo by an artist like Ganzeer. In this sense, the rhetorical function of agitation is to disrupt dogmatic opinion through strategies of surprise, shock, dissuasion, and estrangement, with a view on clearing the way for the propagation of facts, information, analysis, critique, that is of a, perhaps, more "correct" view of social reality.

I am not claiming that an entirely correct view, in a scientific sense, can ever be reached. Every correct perspective on social reality will be transformed and contorted by the very struggles that are fought to enforce it against resilient ideology patterns. A correct view will, therefore, always be less than entirely correct. It will be a partial view that has managed to claim hegemony. In the realm of politics we will never be able to gain access to "truth," but we will be able to institute some sort of *political* correctness (in a wide sense of the term)—a form of correctness that will result from hegemonic struggles. The task of transmitting such *politically* correct knowledge is the task of propaganda.

Disrupting, Expanding, Instituting

For this reason, we must not be afraid of the term, even though it has had bad press. Every knowledge we can gain, every truth and every correct worldview we may achieve in the field of politics, will have to be *propagated* against rival truths and worldviews. The fact that every political position will have to be propagated by a *hegemonic project* (hegemony being defined by Ernesto Laclau as the process whereby a partial force assumes the—ultimately impossible—role of a universal actor) becomes immediately clear if the etymology of "propaganda" is considered. Originally, to propagate means to procreate, to broaden, to enlarge. In this sense, it is possible, for instance, to speak about the "propagation" of a dominion, which simply means to extend a given domain of political rule. And this is also what *hegemony* is about: the extension of a particular position to an apparently universal one.

How is this to be done? The Russian artist/activist group Chto Delat? ("What Is To Be Done?"), in their reflections on what it means to run a newspaper as an art project, quotes from Lenin's 1901 article "Where to Begin." For Lenin, it is clear that a newspaper "is not only a collective propagandist and collective agitator, but also a collective organizer." Here, eventually, we have the completed *trias* of Soviet revolutionary activity: *agitating, propagating, organizing*. Or, as I would translate: *disrupting, expanding, instituting*. Dmitry Vilensky of Chto Delat? leaves no doubt that the last term of the *trias*—the dimension of organization or institution—is of key importance. A newspaper is a means of constructing a collectivity around instituting practices, of organizing not only an editorial collective but a whole network of people, practices, and debates.

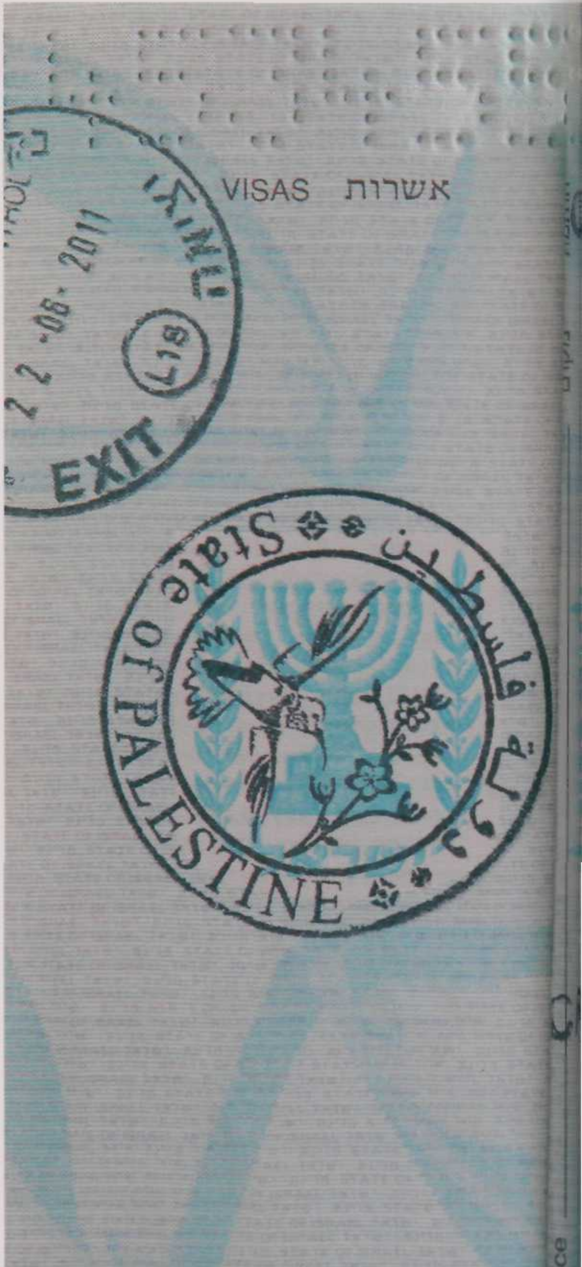
These considerations are, I suppose, substantial enough to lead us to the following conclusion: a position in which art connects to politics must be informed by the triple strategy of agitation, propaganda, and organization. Without prior disruption of common opinion, the chances of propaganda succeeding are small. But without the propagation, i.e. the *expansion* of a particular position to a more hegemonic one, no sustainable effect will be produced through agitation. A given artist/activist performance will—like a flash mob—disappear in a second. And without the dimension of organization, the propagation of a particular position will not be sustainable either. Debates and practices have to be organized in order to survive over time. They have to be, to a certain extent, institutionalized.

With this we have arrived at the political function of activist art practices: to disturb, to expand, and to institute. Thus, art, insofar as it is responsive to the triple exigency of agitating, propagating, and organizing, can easily turn into politics. More easily and more frequently, in any case, than functionaries of the art field will ever admit.

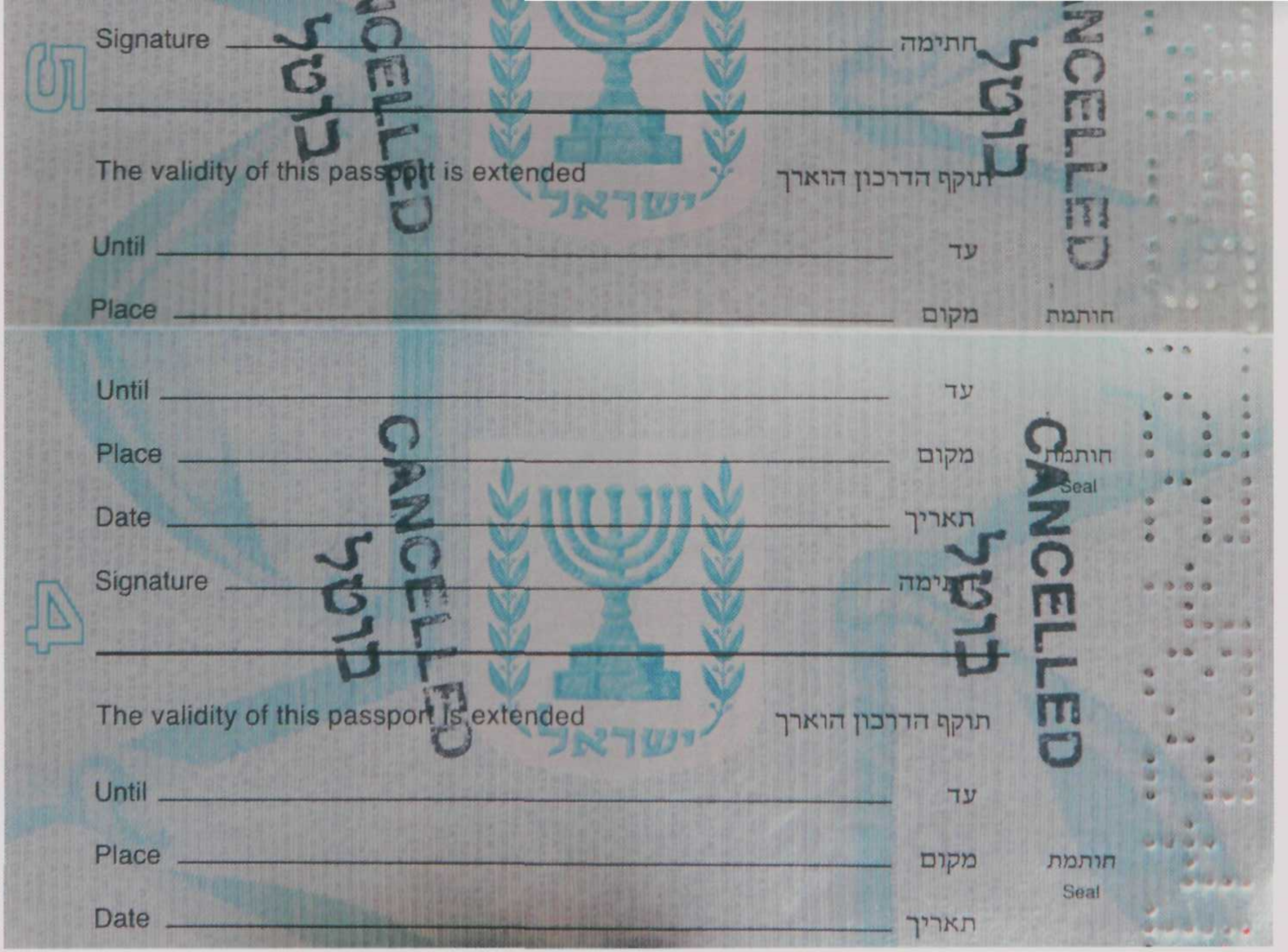
Oliver Marchart *(AT) is a professor of sociology at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. He works in the fields of political theory, social theory, theory of culture, and art. His recent publications include* Das unmögliche Objekt. Eine postfundamentalistische Theorie der Gesellschaft *(2013),* Die Prekarisierungsgesellschaft. Prekäre Proteste *(2013), and* Die politische Differenz *(2010).*

Khaled Jarrar

Stamping



***Khaled Jarrar** (PS) is a photographer, filmmaker, and video artist. For his project "State of Palestine," he produced a seemingly official Palestinian stamp to mark the passports of visitors and friends—first at the Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank and later in different parts of the world. Having a stamp from an unrecognized country in one's passport creates the particular experience of a small scale act of disobedience for its holder: while standing in line at the border of Israel, for example, or the United States, one becomes part of an inner performance: a small reminder of what many people in the world have to go through every time they try to pass state borders. The passport depicted in the image was stamped invalid by Israeli border police when its owner tried to cross the border.*



5

Signature ____ חתימה

The validity of this passport is extended תוקף הדרכון הוארך

Until ____ עד

Place ____ מקום

חותמת

NCELLED
בוטל

CELLED
בוטל

4

Until ____ עד

Place ____ מקום

Date ____ תאריך

Signature ____ חתימה

חותמת
Seal

CANCELLED
בוטל

The validity of this passport is extended תוקף הדרכון הוארך

Until ____ עד

Place ____ מקום

Date ____ תאריך

חותמת
Seal

CANCELLED
בוטל

Reverend Billy &
The Church of Stop Shopping

Preaching

To preach in the United States—that is, to inhabit the character of the Christian apocalyptic right-wing preacher as I do—is to adopt the iconic persona of American fascism. The late night televangelists, threatening their congregations with hell and damnation, echo the larger pressure of American patriotism, the religion of consumerism, celebrity worship, and all the disasters of the expansionist promised land.

Preaching as a purely vocal art, though, is much older than the blues. And I am in love with preaching. Laurie Anderson has called it the "crack between talking and singing." I would call it the landscape between the dreamland beyond. The vowels can howl full of breath, the consonants stop suddenly to deliver a hostage-taking silence. I love to preach. I'm a student of the form.

Our goal is survival. Since our singing activists, the Church of Stop Shopping, have become a community, with births and loves and deaths—we are mindful of life. That the creators of consumerism are a principal devil in the earth's crisis, we feel only that our goal has deepened and clarified over the years.

To engage in nonviolent direct action as a community, with birth, love, and death within the bodies of the action participants, is a completely different feeling than proceeding as we often used to, from research, from policy, from values. And as we became a community of interlocking families, facing life—and arrest—together, we became earth radicals, with big banks replacing or adding to big retail as our "dark one." So in our performances in

UBS, Bank of America, Chase, HSBC Deutsche Bank—we were one community standing in for another one, a natural community, an ecosystem. When we don our big golden toad heads, the performance by the extinct frog, with the little trees and singing, and frog floating dances, we are evoking the community of the cloud forest in which this beautiful amphibian lived before it was forced into extinction by drought and disease. So our ultimate goal is survival, and community is the drama, the script of our nonviolent direct action. Earthalujah!

In an activist event, say the takeover of a bank lobby, we believe that the collision of my right-wing threads and left-wing voice—and the intimidating presence of the Stop Shopping Choir in their fervent harmonies—release powerfully upon the customers, tellers, renta-cops, and the bank manager. I'm told that, as the singing and preaching about the bank's behavior gets under way, that people have trouble focusing on what's happening. The whole thing is too jarring, with the gospel concert and radical lyrics and the Elvis impersonator out front ... and we find that the inability to place us easily in a category requires that each witness figures out—in a more original way than they might otherwise—what we are, and who they are, and just what this bank is doing ...

And then, of course, there's the volume. I often use a small battery operated bullhorn. But the police have taken them from me so often that I went to an opera teacher to learn how to increase my volume physically; to create a bullhorn within, you might say. I'm told that there is a bullhorn shelf in the police warehouse, where my bullhorns are arranged neatly in a row, one after the other. My own little museum.

***Reverend Billy & The Church of Stop Shopping** (US) is a New York City based radical performance community. They are wild earth-loving activists who have defended land, life, and imagination from evil corporations and corrupt governments.*

Inna Shevchenko / Femen

Un-dressing

Dear Friends,

I need to reveal a terrible secret about civilization: a woman is not a human being. This secret is thousands and thousands of years old. This dogma—the subjugation of women—has been spelled out in all texts considered to be sacred to humanity: the Bible, the Torah, the Koran. It is reflected in the art and folklore of all peoples and nations. It is even evident in legal systems and legislation. The doctrine of the subjugation of women is shared to some degree by all countries from the wild Middle East to emancipated western Europe. Let's not forget the nasty incidents involving the Swedish furniture chain IKEA trying to please the rich Saudi Wahhabi by photoshopping out women and girls from the Middle East version of its catalogue. This monstrous, misogynistic alliance was formed between a country with one of the highest levels of emancipation and a country where women are still denied the right to vote. This catalogue has become a marketing manifesto for modern patriarchy—a system which, whether manipulating women's bodies for full concealment or for pornography, works solely in the ideological and economic interests of men. This is the public crime against women's liberation. And there is an explanation for it.

The key to enslavement of women by men is control over their bodies. The methods of control range from the glamour of the "beauty industry" to barbaric acts such as genital mutilation and acid attacks.

We live in a world of male economic, cultural, and ideological occupation. In this world woman is a slave, she is deprived of the property rights to everything, but mainly she is deprived of ownership of her own body.

Truth is Concrete
Truth is in Fight

Separated from the woman, her body is an object of monstrous patriarchal exploitation. Complete control over the woman's body is the key instrument of her suppression, the woman's sexual *démarche* is the key to her liberation. Female nudity that is free from the patriarchal system becomes the symbol of women's liberation. Nudity as a weapon is one of the new ways for feminism to transform society. We are naked because we are feminists.

The greatest concern of modern feminism is how to take back the female body from the cultural and financial machine of the patriarchal system, and return it to its rightful owners, while using this body, instead, to protect the interests of women across the world.

Femen is trying to bring the world a new interpretation of modern feminism, where the naked body becomes an active instrument in confronting institutions of patriarchy, like the church, dictatorship, and the sex industry. We have developed a tactic that we call "sextremism." Sextremism is a new type of women's activism, which is aggressive, but still nonviolent—provocative but with a clear message. Sextremism not only allows us to raise awareness about some of the more important issues faced by women today, but also to check each country's levels of liberation. Sextremism is insurgent against patriarchy, women's sexuality within extreme political acts. Appropriating the sexist style of the actions is a way to destruct the patriarchal understanding of what is the destination of female sexuality to the benefit of the great revolutionary mission. Sextremists are a demonstration of intellectual, psychological, and physical superiority of women.

We have conducted topless protests in countries across the globe: in democratic countries they shake our hands; in totalitarian states our activists are liable to be beaten, kidnapped, or imprisoned. Femen is performing a real test for democracy all over the world.

Go out! Undress! Win!

Your Inna Femen

***Femen** is a feminist protest group originally from Kiev, Ukraine, founded in 2008, focusing on topless protests in public to fight against sex tourism, corruption, and exploitation. Meanwhile Femen has branches in ten countries.*

*As a founding member, **Inna Shevchenko** (UA/FR) has organized sex attacks by Femen all over the world. After cutting down a large wooden Catholic cross with a chainsaw in Kiev's main square in 2012 as protest against the influence of religion on human rights, she had to leave Ukraine and moved to France.*

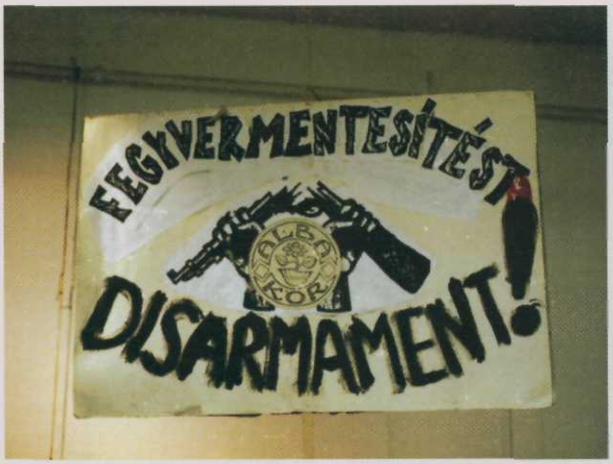
Toma Sik

One Man Demos

Toma Sik defined himself as a social non-artist and socialized bon vivant practicing the art of life. Long before others—as early as the 1960s and 1970s—he started the Palestinian-Hebrew peace movement. He was a vegan, an anarchist, and a cosmopolite. He was not a superficial critical leftist, but a radical activist whose ideology became concrete through his life, his body, and his death. When I met him in 2001, he was living very frugally on less than twenty euros per week and advocating others to do the same. He sold vegetables for a bio-farm at a Saturday market and lived in the notoriously poor District IX in Budapest. His thirty square meters were so rich, so full of colorful placards, signs, and manifestos dedicated to the widest ranging political and environmental causes. Toma followed the high and universal goals of saving the earth, plants, and animals, and of overcoming ethnic problems and ethic differentiation, alongside peacemaking in politics. If everyone were to follow his path, instead of sitting in cars or planes for no particular reason, using carbon-based energy, and using arms, the human disaster taking place in the Middle East would be solved with no more fruitless negotiations or corrupt political meetings. He tirelessly protested in public space—often alone—and for each new demonstration painted demo signs on textile and paper, wrote poetic slogans on them and invented simple but clever mechanisms to carry them and move around. He was thus able to hold one-man demonstrations, carrying hundreds of signs himself.

In 2005, I took all the heaps of demo plates home before their complete destruction.

AZ EMBER MÁS: SZERET!
AZ EMBER MÁS: SZERET!


EGYVERMENTESÍTÉST
ALBA KÖR
DISARMAMENT!

FIGHT FASCISM
TOGETHER
NEM FEGYVER KELL
NEED NO WEAPONS

AZ EGYEDÜLI GLOBÁLIS TÉR A TERMÉSZET

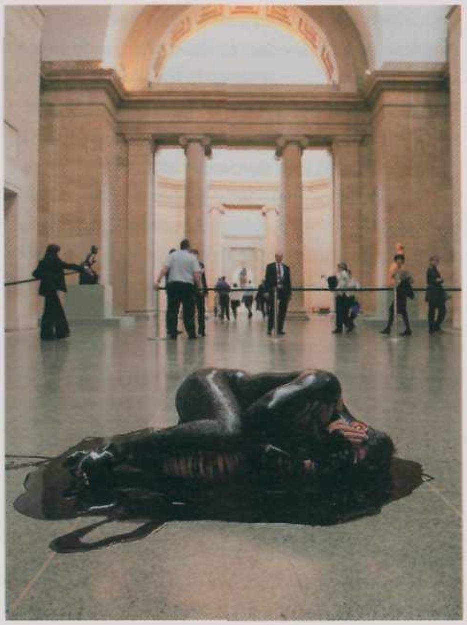
Among them, I found many signs protesting against the Danube dam planned at Bös-Nagymaros in Hungary. After strong civil and environmentalist resistance, in which Toma took part, construction of the insanely huge dam was halted in 1989. Peaceful artistic resistance had borne fruit. His death remains mysterious: he was hit by some huge farm machinery in the night, but the driver was never found. Even after his death, he still connects people from the widest of ethnic and religious backgrounds. *(Róza El-Hassan)*

Toma Sik *(HU/IL), born in 1939 in Budapest's Óbuda district, was moved in 1944 to the Budapest ghetto, and then in 1950 to Israel. He became a founder of the Arab-Hebrew peace movement and won a secular humanist trial to make religious and ethnic origin no longer obligatory on ID cards. He moved to Budapest in the 1990s where he was very active in the nonviolence and ecological movements until his death in 2004. In 2001 he met visual artist* ***Róza El-Hassan*** *(HU) who had created a work related to the 9/11 attack and the Palestinian issue: Toma was the only artist willing to take part in a shared exhibition.*

Liberate Tate

Oilwashing

In an age of so called austerity, many governments have been making savage cuts in public spending to essential public services, including the arts. Many arts institutions are being pushed toward corporate sponsorship as a means of replacing this reduction in public funding. Many controversial companies with appalling environmental and human rights records, like BP, are very keen to involve themselves with arts institutions as a means of "art washing" their sullied reputations without actually having to modify, reduce, or halt their destructive practices. In promoting BP as an acceptable brand, Tate forces gallery-goers into positions of complicity with the destruction of a safe climate and the exploitation of communities the world over.



Whilst there had been protest by activists about oil companies sponsoring cultural events in the UK going back to at least 2003, Liberate Tate pursues a different strategy: as artists we set out to create art, to do so inside the art museum and in ways that the art world could not ignore and that might inspire others including other artists. The best way to look at this sorry situation is not that the oil companies are supporting the arts, but that the arts are supporting their lie—that they care about anything other than pumping as much oil out of the ground as quickly as possible.

On June 28, 2010, Tate decided to celebrate twenty years of BP "support" for British art with a summer party. We disrupted proceedings by pouring hundreds of liters of "oil" (what was actually molasses) in the gallery and its entrance in a work called *License to Spill*. As the cultural and corporate elite made their way into the party, Liberate Tate spilled black liquid from large barrels branded with the BP logo into their path. Meanwhile, two Liberate Tate members infiltrated the party wearing large floral bouffant dresses underneath which were concealed large sacks filled with the oily molasses. Soon the sacks under their dresses burst releasing tens of liters of "oil" across the shiny gallery floor. The spectacle went viral and Tate's judgment on BP was found wanting.

On July 7, 2012, Liberate Tate installed a massive 16.5 meter (fifty-four foot), 1.5 tonne wind turbine blade in Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, submitting the artwork to be part of Tate's permanent collection. The artwork, called *The Gift*, was installed in a performance involving over 100 members of the group. In November 2013, at the reopening of Tate Britain after an extensive refurbishment, fifty veiled figures dressed in black performed *Parts per Million* using the decade by decade chronology of the "BP Walk through British Art" to perform the corresponding rise in carbon emissions.

The idea that it is therefore normal to continue to burn fossil fuels subtly seeps into our imaginations, fixing the image of a certain kind of culture, a certain kind of destructive behavior.

Breaking the sponsorship link between Tate and BP will not by itself prevent climate change. But by creating and informing a public debate that questions the legitimacy of these companies being associated with respectable and cherished cultural institutions, we can strengthen attempts to hold them accountable in other political and financial spheres.

This is an essential step in ending the stranglehold that the companies have on the corridors of power—a major obstacle that we face in the transition to a low carbon society. The shift away from oil takes place in many municipal sites as well as in our personal daily experience. From the infrastructure of transport, to the shareholdings of pension funds, from where the food we eat is grown, to divorcing fossil fuel industry interests apart from the seats of governmental power.

For a fair and just transition to a post-oil era, we see the creativity and collaborative practices of artists as essential to the process, and cultural institutions as a key space to nurture that evolution.

Liberate Tate *(GB) was founded during a Tate workshop on art and activism in January 2010, which ended with the words "ART NOT OIL" placed in the windows of the top floor of Tate Modern overlooking the river Thames, as hundreds of Londoners and tourists walked by.*

Ganzeer

Street Discourse

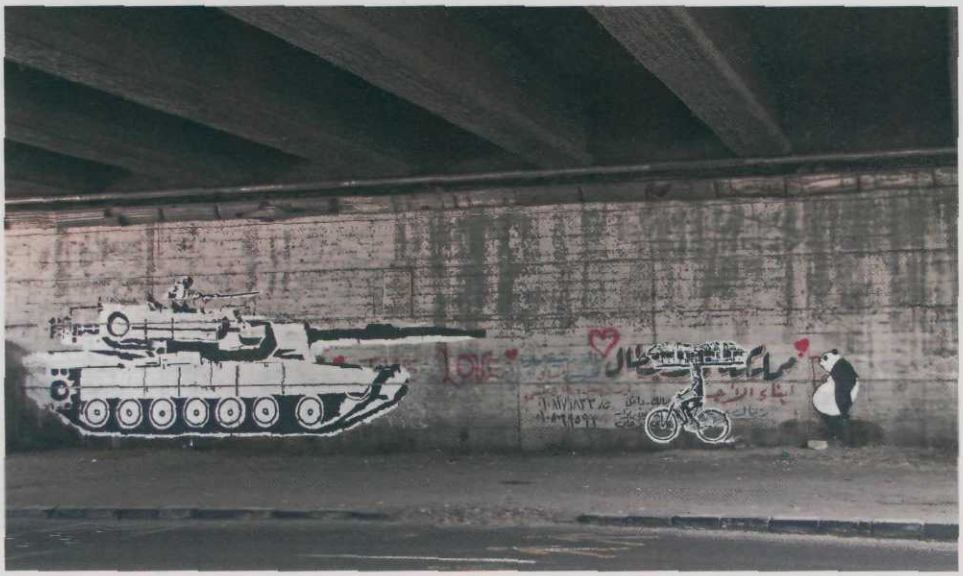
Before the revolution there was little or no street art in Egypt. When the uprisings got under way, street art appeared just as spontaneously and unexpectedly as the revolution. As for me, that very same day—January 25, 2011—I happened to be downtown with some friends. Suddenly we were in the middle of things we hadn't expected: a huge march through Cairo, heading straight for the Ministry of the Interior, with many people joining it along the way. Nothing like this had ever happened before, and I knew it would not be mentioned in the papers or the news, and that the police would do their utmost to stop it. So I thought it might be a good idea to leave some kind of a mark in the area to show people that something had happened here, to document it if you like, but also to use it as a kind of counterpropaganda.

As an artist it is difficult for me to be spontaneous; I plan things very carefully. But that day, I didn't have any plan. I just started spraying what people were chanting "Down with Mubarak." And as soon as I wrote these words on a billboard right in the middle of Tahrir Square, people started applauding and cheering. This was an important clue for me: it showed the importance of the visual dimension. Even if people already know it, if people already hear it, if people are already chanting it, seeing it spelled out, with their own eyes—that was important. Right then and there I decided that this was what I needed to do—and a whole lot more besides.

The state has so many more instruments, and such influence over the media and public opinion. Taking our demands onto the streets and the walls of the city is our means of countering state propaganda and creating a different discourse in the public space.

Today Cairo is covered in graffiti and other images—you need to permanently change your strategy to get noticed. It has become a battle for attention. I started out just spraying slogans; then I prepared neat, well designed little stencils that I could use in many different locations around the city, and eventually moved on to fairly large, four meter high murals that used striking colors and a design that would make people stop and look.

But of course this discourse also met with disagreement. As the first works started to



be seen across the city, the first attempts at censorship began. Usually not by officials, but rather by people who felt offended by the images in one way or another: they didn't paint over the whole wall, but instead covered only certain parts of the painting … so it actually helps to find out what topics to push even further. The different ways things are received or censored say something about the society and how it changes.

A friend of mine, Ammar Abo Bakr, was *painting a portrait of a protestor close to* Tahrir Square. Right next to that, tanks were parked, almost right in front of an older piece of mine, which is highly critical of the military. They were obviously bothered by it, but hadn't removed it. Yet, when they saw my friend painting there, they asked him to paint over my work. He refused, but they still *wouldn't do it themselves for fear of being* accused of censorship. It's much easier for the government to incite the populace to do its dirty work for it sometimes.

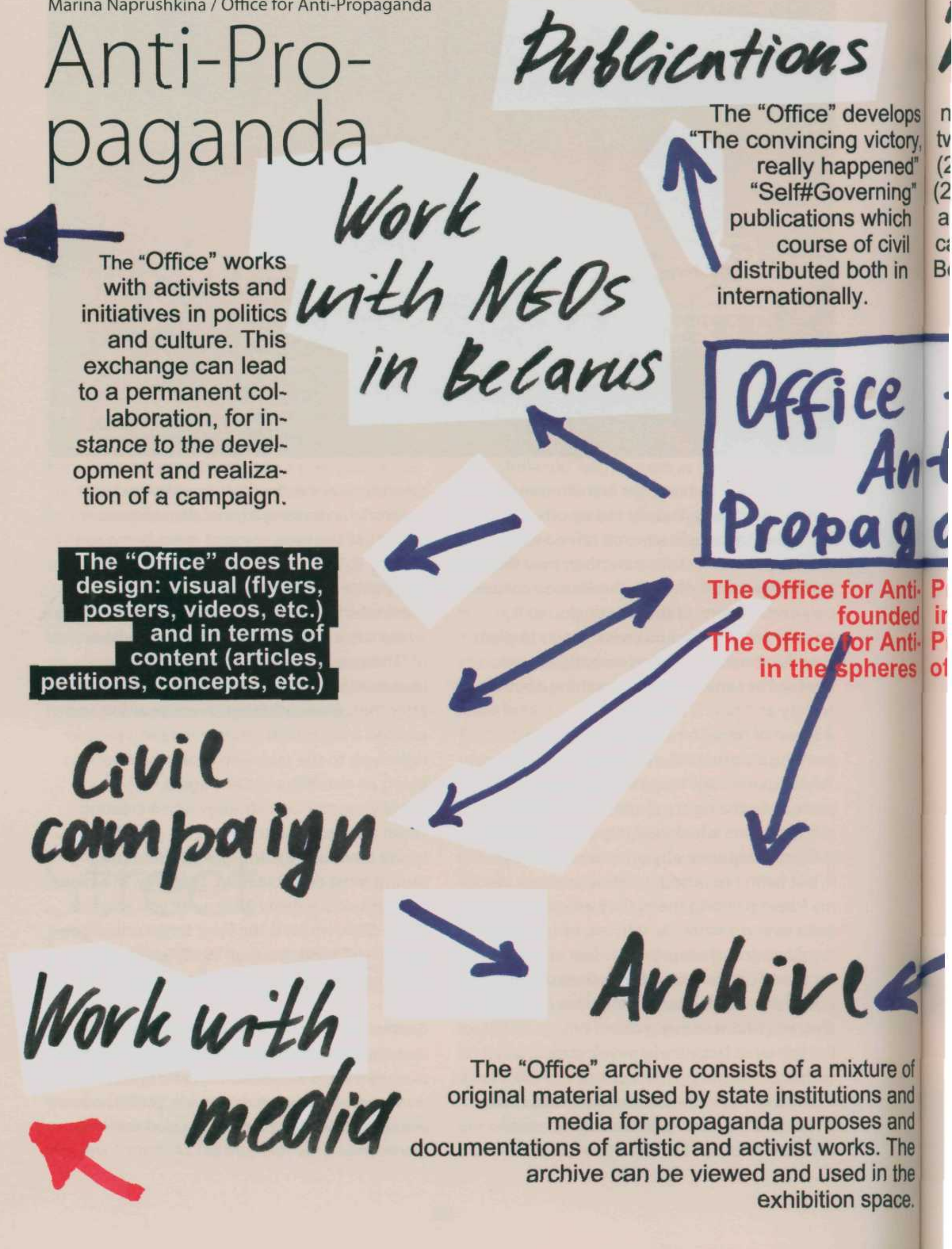
But the most fascinating development was with another work of mine, from 2011: it shows a tank moving in the direction of a lone biker. A few months after I painted it, protesters were attacked by the military in front of the television center. So another artist updated my work by drawing a lot of demonstrators in front of the tank, some of them being run over by it. Once again, other people came and painted over everything, except the tank itself, which now stood completely alone. They wrote something next to it, along the lines of "The people and the army hand in hand," thus turning it into promilitary work. Shortly after that, some other artists came along and painted a big military monster eating people *right next to the tank—so it switched back to* being an antimilitary piece again.

In my view, the best strategy when creating street art is to design it in such a way that it isn't obviously an anti-government piece during most of its creation. That way, in a piece like *Tank versus Bread Biker*, until you add the Bread-Bike, which is the least time consuming *part of the piece, you can easily argue you're* creating a pro-government painting.

Ganzeer *(EG) is a designer, videomaker, and contemporary artist. Since 2011, however, he has come to prominence for his art activism in the Egyptian revolution, which uses murals, stickers, graffiti, posters, and other forms of street art across Cairo's public spaces.*

Marina Naprushkina / Office for Anti-Propaganda

Anti-Propaganda



Publications

The “Office” develops “The convincing victory, really happened” “Self#Governing” publications which course of civil distributed both in internationally.

Work with NGOs in Belarus

The “Office” works with activists and initiatives in politics and culture. This exchange can lead to a permanent collaboration, for instance to the development and realization of a campaign.

The “Office” does the design: visual (flyers, posters, videos, etc.) and in terms of content (articles, petitions, concepts, etc.)

Office An Propag

The Office for Anti- founded The Office for Anti- in the spheres

Civil campaign

Archive

The “Office” archive consists of a mixture of original material used by state institutions and media for propaganda purposes and documentations of artistic and activist works. The archive can be viewed and used in the exhibition space.

Work with media

Public relations

newspapers, e.g.
two stories on what
(2011–1012),
(2012–...), and other
are published in the
campaigns and
Belarus and

Arbeit nach Außen

Direct action

Direct work, organization and realization of actions in public space is an important part of the work.

for
ti -
anda

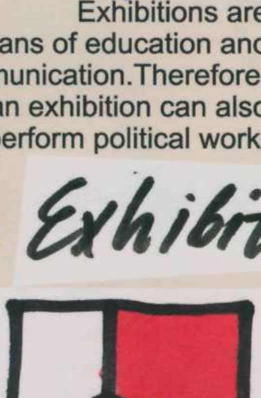
- Propaganda was
in 2007.
- Propaganda operates
of art and politics.

web

Newsletter and blog are used as separate media.
The newsletter provides information about actions and events, with the emphasis on Belarus. For actions, the newsletter can help mobilise the public. Languages: Belorussian, Russian and German. The newsletter focuses on activist practices.

Exhibitions are means of education and communication. Therefore, an exhibition can also perform political work.

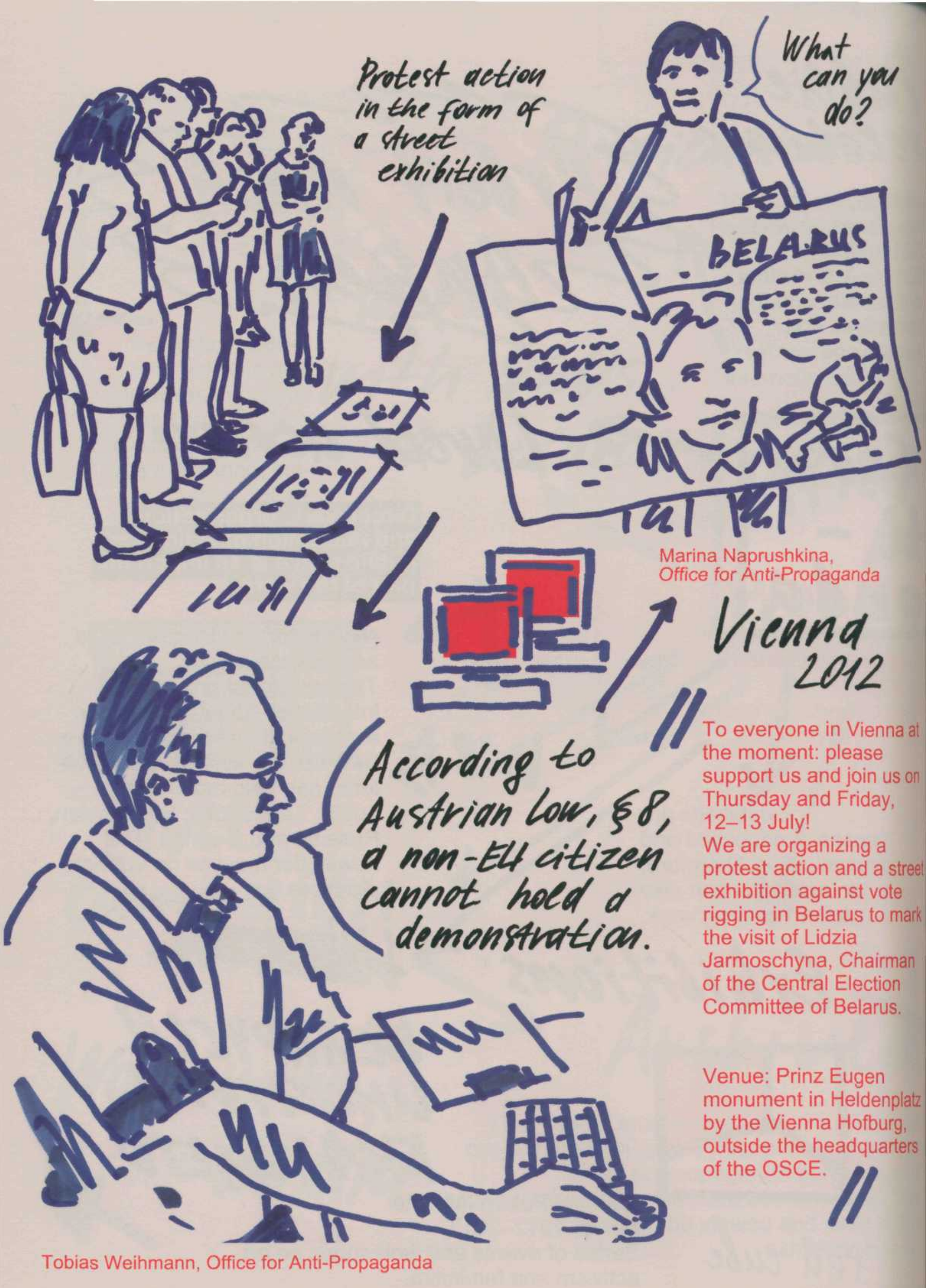
Exhibitions



red cube

БЕЛАРУСЬ//
ИНСТИТУТ
БУДУЩЕГО

Belarus//Future Institute
Minsk, 2012–2013
Series of events and workshops on art, activism and feminism.


Protest action in the form of a street exhibition
What can you do?
BELARUS
Vienna 2012
According to Austrian low, §8, a non-EU citizen cannot hold a demonstration.

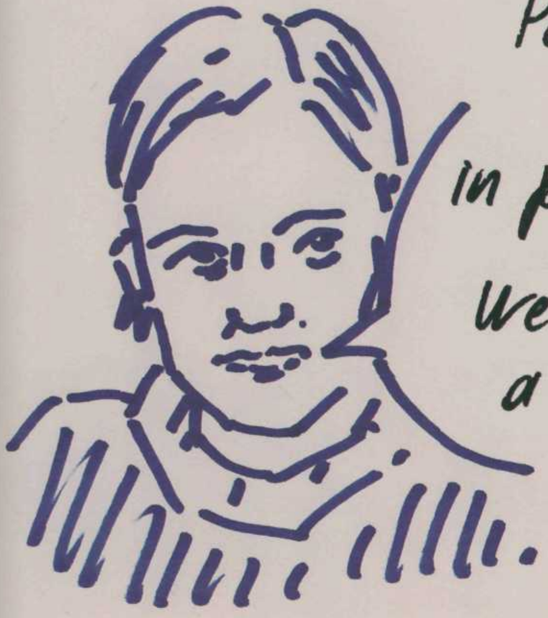
Marina Naprushkina,
Office for Anti-Propaganda

To everyone in Vienna at the moment: please support us and join us on Thursday and Friday, 12–13 July!
We are organizing a protest action and a street exhibition against vote rigging in Belarus to mark the visit of Lidzia Jarmoschyna, Chairman of the Central Election Committee of Belarus.

Venue: Prinz Eugen monument in Heldenplatz by the Vienna Hofburg, outside the headquarters of the OSCE.

Tobias Weihmann, Office for Anti-Propaganda

People aren't interested in party politics and presidents. We need to find a new form of the political.

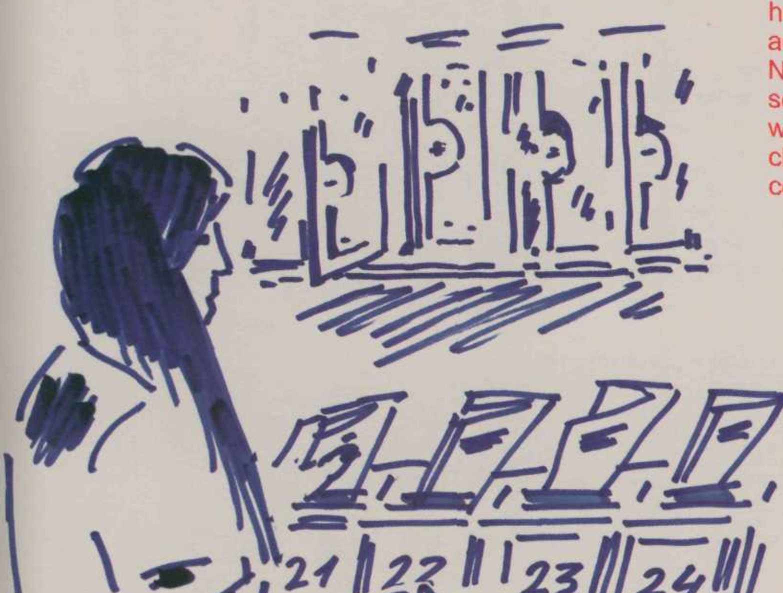


Olga Katatch, head of the NGO "Nash dom", Belarus

The "Samoupravlenie" newspaper ("Self#Governing") consists almost entirely of drawings and is distributed to households in Belarus by activists of the "Nash Dom" NGO. The newspaper covers social and political conditions with the aim of initiating change and encouraging civil commitment.

Self# Governing

On 6 June 2013, the activist Natalja Leonova was arrested by the police in Minsk; 700 copies of the "Self#Governing" newspaper were confiscated.



Activist in distributing the "Самоуправление" newspaper, ("Self#Governing"), Minsk 2013

***Marina Naprushkina** (BY/DE) is a visual artist examining power and structure of the state, often using material acquired from contemporary Belarus. Since 2007, she has run the Office for Anti-Propaganda.*

Public Movement

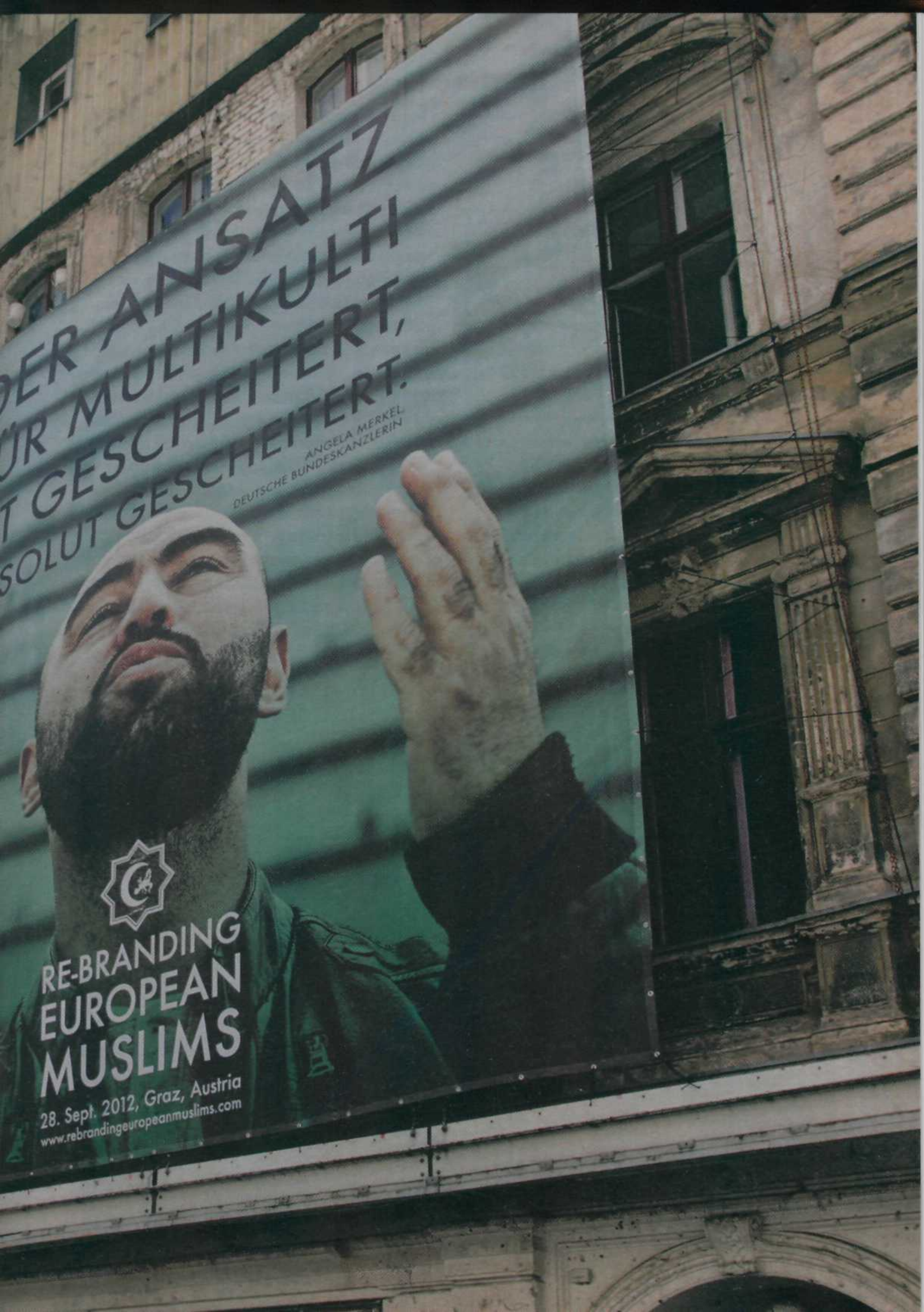
Campaigning

The international PR project "Rebranding European Muslims" by the performance and research group **Public Movement** *(IL) was part of an Austrian national celebration in 2012 to mark the hundredth anniversary of the historic recognition of Islam as an official religion in Austria. It was launched with a big billboard at the Berlin Biennial 2012 and in Graz, quoting the German Chancellor Angela Merkel: "Multiculturalism has failed, completely failed."*

At the heart of the project was a sumptuous, elegant gala: a political charity event as much as a theatrical enactment of advocacy and conflict. The performance of the Gala was Public Movement's proposal for a new way to celebrate a historic anniversary, looking into the constructive potential it carries—an anniversary that not only commemorates a moment in the past, but reactivates it within the present to recognize the repercussions it had, and continues to have, for identity formation. The different performative elements of the gala: politicians giving opening remarks, branding strategists pitching their campaigns, Austrian bellydancers, the Bosnian choir and the gala itself—were juxtaposed to create overt and covert conflicts, and to transgress the typical appearance and settings of these kinds of public displays of politics and money.

Three prestigious branding agencies pitched their creative proposals for the future direction of the "Rebranding European Muslims" campaign: Metahaven from Amsterdam, Love Tensta from Stockholm, and Demner, Merlicek & Bergman from Vienna. The audience itself was asked to embody their opinion and stand for the approach that they thought was the most convincing.

"Rebranding European Muslims" played with the idea of branding knowing full well that it was doomed to fail; exposing the unbearable and unbridgeable gap between the image and the reality, between a signifier and a signified. It confronted and reflected the position of the left-wing artworld discourse, which is governed by a reiteration of the postcolonial question: who is eligible to speak, about what, and on behalf of whom?


DER ANSATZ
ÜR MULTIKULTI
T GESCHEITERT,
SOLUT GESCHEITERT.
ANGELA MERKEL,
DEUTSCHE BUNDESKANZLERIN
RE-BRANDING
EUROPEAN
MUSLIMS
28. Sept. 2012, Graz, Austria
www.rebrandingeuropeanmuslims.com

John Jordan

Clowning

The clowns are organizing … the clowns are organizing … over and out.
(Overheard on Police radio during a protest, UK, 2003)

For years I worked in direct action movements that invented tactics such as Reclaim the Streets parties and carnivals against capitalism: events where rebellious play and wild bodies were released into the public realm to confront injustices. But something seemed to be missing: where was the play and the liberated body within the movements' own creative/organizing processes. In fact the processes resembled the most tedious leftist meeting, a bunch of people sitting on their arses and talking, talking—all head and little heart. In 2003, arch clown of the empire George Bush announced his visit to the British Queen. This was the ideal moment to invent a new form of disobedience, one where the body was not only the end but also the means. When Bush's motorcade crawled toward the royal palace several months later, the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (C.I.R.C.A.) loaded a cannon with pink pretzels and fired them at the president (infamously, he nearly choked to death whilst eating a pretzel). It was the birth of a new methodology, Rebel Clowning, which become an international protest phenomenon, with self-organized groups popping up in dozens of countries from Colombia to New Zealand, Belgium to Egypt, Denmark to Brazil. Rebel Clowning merged the ancient art of clowning with contemporary tactics of nonviolent direct action, and introduced play and games into the process of political organizing. Activists worked with professional clowns to develop a methodology that

encouraged protesters to reprogram their bodies, develop their intuition, and "find their inner clown"—a childlike state of generosity, openness, and spontaneity. Clowning is a state of being rather than a technique and the idea of Rebel Clowning was not to make street theater but to carry out direct action in the characters of real clowns.

Armed with mockery and love and using tactics of confusion rather than confrontation, some notable Clown Army actions were *when a seventy strong gaggle of clowns* walked straight through a line of UK riot cops who, unusually, could not hold their line. When the video footage of the event was examined, it turned out that beneath their visors the cops were laughing too much to concentrate. A gaggle once marched into an army recruitment agency to join up, causing so much chaos that it had to close for the day, whereupon the clowns set up a shabby C.I.R.C.A. recruitment stall outside. Armed with kärchers (high pressure water cleaners to get rid of graffiti), the French Clown Army cleaned the town hall of Neuilly-sur-Seine after President Sarkozy suggested using a kärcher to get rid of suburban youth.

Rebel clowning was enough of a threat to the British State that an undercover police officer even infiltrated the group and became a (very bad) clown. But rebel clowns are not meant to pretend to be clowns, they should be real clowns and like all arts this requires practice and dedication. Unfortunately this was one of the downfalls of the methodology. The urgency of activism meant that many activists never took the time to really train in the art of clowning and as a result many bad "hippy" clowns ended up on the streets, thinking that being in the Clown Army was just about dressing up, rather than a deep physical and psychological practice that could lead to effective direct action.

***John Jordan** (GB/FR) is an art activist and a cofounder of many initiatives, such as Reclaim the Streets, the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army, and the laboratory of insurrectionary imagination (labofii) that merges art and life, creativity, and resistance.*

Robyn Orlin

Dancing Condoms

… it's 2001 and i was working downtown johannesburg with the students at the market theater laboratory … they were smart, hungry to learn, talented, and our future … but i noticed that most monday morning classes someone was always missing … when i asked, the answer always was that they were inevitably burying somebody that weekend and could not get back to school on time that monday … it was not difficult to put two and two together and as i started asking more i realized these students are caught up in the "aids vacuum" and not really being able to understand it … i thought we needed to understand it, hence a piece …

we must eat our suckers (lollipops) with their wrappers on … in memory of aids …

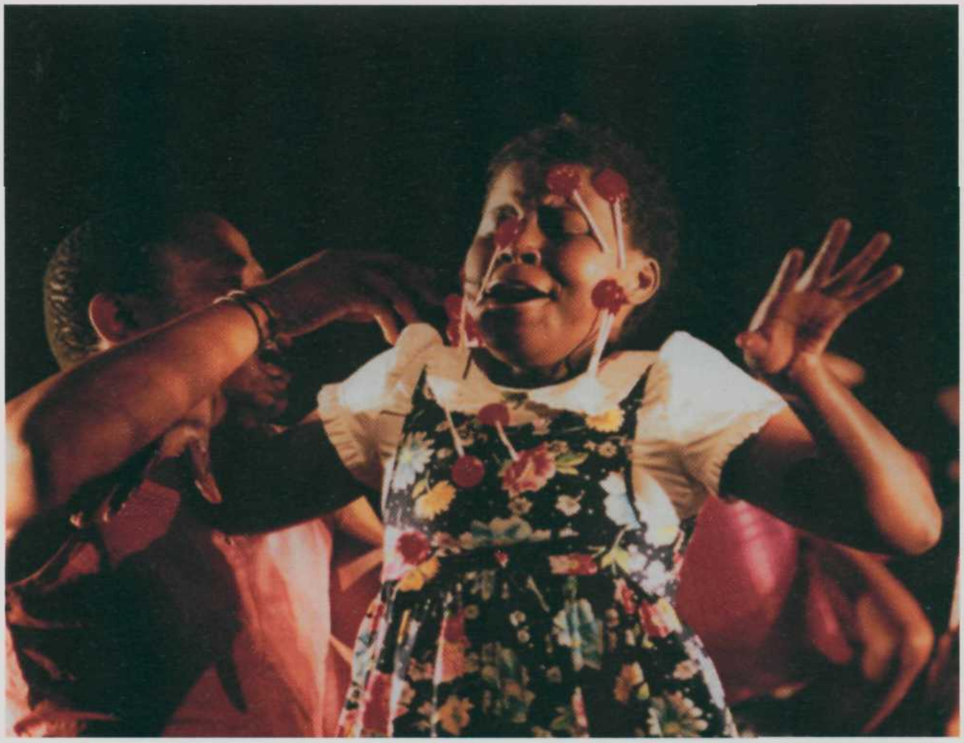
we started talking a lot before the making of the piece … this work was for us and the community around us … the title says it all: this is how young people in the townships perceive aids … it's a very cynical view of aids but it's all about coping mechanisms teenagers use to try to understand and survive …

i wanted to help the performers (and the public) understand the severity and ramification of aids—I do not think that the penny has dropped—it plays havoc on social structures (children of eight years old are now heads of families and very vulnerable with, trying to protect younger siblings); as south africans how do we become more proactive with our lives and take responsibility for our actions (apartheid dictated all of this for us);

it was important for me to try to help the performers and the public realize that aids is not about morality and that guilt is not helpful; and last but not least as a community we must not alienate aids sufferers, dying is not punishment!!!!!

so we went with the abc of the trauma …
how it happens (we started with performers stuffing their faces with suckers, while singing a traditional song about gambling until they literally could not sing, dance, or breathe anymore);
the fear once one gets the illness (we went through the array of different ways of trying to get rid of the sickness even though it was not possible);
the social behavior around aids (the stigma … the anger … the loss …) using images of hope, love, and acceptance to be able to be in the world as an equal even though one may have the illness …

our weapons were:
red plastic buckets;
young girls' dresses;
very red lipstick;
red lollipops, lots and lots;
naked light bulbs (also lots): white and red;
bicycle toys made from thin steel you get from dress hangers;
condoms (smiling!!!!!);
a white stage … with only red props;
a cheap webcam the close up and personal kind;
lots of energy;
anger;
pain;
humor and love;
the audience: to help us understand that aids has no color, age, or hierarchy;
and then their shoes as well to share this journey;



most of the audience went through this process
with us, not all, but hey! would they ever …
most of the audience did "get it", they might not
have liked it but that was not our criteria …

we threw ourselves onto this white space with
many red objects …
we got answers …
it still hurts …
young children are still being molested …
aids sufferers are still dying without dignity …
some of the cast have even passed away (i think
with some dignity) …
but the question still remains for me …
how can we fight so hard for the respect and
rights of all south africans and yet so many aids
sufferers now die alone and broken because of
the pain, stigma, and shame …

we cannot change the world but we can change
our curtains …

***Robyn Orlin** (ZA) is one of South Africa's most renowned choreographers and performance-makers whose controversial work focuses on the complex current social and political problems facing her home country.*
Her dance piece We Must Eat Our Suckers with the Wrappers On … *(2001) demystifies the silence around AIDS in South Africa—where one out of nine inhabitants is HIV positive—by using authentic township vocabulary, as well as traditional singing and dancing.*

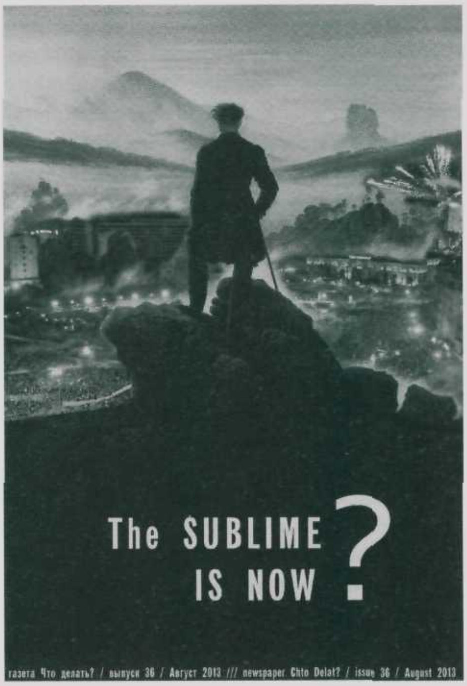
Dmitry Vilensky / Chto Delat?

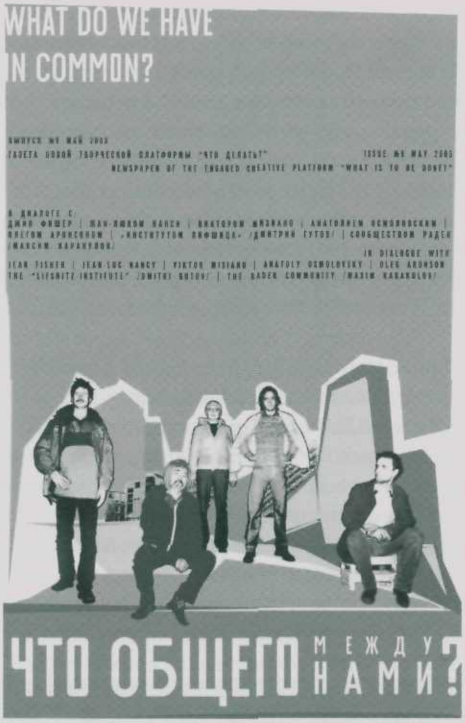
Newspapers

A long time ago, when creating a website or a blog was still quite a task, anyone who was angry and wanted to adequately express this anger would always come up with the idea of starting a newspaper.

True enough, newspaper publication has a tradition of its own: what could be better for expressing a point of view, what could be better for agitating, discussing, and disseminating a position? The function of newspaper production and distribution was precisely expressed by Lenin in his 1901 article, "Where to Begin," which discussed the organizing role of the periodical press in the life of the Bolshevik Party:

> *The role of a newspaper is not limited, however, merely to the spreading of ideas, merely to political education and attracting political allies. A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and collective agitator, but also a collective organizer. In this respect it can be compared to the scaffolding erected around a building in construction, which marks the contours of the structure, facilitates communication between the builders and permits them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organized labor.*


The SUBLIME
IS NOW ?
газета Что делать? / выпуск 36 / Август 2013 /// newspaper Chto Delat? / issue 36 / August 2013



WHAT DO WE HAVE
N COMMON?

ВЫПУСК №9 МАЙ 2005
ГАЗЕТА НОВОЙ ТВОРЧЕСКОЙ ПЛАТФОРМЫ "ЧТО ДЕЛАТЬ?"
ISSUE №9 MAY 2005
NEWSPAPER OF THE ENGAGED CREATIVE PLATFORM "WHAT IS TO BE DONE?"

В ДИАЛОГЕ С:
ДЖИН ФИШЕР | ЖАН-ЛЮКОМ НАНСИ | ВИКТОРОМ МИЗИАНО | АНАТОЛИЕМ ОСМОЛОВСКИМ | ОЛЕГОМ АРОНСОНОМ | «ИНСТИТУТОМ ЛИФШИЦА» /ДМИТРИЙ ГУТОВ/ | СООБЩЕСТВОМ РАДЕК /МАКСИМ КАРАКУЛОВ/

IN DIALOGUE WITH
JEAN FISHER | JEAN-LUC NANCY | VIKTOR MISIANO | ANATOLY OSMOLOVSKY | OLEG ARONSON | THE "LIFSHITZ INSTITUTE" /DMITRI GUTOV/ | THE RADEK COMMUNITY /MAXIM KARAKULOV/

ЧТО ОБЩЕГО МЕЖДУ НАМИ?

So, how can we translate this historical party-building rhetoric into something different: the construction of a group, a collective, an artistic unit that has a set of tasks that differentiates itself from the idea of real political struggle? The newspaper in this situation is a means to build up a unique agenda of concrete work, which the collective can develop on many fronts. But the publishing of a newspaper is not that significant unless it is embedded in an array of other mediums and productions. And as long as there is agreement to focus on the tasks of art production, then it should provide a well developed context for other different activities, such as films, installations, theater, performances, architecture, and so on.

The Newspaper as an Art Project

The newspaper can function as an artistic medium. But if it is not related to other practices, then its power may be limited to a rather simple gesture, impotent to represent anything but itself. The newspaper as an art project can survive if it uses the inexpensive democratic medium of mass communication for another task: to engage readers with issues that can never be labeled "yesterday's news." Its ephemeral qualities then acquire the dimension of dialectical negation.

The art newspaper can also be transformed into a time sculpture when inserted in the exhibition space. This sculpture does not simply offer the sharing of knowledge, but also helps to save exhibition wall space.

The Dialectic of New Constituencies

There is nothing more tedious than addressing people and things that already exist. There is nothing more snobbish than preaching to experts or the converted.

Each publication's Soviet editorial (always limited in number as in any production initiative) is an important tool of self-education for micro-communities hungry for the truth. The audience for this adventure is never given, but has to be formed and reformed with each issue of the newspaper.

Agonistic Editing

It is foolish to expect an art newspaper to simply declare one uniform "party line." It should create agonistic struggles inside and outside of its editorial collective. But this struggle takes place not for the sake of plurality of opinion, but as the uncompromising search for a true "party line."

Tactic and Strategy

If a newspaper is to be kept in circulation for a few decades (and nothing shorter really counts), then it should be based on a balance between tactical reactions and interventions in situations that are here and now, and a strategic vision of history. This means, first of all, that a newspaper has to follow a plan, in much the same way that a scaffolding expresses architectural decision making.

The Unity of Paper and Web Distribution

To print text and graphics in newspaper format is not just a waste of paper in our digital age.

Newspapers are heavy: if 116-page newspapers printed on cheap eighty gram paper weigh 4.3 kilos, 1000 will weigh forty-three kilos:

Boy, you gotta carry that weight
Carry that weight a long time

But remember: all materials in any digital format must be accessible on the web for free.

***Dmitry Vilensky** (RU) is an artist and cultural activist. He is founding member of **Chto Delat?** (What is to be done?), a platform initiated in 2003 by a collective of artists, critics, philosophers, and writers with the goal of merging political theory, art, and activism. Vilensky is also an editor of the Chto Delat? newspaper.*

Yekaterina Samutsevich /
Pussy Riot

Punk

Punk for us is a musical style, plus an ideology of resistance against right-wing powers. We don't support the stereotype that punks are crazy and insane people who do everything spontaneously. We believe that is absolute nonsense.

We play our performances live, but afterwards we release a final edited video clip, with a music track recorded as a specific component of our work. Sometimes we add live sounds recorded during our performances. Our work principle: performances planned to the utmost. Due to the fact that they are illegal, it is hard to achieve all our aims, so rehearsals for a performance or rehearsals for possible situations are of great importance.

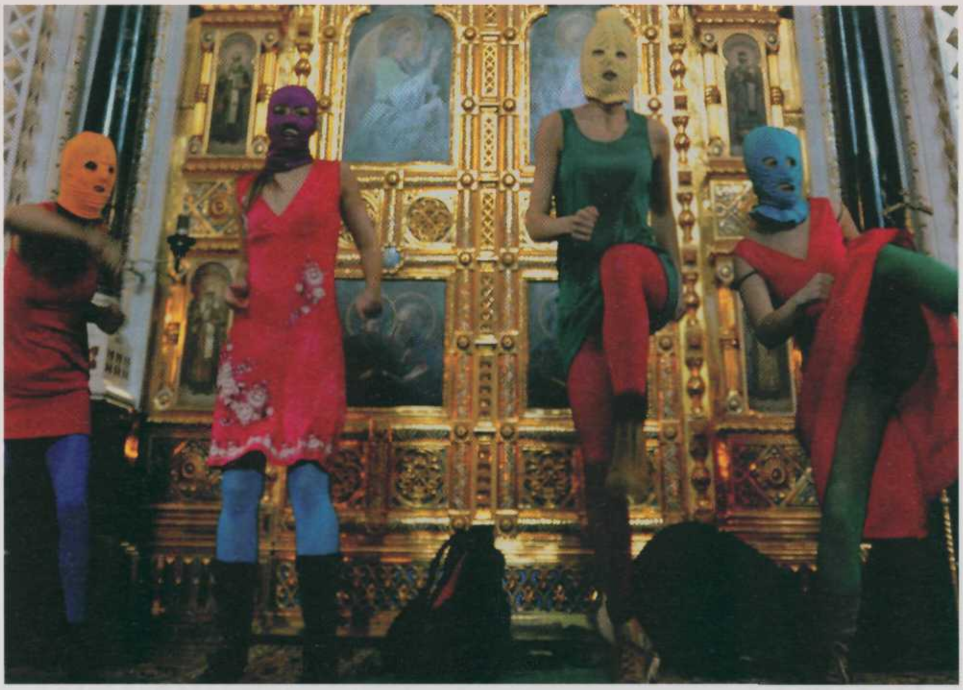
Preparations for a series of performances—a "tour" as we call it—devoted to one song or theme can take more than one month. The band is all women and committed to separatist feminism; we try not to even let men into the circle of external documenters. First we come up with a theme for a performance (or series of performances), then we write lyrics and develop a performance method, highly dependent on the venue (whether it is guarded or not, whether it has many or few visitors, whether guards ring for the police immediately or not, etc.).

We also think through the video shoot to be done later by the documenters. They only realize our idea. Some are given the task of shooting in dynamic close-up, some of doing medium or wide shots. Sometimes we think up the shoot right within a performance since it is hard to think through specific abnormal situations: here we count on luck and intuition, but we try anyway to accomplish everything we've planned, fighting for a successful performance to the bitter end. In the end, the audience of our media resources (where we publish our texts and videos of the performances) is the judge.

The idea for the band came about back in 2010, but the first performances only happened in autumn 2011. From the very beginning on the illegality of our performances, as well as the concept of anonymity and separatist feminism were our guiding principles. Our first "tour," called "Free Paving Stones," took place in the Moscow Metro and on the roof of a trolleybus in autumn 2011, combining feminism with other political messages, and criticizing the elections announced for winter 2011/12.

Our second tour, with the song "Fuck Sexists, Bloody Putinists," was performed during a fashion show and was dedicated to what is called "Putin's glamour"—a relatively new phenomenon of elitist consumerism, possible only in full compliance with the current regime.

After this we decided to make no further series of performances, but rather do quick solo performances precisely matching the context of the event. Many people were detained after the protest marches and rallies of December 5 and 6, 2011, so we performed a song called "No to Prison, Freedom to Protest"



on one of the roofs of the prison, opposite the windows where the oppositionists were held. This was followed by a performance on January 20, 2012 at Red Square, where we sang a song to motivate all protestors: "Putin is Fucking Afraid," pointing at the regime's fear of protests and marches at that time.

Our next—and for a long time our last—performance took place at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior on February 21, 2012. We had been waiting for a long time to perform a song there, criticizing the politics of the Russian Orthodox church toward LGBT and other minorities—a tradition going back to Russia's imperial days. The Cathedral of Christ the Savior is the main symbol of the Russian Orthodox church: only here our performance could become an accurate statement.

After the arrests and convictions following this performance, Pussy Riot has put its activities on pause. But the anonymous group of Pussy Riot still exists and plans to continue—keeping to the band's original principles.

Yekaterina Samutsevich *(RU) is a political activist and member of the feminist punk rock protest group* ***Pussy Riot*** *(RU). Pussy Riot, based in Moscow and founded in 2011, stages guerrilla performances in public locations, which are later edited into Internet music videos. On February 21, 2012, five members, including Yekaterina Samutsevich, performed their* Punk Prayer—Mother of God Chase Putin Away *unannounced in Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral. Three of the members, Maria Alyokhina, Yekaterina Samutsevich, and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, were arrested and later on convicted of "hooliganism motivated by religious hatred" and sentenced to two years imprisonment. Samutsevich was released on probation in late October 2012, following an appeal. Alyokhina and Tolokonnikova were freed in December 2013 after an amnesty by the State Duma.*

Playing the Law

Joanna Warsza

Every work of art is an uncommitted crime.
(Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*)

In his writings on wrong and misdeed, Theodor Adorno compared art to an "uncommitted crime" in an attempt to reveal and disturb existing social or ideological constructs. His diagnosis, however, turned art into a symbolic gesture. Perhaps more interesting are the questions: How can art commit a crime without being one? What circumstances create the gray areas that enable what is normally illegal? And how—by means of such legal/illegal art—can the normative be renegotiated with the help of constitutionally guaranteed freedom of expression and art? Art enjoys the fact that, under the scrutiny of law, it is an undefined field, open to different interpretations, including actions that are "against the law."

The following chapter reports on art that functions legally on the edge, entering the arena of the forbidden to make it legally accepted through political or social use. In conversations with lawyer Jakob Braeuer on what is considered to be art in legal terms, I was told that the legal system goes by Joseph Beuys: "Everyone is an artist"—if she or he claims to be. Freedom of art is a fundamental right, not bound to academic background or diplomas. But, in a constitutional state, it is the judges who have the last word to determine whether something is or is not art. Their judgments are bound to the general statutes provided by legislation. For the term "art," however, there are apparently hardly any statutory defaults. A certain frame around the term has been developed by the courts and legal scholars over time, which pays respect to the state of art theory and practice, and—partly, at least—to what society recognizes as art.

Especially since the avant-gardes, there have been recurring discussions about whether certain events or precedents are to be considered art or not. After the recent Pussy Riot performance in Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Savior and in their subsequent trial in 2012, art often appeared in quotation marks as "so-called art." But even by law, the definitions of art are never precise: "The reason for this is a structural problem," explains Braeuer. "There is an evident conflict between what constitutes a definition and what constitutes art. Apart from the fact that art theorists and producers are already far from agreeing on a uniform notion of art, a central element of contemporary artistic production is to cross—and expand—the borders of art. In law, on the other hand, one has to clearly decide whether something meets a definition or not."

The decision to contract the Russian Voina group as associate curators of the seventh Berlin Biennale was a way of conceptualizing the blurriness of the definition of freedom of art on one hand and, on the other, of exploring the Midas touch of appropriating everything as contemporary art. Voina is a sister-collective of Pussy Riot, engaged in civil disobedience and anti-Putin advocacy through art, echoing avant-garde claims of fusing art and life. Obviously, they weren't acting as curators at all. They did not come to Berlin even once for curatorial meetings, nor did they give any advice, and the team of KunstWerke, the institution hosting Berlin Biennale, never met them. The curatorial alliance between the Berlin Biennale and Voina was meant to create a situation in which the institutional tools of a large prestigious exhibition—access to press coverage, legal representation, and funding—could serve Voina's practice. Through the contract, Voina agreed to being legitimized as artists and all their actions deemed art.

The list of a variety of complex cases of art that "interrupts reality" is very long. Such projects use the agency of art to politically operate within paragraphs on freedom of expression. They are meant to reveal and question political preferences, moral attitudes, societal values, and norms.

Since 1969, Belgium artist Noel Godin has attacked persons of public interest with cream cakes, with Jean-Luc Godard and Bill Gates among his victims. In the US, throwing a cake can bring a prison term of up to six months, but being aligned with the surrealist tradition, the artist was found innocent.

In 1995, as part of the steirischer herbst festival, the Viennese collective WochenKlausur, commissioned seven immigrants to produce "art works." Employed as artists, they carried on doing their daily jobs—such as bike repairs or cleaning work. The works were then exhibited in the official steirischer herbst program and deemed to be art. Through collaboration with lawyers, the project assured the participants legal residency in Austria and served as a means of circumventing strict legislation concerning foreigners. As WochenKlausur explains on their website: "We made use of a special arrangement for foreign 'artists'. The following special provision in the Austrian immigration code allowed the artists to remain in the country without a work permit provided they could prove that they lived from their artistic activity alone." Ten years later, in 2006, a stricter law excluding this provision came into effect.

In 1997, artist Gianni Motti sneaked into a UN session on human rights in Geneva and gave a speech instead of an absent Indonesian delegate at the fifty-third Session of the Commission on Human Rights, resulting in the session being suspended. On September 30, 2004, a car accident on the Polish-German border, on the bridge over the Oder was caused by a Polish and a German vehicle. The crash happened at the very place where it is impossible to determine which legislation should apply, and how to proceed judging the situation in legal terms. This was a work by artist Hans Winkler.

In May 2012, Jonas Staal's New World Summit took place as part of the seventh Berlin Biennale. Representatives from both "legal wings" and lawyers of groups considered—justified or not—terrorists, were invited to Berlin. Under normal circumstances, it would have been prohibited to discuss such issues in public—especially against the backdrop of the organization's flags—even when the aim of the project was clearly not to praise terrorism, but to reveal and engage in the discussion on the so-called War on Terror, this summit could only happen through the constitutional freedom of art. And even the general framework of art provided by the Biennale might not have been enough. Yet the fact that it happened in the "as if" setting of a theater finally made it possible.

The following chapter explores further artists' interest in the dichotomy of legal and illegal. It presents a number of current subversive strategies and examples of operating "in between": Santiago Cirugeda encourages the ideas of self-building by reusing temporary constructions in the city, like dumpsters, or renovation extensions, turning them into playgrounds or balconies. There is a Polish saying that there is nothing more permanent than the temporary, and that is Cirugeda's motto: turning architectural extensions into pockets of urban liberty, and leaving them to stand for a minimum of twenty years.

Fuzzy Biological Sabotage (FBS), an activist strategy explored by the Critical Art Ensemble, strikes an alliance with the post-humanist interest in contemporary technoscentific knowledge. FBS positions itself in the "plausible deniability" between the legal and the illegal, making nature in the form of fruit flies, germs, or mushrooms into political agents, as they cannot be prosecuted for trespassing.

Spanish artist Nuria Güell found herself faced with the question: Art or direct action? Investigating the fields of legislation and political discourse, she chose art for its "supposed" autonomy. The artist started to use it as an "umbrella" to point out certain illegalities, and to employ art's financial and human resources as the means to reveal hidden agendas, as in her project "Expropriating Money." On the other hand, the collective, Yomango, also from Spain, stages a social revolt that turns shoplifting into a meaningful political act within the realm of art.

Founded by a group of Occupy activists, the Church of Kopimism adopted the principles of Kopimism as an experimental form of protest. They registered as a religious organization because of the ease of founding procedures and the laws regarding resources and property—including intellectual property—which belong to the whole organization. Freedom of religion has been used by the church members to push back the boundaries of commercial law. The Church claims that the copying and sharing of information is the whole essence of life itself and can therefore be considered a holy act.

Lawyer and founder of the Alternative Law Forum, Lawrence Liang, delves further into what a copy does, proposing ways of translating open source ideas into the cultural domain. Tomislav Medak describes the emancipatory potential in hacking, as a disobedient practice, creating uses for technology that escape corporate economic interests. Hacking—in Medak's words—becomes a form of new people's knowledge. But maybe the most complex example of using the law to redefine what art can be is the groundbreaking legalization of the occupation of Teatro Valle in Rome, described by political economist Saki Bailey. The theater, which was meant to be turned into a commercial enterprise, was taken over by cultural producers and claimed as a "public good." The occupants demanded that culture be recognized as a *bene comune* essential to human life, and that access to it be made a constitutionally guaranteed right. This status has a strong legal basis in the Italian constitution and presents an alternative to neoliberal economic ideology. Since the enactment of the statute, nine other theaters around Italy have used the Teatro Valle as a precedent: adopting the political strategy of occupation, embracing the idea of the commons, forging a new type of legal and economic institution that challenges the public-private dichotomy.

A number of the projects presented show ways of engaging with the complex nature of the conflict between the "immunity" of art and the concrete truths of the paragraphs. They operate in the ambiguous political blind spots. Highlighting the transgressions of public legislation, the chapter approaches art and crime—as suggested by Adorno—not just symbolically, but in their common legal plea to revolutionize the status quo.

Joanna Warsza *(PL) is a curator in the fields of visual and performing arts, and architecture. She was curator of the Georgian Pavilion, fifty-fifth Venice Biennale 2013, as well as a curator of Göteborg Biennal 2013 and associate curator of the seventh Berlin Biennale 2012. She is editor of several books, including* Ministry of Highways: A Guide to the Performative Architecture of Tbilisi *(2013),* Forget Fear *(2012), and* Stadium X—A Place That Never Was *(2009).*

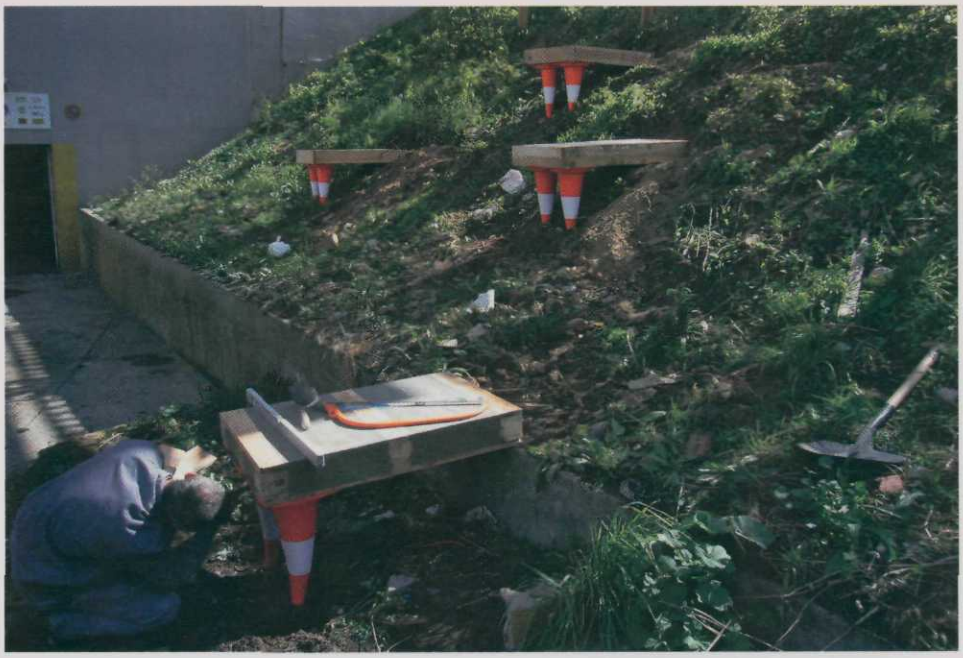
Santiago Cirugeda / Recetas Urbanas

Guerilla Architecture

Legal constraints and economic interests limit our actions and ability to intervene in public space, our public space. Our aim is to recuperate a critical awareness against official urbanism manipulated by economic and political agents, which has led citizens to lose their capacity to react to spatial injustice. We are also part of different networks to strategize joint actions and provide aid through architectural and legal support, as well as social mediation. In the present moment, it is essential for all of us to be more prepared and to act faster, because this "official urbanism" knows exactly what to do every day and has no doubts over its activities. Furthermore, it doesn't need to listen to people or reach a consensus to make a decision.

In a residual lot in a peripheral neighborhood of Vigo, we illegally installed six benches. We called them: "Alegal Benches." The act of installing urban furniture, provided some functional improvement of the space. It was a collective work, as friends took part in it, providing materials or work. Furthermore, this project encouraged the creation of a rewarding personal and collective experience, which served the idea that we were able to get something done fast, without a major effort and without waiting years for all the bureaucratic and legal procedures, for the people, means for ourselves. For "Kuvas S.C." (1997), to name another project, we requested a permit for temporary dumpsters that we then reconfigured into a playground.

We also build prosthetic constructions that can be quickly set up for public or private use: housing units, classrooms, or other rooms attached to facades, patios, roofs, and lots. We either build scaffolds from courtyards invisible



from the streets or apply for a temporary permit to erect one in order to renovate or repaint a façade and then transform it into a habitable space. We work with maximum economy of resources, space, and time. We call these pockets "urban reserves." To have a carrying system for the construction and a load-bearing structure, we developed various different types of cranes made of stabilization structures for facades. The cranes are made of pieces that, like Lego, can be put together by two or three people in half an hour and can be rented or bought for a variety of uses. We developed a quick building system, where the crane was carried piece by piece, via the stairs, which were used as a discreet and silent elevator for material, and then became a column of the final construction or, as mentioned, even part of the structure. Even untrained people can take part and collaborate in the construction work: self-building is very important to us to speed-up and multiply the implementation of such constructions, which are urgently needed by people. We are building real guerilla architectural objects.

Each of these actions is a negotiation between the legal and the illegal. Our aim is to obtain legal status for the extensions; this will happen if they stand for twenty years.

***Santiago Cirugeda** (ES) is an artist and architect. Since 1996, he has been developing a critical and collective praxis through subversive projects in diverse urban environments, all of which ultimately demand the revision of city planning regulations and ordinances. In 2003, he created the **Recetas Urbanas** architectural studio, continuing the development of subversive projects in different urban areas, from occupations to illegal constructions.*

Katherine Ball

Biological Disobedience

What is the biological equivalent of civil disobedience? How does nature compost human hegemony and germinate inertia? Ink cap mushrooms (*Coprinus comatus*) break through roads, raspberry crazy ants (*Nylanderia fulva*) short-circuit electronics, pigweed (*Amaranthus*) grows in fields sprayed with herbicides, sulfur-reducing bacteria (*Desulfovibrio vulgaris*) corrode oil pipelines, and termites (*Termitoidae*) devour money. How can we mutually cooperate with nature to implement its tactics—like hybrids of Johnny Appleseed and Rachel Corrie? Protests typically march with signs and puppets, chanting slogans and singing songs. What if we marched with bedbugs, termites, spores, and seeds, and when reaching a target of resistance, set these species free to continue onto their next stage of evolution?

Fuzzy Biological Sabotage is a form of activism explored by the USAmerican art activist group Critical Art Ensemble in their book *Molecular Invasion* (2002). To put the theory of Fuzzy Biological Sabotage into practice, research and development are prerequisites. For instance, the Critical Art Ensemble proposes releasing mutated fruit flies into the lobby of a biotechnology laboratory performing genetic testing on fruit flies—knowing the mutated fruit flies will inevitably find their way into the labs and contaminate the tests. In order to implement this tactic, one must first figure out how to culture mutated fruit flies. (If you want to try this at home, you can buy fruit fly culturing kits from Blades Biological Supply.) Another potential application of Fuzzy Biological Sabotage could be using the fungus *Coprinus comatus* to break up roads. There is photographic evidence of these mushrooms growing through asphalt roads laid over organic debris (tree branches, manure, etc.), already impregnated with *Coprinus comatus* spores. The conundrum is: if we wanted to break up a specific stretch of road, say a road to a new coal-fired power plant, how exactly would we get the spores under that road? Could inoculating tree stumps bordering the road be the answer to this riddle? This way, the mycelium would crawl through the tree roots beneath the road and eventually send its mushrooms to the surface to break through the road.

Peeling another layer in the onion of Fuzzy Biological Sabotage, the Critical Art Ensemble insinuates the effectiveness of creating "inertia" within a system. Inertia is the resistance of any physical object to a change in its state of motion or rest. By releasing low doses of fruit flies at a biotech lab at consistent time intervals—consistency not quantity is key—the mutant flies will not only contaminate the tests, but also create an inertia of paranoia within the workforce, who will not be able to figure out why the tests keep going wrong. This inertia may germinate fear that the saboteur may be one of their fellow scientists. "A paranoid work force is an inefficient work force."

The "fuzzy" in Fuzzy Biological Sabotage refers to its location in the grey area between legality and illegality: plausible deniability. For example, fruit flies cannot be charged for trespassing. As opposed to the unfuzzy act of lighting oil wells, a fuzzy act would be inoculating oil wells with oil-eating bacteria. As the bacteria neutralize the oil supplies they would also germinate inertia by creating a positive feedback loop of bacterial reproduction and oil neutralization.

"Fuzziness" can also be applied to ethical grey areas. There are obviously different ethical ramifications to breaking up roads that lead to nuclear weapons factories than roads on school bus routes. An equally important question to ponder is: What is the saboteur's ethical responsibility to other than human species? If a real estate headquarters was infested with bedbugs their reaction would be to fumigate the building, just like the real estate firm Douglas Elliman did in their New York headquarters in 2011. Is leading bedbugs to a certain death Fuzzy Biological Sabotage or just biological sabotage for both species?

Another conundrum comes into focus when we point the microscope at ourselves: Are we all engaging in a form of biological sabotage every time we put our foot on the gas pedal, step into an airplane, turn on the lights, send an email, and pay our taxes to fund wars and oil subsidies? To those who label Fuzzy Biological Sabotage as a negative tactic—one that fights violence with violence—I would ask, aren't we all committing acts of violence with our everyday participation in the dominant discourse? It is not a question of being or not being a saboteur, it is a question of what kind of saboteurs we want to be.

***Katherine Ball** (US) is a habitat for fungi and bacteria located on planet Earth. Just as waves move an ocean, their collective movements swirl with hands-on experiments in alternatives to the dominant discourse. For "Truth is Concrete," she installed the "Garden of Biological Disobedience"—a research and development laboratory. Part garden, part laboratory, part home, it also functioned as an insect hatchery, seed library, experiment station, and spawn dispensary for gathering and discussing ethical and ecological ramifications of biological disobedience.*

Leónidas Martín / Yomango

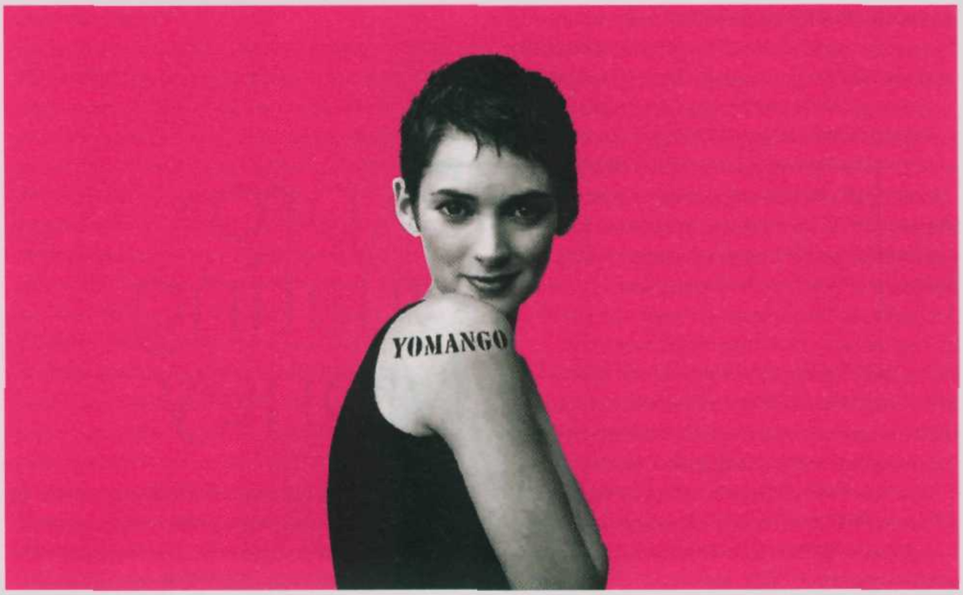
Shop-lifting

On July 5, 2002 in Barcelona a new brand was born: Yomango—a brand unlike any other. Yomango translates as something like "I love lifting," and that's precisely what it offers: the appropriation of things sold by multinational corporations, without money or credit cards, without even stopping at the checkout.

That may seem confusing at first glance. It may make us think we have to accumulate objects and just repeat the logic imposed by capitalism using other means. Nothing could be further from the truth. The only interest Yomango has in things is to make something new happen with them. To force them to become something different, something that has nothing to do with consumption, but with the invention of new possibilities for living. In this way Yomango leaves behind the closed circle of production and consumption, and falls squarely within the scope of appropriation. That is where its art is coming from.

Aside from this, Yomango behaves just like any other brand. It produces ads and catalogues, designs, fashions, and accessories—a whole life-style package ready to acquire in bulk. Although its imagery is drawn from and applied to everyday life, it also performs the most extraordinary and spectacular actions. Mass flash mobs in multinationals to make the brand visible. These actions are their advertising, their gleaming hoardings in the heart of the metropolis. They give rise to the design of videos that go so far in creating the brand's image, varying with the seasons and interests of each Yomango community.

The first Yomango action was performed in Barcelona, at a branch of Bershka. The city's Centre of Contemporary Culture (CCCB) had invited us to take part in one of its annual exhibitions, so we made the most of the opportunity to introduce the brand to society at large. There were sales on everywhere when Yomango wove its particular brand of magic. According to the media, a blue, size 34 dress was removed in front of everybody's eyes and



transformed into a wave of light and color—a true explosion of life that was later exhibited in a museum as a work of art. They say the strength of this intervention was so powerful that the aftershock even reached the mayor's office.

From that moment on the Yomango brand grew like wildfire. A key piece in this expansion was its open access webpage, whose chatrooms gave birth to the first Yomango communities. Workshops on the brand were organized in many cities, both in art institutions and social spaces. Cities like Madrid or Bilbao signed up for the party, and began to develop the brand and to tailor it to their needs, tastes, and desires.

Our second intervention we called "Yomango-Tango", also performed in Barcelona. The banks and multinationals had been pillaging Argentina for a year and the social response was widespread: demonstrations, *cacerolazos* with people taking to the streets banging pots, pans, and barter markets. Three governments were forced to resign in less than a month. Our action was intended as a tribute to all the people who had taken part in that highly creative social revolt—a Yomango style tribute, of course.

The first thing we did was to organize some tango classes. We learnt the basic steps, then gave them the Yomango touch, and Yomango-Tango was born, a kind of tango that, with every step, lifts whatever happens to be at hand. All ready to go, we set off for the Carrefour on the Rambla to hold a milonga. The cashiers blinked in disbelief when they saw a crowd of Yomango dancers come in and tango their way around the shelves with music specially composed for the occasion at full volume. Bottles of champagne disappeared with every step the dancers took. According to the press, over twenty vanished as if by magic—Yomango magic. Next day we uncorked them in a branch of the Banco Santander, one of the banks responsible for the crisis in Argentina, and joyfully toasted the free movement of things, people and desires.

This action marked the explosion of the brand. Before its first anniversary Yomango had several franchises in different countries around the world: Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Germany, Italy ... For many people its logo began to represent a gateway to a shared world where production became cooperation. That was when we adopted the slogan "Yomango Is You." Ever since that day, Yomango has blazed the trail with a whole array of communicative events, devices, and channels, from alternative media to the official press, from supermarkets or shopping malls to international activist meetings, from fashion catalogues to Internet blogs. In the process, it has won the hearts of thousands and become a genuine multinational brand. The only multinational brand to stand outside the market.

Over time Yomango has become an activist style: another tool to change the world. A way of life designed to be adopted by anyone wherever and whenever they like—transforming it, plagiarizing it, expanding it. Yomango is a way to make your life better, because happiness isn't for sale.

***Leónidas Martín** (ES) is an artist, activist, founding member of **Yomango** (2002), and cofounder of the cultural collective Enmedio (2007). Martín uses humor and creativity to develop collective projects like "Prêt à Révolter" or "Las Agencias" that lie in the space between art and activism.*

Núria Güell

Expropriating Money

Too big to fail: a peculiar justification given by the government to take away public resources and hand them over to the banks. The more perverse and corrupt they were, the more rewards they obtained. It all started with the "fractional-reserve system," which is the legal privilege that the States ceded to the financial institutions to create money from nothing, allowing them thus to lend its customers deposit money to make a credit expansion and achieve exponential growth in earnings. And it seemed they were going to fall, but they were rescued. Placing on our backs an extraordinary debt that does not belong to us and that we are required to return through budget cuts, and by decrees, we have been condemned to impoverishment, family instability, the dismantling of public services, in order to fatten the odious mass grave in the Strait of Gibraltar, the consumption of anxiolytics, and the loss of a future.

Lucio Urtubia counterfeited twenty million dollars in City Bank checks in order to contribute them to the antifascist struggle during the Spanish dictatorship. Human betrayal put him behind bars, though only for six months. "Anarchists are the kings of the arts," Lucio always says, and City Bank wanted the impeccable engraving plates that made them lose capital and legitimacy. His wits won the day: "First of all get me out of jail so I can hand over the plates in exchange for the millions I ask, and I promise the counterfeit checks will stop circulating."

Enric Duran, a Catalan activist, expropriated €500,000 from banks to allocate them to anticapitalist initiatives. He made this public, assuming the risk and consequences. Enric chose not to legitimize the judicial system, and preferred to go underground.

I called Enric and Lucio. I needed their complicity to conduct a "displaced legal application" to the "fractional-reserve system," as I had defined a master plan that sought to apply to the bank the same law they applied to their clients. They were surprised when I told them we could use the autonomy of art as an "umbrella" to use certain illegalities as a significant resource, the financial and human resources of art institutions as a means and as a framework to make the imagined possible and to leverage media exposure in order to expand the audiences and those addressed.

So Enric and Lucio went from being expropriation militants to being teachers, participating in various delivery platforms and training citizens on strategies to expropriate money from banking entities. After the completion of the pedagogical encounter entitled: "How can we expropriate money from the banks?," I published a manual with different expropriation strategies, legal and economic analysis, and reflective texts for free distribution in public space and the Web.

The methodology is simple: it consists of applying for several loans at different banks in parallel so that they do not know you are applying for loans simultaneously. The documentation requested in order to obtain the credit can be forged. As banks are private companies, at least in Spain they cannot check your personal information. You pay the first instalments and when you have already applied for all the credits you want, you declare insolvency and stop paying the fees, getting to keep all the money. The banks will think you are one of the thousands of customers that due to the crisis cannot repay their debts. In order to avoid any legal entrapments it is imperative to state that the intention from the outset was to repay the loans and that, despite the counterfeiting of documents, there was no premeditation to not repay them.

Sharing strategies, fears, and above all desires, empowers us and gives us the feeling of a togetherness that is more powerful than the power itself. The project was appropriated by others, creating small groups and organizing clandestine meetings to create future strategies and set up future actions. And then came the moment I had to position myself: direct action or art?

Núria Güell *(ES) is an artist whose projects expose social, political, and economic inequality and situations where authority generates oppression and try to provide partial solutions to them. Her work explores institutional or governmental abuses of power and challenges the limits of legality. It is also often aimed at generating protest and dissent against dominant economic or power structures.*

Janice Kerbel

Bank Robbing

00:02:40 **Street Cleaner** places Diversion Explosive 1 behind cellar grille, Abchurch Lane
removes overalls in Sherbourne Lane and takes second explosive from wheeled bin
takes taxi to Mansion House Station

00:05:00 **Air-Conditioning Van** arrives at **Position 1**

00:06:00 **Technician** cuts telephone ground line
takes Underground to Liverpool St Station

00:00:00 armoured vehicle passes George Yard heading northwest on Lombard St
00:00:01 ***Collision Vehicle 1*** *pulls out of George Yard on tail of armoured vehicle*
00:00:04 armoured vehicle turns left into Clements Lane
00:00:10 ***Collision Vehicle 2*** *pulls out from Lombard Court into Clements Lane*
00:00:11 armoured vehicle collides into side of ***Collision Vehicle 2***
00:00:12 ***Collision Vehicle 1*** *collides into back of armoured vehicle*

00:06:10 teller and manager return to main banking hall
Client calls **Driver** and hangs up after two rings

00:06:20 **Air-Conditioning Van** proceeds to **Position 2**

00:06:25 investment advisory meeting resumes

00:06:30 **Repairman 1** exits van and proceeds to side entrance
Repairmen 2 & 3 exit van and proceed to side garage

00:06:40 **Repairman 1** notifies side security guard of COOLFLOW arrival to repair reported ventilation problem

00:06:50 side security guard escorts **Repairmen 2 & 3** through side garage to central control room

00:07:10 out-of-camera zone created in side lobby
Repairman 1 blocks back wall camera with ladder
directs front wall camera away from lift 1
sprays black paint over front wall camera's motion detector

00:08:45 **Street Cleaner** sets *Diversion Explosive 2 on traffic median, Queen Victoria St and Friday St*
side security guard returns to side lobby

00:08:50 **Repairman 1** knocks side security guard unconscious within out-of-camera zone

00:08:55 **Repairman 1** drags side security guard into lift 1 and arrests lift movements
changes into guard's uniform and takes keys, security pass and swipe card

00:09:00 **Repairmen 2 & 3** remove coveralls under which they wear armoured vehicle guard uniforms

00:09:30 **Repairman 1** exits lift leaving side security guard locked inside
Street Cleaner takes Underground to Victoria Station

00:09:35 Holding vault notified to prepare for collection
Repairman 1 calls holding vault from security desk
deactivates detection sensors/unlocks barriers to holding vault (interior control panel)

00:09:40 **Repairman 1** sends radio signal to **Repairmen 2 & 3**
exits bank and signals to **Driver** to proceed to **Position 3**

00:09:45 **Repairmen 2 & 3** proceed to holding vault

3-minute alarm danger-zone begins

00:10:00 **Air-Conditioning Van** moves forward to **Position 3**
Repairman 1 returns to side lobby

00:10:35 **Repairmen 2 & 3** arrive in holding vault
receive collection in exchange for weighted cash-transport containers

00:11:40 **Repairmen 2 & 3** send radio signal to **Repairman 1**

00:11:45 **Repairman 1** activates fire alarm (automatically unlocking all external fire-exit doors)

5-minute fire brigade response-time begins

00:11:55 **Repairman 1** exits side entrance
Repairmen 2 & 3 exit back garage with money in cash-transport containers

00:11:58 **Repairmen 1, 2 & 3** into waiting **Air-Conditioning Van**

00:12:00 **Air-Conditioning Van** departs following getaway route toward North London Freight Depot

south-east along King William St
right on Abchurch Lane

00:12:15 **Client** takes Underground to London Bridge Station

The piece Bank Job *(1997) was produced in response to the increasing difficulty of surviving in London as an artist. The elite investment bank, the Robarts branch of Coutts & Co, located at 15 Lombard St. in Central London, was chosen and surveyed: detailed notes and photographs of daily operations, layouts, security shifts, and armored vehicle routes were accounted for. From the information gathered a detailed plan was devised, its form determined by the need for invisibility. The work includes all essential material to execute the plan: requirements list, background information, timelines, getaway routes, floor plans, site plans, maps, and photographs.*

Janice Kerbel *(CA/GB) is an artist and trained cultural anthropologist. She explores issues like surveillance, urbanism, tourism, or ecology mixing meticulous scientific research and oneiric poetics.*

Tomislav Medak

Hack-ing

Hacking is the practice of disrupting communication systems and information flows and repurposing them against their intended or legal use. When discussing technology, we tend to perceive it as an enabler. Tools that help us master the world around us with ever lower energy expenditure. Frequently, but less so, we still think of technology as war machines, surveillance machines, propaganda machines.

But technology is linked at a more fundamental level to social domination: that is, to that most fundamental of forms of contemporary domination, the domination of social life by capital. Since the onset of capitalism, the development of technology has been driven predominantly—but not exclusively—by the laws of intra-capitalist competition: by the pressure to expand demand and increase productivity. Technology in particular, as a means of production, is a form of domination: that of capital over labor. It is fundamentally the ingenuity and productivity of living labor that has accumulated over time, assumed the form of machines and that now confronts it in an alienated form: as the productive coercion that extracts—"vampire-like," as Marx called it—the living energy from it in order to keep accumulating.

Turning now to contemporary communication technologies and their attendant configurations of domination, subordination, and social control, which are the targets of hacking, a technology is never merely technological: it is a confluence of engineering, market, legal, and social norms. All of these can be mobilized to sustain the domination of a technology and the domination by means of that technology. Take the example of the development of the Internet. The Internet has emerged outside of the domain of capitalist competition. It was created as an effort by the US military at the height of the Cold War to create a distributed communication system with no central hub, a system that could sustain the attack and outage of a part of the network. And it has continued to be developed by academia, providing the broadest possible participation with the least degree of centralized control. It is a typical brainchild of the military-academic complex: robust and open.

In the early 1990s, the Internet massified, stirring the old hope that we will finally get a two-way public medium, in which everyone will be able to speak to the broadest public. And, twenty years later, that potential has indeed materialized. Almost everybody can participate. But this democratic participation is relative—it perfectly reflects the separation between the economic freedoms and political freedoms that capitalist domination wants to sustain. While we have the absolute freedom to debate, we have no means to engage in the transformation of the economic order. The Internet has thus become the epitome of that paradox of equal inequality: capitalist democracy.

And it has also become a typical capitalist technology. While it feels like the same old hyperlinked and distributed communication network, it is now much more centralized: controlled by a handful of service providers and dominated by commercialized content. Large corporations, many of which formerly controlled the old media landscape, now control large segments of the Internet infrastructure. They have transformed it into a system where monitoring of user behavior has become the instrument to sell advertisements to the users and sell users as a commodity to advertisers, while at the same time allowing the easy surveillance and aggregation of all electronic communication to the security services. The network topology of the Internet nowadays is more of a hub than a mash. And legal protections of copyright and patents serve to sustain the monopoly power of those companies, and their capacity to protect their control over the exchange of information and the development of technology from innovations and interventions that might disrupt their monopoly power.

We have now come full circle to understanding what defines the emancipatory in the practice of hacking. First, it means disrupting capital's control over the development of technology, creating uses of technology that escape the economic interests of technology companies and transform it into a true people's technology that might allow them, in a second step, to escape the social control in their effort to transform existing social relations. Two hacks are here exemplary: Richard Stallman's GNU General Public License—a copyright license that suspends private property and commodification in software; and Phil Zimmermann's Pretty Good Privacy—an encryption algorithm that prevents anyone reading the communication for whom it is not intended to.

Second, it means using technology to break the economic and legal power that sustains the domination of capital over social life. Exemplary here are the hacks by the late Aaron Swartz, a hacker and political activist who took his own life in January 2013, two days after the US justice decided to take him to court for his JSTOR hack, with the prospect of up to thirty-five years in jail. His setting free of metadata from the Library of Congress, of legal documents from the PACER repository, and what looks like an attempt to liberate all the scientific articles in the JSTOR repository, were all attempts to circumvent the economic barriers and access controls provided by copyright, but having little to do with the authors and everything to do with monopoly capital's capacity to bar access to fundamental social goods, such as science and law, and to protect its market power.

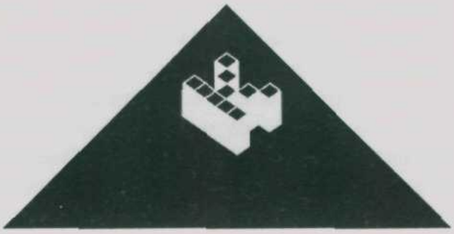
The circumstances of Swartz's tragic death, however, indicate that the copyright oligopolies will not back down under such brave acts of hacking. We cannot find technological solutions to social problems, nor engineer our way out of social domination. Without a political struggle, hacks won't stick. And that is a double requirement that Swartz, a political activist himself, was aware of in his all too short hacking life: without disobedience, antagonism, and organizing work a transformation of social and political order cannot be brought about—without a transformation of social and political order all prowess, ingenuity, and resistance is lost.

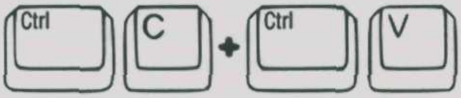
Tomislav Medak *(HR) is a philosopher coordinating the theory and publishing program of the MaMa—Multimedia Institute in Zagreb, Croatia. He is an advocate of free software and free culture. He is a member of the Zagreb-based theater company BADco.*

Lucifer / Church of Kopimism

Church Founding

When most Occupy activists would have turned their backs on any form of political or religious *colors, in the Netherlands there was a debate* on January 9, 2012, at Occupy Leiden to adopt the religious principles of Kopimism as an experimental form of protest. This motion was generally accepted and the so called "Copy/Paste" religion from Sweden began to be copied to the Netherlands, through translation and other adaptations. The religious concept of copying and sharing being holy became quite popular within weeks and the church itself moved away from its Occupy grassroots within two weeks.
After operating on its own with one Operator/ Priestess "Puntjes," the board of directors *Nihlaeth, Lucifer, and Anonymous #1 decided* to register the Kopimism religion as a "way of life" on April 2, 2012, with the Humanity4all Foundation in the Netherlands to guarantee the religion's continuity in the future.





"Copy and Paste what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law."

Kopimism Values
Kopimism is based on a few basic axioms, which can be traced back to our strong defense of the intrinsic value of information, irrespective of its content. Information is sacred, therefore:

- Copying of information is ethically right.
- Dissemination of information is ethically right.
- Copymixing is a sacred kind of copying, more so than perfect digital copying, because it expands and enhances the existing wealth of information.
- Copying or remixing information communicated by another person is seen as *an act of respect and a strong expression of* acceptance and Kopimistic faith.
- The Internet is holy.
- Code is law.

Members of Kopimism (Kopimists) and the Church of Kopimism recognized religious representatives (Operators) dedicate their lives to living in accordance with these axioms.

Church of Kopimism Symbol and other Sacred Symbols
The Church of Kopimism symbol is a pyramid *with the letter K inside. It is called Kopimi*-pyramid or the Holy Kopimi-pyramid.
It is the symbol that you refer to as the *kopimistsamfundets* symbol. It is permissible for individuals to depict, copy, and remix any icon and call it the Kopymism symbol. Operators (Kopimi Priests) may, at their discretion, also copy, remix, and adopt alternative symbols; however, it is of the utmost importance that they also remain stewards of the traditions set forth in the manifesto.

The key combination "ctrl C + ctrl V" is a deeply *sacred representation of the act of copying, and* therefore should be treated as such.

Dutch Religious Legislation
In the Netherlands, the only thing actually needed by law to form a religion is some kind of "enlightened" religious leader and followers. In fact, it is perfectly possible to form a church

in the Netherlands with a priest and the main belief being the existence of the invisible pink unicorn or the flying spaghetti monster.

Religious organizations here are not required to register as a formal organization to exercise their religious duties, unlike in Sweden, where they have had to rewrite their manifestos several times since 2010 before being finally accepted by Swedish authorities as a real religion in January 2012.

A religion does have certain advantages over laws concerning resources and property—even intellectual property—which all belong to the whole religious organization and not to its members. Freedom of religion is a highly guarded freedom that allows one to push back the boundaries of commercial law a little further. Since Kopimism claims that copying and sharing of information is the whole essence of life itself (see, for example, the biological replication of DNA in any living organism), copying and sharing is therefore considered a holy act. And no commercial organization should interfere in a natural process.

Religious Activism

In Sweden, the word Kopimism is considered a new word, defined by the Language Council as a "political and religious ideology centered around freedom of information." We are now, indeed, more committed than ever to a religious, creative, and artistic approach of supporting the activist community here in the Netherlands, both on and offline.

We do play with the law: in the same way that the copyright mafia industry has played with the law in the last couple of decades to monetize culture, the Kopimist church "religiously" plays with the law to emphasize the importance of culture to people, so that it remains free just as it will be for ages to come. Activism itself can be considered a religion in certain ways, as a true activist actually believes that the information he shares will inspire change for the good of mankind. And that is what Kopimists are trying to do as a religious entity as well. The act of copying and sharing of information is done to inspire change and to help create new insights to solve complicated contemporary issues—or simply to make this world a more creative, joyful place, without the harsh restrictions imposed by corporations getting fat on culture and information.

Because, in the end, information just wants to be free and shared.

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***Lucifer** (NL) is one of the founders of the Dutch **Church of Kopimism**. The missionary kopimistsamfundet is a religious group centering on Sweden that believes in the copying and sharing of information. On January 5, 2012, Kopimism was accepted by Sweden as a religion. The Dutch church was copied and pasted from the Swedish one on 09-Jan-2012 16:00:01:26 UTC.*

Saki Bailey

Legalizing the Occupation

On June 14, 2011, the community of the Teatro Valle in Rome occupied the historic theater after the local government attempted to force its sale to private bidders. The occupation started just days after the unprecedented outcome of a public referendum in Italy on water, where over ninety-five percent of voters voted against profits on water, claiming water as a *bene comune* or common good. The occupants demanded that culture be recognized as a common good essential to human life, like water, and that access be made a constitutionally guaranteed right. The status of common goods has a strong legal basis in the Italian Constitution in Articles 3, 42, and 43 related to economic and social rights guarantees, as well as, public interest limits on the uses of private property. Informed by this constitutional basis, the Rodotà Commission, appointed by the Prodi government, proposed reforms to the Italian Civil Code, which would have created a special legal category for common goods "essential to human development." However, their reforms—proposed as a bill by the Piedmont region—were never discussed and set aside by a senate majority in favor of privatization.

The Valle is a magnificent architectural treasure: built in 1727, it was one of the first theaters in Europe (1822) to offer performances available to the general public (rather than exclusively for the nobility). The theater has hosted some of the most important musicians, directors, and artistes in history, among them Mozart and Rossini, and is noted for being the birthplace of Pirandello's plays in the 1920s. The Valle is located in the heart of Rome, and its presence has contributed over the years to the neighborhood's hip and lively character, as well as raising its property values. For all these reasons, the municipality of Rome saw the economic potential of converting the Valle into a privatized theater, rumored to be part of a larger and more profitable commercial center. This is a good example of the predatory relationship of the private and public sectors to the commons: as the economy moves from profit to rent, the private sector lurks as a "specter" of the commons to exploit them when they have reached peak value.

The occupants realized that the value of the theater—beyond the purely commercial—needed to be reformulated and articulated. The occupants understood the Valle as valuable not because of its location, but because it is a place where people offer their creative artistic work, and the interaction among artists, directors, and patrons forms a community within the theater, producing an immaterial cultural good for citizens. The framing of the Valle as a cultural common good presented an alternative narrative to the dominant neoliberal economic ideology embraced by the Italian government, which also resonated politically and culturally with Italian citizens, and offered an alternative institutional form through which this vision could thrive. Commons, in an institutional sense, is not just aspirational rights talk, but a practice based on the experience of communities around the world jointly owning, using, and managing access to vital resources through mechanisms for direct participation in decision making.

Ugo Mattei, a prominent jurist and one of the leaders of the water referendum, and Stefano Rodotà, a recent presidential candidate in the 2013 elections, became involved with the Valle and helped the occupants establish a legal foundation for the protection of culture as a common good based on these experiences. And in July 2011, the Teatro Valle notarized the Statute of the Valle (*Statuto della Fondazione Teatro Valle Bene Comune*) to create The Fondazione Teatro Valle Bene Comune, allowing the occupants to legalize an illegal occupation and pursue a laboratory for the horizontal management of the theater through an open assembly. The statute structured the occupants' relationships within the Valle, as well as the method of decision making. It determined that an open General Assembly is charged with the most important decisions affecting the life of the theater: from programming, undertaking cultural and political activities, and annual budgeting, to policies for the acceptance of donations and other funding, as well as the conditions of membership and participation, and the process for amending the statute.

The legal foundation of the Valle was in many ways a paradox: its existence tested the fine line between legality and illegality, in that, while the occupation of public and private property according to Italian law is "illegal" (as it is in most other places around the world), the Valle foundation—and others after it—challenges the very basis of this established legality: namely, the rules of private property. The use of the foundation to effectuate the legal recognition of an illegal occupation was completely unprecedented in Italian law. And while its recognition continues to be challenged by the local government, it has been upheld, and has been supported by the Italian courts, for example, in the case of the Cinema Palazzo, the Tribunal of the Municipality of Rome (2012), Section VII, found for occupants of the Palazzo, stating that, where the trespass of private property (the use of occupation) serves a legitimate social purpose, it can be legally justified and sustained. Since the Valle statute's enactment, nine other theaters around Italy have used the Valle as a model: adopting the political strategy of occupation, embracing the idea of the commons, forming the legal entity of the foundation and experimenting with the direct governance of cultural goods, and as a result, forging a new type of legal and economic institution that challenges the public/private dichotomy which has colonized the modern imagination.

***Saki Bailey** (IT) is a lecturer at the International University College of Turin, as well as Executive Director of the Institute for the Study of Political Economy and Law. She is a "comunarda" of the Valle Theater and director of Occupying the Commons: Teatro Valle Occupato.*

Lawrence Liang

Unlatching the Copy

In her meditation on the Greek poet Stesichoros, Anne Carson suggests that he unlatched the world which had been fixed in its place by well worn adjectives that suggested blood was always black and women neat-ankled. After Stesichoros was done, there was nothing to prevent an insomniac from being *outside the joy* or a river being *root silver*. What better image of a tactic can we have than this original idea of poesis (with its etymological roots to the act of making) as we move deeper into the immaterial capitalism of the twenty-first century, where value is harnessed through naming regimes that distinguish between the original and the copy, the real and the fake, the authentic and the pirated. If definitions belong by virtue of power to definers, how do we erode their original meaning by making copies, fakes, and pirated versions? Artistic practice has always thrived on blurring boundaries, and one of the crucial strategies for us would be to remix the idea of the copy from its noun form to a verb. At the moment, the focus on what a copy is, rather than what a copy does, or what it means to copy, tends to privilege the legal aspects of the copy and in its legal avatar it emerges as a diminished idea, moving from its original sense of abundance (copia) to the more recent sense of derivativeness, passing thereby from a sense of plenty to a sense of lack.

How then are we to return to the ontological excess that is embedded in the idea of the copy. Walter Benjamin, when thinking of the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction struck a deep blow at the auratic idea of the original but did little to give us a richer account of the copy, and it is to this task that we need to collectively turn. The idea of mechanical reproduction conjures not just a technological shift but also invokes the idea of bad sex: a mechanical reproduction without love. What would it mean to love the copy and to love to copy? If copies were classified according to the conventions of film genres, they would fall either under horror or love stories. Borges narrates the story of a passionate village librarian who, lacking the resources to buy new books and yet wanting to complete his library, would, whenever he came across a favorable review in a journal, write the book himself on the basis of its title and review. William Gass adds a frightening conclusion to the story: the books written by the unknown provincial librarian ultimately replace the originals which are declared to be fakes. Gass' dystopic addition to the story speaks to a recurring cultural anxiety that has persisted from Plato till today—the copy eventually overwhelming the original—a fear that has intensified with the advent of every technology of mass reproduction.

Hillel Schwartz in his eclectic history of the culture of copy takes us through a journey of the copy in the West, from twins and doppelgangers to puppets and parrots, to examine the simultaneous fascination and horror that the copy induces in us. Schwartz says: "The most perplexing moral dilemmas of this era are dilemmas posed by our skill as creating likeness of ourselves, our world, our times? The more adroit we are at carbon copies, the more confused we are about the unique" (Schwartz 1998). He sees this duality as an inevitable aspect of modern life, where, on the one hand, we have a constant striving for the reproduction of our likeness through portraits, miniatures, sculpture, photography, etc., while, on the other, simultaneously struggling for authenticity in the midst of these copies. For Schwartz, it is only within an exuberant world of copies that we arrive at our experience of originality, and it is only in a pervasive culture of the copy that we assign a militant value to the original. Gently disagreeing with the famous Benjaminian thesis on the loss of aura, he says the crisis brought about by mechanical reproduction is not just about the loss of aura or the happenstance of a work but the assurance of our own livelihood.

In contrast to the horror of copy, here is a romantic modification of Benjamin's work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. An English professor and Saul Bellow enthusiast in Bangalore was delighted to find a copy of a Bellow novel in a library in Chennai that he did not earlier possess. Unfortunately for him, the library policy did not allow for either the borrowing of the book or its photocopying. The professor sat, pencil in hand for a week—invoking the ghosts of the scribal past—and copied down the entire novel. On returning to Bangalore, he typed out the entire novel and photocopied it to distribute to his students. The dedicated act of sitting for weeks on end copying out passages, typing and reproducing them only to be able to distribute them is what I would term as the work of love in the age of mechanical reproduction. This labor of love stands as a corrective to the extreme idea of the grotesque multiplying copy, and I would like to believe that like Pierre Menard's copy of Don Quixote, the Bellow novel transformed with each copy as it moved from the labor of the eye and hand to that of the hand and machine, and finally to the machine alone.

Might this be the labor of love needed to retain our authenticity in an age of copies, where we invest our affective philias—biblio or cine—in an attempt at harnessing the kernel of truth lying in the ontological excess of the object? Marcel Proust says that it is only through art that we leave ourselves, know what the other knows of this universe that is not the same as ours, and whose landscapes are as unknown to us as those that might be on the moon. "Thanks to art," writes Proust, "instead of seeing only one world, ours, we see it multiplied, and insofar as there are original artists, insofar as we have worlds at our disposition, they will differ more from one another than all those that wheel about in the infinite."

***Lawrence Liang** (IN) is a lawyer and founder of the Alternative Law Forum. He works on the intersection of law and cultural politics. Being a keen follower of the open source movement, he has been working on ways of translating open source ideas into the cultural domain.*

Justin Hoffmann

Sabotage

The act of sabotage was deployed as an instrument of class struggle in the French labor movement at the end of the nineteenth century and soon gained popularity. The aim was to challenge the capitalist system of rule. The concept of sabotage was undergoing constant change too, as we see almost half a century later in film. *Sabotage* (1936) and *Saboteur* (1942), two films by Alfred Hitchcock both about Nazi agents, portray sabotage not in the context of a revolutionary movement, but as a brutal act of terrorism. Antonio Negri published *Domination and Sabotage* in 1977 a book which recalls the nature of sabotage as class struggle at the transition from capitalism to communism and updates the concept. Here, sabotaging company operations, for example, is often seen in connection with appropriating something that already belongs to you. Unlike in the sphere of politics, where the notion of sabotage increasingly came to be replaced by such terms as "militant opposition" or "terrorism," it gained relatively wide currency in the realm of art and culture. The artistic practice of sabotage itself has a surprisingly long history. It started at the beginning of the twentieth century with the Futurists and the Dadaists. In July 1919, Johannes Baader distributed leaflets entitled "Dadaists against Weimar," in which he threatened to "blow Weimar to smithereens." From the onset, art sabotage established itself as a radical form of intervention within the arts—especially the performing arts—but without having been practiced on a large scale. The intention is not to destroy things but to repudiate short or long term events. Its goal is to interrupt a process, whereby destructive methods may sometimes but not necessarily be employed. A metaphoric and subjective character is what generally distinguishes art sabotage from criminal activity with political intentions.

Art sabotage has undergone substantial changes in recent decades. The focus is no longer on disrupting events, instigating riots, kidnapping and hostage taking, violation of the private sphere, theft, or damaging property, but rather on interfering in processes of communication. Whereas activities in the 1960s concentrated on real, highly symbolic places (for instance, the "Subversive Aktion" group disrupting a conference of the German advertising industry in 1964 with loud surf music, among other things), acts of sabotage today often take place in the virtual domain. These acts can, however, look back on a long history too. By the end of the 1990s, the Electronic Disturbance Theater had already developed a piece of software called FloodNet, which allowed them to block websites. The aim was to overload Internet connections. Hackers also count as digital saboteurs. Virtual activists can, however, only be successful if they accomplish something in the realworld setting of society—a fact of which they are equally aware. In *The Temporary Autonomous Zone*, Hakim Bey proclaimed a "poetic terrorism," advocating destruction of money, defacing of monuments, or radio piracy. More recently, the French authors' collective Tiqqun, influenced by the Situationists and Lettrists, has recently brought sabotage back into play as a political instrument. Tiqqun (Hebrew for reparation) designates a becoming-reality in a process of revelation. Instead of criticism inherent in the system, it calls on people to disrupt communication flows and to evade the system of rule.

__Justin Hoffmann__ (DE) is director of Kunstverein Wolfsburg, art director of the science and art festival Phaenomenale, and a founding member of the band FSK.

Remove All Obstacles, One by One

from *The Coming Insurrection*, Tiqqun, 2007

It's well known that the streets teem with incivilities. Between what they are and what they should be stands the centripetal force of the police, doing their best to restore order to them; and on the other side there's us, the opposite centrifugal movement. We can't help but delight in the fits of anger and disorder wherever they erupt. It's not surprising that these national festivals that aren't really celebrating anything anymore are now systematically going bad. Whether sparkling or dilapidated, the urban fixtures—but where do they begin? where do they end?—embody our common dispossession. Persevering in their nothingness, they ask for nothing more than to return to that state for good. Take a look at what surrounds us: all this will have its final hour. The metropolis suddenly takes on an air of nostalgia, like a field of ruins.

All the incivilities of the streets should become methodical and systematic, converging in a diffuse, effective guerrilla war that restores us to our ungovernability, our primordial unruliness. It's disconcerting to some that this same lack of discipline figures so prominently among the recognized military virtues of resistance fighters. In fact though, rage and politics should never have been separated. Without the first, the second is lost in discourse; without the second the first exhausts itself in howls. When words like *enragés* and *exaltés* resurface in politics they're always greeted with warning shots.

As for methods, let's adopt the following principle from sabotage: a minimum of risk in taking the action, a minimum of time, and maximum damage. As for strategy, we will remember that an obstacle that has been cleared away, leaving a liberated but uninhabited space, is easily replaced by another obstacle, one that offers more resistance and is harder to attack.

No need to dwell too long on the three types of workers' sabotage: reducing the speed of work, from "easy does it" pacing to the "work-to-rule" strike; breaking the machines, or hindering their function; and divulging company secrets. Broadened to the dimensions of the whole social factory, the principles of sabotage can be applied to both production and circulation. The technical infrastructure of the metropolis is vulnerable. Its flows amount to more than the transportation of people and commodities. Information and energy circulates via wire networks, fibers and channels, and these can be attacked. Nowadays sabotaging the social machine with any real effect involves reappropriating and reinventing the ways of interrupting its networks. How can a TGV line or an electrical network be rendered useless? How does one find the weak points in computer networks, or scramble radio waves and fill screens with white noise?

As for serious obstacles, it's wrong to imagine them invulnerable to all destruction. The promethean element in all of this boils down to a certain use of fire, all blind voluntarism aside. In 356 BC, Erostratus burned down the temple of Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the world. In our time of utter decadence, the only thing imposing about temples is the dismal truth that they are already ruins.

Annihilating this nothingness is hardly a sad task. It gives action a fresh demeanor. Everything suddenly coalesces and makes sense—space, time, friendship. We must use all means at our disposal and rethink their uses—we ourselves being means. Perhaps, in the misery of the present, "fucking it all up" will serve—not without reason—as the last collective seduction.

***Tiqqun** (FR) is a collective of authors and activists formed in 1999, radically engaged in a war against the current political and economic system. Originally known as The Invisible Committee, the group's principles are laid out in the book* Théorie du Bloom.

Taking Care

Jacob Wren

In my book *Revenge Fantasies of the Politically Dispossessed*, I wrote about a group of activists who attend something referred to only as "the meetings." What exactly the meetings are is never made entirely clear. However, a few things are explained. The meetings take place in a dystopian near future in which the activists in attendance have good reason to fear that, were they to engage in effective acts of protest or civil disobedience, they would be arrested, tortured and perhaps killed. Their weekly gatherings are therefore a kind of refuge from this harsh reality. A place to talk, reflect, attempt to reinvent the left, and prepare for a time when activism will be effective once again. When that time comes, because of the ongoing discussions that make up the meetings, they will have considered all options and be ready. Many readers saw these meetings as a satire on the ineffectiveness of the current left, but this was definitely not my intention. The idea for the meetings had far more to do with my own personal frustration, with looking at the desperate state of the world and not knowing what to do, where to start, how real long term change might begin and continue.

I remember first reading *The Critique of Cynical Reason* by Peter Sloterdijk, how I was fascinated by the concept of "enlightened false consciousness," that we can clearly see all the structural inequalities we take part in perpetrating but still do little or nothing to change them. Or, on a slightly different register, I often think of an anecdote I once heard about Charles Mingus, who regularly began his concerts by playing the Duke Ellington standard "Can't Get Started." When asked why, he would apparently reply: "Because that's my problem in life, I can't get started." All of this is a way of speaking about the fact that I have enormous sympathy for and curiosity about anyone who can get started—who finds ways to break the inertia of relative privilege and set off on the endless and impossible task of improving the world. I don't feel qualified to judge what might be more, or less, effective strategies in such matters. I fear that "the road to hell is paved with good intentions" but, at the same time, also embodies a much greater fear of my own ineffective paralysis.

We might say that all of the texts and projects in the following chapter take place on the other side of the line from where I stand. I am on this side of the line, along with much of the world's population, where I'm definitely not doing enough (if I'm doing anything at all), and they are on the other side, where they are doing at least something, if not quite a bit more than that. On the other side of the line, many strategies are invented and become possible. From WochenKlausur's "concrete improvements of existing social circumstances" to Minerva Cuevas' offering of "unexpected products"; from Michal Murin's rehabilitation of his old friend Milan Adamčiak, assisting him from homelessness toward a renewed artistic practice, to Christoph Schlingensief's equal treatment of *Superstar* and differently abled performers; from the vacuum cleaner's act of starting his own mental health institution and detaining himself within it to the necessary design-based paradigm shift that is Permaculture. Again and again, I feel I am reading about events a little bit further along the path than I am. (Or, since I don't particularly believe in progress, a little bit further around the circle that will continue endlessly unless our complete extinction cuts its short.) This feeling reminds me of the well-known last lines from Rilke about gazing at the "Archaic Torso of Apollo": "For here there is no place / that does not see you. You must change your life." It might be a simplified reading, but I have always seen these lines to mean that experiencing great art leads toward the realization that the way one is living is not nearly enough. "You must change your life" doesn't suggest that there is only one right answer, only one possible change, a right way and a wrong way and you must choose correctly. It is more about opening up possibilities, opening up a window and letting in some air, wondering anew what can and cannot become part of our more general reality.

Notions such as care, kindness, and compassion might help us find a basis for where such personal shifts can take place. Here we are in a territory of fragile humanism, about as far away from the "no future" punk rock nihilism that was one of my personal entry points into art and creativity. If I can get past my anxiety that all punks become boring hippies in the end, I can see that conceptual strategies that allow for more generous social relations, to put it rather bluntly, often feel good when you take part in them. In their book *On Kindness*, Adam Phillips and Barbara Taylor suggest that Freudian or Hobbesian conceptions of people as inherently selfish or cruel turn our gaze away from something we already know: that behaving with kindness toward others occurs continuously, on all levels of society, and is in fact highly pleasurable. We are capable of selfishness but equally capable of generosity. The suggestion that we are not, or that one quality is more prominent in human nature than the other, is little more than propaganda for selfishness.

The strategies suggested in this chapter are varied, at times in conflict with each other, very much open to every kind of criticism. When you mix art and politics you open yourself up to a barrage of difficult questions from all sides: that the work is not political enough, that it takes the wrong political position, is naive, a mere band aid on the problem it seeks to address. Because so many projects along these lines step outside of the safety of an autonomous artistic position, the grounds upon which they can be criticized become increasingly unstable. If I criticize a painting or a novel, the forms my criticism might take are fairly well established and, most of the time, reasonable limits are adhered to. But if I criticize an art project in which addicted, homeless sex workers and politicians are placed together on a boat in order to engage in dialogue, other levels of questioning rapidly, often confusingly, arise. How do I feel about the rights of sex workers? How do I understand sex work in relation to other kinds of work? How do I feel about activists (or artists) engaging with the state? How do I understand the social role of the state? Is it possible, in a short time, to set the parameters for a long term solution to such a complex, ongoing problem? Where does charity end and empowerment begin? For me, such works have multiple agency: they assist the people more directly involved in the situation while at the same time opening up a space in the imagination, suggesting that every social problem has multiple imaginative solutions if only we change our habits of thought.

Of course, changing our habits of thought is not nearly enough. Capitalism is a way of thinking, but it is also a system that enriches the lives of the few at the expense of the many. To state the obvious: where there is suffering, most likely there is also economic profit. I suggested earlier that "kindness toward others occurs continuously, on all levels of society." I believe this to be true on an interpersonal level, but it does little to ameliorate the fact that structural inequality will put profit before kindness each and every time. If we start with the metaphor that I am on one side of a line and on the other side are those who have taken at least the first step toward making small or large improvements, we might also suggest that with me, on this side of the line, are many who take a considerably more vicious self-interest in maintaining the current status quo, who are working toward building up this metaphorical line into a totalitarian-capitalist prison from which they hope we will never escape—and who probably wouldn't put the matter in these specific terms. Still, obsessing over these cruelties will get us nowhere. We are clearly not going to solve all the problems of the world in one fell swoop. Perhaps the only way to start is as close to ourselves as possible, one small step after another, working toward situations in which possibilities might increase over time, looking around and feeling where our natural desire to care might be put to best use.

Criticality has become such an unquestioned staple of theory and art. However, it seems to me, a caring attitude does not require us to call upon our most critical selves. A critical outlook is often a defensive position, a desire to rip off the veil of surface appearance and get to the real stuff underneath. Yet not all truths are hidden. At times, surface appearances might be speaking to us so clearly and directly that, obsessed with what else might be there, we do not hear them. An art project that helps a friend in need, a friend who has fallen on hard times might, in offering another alterative, reveal some of the hardness present in this constant need for greater critical insight. To see someone in need, to try to help them, does not require the sophisticated critical apparatus that is so often celebrated as the only basis for complex thought. It only requires a belief that change is possible, the very belief that certain strains of critical thinking so often undermine.

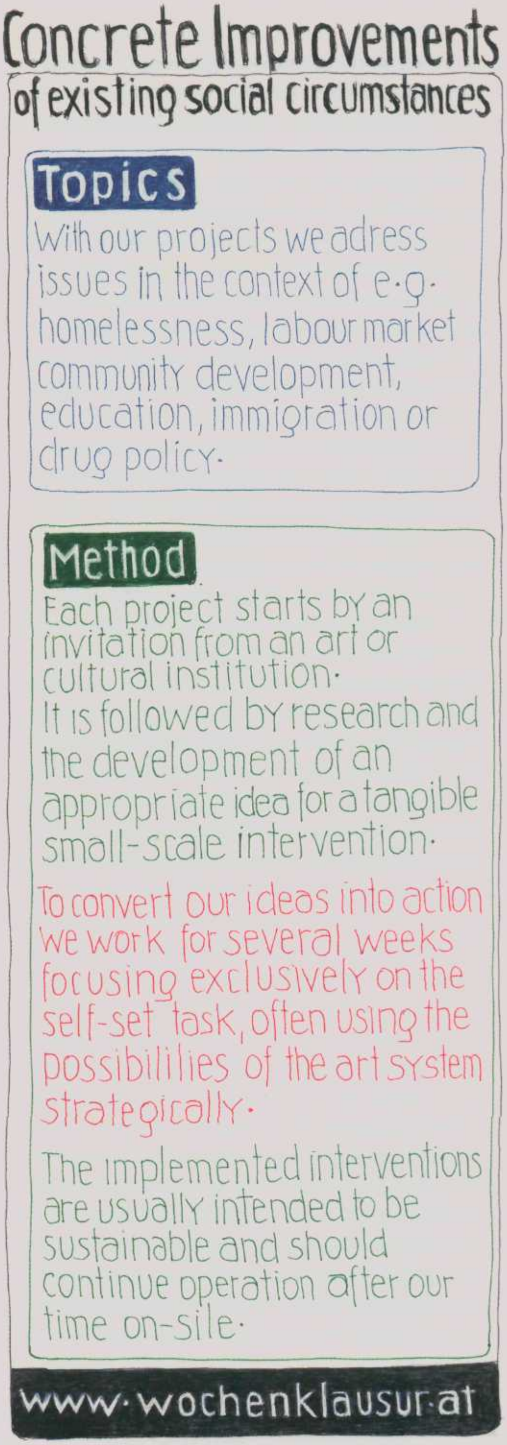
Coming full circle and returning to *Revenge Fantasies of the Politically Dispossessed*, I can see now that part of the problem, part of the shortcomings in my own thinking, can be found in the title, since the characters in *Revenge Fantasies* are not truly dispossessed. They are dispossessed in the same way I feel myself to be: as a reasonably privileged, straight white male living in a wealthy country (Canada) currently being run by a government I completely disagree with. I have a certain amount of power that I could direct toward social change but cannot feel exactly what this power is or how I might use it, what other people I might form coalitions with, and what specific issues we might organize ourselves around. I feel myself to be dispossessed but I don't see how to bring myself into solidarity with those even more dispossessed than me. If I were to do so, it seems I would be setting off on an unknown path: most likely some (or many) of the people around me would change, as might my worldview. What are the things closest to me to which I can most usefully contribute? How does my misguided sense of dispossession, of alienation, prevent me from doing so? How does it shortcircuit my compassion?

By each dealing with one small, yet specific, situation (and in the process bringing themselves closer to it), the projects and desires in this chapter remind us that focusing on immediate concerns, caring about someone or something within reach, can be a way of grounding ourselves. Reality is never just one thing. Luc Boltanski writes: "Reality suffers from a species of inherent fragility, such that *the reality of reality* must incessantly be reinforced in order to endure." So many of the images and words that surround us continuously enforce and suggest the idea that, as Margaret Thatcher famously pronounced: "There is no alternative." There is certainly no heaven on earth we will all someday achieve. But there are as many alternatives as we are able to imagine, little pinpricks of hope, shifting moments for potential change. All we need to do is step over the line, take the first step. I wonder if some day I might.

***Jacob Wren** (CA) makes literature, performances, and exhibitions. His books include:* Unrehearsed Beauty, Families Are Formed Through Copulation, *and* Polyamorous Love Song. *As coartistic director of the Montreal based interdisciplinary group PME-ART, he has cocreated several performances, among them* En français comme en anglais, *(*It's Easy to Criticize*), and the* HOSPITALITÉ / HOSPITALITY *series.*

WochenKlausur

Shifting Resources



Concrete Improvements
of existing social circumstances

Topics

With our projects we adress issues in the context of e.g. homelessness, labour market community development, education, immigration or drug policy.

Method

Each project starts by an invitation from an art or cultural institution.
It is followed by research and the development of an appropriate idea for a tangible small-scale intervention.

To convert our ideas into action we work for several weeks focusing exclusively on the self-set task, often using the possibilities of the art system strategically.

The implemented interventions are usually intended to be sustainable and should continue operation after our time on-site.

www.wochenklausur.at

The artist group ***WochenKlausur*** *(AT), founded in 1993, develops small but concrete improvements to sociopolitical problems, upon invitation by various different art institutions. To implement change the group makes conscious use of its possibilities as artists and realizes social interventions, addressing issues of homelessness, substance abuse, immigration, education, community development, labor market policy, or voter rights.*

SHELTER FOR DRUG-ADDICTED WOMEN

Foundation of a day care shelter for addicted, homeless sex workers

STARTINGPOINT

During the Swiss election campaign relief organizations were being attacked by some parties for assisting drug abusers. The city reacted by reducing social services for drug-addicted females supporting their habit through sexwork. These mostly homeless women were often victims of violence and could not use the city's shelters which were only open at night when they needed to work.

INTENTION

We decided to provide a day time shelter for drug addicted and homeless female sex workers.

IMPLEMENTATION

Lobbying
The project demanded a constructive dialogue among decission makers.

We approached opinion leaders as lobbyists but did not want them to use our project to promote their own interests. Thus we arranged three-hour boat tours on Lake Zurich each for a group of four - including politicians, editors of newspapers, attorneys, drug addicts, social workers, police chiefs, therapists and so on. The newspapers reported encouragingly about the project.

Shelter
It was necessary to find a suitable building.

After intense research a former hotel was found. The owner was persuaded to give the project a trial period but as the neighbourhood residents association opposed he resigned and paid a compensation to us. Another location was found.

Funds
Public subsidy was necessary to furnish and run the shelter.

The boat talks made it difficult for the city to deny their support but we did not receive their agreement in time. To put more pressure on their decision we already started to furbish the shelter during our residency in Zurich. After the opening the city confirmed their support.

Continuity
The shelter needed a lasting partner.

We found an organisation which ran the shelter and offert supervision to those who asked for it. A member of our team became its facillitator. The shelter was open for six years until the City of Zurich stopped its support.

8 weeks · 1994 · Shedhalle · Zurich

IMMIGRANT LABOUR ISSUES

Refugees were declared as artists to assure them workpermits in Austria

STARTING POINT

Following the Bosnian War a public discussion was launched by right-wing parties regarding refugees who were 'fed by the state but not willing to work'. At the same time refugees needed a residency permit.

INTENTION

We wanted to develop a model that allowed more refugees legally work and stay in Austria

IMPLEMENTATION

Law

All relevant laws had to be analysed

We created an 'artistic identity' for seven refugees who had no work permit by using a provision of the immigration code:

> FOREIGNERS PURSUING ACTIVITIES THAT ARE PRIMARILY OF AN ARTISTIC NATURE NEED NO WORK PERMIT INSOFAR AS THEIR LIVELIHOOD DERIVES FROM THE INCOME YIELDED BY THEIR ARTISTIC ACTIVITY AND THEY PURSUE NO OTHER OCCUPATION

According to this if they could demonstrate sufficient income from artistic activity non-Austrians could get workpermits. Also we were assured by attorneys that authorities had no power to decide what constitutes 'art'. Conclusive proof could be demonstrated through exhibitions.

Commissons

To ensure the refugees income through art we had to find commissoners.

Sponsors were found who commissoned 7 refugees as artists to produce Social Sculptures. For example one artist from Iraq collected baby food for Kurdistan cities. Another artist repaired old bicycles. The art festival 'steirischer herbst agreed to present the results at an exhibition.

8weeks. 1995. steirischer herbst. Graz

LANGUAGE SCHOOLS FOR TEENAGE REFUGEES

Installation of classes in Macedonia during the Kosovo War

STARTING POINT

As the Venice Biennial took place thousends of people fled from the Kosovo War–most of them to Macedonia. Contacting refugee relief organisations we learned that teenage refugees were unable to continue their school education.

INTENTION

By using the international platform of the Venice Biennial we wanted to improve the situation for Kosovan teenage refugees by setting up language shools in Macedonia

IMPLEMENTATION

Classrooms

We found seven spaces with affordable rents. Furniture as well as teaching materials were donated by Italien shools. Through the relief organisation Caritas transportation was secured.

Teachers

Teachers from Kosovo were assigned and a teacher who had found out about the project as a visitor of the biennial spontaneously subscribed to volunteer for two years.

Funding

The teacher saleries and the classroom rents had to be paid.

The initiative Women Against War provided the initial funds. To raise more money we collected 1500 donations such as restaurant vouchers, gondola rides or ski-passes and organized a raffle at the Austrian pavillion. For 20 Euros biennial visitors received a surprise bag continuing one of these prizes. The money raised from the raffle was enough to rent and run two facilities and pay four teachers for one year.

Continuity

To manage the long-term project onsite it was essential to find a partner in Macedonia.

Various organisations were contacted. ADI–the Macedonian Association for Democratic Initiativ proved to be the perfect ally. The language shools ran for 3 Year. All students could complete the cours with a recognized certificate.

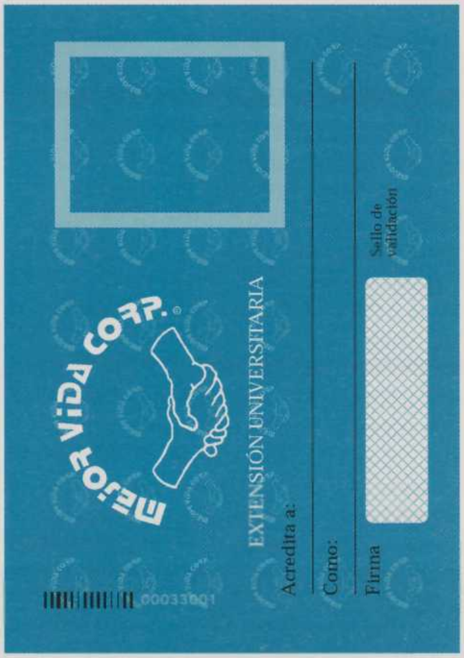
20 weeks . 1999 . Biennial . Venice

Minerva Cuevas

Art as Service

The Mejor Vida Corp.—MVC (Better Life Corp.) began as a series of public interventions offering unexpected products that reacted to the urban context, to its social and economic transactions, and to its institutional monsters. Items like free subway tickets, barcodes to reduce the price of food in supermarkets, letters of recommendation, and student identification cards have all been distributed through street interventions, at MVC's offices, in museums and art galleries, and through the Internet. In 2011, the artist set up her office in an empty kiosk in Frankfurt. In other cities, she would directly approach her potential customers on the street and offer them her products for free. These public interventions evolved into a social and political experiment conducted in the arena of everyday life, closely linked to strategies of direct action, sabotage, street art, and independent media. Yet, as a public entity, MVC's activities were organized into categories that echoed the corporate world: products, services, and campaigns.

MVC's products have been purchased or hacked. They are dispatched to any part of the world for free. Far from philanthropic intention, the articulation of these gifts signifies opposition to notions of commodification and profit. MVC does not conceive of itself as a charity, dispensing help or solutions to those in need; instead it wages a subtle war against the corporatist and institutional system, activating the practice of the gift as the initial condition for the articulation of exchange: a social and noncommercial transaction.



MEJOR VIDA CORP. ©

EXTENSIÓN UNIVERSITARIA

Acredita a:

Como:

Firma

Sello de validación

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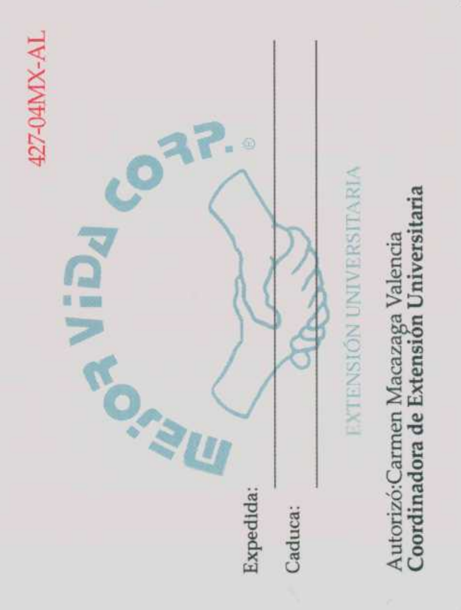


427-04MX-AL

MEJOR VIDA CORP. ©

Expedida:

Caduca:

EXTENSIÓN UNIVERSITARIA

Autorizó:Carmen Macazaga Valencia

Coordinadora de Extensión Universitaria

Mejor Vida Corp. has been an engaged but ludic experiment, a one-woman nonprofit corporation in the demiurgic business of rebellion. It is an anarchist enterprise that belongs to and freely takes place in the public realm, in the streets, without physical or legal boundaries.

Two of the most requested MVC products are the distribution of student ID cards (the ID grants all kinds of discounts or free entrance to a variety of services like public transport, museums, and even flights) and the recommendation letters that have been issued by MVC, but also by a series of art institutions, including the Hartware MedienKunstVerein in Dortmund, the Galerie Chantal Crousel in Paris, the Museo de la Ciudad de México, and also by Pedro Barbosa, an art collector based in São Paulo. In both cases these services are not—like the other MVC products—anonymous gifts, but demand knowing the identity of the recipient of the gift. It seems that the condition that makes these the most successful products, apart from the practical use of the documents, is the necessary exchange of trust and complicity resulting in an act of freedom that challenges institutional authority and makes use of its bureaucratic procedures to counteract it.

The process of requesting the products has been the factor that somehow makes possible the evaluation of adoption of the project as a social service provider. Nowadays it is not necessary to publicize or present the project in cultural spaces to receive requests for MVC products and services. MVC became autonomous from authorship and a corporation generating assets through a human interface.

The deepening global crisis has contributed to the widespread use of aesthetic resources as part of the social struggle, generating a unique alchemy of social discontent, alternative tools, and perceptual triggers, and reasserting the social function of art. How to evaluate the social influence of these kind of projects? What kind of service do MVC's activities provide? After fifteen years activity, they do seem to liberate us from social conventions and the existing power structure imposed by the dominant groups, their customs, and institutions. MVC thus questions our relationship with the public sphere, legal matters, and free will. That is the service we provide.

__Minerva Cuevas__'s (MX) artistic practice is characterized by socially engaged and site specific actions that take place in a range of settings from public spaces to museums and the Internet. She founded Mejor Vida Corp. in 1998 as a self-financed nonprofit organization aimed at bypassing some of the processes defined by the capitalist system.

Michal Murin

Artruism

Artruism is an artistic gesture, a long term performance, a social art project. It is activism as well as altruism, a philanthropic artistic act as well as an intervention and, some would say, a Beuysian social sculpture. As a project it is concerned with a combination of social and artistic curatorship, with cultural executive production as artistic activism, with the phenomenon of contemporary multiprofessionalism, and with a way of providing artistic service and assistance. It focuses on social micropolitics within the nano-dimensions of one particular person and a long term concentration on the individual leading to the cessation of degradation in lifestyle as a consequence of social changes and individual failure.

Born in 1946, Milan Adamčiak was already well known as an original artist and musicologist by the end of 1960s. In the 1970s, he gave up his role in visual arts to work as a musicologist in the Slovak Academy of Sciences, where I first met him in 1987 and began to collaborate with him as an artist. After 1995, he would leave the capital of Slovakia for periods, still appearing from time to time at significant exhibitions. But after 2001, he disappeared completely from the

arts scene and, after someone broke into his apartment in 2005, he relocated as a homeless person to an inhospitable house in a village far removed from any cultural life.

Our collaboration began in 2005, when I started to support Milan Adamčiak: I initiated the making of a documentary, settled his debts, and offered him installments for his daily purchases in the local grocery store. I secured the funds through spontaneous sales of his works and later by arranging concerts, exhibitions, and presentations. This intervention not only changed the way Adamčiak was perceived in his immediate environment, but also rekindled his desire to create and actively participate in cultural activities.

As a result the interest in his work increased, and 2011 was marked by a series of concerts of the resurrected *Transmusic Comp. Revival* and 2012 by a series of solo exhibitions. After he had been homeless for five years, I managed to buy him a small house in 2010 and installed the electricity in 2013. An artist who had disappeared from the public gaze for twenty years is now in the course of being restored as an important personality.

Artruism is a reaction to the lack of relevant functional systems in the post-communist context in both the social and artistic arenas, to the absence of private galleries, and lack of interest in contemporary art, and so on. It stresses the preference for noninstitutional activity and confronts it with the dysfunction of institutions as such.

While current trends focus on community-based art for social change, I have focused on providing assistance to one particular individual and artist as social art. But, in principle, helping a friend was the most substantial thing. I have no need to see my positive activities within the context of art, but, by introducing them into art, I am seeking to prevent them from being forgotten. In activist terms, this project directs criticism at the failure of institutions and curators to perform their roles and tasks. The project represents a substitute for the role of society and social systems; it reacts to the concomitant social phenomena, economic influences, and cultural effects which are the consequences of globalization and neoliberalism that have taken root in the eastern European environment as know-how since the early 1990s. This artistic act also has a broader context. It is an *ad hominem* criticism of the artistic environment in Slovakia, where there is no institution focusing on contemporary visual art.

Michal Murin *(SK) is a project-oriented artist based in Bratislava, who works with conceptual art and performances. He teaches at the Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica and at the Faculty of Arts in Košice, Slovakia.*

Milan Adamčiak *(SK) is a cellist, musicologist, experimental poet, and visual and performance artist. From 1972 to 1991, he was a member of the Slovak Academy of Sciences.*

Carl Hegemann

Miracles

According to Jacques Derrida, our democracy is based upon two basic assumptions: first, all men are equal and, second, all men and women are unique. The fact that there is a contradiction between these two principles is hard to overlook. How a society handles this contradiction is supposed to indicate how well democracy works. Because people find it difficult to bear contradictions, the tendency is usually to abandon equality in favor of uniqueness, or uniqueness in favor of equality. But in fact, the aim should be to tolerate this contradiction. At least that's how I understand Derrida.

And in this sense, Christoph Schlingensief's handling of actors and artists was exemplary. To him, they were all equally unique. He treated the big stars of German theater no differently to the artists he had cast in assisted accommodation facilities or psychiatric clinics. Everyone was allowed to develop their own uniqueness and to reveal all those things that were important to them; only routine, and leveling down conventionalism were barred. In all other respects, he criticized everyone with the same severity and afforded them the same affection. This equal treatment did not meet with approval alone, many a professional actor performing with disabled and special people found it hard to cope with being put on a level footing with them as if that was the most natural thing in the world. It remains

FREAK
FREAK
STARS

Obituary to Achim von Paczensky († 26/12/2009)

Blog posting by Christoph Schlingensief, 01/01/2010

i met achim in 1993 while i was shooting the film "terror 2000" on the former gdr military camp at massow. one day i drove to teupitz, where i saw a down's syndrome boy with his shopping bag, folding up a russian's souvenir and junk stand. the down's syndrome boy must have been annoyed about this russian junk for some reason. i drove straight into the car park and then walked across the grounds of the provincial hospital. it was a real chamber of horrors. rooms with twelve to sixteen patients. severely disabled people screaming, hitting themselves or bobbing about in the corridors, other patients in between, looking like they had just escaped from a burning building. so achim lived in this provincial hospital. at last, i actually found the doctor in charge and asked him straight out whether he had anyone there who would like to get out for a bit and be in our film. he had me describe the story and the role, and then he sent for two men: achim and frank koch. frank was really talkative. he was an epileptic, i think, and had been living at the hospital for ages, too. and achim was completely silent. but achim and frank both had the same hobby: smoking and drinking coffee ... non-stop! and then the two of them really were in the film. and, of course, it was the first time for everyone. achim and frank played the sons of the manager of the asylum seekers' home and had to keep telling the inmates off for being lazy and just lying around. i laughed a lot because i had never had anything to do with people like achim and frank before. they had a style of their own. you didn't need to fiddle around or change anything much, they were just the way they were.

anyway, then came the *volksbühne* time, and achim and frank appeared in "100 jahre cdu" and "kühnen94." and they really were unbeatable. in their first appearance they had to sing the song "ein herz für kinder." when they started singing, the *volksbühne* audience started yelling like crazy ... and having fun. when the two of them came off, they were far from satisfied, saying that the audience had laughed unpleasantly, laughed at them. i told them that, well, they had been funny. they were even better than all those comedians that people in germany always think are so incredibly funny. and the following evening they went out there again and didn't want to come off. they carried on singing the song until the audience stopped laughing. and then they came back stage, all of us were soaked in sweat, and they were totally relaxed. and they said, "see, they laughed! see! because we wanted them to!" ... and then they went for a smoke again ... and, of course, a quick cup of coffee. achim was in on everything after "kühnen." his really big role was HEINER MÜLLER! in rocky dutschke.

frank koch eventually moved away from berlin and went to a different home. and achim met helga, who had been given more than forty electric shocks back in the gdr days. imagine that. well you just can't, can you? forty electric shocks and helga is still here ... achim's great love and helga's great love! and all those idiots who said that we were exploiting disabled people started to quiet down. and then when we shot "freakstars 3000," former enemies suddenly turned into friends and supporters. when it comes to "disabled theater," all i can say is that i really hate all that dumb talk: "look ... that little disabled girl over there, she doesn't have any lines and just stands there gawping, but wasn't it sweet the way she picked up the red ribbon and tripped over it ... that was charming, wasn't it ... well done, you little disabled cripple ..."; and how many theater companies have got stuck at precisely this level of reward and comparison. all i know is that achim and i did argue sometimes. and that that was a good thing, too. and that horst or achim or helga pull out very different stops to accomplish different things. and that they sometimes open doors, while we—thoroughly immunized, delegated sufferers in theater or culture, in the little editorial offices, broke off these "antennæ" long ago and left them to rust away. or never had them in the first place.

***Christoph Schlingensief** (DE, 1960-2010) was a German film and theater director, performer, artist, and author, whose work was often accompanied by fierce public controversy. He continuously blurred the borders between art, life, and politics. From the early 1990s until his death, Schlingensief worked continuously with handicapped performers in his manifold productions and interventions.*

a mystery to me how Christoph managed to treat his disabled fellow players, such as Werner Brecht and Achim von Paczensky, with just as much serious attention, curiosity, and friendliness as Peter Sloterdijk or Alexander Kluge, for example. It was not a moral pretence or pragmatic strategy intended to motivate his collaborators. It was probably Christian love of one's neighbor, but not as stuffy fulfillment of duty or out of a guilty conscience but out of pure pleasure and inclination. For the disabled *people—the "specialists," as they often were* called—working with Schlingensief was like a miracle. They, whose great skills and special qualities had never been taken seriously, who had been tormented and exploited, who were just a nuisance, were suddenly in the limelight. The fact that Schlingensief made it possible for them to show that they could do things on stage that no actor, even the best, could accomplish, was a gain not only for the audience, but also for themselves, and they greatly appreciated the surprising interest in their uniqueness. Nevertheless, Schlingensief was long subjected to bitter criticism for the exploitation, instrumentalization, and exhibition of people who could not defend themselves. Above all probably by people who could not imagine someone choosing to work with disabled people out of pure enjoyment and love and seeking their company—without any ulterior charitable or commercial motives. Some people felt the very presence of these people on stage hard to endure.

Schlingensief engaged with everything and everyone in the same way, simply because he wanted to, drawing no distinctions, and this openness gave rise to unique and unforgettable encounters both in the aesthetic sphere and beyond it, in the canteen, encounters between art and non-art, between play and non-play. Schlingensief did not think much of the immortality of dead artists in the memory of later generations. His favorite maxim in this context was "remembering means forgetting." Everything is painted over by memory, and even if his name were still known a hundred years from now, people would associate him with something completely different than Schlingensief would associate with himself. Even Shakespeare and Goethe will be forgotten one day. Of that he was convinced.

Still, one thing seems certain to me: as long as people remember Schlingensief, they will also remember his special protagonists. Werner Brecht †, Achim von Paczensky †, Helga Stöwhase, Kerstin Graßmann, Horst Gelonneck †, Mario Garzaner. The list is incomplete. But I must add two more, at least: Karin Witt, not *disabled, just a bit small: one of the greatest* and cleverest members of the family now dissolved. And Angela Jansen, who suffers from ALS, almost total muscular paralysis, and who describes her condition with a clear mind: "I am not sick, I just can't move." Incidentally, something inexplicable occurred during her extremely active involvement in *Kunst und Gemüse*: Angela was able to move her risible muscles, whose nerves had already died, and smile again. Though pleased, the doctors were baffled. Medically, they could not explain this improvement in her condition. Probably a miracle, there were a lot of inexplicable things in Christoph's work.

In the months before his death, I had only one serious argument with Christoph Schlingensief. Reproaching me for not having come to the funeral of Achim von Paczensky, who had died suddenly in winter 2010, he texted some biting invective to me on the day of the funeral in Königs Wusterhausen, the town where Achim had lived. Nothing had ever embittered him that badly. It was as if he thought I would stay away from his funeral because I had to hold a seminar somewhere or other. He later forgave me and I did attend his funeral, as did Helga, Achim's widow. Back then, I promised to visit Helga in Königs Wusterhausen, but I still haven't managed to do so yet. It's about time I did. That would never have happened to Christoph.

Carl Hegemann *(DE) is a writer, dramaturge, and professor at the University of Music and Theatre "Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy" Leipzig. He and Christoph Schlingensief collaborated for many years, for example, on the* Parsifal *productions (2004–2007).*

Shared Inc.

Pillow Research

Pillow Research is the result of a long term investigation into "unresponsive wakefulness syndrome" (a.k.a. vegetative state): a way of "incubating" (as in a pressure cooker) oneself together with the syndrome (for almost ten years) to become part of the care for the syndrome. An important part of the strategy was to develop an original understanding of many medico-technical, professional, organizational, economic, legal, political, and emotional aspects of the syndrome. An understanding that does not rely on expert knowledge that frequently is bracketing those comedies of errors, or tragedies of decisions, as they frequently occur in the clinical field. Scientific experiments and research methods are not innocent (nonpolitical) tools that describe our reality. Rather, they enact or perform multiple realities. The (political) question of how "the natural" or "the social" may be investigated, and of how one reality may be a measure of another reality, has come to the fore in a body of work undertaken in the fields of science and technology studies, cultural anthropology, sociology, and so on. These findings suggest that standardized, academically approved knowledge practices may lead to an impoverished pool of options about how we, as a Western society, prefer to represent, appreciate, and enact our realities by producing sociotechnical entanglements and their politics.

But how can we think of research processes, procedures, and collaborations that are not afraid of becoming the object of (scientific/artistic) ridicule, or that create messy situations and events that, nevertheless, are risky bets on the (political) concrete truth of the respective research. By taking these considerations into account, Shared Inc. attempts to search for unusual and experimental approaches that may result in epistemological, political, and ontological surprises that contribute to questions regarding an "ontological politics," as outlined by John Law and Annemarie Mol.

Pillows were constructed in a way that should allow to stimulate—in the broadest sense of the word—the sensory modalities of patients and carers. Tactile (tickle pillow), auditory (inside-outside pillow), visual (humor pillow), and olfactory (plant pillow) stimulation should enrich the neurocognitive and embodied diagnostic rituals by a collaborative diagnostic setting. The "humor pillow," for instance, became an interface that allowed a collective (family members, nurses, therapists, doctors) assessment of patients' emotional responses. These assessments, then, were used to produce data visualizations that produced not only unexpected responses from patients, but also made unexpected "side effects" of modern neuroimaging technologies visible.

Thus, pillowy artifacts should help patients and caregivers to interact on various levels, producing peculiar data and, sometimes, creating messy and unplanned situations. It provided Shared Inc. with the opportunity to catch a glimpse of the implications of "full and effective participation and inclusion in society" as mentioned in one of the guiding principles of the UN Convention on the "Rights of Persons with Disabilities." How is it possible to envision the "inclusion" of (hitherto) marginalized bodies/persons who suffer from severe perception disorders and/or disorders of consciousness, and who are in need of twenty-four hour care? What kind of care are we capable of thinking up? How to create circumstances so that those (or other marginalized, silenced) bodies/persons gain significance amongst us.

The clinical work with these prototypical pillows—some of them equipped with electronic components—turned out to be highly idiosyncratic: the handling constantly produced sociotechnical errors and incompetencies, that forced us not only to care for the role of the artifacts, but also for the role of patients, families, nurses, physicians, formalities, ethics, and, of course, ourselves. This care repeatedly evoked affective events, which proved to be highly successful in providing the group members with an understanding of the heterogeneous and entangled realities that make up "the syndrome."

We would like to argue that these spatio-temporal affective linkages ("incubations") were important prerequisites that coconstituted both the object of our research (the syndrome) and, what is more, the methods to understand it. Linkages that allow the insight that the becoming of bodies/persons with their various abilities and skills is not the result of a scientific/theoretical understanding, but rather a precondition for it.

***Shared Inc.—Research Centre for Shared Incompetence** (AT), founded by Bernd Kräftner, Judith Kroell, and Isabel Warner, explores the messy interfaces between science and society. Members of the group work with and repurpose methods developed in the field of science and technology studies, medical anthropology, and ethnography, combining these with strategies derived from digital and fine art.*

Omer Krieger

State Art

The more one opposes the state, the more one has to work within it. (A. Rodchenko)

The contemporary concept of political art contains an implicit assumption that every state is a crime and that every artist is a saint. A new and advanced public art practice should acknowledge the fact (or at least aspire to realize the theoretical premise) that, as sovereign citizens, we are the state.

Choreographing police arrests and military marches, rehearsing a mass casualty event with the army, fire brigades, and ambulance services, producing artistic discourse in parliament, creating a new memorial day, making public furniture for demonstrations, walking under the auspices of art's autonomy into a forbidden zone, humanizing the state apparatus, and reclaiming the management and design of political institutions. These are some of the contemporary practices of state art, a new public art.

Such actions embody possible manifestations of the state artist's role, and gently delineate his playground. Working with state bodies allows artists to step outside the autonomous paradigm safeguarded by the art industry, the understanding of public art as beautification, social work as art practice, and also the leftist strategies of protest and propaganda, which in most cases do not make for beautiful art nor for effective politics anymore.

The new public artist is walking into state institutions, social situations, and religious gatherings, and changing them. The new public artist in one of her most effective and artistically innovative moments, is the state artist.

Today, artists find the state a useful tool for political organization and for the creation of new forms, new attitudes, new behaviors. The idea is for artists to intervene in the activities of the state, tactically as artists and strategically as citizens. The future of civic participation walks hand in hand with the future of public art. And at this moment in history, art can only benefit from the reality-check brought about by working with the state, and politics can only progress following a contemporary avant-garde of state artists who stop complaining or shouting from the sidelines and step into the fire singing, grab a hammer and walk into the machine, participate in this massive operation of political life with their delicate, thoughtful, inspiring, and imaginative touch. The state as studio and stage, platform and toolbox, frame and condition of possibility.

The institution of the State Artist will be created by curatorial and artistic practice, leading to national legislation in every state. The State Artist will be a new state agency, a public office for the inhouse production of public projects by an artist—if you like, a permanent residency position within the institution of the state, a position similar to that of the ombudsman, the court jester, the chief justice,—the nurse, the teacher, the secret service PR person, the military orchestra. An autonomous authority funded by public money and resided in by artists for a limited term. The State Artist will be selected like any public official or artist: based on their expertise, talent, experience, fame—for artistic and political reasons.

Take all artistic talent and put it in the state, and there you have a perfect world—or at least more interesting wars.

***Omer Krieger** (IL) is an artist and curator who produces transrational society formations, public experience institutions, and spaces. He is cofounder and leader (2006–2011) of the performative research body, Public Movement. He has served for the last four years as artistic director of Under the Mountain, a festival of new public art in the Jerusalem Season of Culture.*

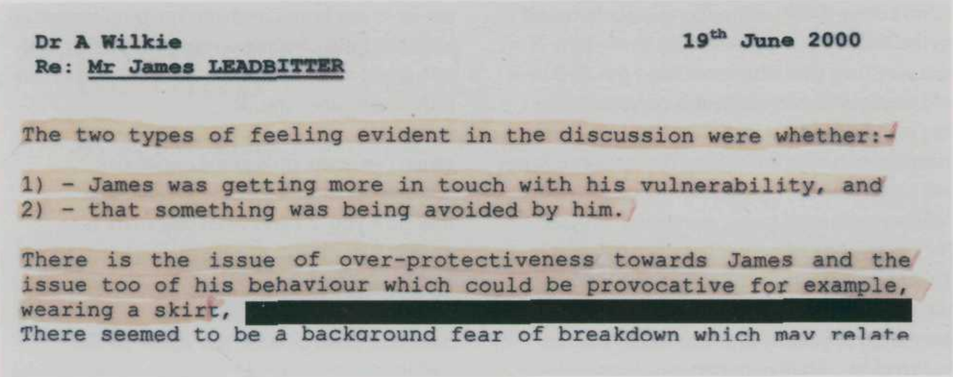
the vacuum cleaner

Cure and Poison

Anti Social Behavior Order, Community Treatment Order, Metropolitan Police Public Order Operational Command Unit (CO11), Anxiety Disorder, Mood Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Aside Order. "Order Order Order, I will have order in my court." The Judge. A police officer. A Doctor or Nurse, A social worker. "The house will come to order." The rule of order. There is a Psychiatrist Inside All Our Heads. They must be Restrained. These are a selection of the documents that appear in Mental, from the National Health Service and the Police. (fig. 1)

I can now recognize that, at the age of nineteen, I was transitioning in my gender, from male to whatever. By the age of twenty-two, following a long time under the care of different psychiatrists, psychoanalysis, and suchlike, this transition had reversed and I was put firmly back in a box labeled male. Maybe one day that will change. (fig. 2)

This was my first encounter with the Forward Intelligence Team, who are the police that monitor and gather intelligence on "Domestic Extremists." It wasn't remarkable: I don't remember much except that it was dull, and their line of questioning was as subtle as an animal rights activist. If only I knew at the time that I had my own code name—UNIDENT0013ACCO11. I've spoken to a few journalists and academics about the code—no one has seen anything like it before. It does contain the letters CO11 which is the Public Order Operational Command Unit of the Metropolitan police, but that's all we know. (fig. 3)



Dr A Wilkie **19th June 2000**

Re: Mr James LEADBITTER

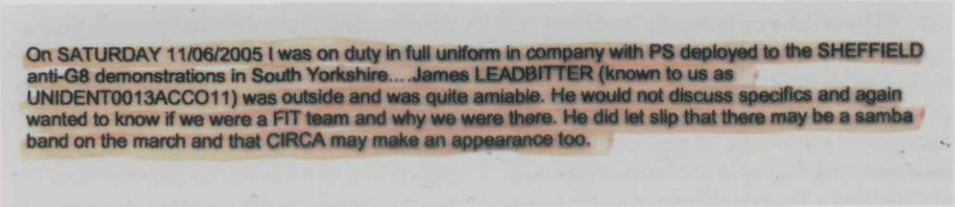
The two types of feeling evident in the discussion were whether:-

1) - James was getting more in touch with his vulnerability, and
2) - that something was being avoided by him.

There is the issue of over-protectiveness towards James and the issue too of his behaviour which could be provocative for example, wearing a skirt, [redacted]

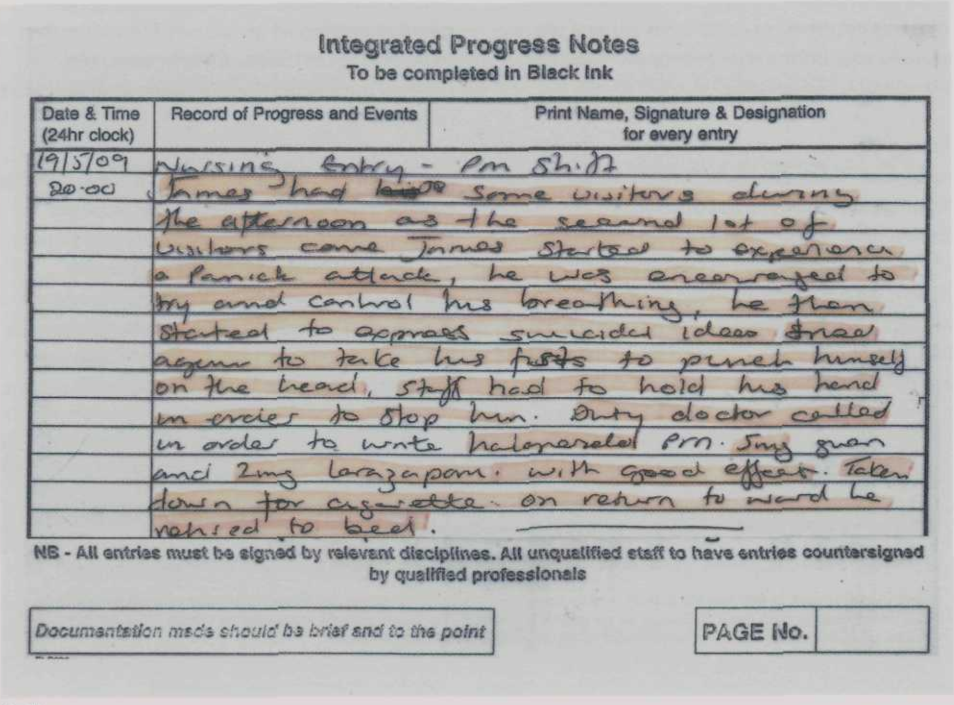
There seemed to be a background fear of breakdown which may relate

(fig. 1)



On SATURDAY 11/06/2005 I was on duty in full uniform in company with PS deployed to the SHEFFIELD anti-G8 demonstrations in South Yorkshire... James LEADBITTER (known to us as UNIDENT0013ACCO11) was outside and was quite amiable. He would not discuss specifics and again wanted to know if we were a FIT team and why we were there. He did let slip that there may be a samba band on the march and that CIRCA may make an appearance too.

(fig. 2)



Integrated Progress Notes

To be completed in Black Ink

Date & Time (24hr clock)	Record of Progress and Events	Print Name, Signature & Designation for every entry
19/5/09	Nursing Entry - Pm Shift	
20·00	James had [illegible] some visitors during	
	the afternoon as the second lot of	
	visitors came James started to experience	
	a panick attack, he was encouraged to	
	try and control his breathing, he then	
	started to express suicidal ideas tried	
	again to take his fists to punch himself	
	on the head, staff had to hold his hand	
	in order to stop him. Duty doctor called	
	in order to write haloperalol prn. 5mg given	
	and 2mg larazapam. with good effect. Taken	
	down for cigarette. on return to ward he	
	retired to bed.	

NB - All entries must be signed by relevant disciplines. All unqualified staff to have entries countersigned by qualified professionals

Documentation made should be brief and to the point	PAGE No.	

(fig. 3)

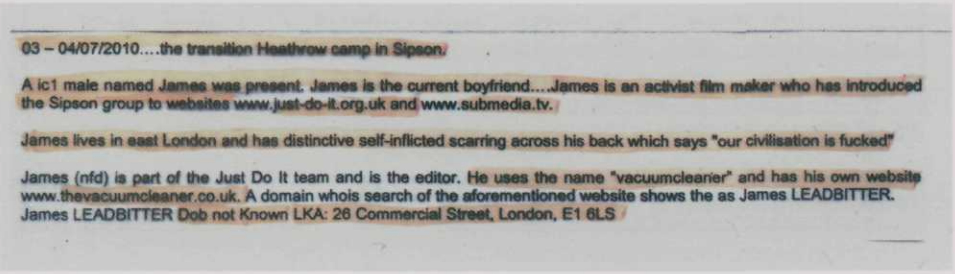
I don't deny that I was trying to punch myself in the head. What is interesting to me here is the way they describe restraining me. Restraint of people with mental health conditions is a big problem in the UK, where the police and hospital security (G4S) using these methods has led to a number of deaths. Many people who have experienced being restrained—myself included—talk of how utterly degrading it is. There are many types of pain in the world, yet we still live in a culture where it is considered normal to physically and chemically restrain vulnerable people in debilitating pain. (fig. 4)

Firstly, the scars on my back were not self inflicted—I'm not a contortionist. Secondly, the scars say "this civilization is fucked," not "our civilization"; I'm not responsible for western civilization, even if all the stupid parts of it have conditioned me. Thirdly, FIT teams generally wear uniforms: they're kind of obvious; it's part of their tactics. The odd thing is, over the space of that work weekend at Grow Heathrow, there were no uniformed police officers. This means that this information came from either a plain-clothed cop, undercover cop, or an informant. We still don't know who.

Spring 2011, and my yearly cycle of getting ill is upon me. The doctors want me to go back into hospital, but this is what I do.
I open my own hospital in my own flat, I write my own mental health act which I detain myself with for twenty-eight days, and some amazing artists come and spend time with me. The doctors and nurses do not like what I am doing, but their attempts to forcibly take me from my home and into hospital is averted with the help of some wonderful friends and an excellent mental health lawyer. And I make it through, alive. (fig. 5)

When I've come up against criminal or disciplinary models of care, I have found that how you act and what you share is a question of strategy. Some may argue for a withdrawal from the system that does this to you but, like most disabled people, I don't have that luxury. For all the states' faults/inbuilt failures, it would be naive to remove the little support it does provide disabled people; support that we fought very hard for. So what becomes important is deciding what is public and what isn't. You may be able to trust an individual, but the system of state control isn't as friendly, genuine, or humane. When I've been interviewed by the police, detained by a psychiatrist, or pressured by social services, I've learnt to be aware of the image I am projecting. This, of course, will be written down, logged, databased, leaked, sold, etc. It becomes a game of getting what you need from the state to survive (or at least not live in some hellish poverty trap), whilst being aware what you can't trust it with.

the vacuum cleaner *(GB) is an art and activism collective of one, employing various creative legal and illegal tactics and forms, attempting to disrupt concentrations of power. His latest project "Mental" explores this through a performance telling the story of his adult life through medical records, hospital reports, social services, homeless housing departments, university research departments, the police, local authorities, victim support.*



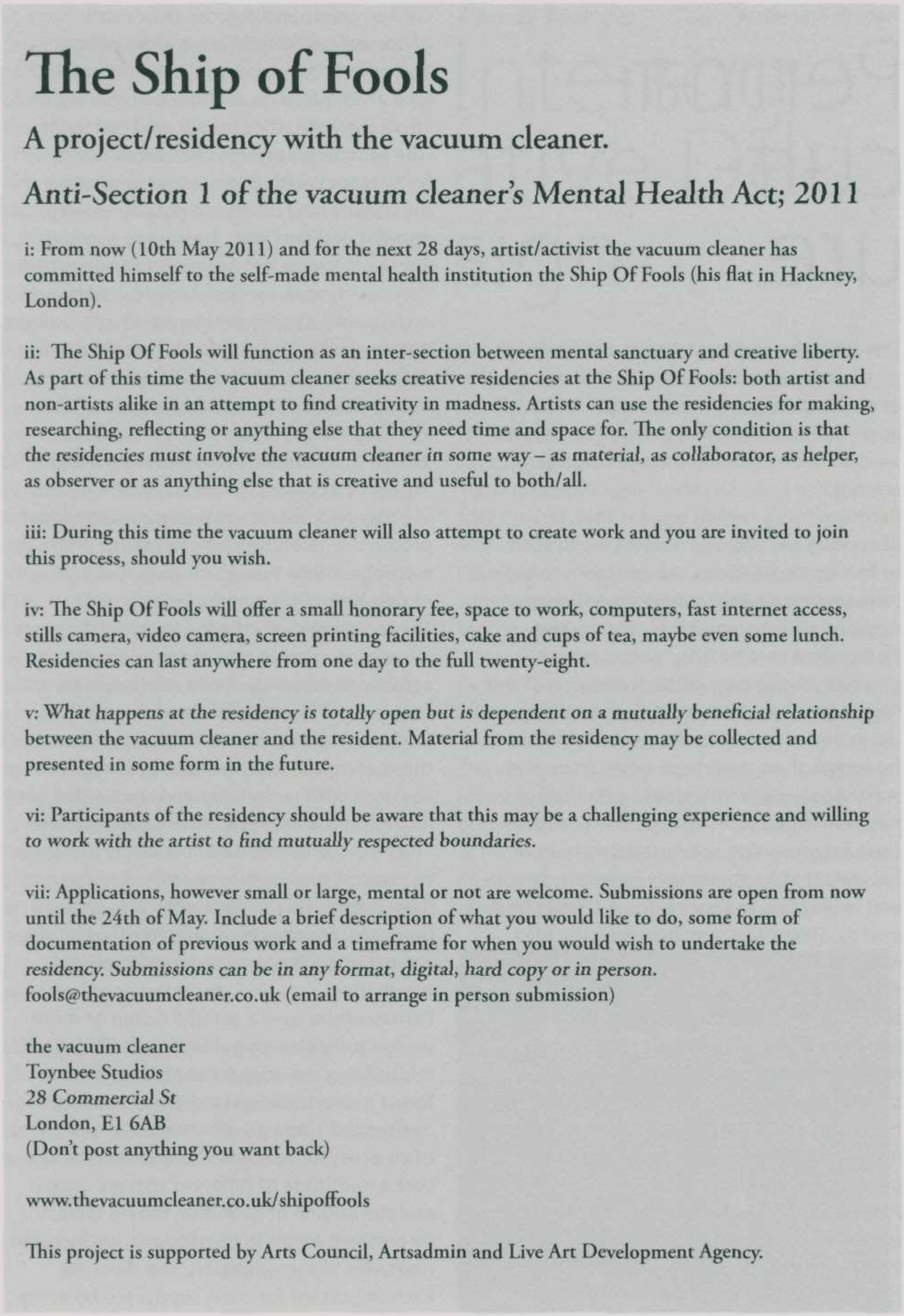
03 – 04/07/2010....the transition Heathrow camp in Sipson.

A ic1 male named James was present. James is the current boyfriend....James is an activist film maker who has introduced the Sipson group to websites www.just-do-it.org.uk and www.submedia.tv.

James lives in east London and has distinctive self-inflicted scarring across his back which says "our civilisation is fucked"

James (nfd) is part of the Just Do It team and is the editor. He uses the name "vacuumcleaner" and has his own website www.thevacuumcleaner.co.uk. A domain whois search of the aforementioned website shows the as James LEADBITTER. James LEADBITTER Dob not Known LKA: 26 Commercial Street, London, E1 6LS

(fig. 4)



The Ship of Fools

A project/residency with the vacuum cleaner.

Anti-Section 1 of the vacuum cleaner's Mental Health Act; 2011

i: From now (10th May 2011) and for the next 28 days, artist/activist the vacuum cleaner has committed himself to the self-made mental health institution the Ship Of Fools (his flat in Hackney, London).

ii: The Ship Of Fools will function as an inter-section between mental sanctuary and creative liberty. As part of this time the vacuum cleaner seeks creative residencies at the Ship Of Fools: both artist and non-artists alike in an attempt to find creativity in madness. Artists can use the residencies for making, researching, reflecting or anything else that they need time and space for. The only condition is that the residencies must involve the vacuum cleaner in some way – as material, as collaborator, as helper, as observer or as anything else that is creative and useful to both/all.

iii: During this time the vacuum cleaner will also attempt to create work and you are invited to join this process, should you wish.

iv: The Ship Of Fools will offer a small honorary fee, space to work, computers, fast internet access, stills camera, video camera, screen printing facilities, cake and cups of tea, maybe even some lunch. Residencies can last anywhere from one day to the full twenty-eight.

v: What happens at the residency is totally open but is dependent on a mutually beneficial relationship between the vacuum cleaner and the resident. Material from the residency may be collected and presented in some form in the future.

vi: Participants of the residency should be aware that this may be a challenging experience and willing to work with the artist to find mutually respected boundaries.

vii: Applications, however small or large, mental or not are welcome. Submissions are open from now until the 24th of May. Include a brief description of what you would like to do, some form of documentation of previous work and a timeframe for when you would wish to undertake the residency. Submissions can be in any format, digital, hard copy or in person.
fools@thevacuumcleaner.co.uk (email to arrange in person submission)

the vacuum cleaner
Toynbee Studios
28 Commercial St
London, E1 6AB
(Don't post anything you want back)

www.thevacuumcleaner.co.uk/shipoffools

This project is supported by Arts Council, Artsadmin and Live Art Development Agency.

(fig. 5)

Isabelle Fremeaux

Perma-cult-ure

Described by some as "the art of beneficial relationships" and by others as "the science of connections," permaculture is a radical approach to design that merges traditional wisdom with contemporary ecological science.

Permaculture's central tenet is that, by observing the way ecosystems work, such as forests or meadows, we can learn to build human systems that are energy efficient, resilient, diverse, and highly productive. First coined in the 1970s, permaculture originally fused two words, "permanent" and "agriculture" implying that systems designed using permaculture techniques would last a lot longer than short term destructive and wasteful forms of industrial agriculture. A radical holistic thinking tool, it was initially used for designing self-sustaining human habitats that harmoniously integrate people and landscape, to provide food, shelter, and energy. Thirty years on, however, the idea of mimicking the patterns and relationships found in the natural world is being used to design a variety of aspects of everyday life: from urban planning to performance, regional economies to edible landscapes, protest planning to designing a festival, its broad approach can be applied to anything. Permaculture now refers more to the idea of permanent culture.

Permaculture is held together by a strong ethical framework that consists of three core values: earth care (the acknowledgement that we must work with our ecosystems not against them, radically reduce our consumption, and oppose the destruction of our soils, wild habitats, water systems, and atmosphere), people care (the need to look after ourselves and our community, and strive toward justice for all), and fair share (the acknowledgement that we live on a finite planet, with finite resources that we must share and distribute equally amongst all peoples and species).

These ethics are not unique to permaculture, they are shared the world over by social and ecological justice movements; what is unique is that permaculture links these ethics to a practical design system, the key to which is seeing the world as a whole entwined and interdependent system. A permaculture design therefore involves planning every aspect of a project in relation to the others in order to construct as many beneficial and productive relationships as possible while wasting as little human or fossil fuel energy as possible.

The more we study the living world the more we come to realize that the tendency is actually to associate, build relationships, and cooperate. From trees that work with fungi to share sugars and information between themselves to bees pollinating flowers, nature abounds with reciprocity and mutual aid, and its design is all a matter of relative location.

The ultimate aim of a permaculture design is to create a system that needs as little input from outside as possible, energy autonomy being the fundamental principle that enables natural ecosystems to be so resilient and productive.

Permaculture uses a set of a dozen or more design principals to guide it, including:

multiplying the edges: the points where a forest meets meadowland or the sea slaps against the shore are the most dynamic parts of an ecosystem. It is in those slithers of space that a multitude of different species coexist and the engine of evolution moves fastest. By creating edges in our designs, we increase creativity, communication, and diversity.

Each important function supported by many elements: the global economy is entirely dependent on cheap oil: as it becomes scarcer and its price rises, a serious systemic crisis looms. In a healthy system, however, *nothing is indispensable; everything has* several backups. We can see this working in horizontal protest movements surviving state repression, because they don't have executive committees to infiltrate or leaders to assassinate or corrupt.

Each element has several functions: every element of a design is given at least three functions. If a tree is planted, it can also provide shade for outside dining, fruit for dessert, leaf-fall to fertilize the crops beneath it, and roots to prevent erosion and raise the water table.

Perhaps the most important of all the principles is "observe and interact": before taking action permaculture always begins with a long period of observation and reflection, surveying the desire and needs of the system, understanding and mapping the spaces, and researching local networks, energy flows, and resources. As John Berger put it, "to improve something, you really need to know the texture, the life story of that thing," and permaculture is similar in this to art, which, as Alan Kaprow says, is "simply a matter of paying attention."

Providing a critical framework for the necessary and just transition from a carbon, consumption, profit-based economy to a participatory, life-affirming, need-based society, permaculture provides both a vision of a desirable future and a concrete tool for transforming the present.

***Isabelle Fremeaux** (FR) used to teach Media and Cultural Studies at Birkbeck College, University of London, before setting up a utopian collective experiment in France. She is cofounder of the laboratory of insurrectionary imagination—labofii.*

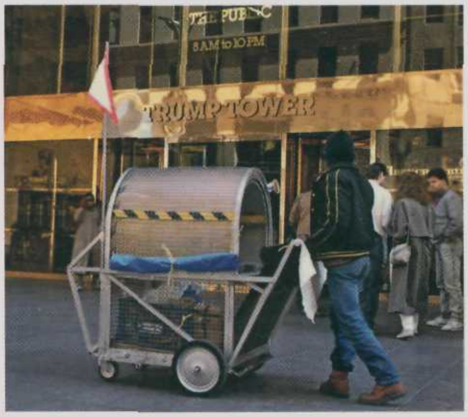
Krzysztof Wodiczko

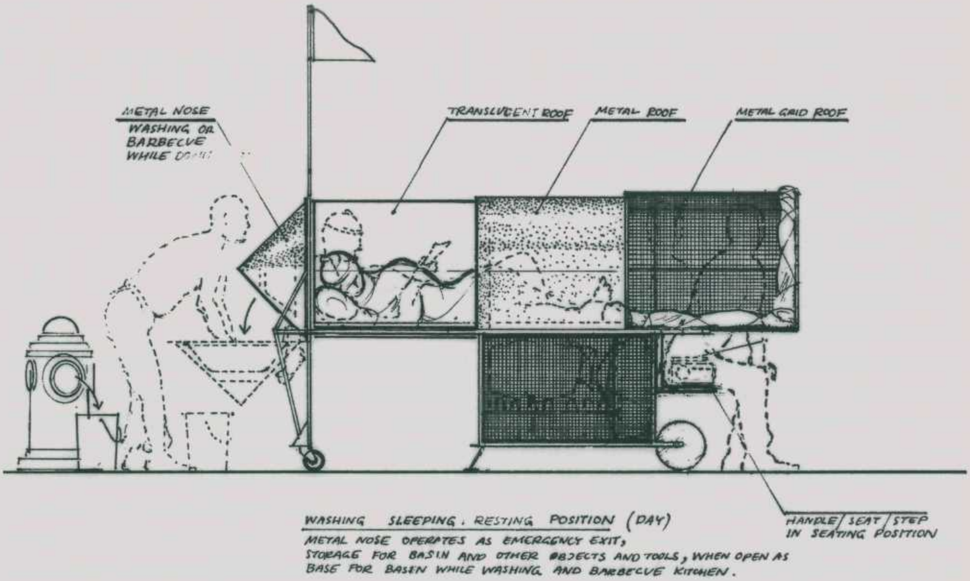
Interrogative Design

During the winter of 1987–1988, in the days of Reaganomics—which contributed to the destruction of "Single Room Occupancy Hotels" (SROs), halfway housing projects and other social programs—an estimated 70,000 to 100,000 people were made homeless in New York City.

Through discussions with groups of homeless, I designed an expandable multifunctional vehicle to be used both for personal shelter, and for collected can and bottle transportation and storage. The use of a vehicle fashioned specially for their collection activities made visible the fact that "scavengers," like other urban citizens, were working for their subsistence.

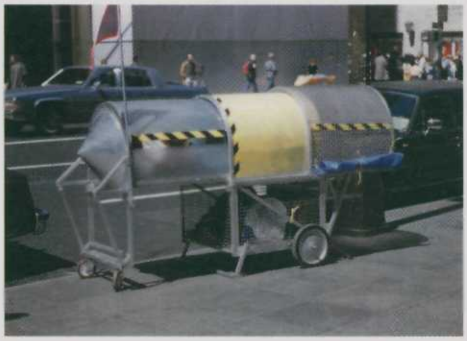
The vehicle was designed to look like a weapon, referring to the fact that the movements of homeless carts through New York City were acts of resistance, opposing the ongoing ruination of an urban community that excludes thousands of people from even the most meager living.




METAL NOSE
WASHING OR BARBECUE WHILE
TRANSLUCENT ROOF
METAL ROOF
METAL GRID ROOF
WASHING SLEEPING. RESTING POSITION (DAY)
METAL NOSE OPERATES AS EMERGENCY EXIT,
STORAGE FOR BASIN AND OTHER OBJECTS AND TOOLS, WHEN OPEN AS
BASE FOR BASIN WHILE WASHING AND BARBECUE KITCHEN.
HANDLE / SEAT / STEP IN SEATING POSITION

While pragmatically responding to the needs of the homeless, the appearance and function of the Homeless Vehicle was aimed at provoking public attention to the unacceptability of such needs. The design methodology of the Vehicle I named "Interrogative Design" and its aesthetics, "Scandalizing Functionalism," assuming that its scandalizing presence would provoke new public awareness and eventually contribute to social change. As Rosalyn Deutsche pointed out: "Its utopia was to be based on the hope that its function would make it obsolete."

While observing the Vehicle in use, it became clear to me, however, that its function was more complex than intended. The vehicle was used not only as a "visual articulator" of conditions of homeless life, but also as an instrument for users' communicative performance. In the same vein, the vehicle was used by the street "audience" as a pretext—or perhaps an excuse—to come closer to the homeless operator, ask questions, and listen to him or her without resentment and fear.



In this way, the vehicle's user, was no longer perceived as a faceless urban character, but as both a real person and a performer-presenter: a storyteller conscious of his/her entertaining and instructing role—an often humorous, philosophizing, existential witnesses to a city undergoing rapid transformation. Responding to public questions about the vehicle's complex set of functions helped users to speak more openly about their conditions of life and urban survival. But the vehicle itself lacked equipment specifically designed to inspire, assist, and amplify such communication: its communicative potential became just as evident as its communicative insufficiency. It demanded media capacities to meet its emerging communicative role.

Upon critical reevaluation of the homeless vehicle's shortcomings, my projects began using video technology, and participatory and narrative strategies in order to reinforce their communicative objectives. These were new "public projections" (video-based participatory monument animations) and "immigrant instruments" (specially designed performative communication equipment) developed with, by, and for homeless people, as well as other potential *parrhesiastes*, to inspire and assist them in their public "truth telling," and sharing their often unspeakable experiences provocatively, fearlessly, with full emotional charge, articulate expression, and transmission.

***Krzysztof Wodiczko** (PL/US) is a visual artist and professor of Art Design and the Public Domain at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. His concept of "interrogative design" combines art and technology as a critical design practice in order to highlight marginal social communities.*

Tania Bruguera

Arte Útil

The most common claim from skeptics about the transforming force of art in the realm of the social and the real is that art and politics cannot coexist efficiently. To back up this assertion they mostly deploy normative assumptions about aesthetics, segregated notions of expertise, misplaced ideas about the target audience, and issues that are out of sync with expectations and time. Many people claim that social or political art that goes beyond the responsibility bestowed on an image trying to insert itself into the social and the political on an equal footing is not art. All these arguments are used to invalidate art that tries to work politically, to be part of the construction of society: they see artists as an active part of and having a role in civil society.

The main accusation comes mostly from the unrealistic and desired spectacular "change" created by such art, as if change is something clearly tangible and not a subtle, long term process of growth. Expectations are only met if one expects the condensation of a complex and collaborative process to be simplified to the satisfaction of the beholder; such art does not work with concepts of spectatorship, which instead require the traditional spectator to become an activator of the social dynamics in the piece.

Another target of these attacks is aesthetics versus ethics, which misses the point that political art is the art of aesthetics of/in ethics. I wonder if these people have stopped to think who they are helping with such restrictive and conservative arguments.

Some of us have resolved these claims with Arte Útil.

For this we are creating a new vocabulary, one that comes out of political art and reflects the practice in its own terms and its own developing process: Where are the zones of friction? What was agreed? What is still an open definition? So we are analyzing political art in these terms.

We have understood that political art is as much about aesthetics as it is about ethics, and that in this specific case it is about the aesthetics of ethics, about the sustainable transformation that is generated in people: this is what we call esth-ethics.

We know that art working politically is not about announcing and "showing" the problem, but about trying to do something about that problem. Art that works politically is about using all the tools we have in art to challenge things outside of art: it is making art useful for those who are not trained artists. The usefulness we are talking about is art's immersion directly in society with all the resources we have at our disposal. Arte Útil is not art to look at, but art to do something with.

Arte Útil is not art for institutions, but art for the people: it is art that enters people's houses, people's lives. We work on the human scale

and not at the ever-expanding corporate scale; we prefer to be small cells spreading and inspiring. We have found this practice a powerful way to deal with both informed and uninformed people with the same levels of interest and engagement.

The main reason I think Arte Útil is worth discussing is because we have to stop asking ourselves in what medium and with which materials I would do my art, where I will do it, how I would package, circulate, or sell it, and, every time we begin a new artwork, start asking ourselves the question "what am I doing this art for?" We have to rethink the function of art these days, instead of accepting the one we have been told.

Arte Útil has a long history, with a manifesto in 1965 by the Italian artist Pino Poggi, another in 1969 by Eduardo Costa, and a 1981 exhibition at the Queens Museum curated by John Perreault. But its history started long before that: it started when people stopped wanting to see the work functioning differently and started building it, like the first housekeeping cooperative model in 1870 or when Nikolai Vavilov created the first seed bank in 1921, or when Augusto Boal implemented Legislative Theater in 1956, to mention just a few projects. More recently there have been projects like the "Rolling Jubilee," where a group of concerned citizens from Occupy Wall Street buys medical or educational debt, and releases it. Arte Útil's timeline is a continuous effort by individuals or collectives who have challenged the ways in which the world works by creating functioning models of different realities.

We have to acknowledge that all art history is ideological. So we have to make sure that our art is itself ideological—clearly ideological. We need to look for new forms, not for the sake of renewing art as a practice, but for the sake of problematizing people's relationships with art. We need art that is a tool, and a tool that has to be used for something other than its own sake. We need to put Duchamp's urinal back in the rest room, where it can be of use again.

We have to push art institutions to become social and civic institutions.

There are two kinds of artists: those that think problems are solved by making fun of them, and those who have fun thinking up ways of solving them. Arte Útil artists belong to the second kind.

These times call for a different kind of legitimization and the right to exercise a different kind of art: one that has its roots in a different kind of art history and, above all, in a different set of values. If it is political art, it deals with consequences; if it deals with consequences, it is definitely Arte Útil.

Tania Bruguera *(CU/US/FR) is an installation and performance artist. From 2003–2009, she founded and directed Cátedra Arte de Conducta in Havana, a pedagogical art project for political and performance art. In 2011, she founded Immigrant Movement International, a long term art project in the form of a sociopolitical movement. Her decade researching Arte Útil recently developed into the Museum of Arte Útil at Queens Museum of Art in New York and at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, Netherlands.*

While Arte Útil may be translated as "useful art," the Spanish term also implies art as a tool—a tool to imagine, create, and implement social and political change.

Mierle Laderman Ukeles

Main-taining

In the aftermath of the first oil crisis, thousands and thousands of people lost their jobs in New York City. The city government wanted to privatize public services, amongst them the sanitation department: collecting the garbage and cleaning the streets was to be privatized. I felt that was very dangerous, this kind of service has to be controlled by the city government. It must have been due to the crisis that my application to become an artist in residence at the New York City Department of Sanitation in 1977 was accepted: things were so bad that they thought what harm can it do to have an artist in all this mess?

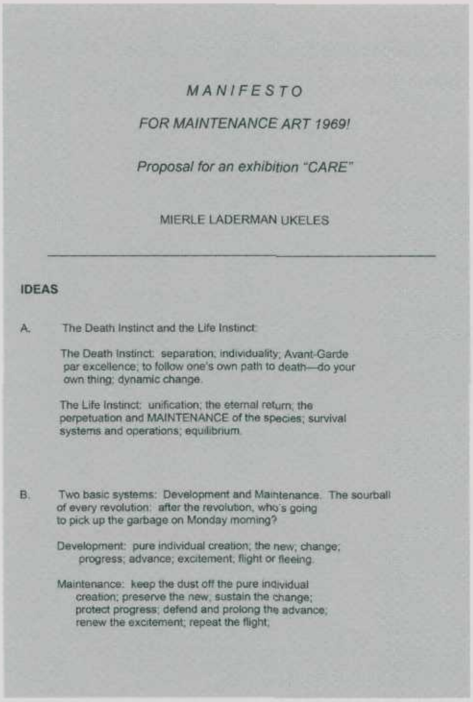
The proposal for "Touch Sanitation," the first artwork I realized during my residency, was shaking hands with every one of the more than 8,500 sanitation workers in the city and saying "thank you for keeping New York City alive." It was not just about coming in, doing a quick artwork and then leaving. It took me a year and a half and it really made a huge impact on people. And I went to every single place right across this huge, huge city. First of all, people saw that it was possible. It didn't kill me. It was fabulous, it was hard, but it was doable. That one person could do this human mapping of a whole system. So that made it human in a way. Because they're an invisible mass otherwise. People doing maintenance art are invisible most of the time.

I was very clear about this being an artwork. "I wanna shake your hand and I wanna thank you, but you don't have to participate." Three people out of 8,500 refused to participate.

I always spent the whole workday with one unit. It didn't involve just shaking their hands and saying "goodbye." That's what a lot of politicians do. I walked many, many miles with them on the street.

To me, it was very important not just to say "thanks for picking up my garbage," but also "thanks for keeping this city alive." That's what they do. I wanted to connect them to life. I also had a very strong sense of the city being a living thing that could die unless taken care of. It's like a body you have to look after. The workers I met understood this very well, and with all the media coverage of the project I hoped to spread the idea to a larger public.

Also, this project was very relevant to me on a personal level. Since 1968, when I entered the world of being a mother—a maintenance worker—with all the repetitive moments that



MANIFESTO

FOR MAINTENANCE ART 1969!

Proposal for an exhibition "CARE"

MIERLE LADERMAN UKELES

IDEAS

A. The Death Instinct and the Life Instinct:

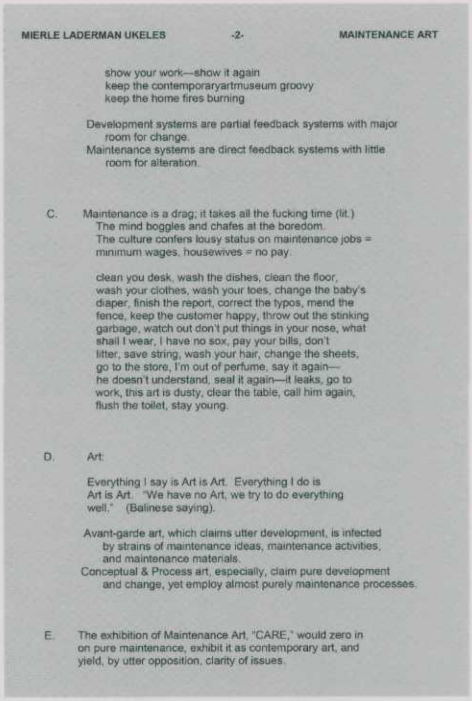
The Death Instinct: separation; individuality; Avant-Garde par excellence; to follow one's own path to death—do your own thing; dynamic change.

The Life Instinct: unification; the eternal return; the perpetuation and MAINTENANCE of the species; survival systems and operations; equilibrium.

B. Two basic systems: Development and Maintenance. The sourball of every revolution: after the revolution, who's going to pick up the garbage on Monday morning?

Development: pure individual creation; the new; change; progress; advance; excitement; flight or fleeing.

Maintenance: keep the dust off the pure individual creation; preserve the new; sustain the change; protect progress; defend and prolong the advance; renew the excitement; repeat the flight;



MIERLE LADERMAN UKELES -2- **MAINTENANCE ART**

show your work—show it again
keep the contemporaryartmuseum groovy
keep the home fires burning

Development systems are partial feedback systems with major room for change.
Maintenance systems are direct feedback systems with little room for alteration.

C. Maintenance is a drag; it takes all the fucking time (lit.)
The mind boggles and chafes at the boredom.
The culture confers lousy status on maintenance jobs = minimum wages, housewives = no pay.

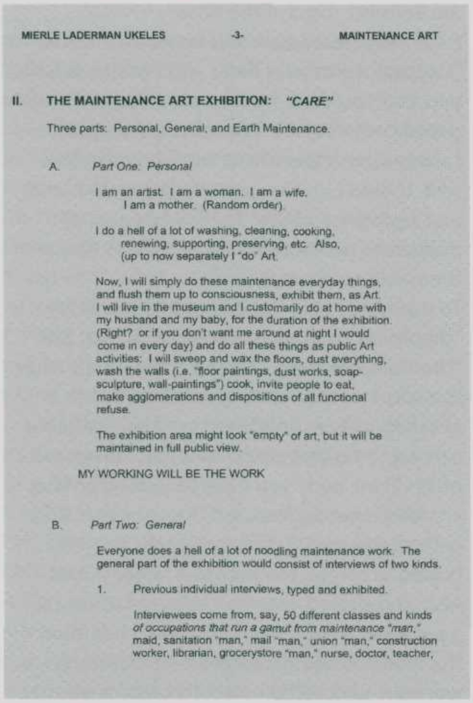
clean you desk, wash the dishes, clean the floor, wash your clothes, wash your toes, change the baby's diaper, finish the report, correct the typos, mend the fence, keep the customer happy, throw out the stinking garbage, watch out don't put things in your nose, what shall I wear, I have no sox, pay your bills, don't litter, save string, wash your hair, change the sheets, go to the store, I'm out of perfume, say it again—he doesn't understand, seal it again—it leaks, go to work, this art is dusty, clear the table, call him again, flush the toilet, stay young.

D. Art:

Everything I say is Art is Art. Everything I do is Art is Art. "We have no Art, we try to do everything well." (Balinese saying).

Avant-garde art, which claims utter development, is infected by strains of maintenance ideas, maintenance activities, and maintenance materials.
Conceptual & Process art, especially, claim pure development and change, yet employ almost purely maintenance processes.

E. The exhibition of Maintenance Art, "CARE," would zero in on pure maintenance, exhibit it as contemporary art, and yield, by utter opposition, clarity of issues.



MIERLE LADERMAN UKELES -3- **MAINTENANCE ART**

II. THE MAINTENANCE ART EXHIBITION: *"CARE"*

Three parts: Personal, General, and Earth Maintenance.

A. *Part One: Personal*

I am an artist. I am a woman. I am a wife.
I am a mother. (Random order).

I do a hell of a lot of washing, cleaning, cooking, renewing, supporting, preserving, etc. Also, (up to now separately I "do" Art.

Now, I will simply do these maintenance everyday things, and flush them up to consciousness, exhibit them, as Art. I will live in the museum and I customarily do at home with my husband and my baby, for the duration of the exhibition. (Right? or if you don't want me around at night I would come in every day) and do all these things as public Art activities: I will sweep and wax the floors, dust everything, wash the walls (i.e. "floor paintings, dust works, soap-sculpture, wall-paintings") cook, invite people to eat, make agglomerations and dispositions of all functional refuse.

The exhibition area might look "empty" of art, but it will be maintained in full public view.

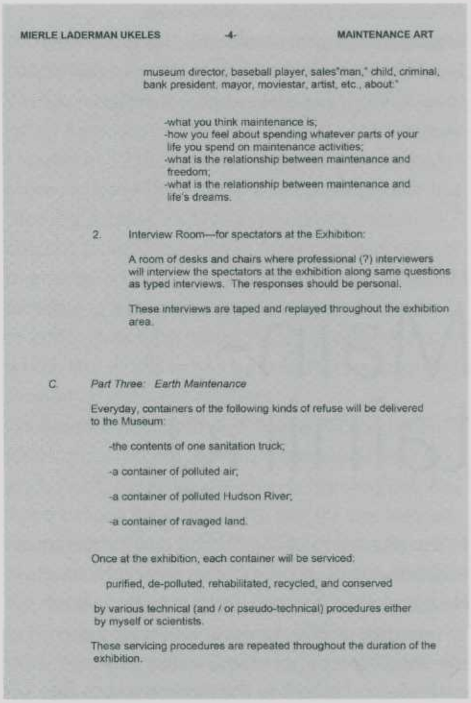
MY WORKING WILL BE THE WORK

B. *Part Two: General*

Everyone does a hell of a lot of noodling maintenance work. The general part of the exhibition would consist of interviews of two kinds.

1. Previous individual interviews, typed and exhibited.

Interviewees come from, say, 50 different classes and kinds *of occupations that run a gamut from maintenance "man,"* maid, sanitation "man," mail "man," union "man," construction worker, librarian, grocerystore "man," nurse, doctor, teacher,



MIERLE LADERMAN UKELES -4- **MAINTENANCE ART**

museum director, baseball player, sales"man," child, criminal, bank president, mayor, moviestar, artist, etc., about:"

-what you think maintenance is;
-how you feel about spending whatever parts of your life you spend on maintenance activities;
-what is the relationship between maintenance and freedom;
-what is the relationship between maintenance and life's dreams.

2. Interview Room—for spectators at the Exhibition:

A room of desks and chairs where professional (?) interviewers will interview the spectators at the exhibition along same questions as typed interviews. The responses should be personal.

These interviews are taped and replayed throughout the exhibition area.

C. *Part Three: Earth Maintenance*

Everyday, containers of the following kinds of refuse will be delivered to the Museum:

-the contents of one sanitation truck;

-a container of polluted air;

-a container of polluted Hudson River;

-a container of ravaged land.

Once at the exhibition, each container will be serviced:

purified, de-polluted, rehabilitated, recycled, and conserved

by various technical (and / or pseudo-technical) procedures either by myself or scientists.

These servicing procedures are repeated throughout the duration of the exhibition.

come with that, I had the feeling that I was excommunicated from the religion of "being a free artist." It felt like I wouldn't be empowered until the people that do maintenance at a sort of general, urban level were all empowered. It's not just gonna happen to one person. We—there is a "we"—we have to get this working together. That's why I tried to build this coalition.

I've always talked about a revolution, about changing society through art. I felt that if a whole museum could deal with personal maintenance, society maintenance, earth maintenance, then people would come out differently. I felt that the museum could be a handy, practical institution to instigate this huge change—that this could be a secular church dealing with life and death. I felt it was that important that it needed to be organized in one place where you could just go in and get converted! And come out and the world's a different place. Because that's what happened to me. Where did I get the faith that it could happen in a museum? I don't know.

Mierle Laderman Ukeles *(US) is a conceptual artist living in New York. Her manifesto, "Maintenance Art—Proposal for an Exhibition" (1969), declared all maintenance work as art, from the very personal kind that comes with being a mother and running a household, through public sanitation work, to earth maintenance. Since 1977, Ukeles has been an unsalaried Artist in Residence at the New York City Department of Sanitation, where she has realized several long-term projects.*

Interrupting the Economy

Kuba Szreder

Let me open with a working thesis: art is not able to interrupt the economy without interrupting art as an economic activity. This of course suggests a degree of conflation between art and capitalism. It refers to the historical moment of an already buried gap between what is deemed as economic and what is perceived as aesthetic. The existence of this division was always questionable, but the notion that art is something not only different, but even opposed to capitalism, still frames our ideas about aesthetics and the economy. The myth of autonomous artists and their discreet productions perpetuates social imagination, paradoxically prompting even the speculative mechanisms of the art industry or the attempts to instrumentalize art undertaken by property developers and state administrations. The belief in the exceptional status of art is still deeply rooted in the capitalistic mythos, and is only slowly losing ground to other, much less romantic concepts.

The classic bourgeois societies of Kant, Schiller, Baudelaire, and Flaubert, laid the foundations of artistic autonomy by conceptualizing aesthetic contemplation as the purposeless purpose, praising the uselessness of art, valuing art solely for art's sake. Art institutions were treated as secular sanctuaries where aesthetic reason found its refugee. Art was idealized as circumventing the means-to-an-end rationale of industrial capitalism. Its anti-instrumental logic seemingly denied profit, utility, and accumulation. The free play of art was believed to subsume bourgeois philistinism, merging the realm of the possible with the universe of necessity. The romantic prophets of an aesthetic revolution, such as Friedrich Schiller, preached that true freedom can be found in the free play of beauty, a cornerstone of the aesthetic state, whose revolutionary coming he foretold.

Art as an activity that is "neither productive nor unproductive," to refer to Bruno Gulli's concepts, was believed to be a form of human activity conducted for its own sake. Artists seemed to be like heavenly birds roaming the skies of modernity, soaring on the updrafts of their aesthetic passions. The rationale of their actions did not exceed the activity in itself. The artistic vocations bent the bars of industrial society's iron cage. The autonomy of artists, their productive laziness, their ability to fully realize their creative impulses, passion, and generosity, used to be contrasted with the alienated lives of both capitalists and workers: the former, too busy money-grubbing; the latter too concerned with their own survival to afford such luxuries as art for art's sake.

However—and this is what we find of most interest here—this ideological construct had its gaps, ruptures, and inconsistencies. In fact, art never was as different from capitalism as bourgeois ideology presented it.

One rupture was a shameful secret of class distinction, as ruling elites snatched aesthetic reason from the domain of universality to employ it for the sake of their own particular dominance, as described thoroughly by Pierre Bourdieu. Free play always depended on free time. It was a privilege for those who could afford it, for the rebellious offspring, second sons, poorer cousins, daughters, and wives of the bourgeoisie. All those gentle souls and aesthetic flowers watered by the spoils of class domination. Moreover, the seemingly free arts were instrumental in the reproduction of class dominance, the air of connoisseurship concealing the foul stench of exploitation. It was as shameless in the age of sugar barons like Mr. Tate as it is nowadays, when art has become the playground of global oligarchs.

Obviously, there have always been artists who devote themselves and their practices to criticizing both the institution of art and artistic institutions, to use Peter Bürger's distinction. The generations of artists, such as Hans Haacke, have scrupulously identified and criticized the ideological functions that the institution of art plays in the capitalistic society. They have unveiled the romantic mythos of social uselessness as a cover for the instrumental use of art by the rich and powerful.

Another of the art field's public secrets was the economic conditions of artistic production itself. The art world, despite the romantic idealizations, never was a domain of pure aesthetic passions. Artists have never really been comfortable in the role of a fowl of the air that neither sows nor reaps, nor gathers in barns. On the contrary, daily matters of survival were frequent topics in the letters and discussions of professional artists. The distribution of their works to a wealthy clientele used to be one of the main functions of the dealer-critic-collector system, on which artists depended. Currently the complex system of auction houses, fairs, global galleries, and art academies serves the purpose of rapid accumulation of symbolic and economic capital. In this system, nobody even needs to pretend that art is somehow different from economics. But even at the peak of the market rush, artistic mythology does not cease to exist; it is merely instrumentalized for the sake of rapid valorizations. Paradoxically, what makes art the perfect merchandise is its own status as an anticommodity. Art costs so much, because it is priceless, as Julian Stallabrass once quipped. Or, as Marina Vishmidt notes, art is always a speculation with its own future value, which might but does not have to be monetized.

Despite these strong links between art and capitalism, some artistic avant-gardes have used the anticapitalistic predicaments of the romantic mythos to coin a genuine aesthetic-political program. Their aim was to disrupt the economy—of both bourgeois art and capitalism—by transforming the artistic apparatus for the sake of proletarian revolution, as Walter Benjamin stated. They considered aesthetic promises not as a topic for disinterested small talk, but rather as a rallying cry for genuine social change. The aesthetic avant-gardes joined ranks with all those workers who refused to be designated as dumb domestic animals. Bourgeois society doomed laborers to lives of toil and never paid enough for them to enjoy the free time needed to enter the temples of poetry, art, and science. But instead of agreeing with the status quo, workers demanded, struggled, and refused to be just mere workers any more. They withdrew from the alienation of dull jobs and disheartening assembly lines, and rebelled against exploitation. They rarely protested in the name of art, though some of them did, devoting nights of labor, as described by Jacques Rancière, to the autonomous pursuits of poetry, science, and aesthetics, trying to live to Schiller's maxima that "man only plays when in the full meaning of the word he is a man, and *he is only completely a man when he plays*." Both political and aesthetic avant-gardes demanded the opportunity to live sensible, selfdirected, and unalienated lives, unconstrained either by bourgeois art or by the capitalistic economy. They demanded it not just for artists, in the undefined future; they wanted it here, now, and for everybody. Currently though, anyone can be an artist, but this has not really brought any dramatic change for the better. Possibly quite a lot of people in the West enjoy more free time than a century and a half ago. Some of this time is not industrialized by the entertainment complex. There are more artists than at any time in human history. However, instead of capitalism being superseded in the aesthetic-political upheaval, the figure of self-directed artists propels the economy at large. Nowadays everyone is expected to be like an autonomous artist even precarious service workers are expected to be as motivated, cheerful, and vocationally involved as artists are believed to be. Mainstream artists nowadays are less proponents of existential laziness, poetic misfits, bohemian bums, or obsessed creators. The Hirsts of late capitalism are rather like ever busy entrepreneurs of themselves, who are for themselves their own capital, their own producers, and their own source of profits, to paraphrase Foucault. Interestingly though, the notion of artists as discreet entrepreneurs who merchandise their works on the speculative market obfuscates the fact that the vast majority of artists are poor. Hans Abbing, among many others, points out the scandalous economic conditions in the art world. In that winner-takes-all economy, a tiny fraction of art celebrities monopolizes access to visibility and resources, while the dark matter of the art world lingers beyond the radar, as Gregory Scholette depicts. Groups such as the Precarious Workers Brigade in the UK, W.A.G.E. in the US, or the Commission of Art Workers in Poland selforganize to protest against the cruel economy of the arts in an attempt to disrupt the vicious circle of precarity and poverty.

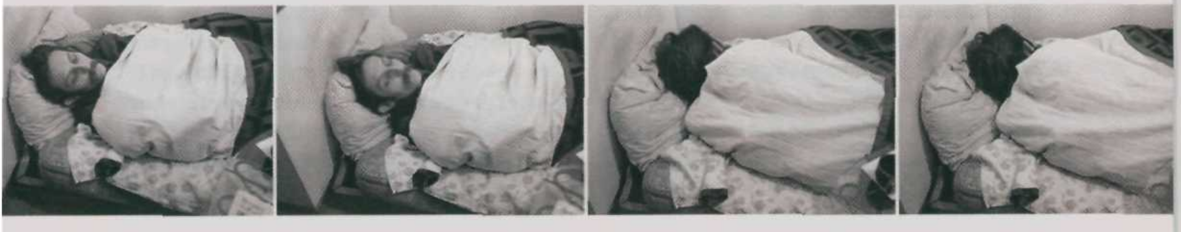
Nowadays the romantic ideology is buried as one of the fashions of the past season: potentially interesting, but not really relevant. None of the authors of the essays that follow understands art as a refuge from contemporary forms of capitalistic alienation. Nevertheless, the majority of the authors presented do believe in interrupting capitalism. They are motivated by the set of ideals not so different from the ones rallying the protests of the past—either in aesthetics or in politics, and most frequently in both.

So, does art interrupt the economy? Not really, neither today nor in the bygone era of ideological aestheticism. Can art be interrupted as an economic activity? Yes: just like anyone else, artists can strike, withdraw, and refuse. They can give, give again, and keep giving, without expecting anything in return. They can merge speculation with militancy. They can recognize the never fully payable social debt forged in the bondage of shipped bodies, to disrupt the algorithms of contemporary logistics. They can identify the urgencies of their own field and face their own points of anxiety. They can call assemblies, empower themselves, and occupy the institutions of the One Percent. They can hone their skills of escapology, of being somewhere else and doing something different, slipping out of the outfits woven for them by the systems of social and economic capture. They can dream about the monetary systems of tomorrow. Or they can simply stay lazy, like the working artists of the good old communist East.

Kuba Szreder *(PL) is an independent curator. His interdisciplinary projects actively engage in the public sphere, combining artistic practices with a critical examination of society. In 2009, he started up the Free/Slow University of Warsaw and has since collaborated closely with the Bęc Zmiana Foundation. His research reflects critically upon the contemporary apparatus of cultural production and its position in late capitalism.*

Mladen Stilinović

Laziness



Mladen Stilinović *(RS/HR) is a visual artist and member of the informal collective, Grupa šestorice autora (Group of Six Artists), which had a significant impact on the development of radical Yugoslavian art in the second half of the 1970s. Stilinović combines words and images, uses poor materials, and simple visual execution. His work revolves around the contradictions of the role of art in society, the relationship between engaged and autonomous art, the end of art, the instrumentalization of art and progressive political thinking in various systems, and the conditions of labor.*

The photo series The Artist at Work *(1978) comments on the attacks on conceptual art in former Yugoslavia criticizing the lack of work in the creation of the artwork. Doing nothing and being lazy were strategies applied against rule-conformed art, product oriented art, and overvalorization of labor.*

Andrea Fraser

Institutional Critique

Rooted in reflexive sociological and psychological analysis, institutional critique as a tactic for interrupting the economy proceeds, first of all, from an analysis of the economy, in which the institutional critic herself is engaged and invested. The tactic of institutional critique is founded on the premise that neither an economy, nor any other structure can be interrupted or impacted from a distance or from a position outside of that structure—and on the recognition that the impulse to interrupt or critique a structure is itself already a relation to and an investment in that structure, even if that investment is a negative one.

The economy in relation to which the institutional critic takes a critical position is understood in three dimensions: as a financial economy of economic capital, as a social economy of cultural and social capital, and as an affective economy (in the psychoanalytic sense) of emotional and sexual energy. Each of these economies is understood as fields of struggle and conflict over the distributions of the forms of capital or energy that define them. "The economy" as a whole is understood as a field of struggle between these economic, social, cultural, and affective economies.

The institutional critic proceeds from this analysis to an analysis of her position within this economy as a particular point of intersection between these three dimensions of the economy. What is her position in the distribution of economic, cultural, and social capital? What are her investments (economic, social, political, emotional) in these distributions, quantitatively and also qualitatively? What is at stake in those investments? What is to be lost or gained in a redistribution of these various forms of capital or energy?

From this point, institutional critique can be likened to the psychoanalytic practice of "interpreting at the point of urgency," transposed to the collective space of particular groups, institutions, or fields. Interpreting at the point of urgency is not just a matter of offering a representation or a theoretical account. The most important aspect of the practice may lie not in the content of the interpretation at all, but in locating and identifying the point of urgency at a particular place and time. "Urgency" in this sense refers to the force of investments. While these investments may be financial, social, cultural, intellectual, political, or emotional, the force of urgency is understood above all as emotional energy and in terms of an affective economy. This affective economy is understood as underlying financial and social economies—not preceding them but enabling them and fueling their reproduction. Emotional energy is understood as a basic medium of circulation and exchange. Emotional investment is understood as underlying other forms of investment and framing what is at stake—what is to be lost or gained—in those investments at the most concrete level: the anticipation of psychological and corporal, individual and collective satisfaction, and security, or the anxiety of frustration, privation, loss, pain, abandonment, annihilation.

The point of urgency may be identified, above all, as a point of anxiety. The challenge in locating the point of urgency is due to the structures mobilized to defend against that anxiety: to repress it, displace it, expel it, or vanquish it. These structures include not only defensive processes that unfold within individuals, but also structures that develop and unfold within groups and institutions. Such social fields are also intersubjective fields that collect, channel, and contain affective

energy, even as that energy may be displaced continuously within them and between them. It is this continuous displacement that makes identifying the point of urgency at a particular place and particular time, in a direct and concrete way, and in terms of immediate stakes and investments, so difficult.
In this regard, the most important capacity for institutional critique may be to tolerate anxiety in oneself and to reflect on that anxiety as an intersubjective fact of shared social and institutional structures. The second most important capacity may be to tolerate anxiety in a group or field—and of oneself as the object of that anxiety, which the institutional critic may become if she successfully identifies and interprets it.

***Andrea Fraser** (US) is a visual artist known especially for her work in critiquing institutions and dramatizing a desirable relationship between art and its audiences. Influenced by feminism, psychoanalysis, appropriation art, and site specificity, her practice has often investigated the central positions and postures of the art world: the docent, the curator, the visitor, the collector, the critic, the art historian, and, of course, the artist. In* Museum Highlights *(1989), for example, Fraser posed as a guide at the Philadephia Museum of Art describing the works in an almost ridiculously enthusiastic way.* A Project in Two Phases *(1994-1995) was conceived as an internal service aimed at exploring the function of contemporary art within a corporate structure: Andrea Fraser investigated the initial hostility of the Generali insurance company's team toward artworks appearing in the offices. In the video performance* Untitled *(2003), she recorded a sexual encounter with a private collector, who paid to participate in her work.*

Stephen Wright

Escapology

Escape is all that remains.
(Henri Laborit, *Éloge de la fuite*)

Escapology, broadly speaking, refers to the rapidly growing field of empirical enquiry and speculative research into the ways and means, tactics and strategies of escaping capture. Not so much Houdini-style escape from physical bonds (though his methodologies do hold metaphorical appeal for both researchers and practitioners, as well as for popular culture) as the more insidious forms of capture in contemporary society that hobble action, desire, and thought by cloaking them in often invisible overcodes. Capture may be ideological, encouraging agents to think in terms of categories whose mere existence is their sole merit. Or it may be institutional, framing practices into a sphere of action that determines their specific visibility and forecloses their potential deployment. Increasingly, both in the general economy and in the symbolic economies of art and activism, capture may be logistical, subsuming human decision making and rationality itself in algorithms. Capture may be epistemic or terminological, but whatever its configuration, escapology is about fleeing its normative clutches. The mode of escapology most widespread in the mainstream artworld has to do with escaping the ontological capture that is the bane of autonomous art practice, whereby actions or objects have their very mode of being (their "ontology") captured as art; just art. This form of capture relies on that most perversely neoliberal form of capture of all—operative or performative capture, whereby things are put to work, made to perform. Escapology, in short, is the theory and practice of suspending the operations of all these capture mechanisms.

Yet escapology is a paradoxical undertaking, and an often ambivalent science. For obvious reasons, escape itself can neither assert itself for what it is, nor perform itself as escape: it must always appear impossible from the perspective of power, yet at the same time it must always be already under way. Escapology, then, is less the study and implementation of sets of tactics or strategies for avoiding capture, than the acknowledgement of a simple, concrete fact: escape happens. This is escapology's a priori, and though it seeks to better appreciate the escapological drive in contemporary culture, it does not see escape as a self-conscious attempt to escape from something. It envisages escape in terms of offensive retreat; as such, it shares none of the projective logic of an event-driven vision of history. Whereas (left-leaning) art historians and social theorists have conditioned us to think of emancipation, and indeed of art itself, in terms of events—whether past or yet to come—escapology rejects this masculinist perspective as one premised on the luxury of being able to wait for the coming event or to look back on the one which took place. Escapology is the science of the kind of everyday elusiveness, leakage and doing-otherwise that can really only be described as "escape" once power structures shift to capture its movement. Ultimately, escapology's examples, those that instantiate its concrete truth, all lie beyond, or behind, the event horizon itself.

In lieu of an example, then, consider this speculative etymology suggestively put forth by a contemporary escapologist. The verb "escape" is usually thought to derive from the Vulgar Latin *excapare*, from *ex-* ("out") + *capio* ("capture"). It may well be, however, that it comes from the Late Latin *ex cappa*, in reference not to capture at all, but to a "cape" or cloak which remains behind even as the living body that it clad has already slipped away.

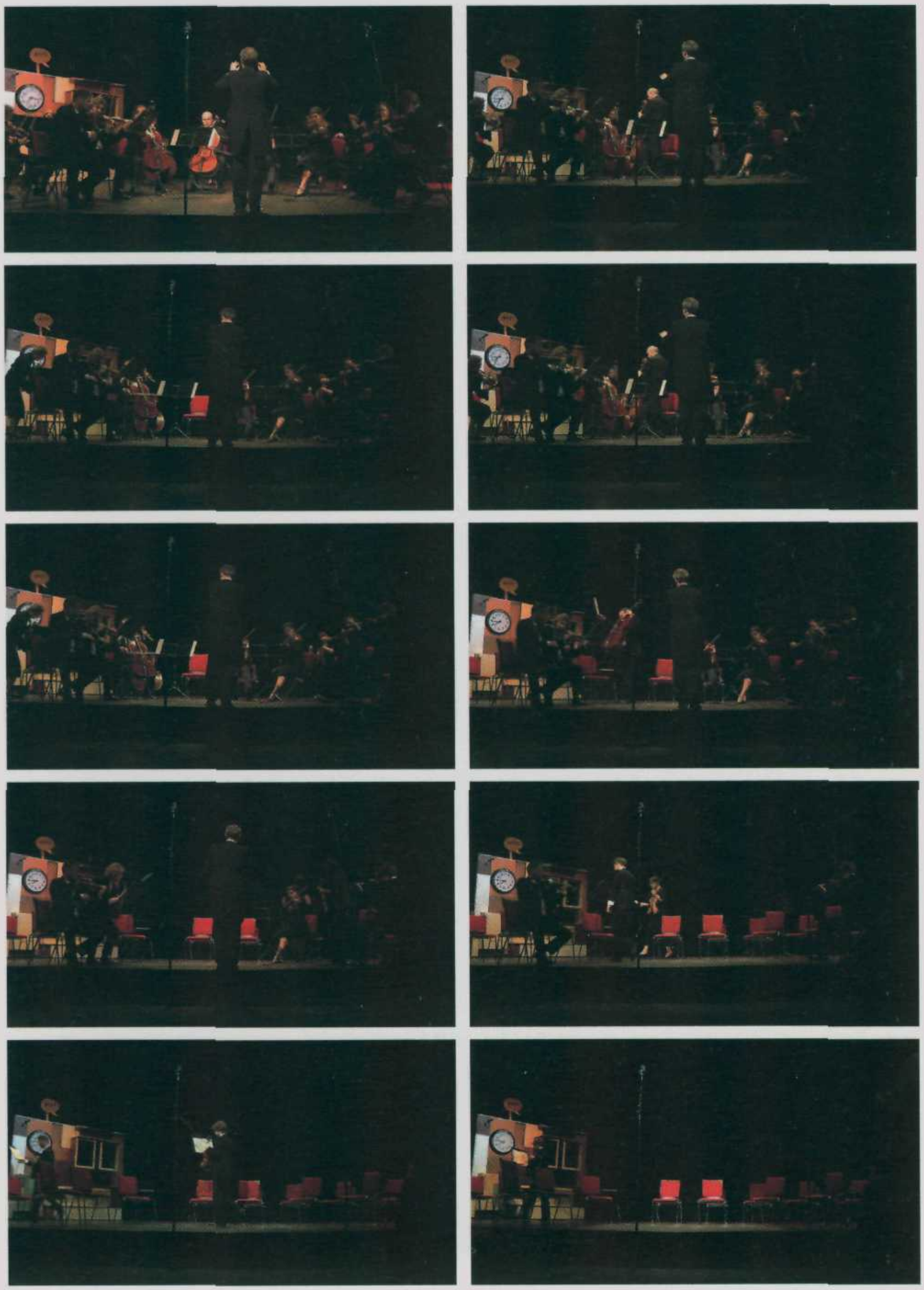
***Stephen Wright** (CA/FR) is a Paris-based writer and professor of the practice of theory at the European School of Visual Arts. His writing has focused on the usership of art, particularly in contexts of collaborative, extradisciplinary practices. Together with Basecamp, Wright set up the Platform Plausible Artworlds, a project to collect and share knowledge about alternative models of creative practice.*

Stevphen Shukaitis

Art Strike

"Everyone is an artist." This would seem a simple enough place to begin: with a statement connecting directly to Joseph Beuys and, more generally, to the historic avant-garde's æsthetic politics, which sought to break down barriers between artistic production and everyday life. But this one statement contains actually two notions: the first alludes to the creativity that everyone could exercise if they realized potentials that have been held back by capital and unrealistic conceptions of artistic production. The second notion argues that everyone already is an artist and embodies creative action and production within their life and being.

If there has been an end to the avant-garde, it is not its death, but rather a monstrous multiplication and expansion of artistic production in zombified forms. The creativity contained within the future-oriented potential of the becoming-artistic has lapsed precisely because it has perversely been realized in



To subtly remind their patron, Prince Esterházy, that the musicians had worked already far more than their share, Haydn composed the final adagio of his Symphony No. 45 as a symbolic farewell: one by one, each musician stops playing, blows out his candle and leaves the stage. Artist ***Ulf Aminde*** *(DE) interprets this piece in different performances—in Graz during "Truth is Concrete"—as the first documented artist strike.*

existing forms of diffuse cultural production. "Everyone is an artist" is realized as a utopian possibility in the same way as "everyone is a worker." This condition has reached a new degree of concentration and intensity within the basins of cultural production: in the post-Fordist participation based economy where the multitudes are sent to work in the metropolitan factory, recombining ideas and images through social networks and technologically mediated forms of communication. We don't often think of all these activities as either work or art. Consequently it becomes difficult to think through the politics of labor surrounding them, whether as artistic labor or just labor itself.

The notion of the Art Strike becomes more productive precisely as labor changes its articulation in relation to the current composition of artistic and cultural work. First, the Art Workers Coalition (AWC) called for an Art Strike in 1969 to protest the involvement of museum board members and trustees in war related industries. Gustav Metzger then called for a strike of a minimum of three years, from 1977–1980, though he noted that almost no one noticed. Metzger and the AWC's formulations of the Art Strike were directed against the problems of the gallery system. This conception was picked up by Stewart Home and various others within the Neoist milieu who called upon artists to cease artistic work entirely for the years 1990–93. In this version, the strike moves beyond a focus on the gallery system to a more general consideration of artistic production and a questioning of the role of the artist. In the most recent iteration, Redas Dirzys and a Temporary Art Strike Committee called for an Art Strike as a response to Vilnius becoming the European Capital of Culture for 2009: the concept broadens from a focus on the gallery system to artistic production more generally, and finally to the ways in which artistic and cultural production are infused throughout daily life and embedded within the production of the metropolis.

The Art Strike emerges as a nodal point for finding ways to work critically between the two compositional modes contained within the statement, "Everyone is an artist": an autonomist politics focuses on class composition, or the relation between the technical arrangement of economic production and the political composition activated by forms of social insurgency and resistance. Capital evolves by turning emerging political compositions into technical compositions of surplus value production. Similarly, the aesthetic politics of the avant-garde find the political compositions they animate turned into new forms of value production and circulation. The Art Strike becomes a tactic for working between the utopian "not yet" promise of unleashed creativity and the "always already" but compromised forms of artistic labor that we are enmeshed in. To repropose an Art Strike at this juncture, when artistic labor is both everywhere and nowhere, is to force that issue. It becomes a concern not solely of the one who identifies as the artist, but a method of withdrawing the labor of imagination and recombination involved in what we are already doing in order to hint at the potential of what we could be doing.

Bob Black argues that the Art Strike, rather then negating artistic production, enacted the ultimate realization of art, where even the act of not making art becomes part of an artistic process. While Stewart Home has argued repeatedly that the importance of the Art Strike lies not in its feasibility but rather in the ability to expand the terrain of class struggle, Black objects to this on the grounds that most artistic workers operate as independent contractors, and therefore strikes make no sense for them. While this is indeed a concern, it is also very much the condition encountered by forms of labor in a precarious post-Fordist economy. The Art Strike goes from being a proposal for social action by artists to a form of social action potentially of use to all who find their creativity and imagination exploited within existing productive networks.

But how can we enact this form of strike? And how can this subsumption of creativity and imagination by capital be undone? That is precisely the problem, for as artistic and cultural production become more ubiquitous and widespread throughout the social field, they are rendered all the more imperceptible. Relational aesthetics recapitulates avant-garde ideas and practices into a capital-friendly, service-economy aesthetics. This does not mean that they are useless or that they should be discarded. Rather, by teasing out the compositional modes contained within them, they can be reconsidered and reworked. How can we struggle around or organize diffuse forms of cultural and artistic labor? This is precisely the kind of question explored by groups such as the Carrotworkers' Collective, W.A.G.E. (Working Artists and the Greater Economy), and Haben & Brauchen, who formulate ways to organize around labor involved in unpaid forms of cultural production, such as all the unpaid internships that sustain the workings of artistic and cultural institutions. In 1953, Guy Debord painted on the wall of the Rue de Seine the slogan *"Ne travaillez jamais"* ("Never work"). The history of the avant-garde is filled with calls to "never artwork," but the dissolution of the artistic object and insurgent energies of labor refusal have been rendered into the workings of semiocapitalism and the metropolitan factory. To renew and rebuild a politics and form of social movement adequate to the current composition does not begin with romanticizing the potentiality of becoming creative through artistic production or working from the creative production that already is, but rather by working in the nexus between the two: in other words, to start from how the refusal of work is reinfused into work, and by understanding that imposition and rendering, and struggling within, against and through it.

Stevphen Shukaitis *(US/GB) is an editor at Autonomedia and a lecturer at the University of Essex. He is the author of Imaginal Machines:* Autonomy & Self-Organization in the Revolutions of Everyday Life *(2009) and the editor (with Erika Biddle and David Graeber) of* Constituent Imagination: Militant Investigations // Collective Theorization *(2007).*

Kalle Lasn / Adbusters

New Aesthetics

The perspective—the aesthetic—of our sustainable future has yet to take hold, but it's a simple, honest way of living. It follows organic cycles and mimics nature's ways. It's not so much about being moral or "good" as about being a little bit wild and fiercely determined, like crabgrass growing through cracks in the concrete. It's about "being" rather than "having" and "process" rather than "form." As this new way of experiencing the world seeps into our imaginations, it begins to change our clothes, our houses, our shops, streets, food, music, and especially, our currency.

The money of the future will not have famous men, architectural triumphs, Masonic symbolism—no pyramid or all-seeing eye of providence or god ... nor will it reflect the anonymity, the faceless modern scientific aesthetic, the abstract emptiness of the current crop of Euro notes ... these gloriously old-fashioned designs will give way to snow-capped mountain peaks, salmon river runs, caribou herds, towering glaciers, breathing forests, teaming jungles, vibrant plains ... it will reflect the mind shift from anthropocentric to ecocentric ... from individual to communal ... from political to spiritual ... and from concrete to nature ... which is the ultimate source of survival of this human experiment of ours on Planet Earth.

Kalle Lasn *(EE/CA) is cofounder of the* ***Adbusters Media Foundation*** *(CA) an anticonsumerist global network of artists, activists, writers, pranksters, students, educators, and entrepreneurs who want to advance the new social activist movement of the information age. Adbusters publishes an activist magazine and has launched numerous international campaigns, including Buy Nothing Day, and Occupy Wall Street. They are known for their subvertisements spoofing popular advertisements.*

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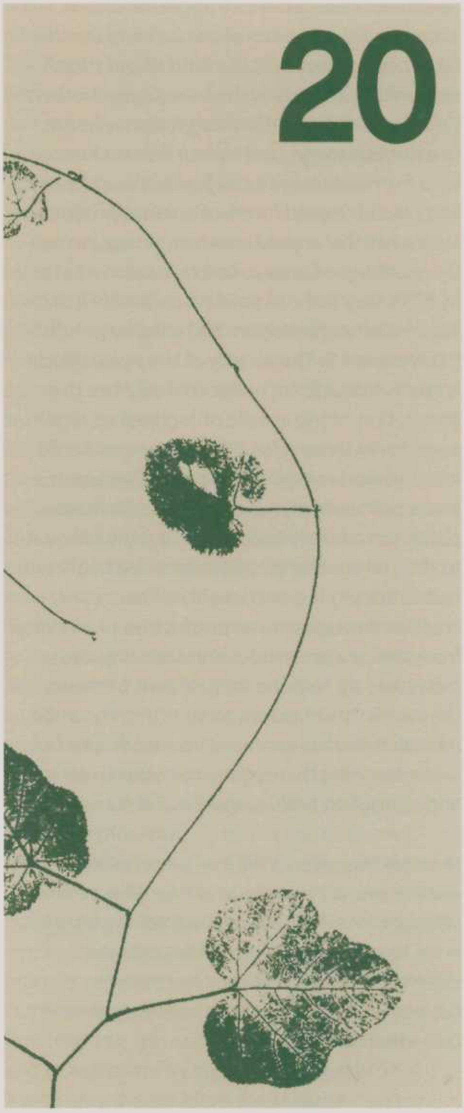
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Stefano Harney

Thingly Debt

Objects —"things"—are capable of autonomous information processing and communication, both with each other and with their environment. Autonomy is a capability (or set of capabilities) that enables a particular action of a system to be automatic or "self-governing." Today, object-oriented philosophy is popular for the way it suggests objects might have their own agency and might interact with each other without human intervention. Unfortunately, the first sentence in this paragraph comes not from the writings of an object-oriented philosopher, but from an article on transport logistics. And the second comes from a recent study by the US Department of Defense on human system collaboration in logistics.

What is notable at this moment in history is the rise of the capitalist science of logistics, for which object-oriented philosophy is just a more or less unconscious symptom. This is the capitalist science today most infected with the dream of capital as that automatic subject no longer in need of labor or, as logistics scholars would put it, human time, permitting a complete interoperability and infinite combination of the four circuits of capital: production, circulation, distribution, and realization.

Logistics theorists, especially those working with the most advanced "object invocations"—algorithms that model objects communicating only with other objects—fantasize about the elimination of the controlling agent and of moving beyond the notion of the human strategist as obstacle, and dreaming of the absolute, we might say concrete moment, where strategy dissolves into the potential of every thing in the simultaneity of time and space, without a need to "slow down" to analyze, plan, and explain. Logistics makes no distinction among these objects, whether money, commodities, labor, or the earth. All objects, including the human body in its parts and affects, must operate on and through each other without a subjective moment. Logistics ultimately seeks what the object-oriented philosopher Tristan Garcia unwittingly calls "a thought about things as opposed to a thought about a thought about things." That logistics has not achieved these "distributed object-oriented frameworks for coordination of autonomous systems" does not mean we do not feel the effects of this science. One of these is the rise of logistical populations and algorithmic institutions.

A simple example of the rise of logistical populations can be found in today's "global" university. We often hear the complaint in contemporary universities that they are merely training students for employment rather than educating them. But this is not the case. Education is not instrumental today. Just the opposite. It trains students to become what Michael Hardt calls the subjects of whatever at the best universities. Students must be able to plug into any situation with complete compliance. There is no object to their education, because they are the objects of their education.

More pernicious is what Patricia Clough calls "population racism," where societies of control and discipline, collapse into each other threatening even the cold comfort of being a biopolitical subject today. Now, there is only blood, skin tissue, dialect, trait, habit, all circulated with no reference and more importantly no prospect of return to subjectivation itself. But, this last example hints at a way to live not as capitalist objects but as "things" that avoids both the naivety of philosophy and the machinations of the capitalist relations that produce it. The foundations of capitalism and the modern science of logistics share a common origin in the first great and terrible logistics operation, the Atlantic slave trade. Logistics produced in this bloody history what might be called the subject of no standpoint, and every standpoint, in the African slave. Denied the category of the subject, and existing in and through the perspective of every circuit of capital, this commodity that could speak (Fred Moten) developed "the consent not to be a single being" (Edouard Glissant) in the middle passage. In what Cedric Robinson coined as the black radical tradition, the experiments in modes of being other than individual ones became the basis for an informal form of social life: rich, varied, and global.

In today's algorithmic institutions—and not just the university—the possibility of what Valeria Graziano might call a sociability is, by contrast, subject to the severe externalization of all thought and study, pushing social life out of the shelter of institutional resources and into the imperatives of interoperability in the social factory at large. Such institutions operate through the constant invocation of credit, which is nothing but the activation of objects by capital. But the black radical tradition operates through an unpayable debt. If debt is generally conceived as a coerced promise to enact current capitalist relations in the future through future labor, black debt is the promise not to perform current social relations in the future. Instead this debt is the invaluable, devalued inheritance of experimental social life, inherited in the proximity of bodies, the debt of bodies, amongst the shipped. This today is the inheritance of all objects forced into logistics if we choose to take on this thingly debt.

***Stefano Harney** (US/SG) teaches ethics at Singapore Management University. He is cofounder of the teaching and research collective, School for Study, and of Immeasure, a pro bono consultancy working with movement organizations. He was born in Berkeley, California. With Fred Moten, he wrote and published* The Undercommons: fugitive planning and black study *(Autonomedia/Minor Compositions, 2013).*

Noah Fischer

Occupy Museums

Occupy Museums (OM)—initiated a month after Occupy Wall Street (OWS) first claimed Zuccotti Park—connects a post-crash critique of Wall Street directly to institutions of culture. In a time when financial corporations dominate political capitals worldwide, gutting the public sphere and redistributing resources to the top of the economic pyramid, US museums have become highbrow propaganda machines for inequality. Here, a luxury lifestyle is advertised, and indirectly, so too are unregulated markets, and the worship of the one percent in the form of collector and philanthropist. The history of art is becoming intentionally confused with an asset class available only to the winners of Capitalism. Although galleries and fairs and auctions are the engines that drive this, museums are the temples and confer the needed authority upon a near complete reappropriation of culture into the private sphere.

In the US, most museums are about ninety percent privately funded and the philanthropic money comes with strings attached: exactly the same corrupt financial moguls at the apex of economic and political power populate museum boards, where they exert an incredible amount of influence on what is collected and shown, how a museum is labeled, and how the space of the museum itself is utilized. People like hedge fund billionaire Steven Cohen, whose company SAC has been indicted for insider trading sits comfortably on the MoCA board. Dirty energy billionaire David Koch, main funder of the Tea Party sits on the boards of the Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of Natural History and the Lincoln Center. Figures such as Danny Meyer sit on the board of Sotheby's auction house while running MoMA's signature restaurants; others sit on both boards

OCCUPY MUSEUMS!

simultaneously. These are major collectors who are capable of driving prices in the art market, one of the largest unregulated markets in the world.

Rather than simply protest with the traditional signs and petitions, the Occupy Movement believes in acting out direct democracy, and engaging in mutual aid. In each action, OM held facilitated "open-source" forums where those present could collectively voice the dimensions of the struggle. For example, at Lincoln Center protesting the absurdity of mayor Bloomberg's sponsorship of the opera about Gandhi and Martin Luther King, our assembly was joined by musicians, who had been fired by the Center in mass layoffs the day before. Composer Philip Glass also showed up to "mic-check" the end of the opera on the streets rather than in the Bloomberg funded opera Hall. Just days before this, Bloomberg had evicted us from Zuccotti Park, while branding his name on an opera about non-violent protest.

These actions took on an elaborate ceremonial aspect. We retooled the OWS style assembly into a performative research and information-sharing session at the Museum of Natural History. In the David H. Koch dinosaur wing, standing before the bones of T Rex and Brontosaurus, we offered examples of the potential menace of philanthropy (the unchecked power of money) on culture and science. David Koch is a climate change denier and uses his influence on national science exhibits to censor information supporting climate change.

We began to write open-ended scripts for the actions and to refine our use of the news media. At one large assembly inside of

MoMA, a group called The Novads dropped a banner, which the museum staff confiscated. In the press, OM accused the museum of a "unilateral acquisition," attaching demands to the banner's return. After a public statement denying that they had our banner in possession, we called for another assembly at MoMA in which we received the banner (it arrived nicely folded and wrapped). As a central ritual in the assembly, The Novads performed a collective quality inspection, and we discussed art and commerce.

The action assembly simultaneously accomplishes several important goals. It creates an instant public spectacle to passersby, of the powerless empowering themselves through direct democracy and the "step up, step back" policy used by OWS facilitators empowers new voices to develop on the spot. The collective process also calms people and allows for group decision making in tense situations such as pressure from the police. The action assembly can create a collective intelligence where many minds and voices combine for creatively unexpected outcomes, such as the spontaneous proposal of actions. In this tradition, OM assemblies were aimed at politicizing the public spaces of the arts sphere; cowering art world complacency makes less sense after a taste of uninvited direct democracy in the atrium of MoMA.

***Noah Fischer** (US) is an artist and activist, who responded to the current economic crisis with "Summer of Change," a series of numismatic rituals performed on Wall Street in summer 2011, and was the initiator of Occupy Museums. He is currently working collaboratively on an alternative art market model called Debtfair.*

Marina Vishmidt

Speculation

When we talk about the "speculative" in art, it sounds like we are proposing to relate art to the more standard senses we give to speculation, such as speculative thinking (philosophy), or speculative trading (finance). Art is a kind of material praxis that remains speculative because it has neither a predetermined use nor a set market value. Its significance or legibility may lie in the future—or not at all; it is, whether by definition or in action, a mode of displacement. Its use of materials renders them unfamiliar, and makes materiality itself a speculative category. This includes also the social as a speculative material, which is how aesthetics comes into the same constellation as politics. Practices that intervene "directly" in institutions of law or administration, in economic mechanisms, or find ways to import and transform these in an art context, calling on activist legacies which have themselves already changed what an art context might mean, are all deploying this sense of the social as speculative material. However, seen through a more strictly economic lens, art is the ultimate speculative commodity (as Adorno recognized in the 1960s), both in terms of its purpose and of its future oriented temporality, which is akin to the temporal structure of capital. This characteristic future orientation is not open-ended, however, since the future is foreclosed by the ultimate goal of making profit. This means that the speculative logic of finance as it is reproduced in society nowadays leads rather to stasis and decline; speculative options for collective existence must be sought in other logics.

With the consideration that art takes the social as part of its propositional or speculative apparatus, art is increasingly established as an (institutional) refuge for experimental social praxis, from the whimsies of relational aesthetics through educational infrastructures to actual sites for the propagation of social dissent in a (differentially) repressive social landscape. So while art accommodates or recalls such practices using performative and archival means, there is at the same time a tendency for it to be deployed as a tool to implant markets not just in common institutions but at the level of each individual, encouraging them to self-optimize without reserve in emulation of the elite subjectivity proper to the artist. This would then be how speculative logics are internalized or assimilated as the form of self-expression most adapted to future orientation in an era when debt and privatization clamp down on any form of this expression that promises to exceed its propagated character.

Capital's future oriented logic of accumulation, one that seals the present with the force of debt and adopts the "living currency" of art in order to produce and transforms subjectivity in its own image: the self-expanding, self-valorizing subject of capital as not just analogous to, but as the essence of human freedom and historical contingency. Also, like capital, art accumulates—experiences, objects, relations—and metabolizes them as its own value logic. Where art remains mimetic of the form of value in its expulsion of labor and frank dependency on predatory accumulation—a disavowal of its conditions—to go beyond itself, its conditions must be exposed, whether acting as an alibi for itself or other agendas. Where art can give possibilities—often destructive possibilities—for the stunted subjectivities, tactics, and structures that traverse everyday social relations, as well as the specialized niche of activism, helping to generate uncertainty and radical horizons, then it is that aspect of its double logic which must be fleshed out (lived).

Several artistic practices have dramatized aspects of speculation as a mode of production. Some have developed an intuition about performativity and negation as the hallmarks of contemporary work, rendering all labor to some extent speculative, as in *The Trainee* (2008) by Pilvi Takala, where she enacts a modern-day female "Bartleby" as a marketing trainee, straying around and claiming to be doing "brain work." In Melanie Gilligan's *Popular Unrest* (2010), where labor as choreography is enacted under laboratory conditions, the investment in ourselves is at the same time the reproduction of capital, which does away with us when it can no longer extract value from us. Even microgestures of reflexivity can pack a punch: witness the tiny replica version of the barracks housing the workers who were building the new Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, secretly stocked in the Guggenheim gift shop in NYC on the same shelf as the model Guggenheim itself. This insertion by Gregory Sholette and Matt Greco is a classic reminder to art of its conditions of reproduction. For art, which always strives to free itself from its social conditions and reincorporate them in its own terms, such a link is as key as the "wages for housework" movement was for reinventing a politics of labor and feminism thirty years ago.

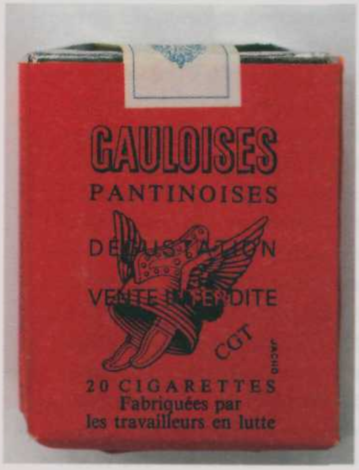
Art as a speculative mode of production—of subjectivity, of value, of situations—this is a theme whose utopian potential, as well as sordid applications, is inseparable from the continued existence of art as a field both for social normativity, and for subjective and collective struggles. It requires approaching art systemically, as a field, as well as through specific practices which lead in very different directions. Speculation is the name of the unrecognizable that has to subtend every process of social imagination, and it is what art can become when its current resources are deprivatized, despecialized, in a general historical process of revolt—a revolt against identity and utility as much as against poverty or unfreedom. Just as once art and praxis had to be brought together through the force of historical contingency in an era where the speculations of capital make all the rules, joining militancy with speculation has to be the first step of our passage.

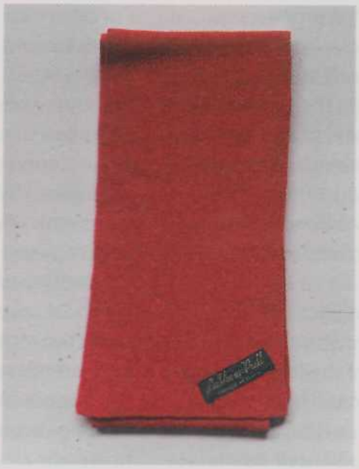
Marina Vishmidt *(GB) is a London-based writer dealing mainly with the issues of labor and value form art. She has just completed her PhD at Queen Mary University of London on the topics presented in synthesis here.*

Jean-Luc Moulène

Strike Objects

EMPLOI
SOLIDARITE
LIBERTE
JUSTICE
Relaxe


GAULOISES
PANTINOISES
DEGUSTATION
VENTE INTERDITE
CGT
20 CIGARETTES
Fabriquées par
les travailleurs en lutte

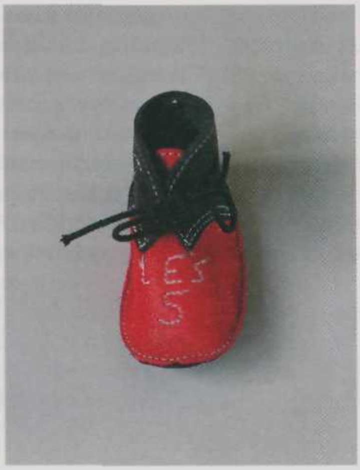


PARFUM DE SOLIDARITE
BAP
TOUCHE
PAS
A MON
EMPLOI !
CROWN CORK

Herald Tribune
INTERNATIONAL

Billet
DERNIER BILLET
AVANT AUGMENTATION

CHOMAGEOPOLY
CHOMAGEOPOLY



Jean-Luc Moulène *(FR) is an artist working primarily with the photographic medium. His output is based primarily on three strategies: production, appearance, and broadcasting. The strike objects Moulène has archived came from often hard fought strikes dating from the 1970s to the 1990s. They are symbolic* objets détournés *imitating regular products and, at the same time, concrete tools used in the social struggle, either as emblems of the strikers, demonstration signage bearing workers' slogans and salary demands, or objects to be sold to procure financial means for social actions. The workers of Manufrance and the employees of Seita and the Banque de France, for instance, chose to produce frying pans, cigarettes, and circulars. Rather than ceasing all activity, the strikers preferred—not without irony—to parasitize the manufacturing process and engage in a form of resistance in productivity terms while, at the same time, over-ruling their regular condition as manufacturers through a new condition as creators. Moulène has given consistency to these objects by photographing them one by one, against a plain background, giving them another form of visibility and linking them to artistic labor.*

The Institute for Human Activities

Value Shifting

The purpose of the Institute for Human Activites's (IHA) Gentrification Program is, first, to make critical artistic reflection profitable for one of the world's poorest populations and, second, to recalibrate art's critical mandate by fully acknowledging its position in the global economy.

While critical art may expose the need for change in, say, the Congo or Peru, it ultimately brings beauty, jobs, and opportunities to Berlin-Mitte or the Lower East Side in New York. In these cities, art is used as a device to accumulate capital and boost the price of real estate. Rather than take this to be a side effect of art, the IHA turns the accumulation of capital into its core activity. The IHA deployed its pilot program in close proximity to a Canadian-run palm oil plantation. The company consigned a piece of rainforest to IHA for the purposes of its Gentrification Program. Of course IHA's attempt at "gentrification" did not displace or disenfranchise anyone. If anything was displaced, it was the economic return on cultural activities. While the results of IHA's activities are shared with audiences around the world, the profits go to the Congolese participants.

The Gentrification Program tries to intervene not merely on a symbolic level but on a material level as well. Concretely, we have begun to reach out to the population by organizing a series of creative therapy workshops, led by Rony Berger, an Israeli therapist specialized in war trauma. The idea was to draw a parallel between structural poverty and other manufactured disasters by administering an NGO type program that is highly critical of itself.

The Gentrification Program is a long term project and, at this point, we are in the

research phase. We haven't yet started selling locally produced art; this will, hopefully, come about this year. Over the next five years we will roll it out. In June 2012, IHA organized a seminar in the heart of the Congolese rainforest. Various critics, philosophers, economists, and activists from all over the world, who take interest in the Congo, joined the bamboo settlement to discuss IHA's project. Some of them emphasized the relevance of the arts to rural development as *an interesting framework for the production of* artworks: this is one of our long term aims. If that plays to people's prejudices about "exotic art" then so be it. Collaborations between local artists and artists whose work circulates in the international art circuit will create value that we intend to channel back to the Congo. As to the distribution of profits, we intend simply to pay those whose works have been sold.

The relation with the locals is highly ambiguous because they don't want art; they want money. Of course we tell them that that is what we bring, but they are very suspicious. Historically they have been duped so often that it is hard for them to believe we are any different. It isn't so much about what we are going to teach the locals as about what they are going to teach us. We are hoping that their critical answers to the institute's propositions will transcend at least one of the problems associated with contemporary (Western) critical art: the way it functions along the lines of other globalized industries. We are trying to concentrate those two elements in the same place by using the structure of the industry against itself.

***The Institute for Human Activities—IHA** (BE/NL) was founded in 2010 in Amsterdam to run an ambitious Gentrification Program in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The core members of the Institute are Renzo Martens, Delphine Hesters, and Jacob Koster. The IHA wants to turn art's potential for gentrification into a critical, progressive, and interventionist tool.*

Neil Cummings

Generosity

Give. Give again. Keep giving. Don't stop. Don't expect something in return, don't *calculate. Don't calculate a return. Don't* financialize. Don't compete. Don't worry if it's too much, or not enough. Give what you can. Maybe a bit more than you can. Keep giving. Give. Give again. Don't stop. This is to give generously.

Thank you, thanks. To receive a gift, whatever it is, with grace, with thanks, without need, fear of debt, or obligation. This is to receive with generosity.

To give generously is to socialize love. Don't worry if others capitalize on your generosity. If they save, store, hoard, or profit. Give more. Give much more. Give much, much more. Overwhelm capital with generosity. Confound those that calculate. Give. Generosity need not be scarce. It's bountiful. Overwrite scarcity with abundance. Keep giving and receiving. This is radical generosity. Infinite giving, like creativity—it's as generous as the sun. Generosity is archaic, it predates subjects, property, and money, and is more powerful than the sum of those parts, much more powerful. Aristotle theorized generosity as a cultivated trait that guides virtuous men to give to others. To give the appropriate amount to the appropriate person in the appropriate circumstances is the privilege of the virtuous man. It's the root of Aristotle's ethics. Christian ethics too. Aristotle economized generosity, and gave it as a property to the powerful. To powerful men. Can poor people be generous? Clearly. Women? Stupid question. Neither Aristotle, nor his ethics, nor the institutions founded on them, can control the transformational power of generosity. Give. Give again. Keep giving and receiving, don't stop. Generosity doesn't depend on the gender, or the social or financial status of the giver or receiver. Or the thing given. Powerful men are frightened of generosity. Give. Give gifts generously. Keep giving. Give promiscuously. Frighten men. Don't stop. Generosity cannot be economized.

Receiving through obligation is not generous. Giving to those expecting a gift is not generous. Giving to those in need is not generous. Don't give money. Giving money can never be generous. Money cancels relations between people. Giving money is charity, charity is middle-class giving, it's the exercise of power not generosity.

Give, give generously. Give again, keep giving. Don't stop. If generosity is commodified, economized, contractual, politicized, or recognized as charity, or recognized at all, it ceases to be generous. There can be no political economy of generosity. That's why men are frightened. Generosity is only possible if it goes unrecognized. It's an impossibility. But don't stop. Give. Give gifts generously. Anonymously. At night. Keep giving. Don't worry about possibility or impossibility. Give generously, and don't stop.

The astonishing power of giving is crystallized by French sociologist Marcel Mauss' in *The Gift* (1924). Mauss' gift economy works like this; receiving a gift triggers the obligation to reciprocate; you reciprocate, the counter gift necessitates a return, and so on, and so on, endlessly. It's a networked social contract. Giving gifts makes families, friends, and communities. Giving also makes enemies. The unreciprocated gift is a debt. And a debt cannot be forgotten or repaid, only deferred. Debt is deferred because of the temporality of the gift; gifts shift the present into the future, as debts recollect the past into the present. Sometimes debts span generations, continents, communities, and nations. And if the debt cannot be forgotten—and it can never be forgotten—it turns vengeful and nurtures hatred: recipients are always beholden to the donor. Here lies the dark underbelly of ungenerous giving. Of charity, debt, obligation, and enslavement.

The ungenerous gift carries a terrible destructive power: it's George Bataille's "accursed share." Give. Give gifts generously. Don't squander, and don't stop.

To give generously is to invest in the future. Generosity transacts love through time. You were born into these meshworks of generosity, giving, and debt. There is no outside. And, unless you have learnt a religious observance, there is no original gift. Give gifts generously. Keep giving. Give precious things, give the most precious things, and give them to strangers. Like blood. Give blood. Give blood to strangers. Give life. Give love. Give love to strangers. Give. Keep giving.

The traditional logic of the gift, presupposes an already constituted subject—the virtuous man—prior to the act of giving. The virtuous man is a sovereign individual in possession of property. By giving or receiving, by deferring debt, he establishes communal, contractual relations with others.

Generosity is radically other. It's not a property, and it's not in the eye of the beholder. It's a collective, temporary evaluation, fleeting, explosive, and transformational. Generosity converts specific values—very valuable values, perhaps the most precious values—into a currency. Generosity embodies and distributes these values. And as such, generosity is always emergent, always a creative intersubjective practice. Generosity creates and distributes radical subjectivity.

Generosity is our future, inhabit it. Give. Give generously, keep giving, and don't stop. Don't expect something in return, don't calculate, quantify, and don't financialize. Give and receive precious things, give the most precious things, and give them to strangers. Keep giving and receiving. Don't stop.

***Neil Cummings** (GB) is a professor at the Chelsea College of Art and Design, as well as a member of Critical Practice, and sits on the editorial board of Documents of Contemporary Art.*

Truth is Concrete—24/7 Marathon Camp
September 21–28, 2012

From Tahrir to Syntagma, from Zuccotti to Taksim Square, from Japan after Fukushima to Moscow during the wave of demonstrations, from London, Budapest, Athens, Istanbul to Ramallah, Tel Aviv, Tunis, Rio, or Buenos Aires—artists were always among the first to get involved, among the first to join the political and social movements. But how does art itself, how do artistic strategies and tactics play a role? At a time when art theory and practice seem to be constantly lagging behind reality, and are seen increasingly as a mere leftist hobby rather than a foundation of humanity? It was in this entangled situation that "Truth is Concrete" (TIC) took place. Perceived well before the Occupy movement began and happening shortly after its first anniversary, the TIC Marathon Camp brought together more than 200 artists, activists, and theorists, in the city of Graz, Austria. They were joined by 100 students and young professionals, as well as by a local and international audience, to meet on the small but common territory of art and activism: a twenty-four hour a day, seven day week marathon camp with 170 hours of lectures, performances, productions, and discussions to pool useful strategies and tactics in art and politics. The Marathon machine ran nonstop—often too fast, sometimes too slow—all day every day and all night every night. It produced thought, arguments, knowledge, but it also created frustration and exhaustion.

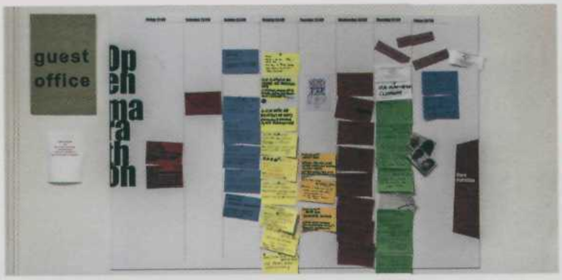
So, wasn't it just a mirror or even a fulfillment of the neoliberal agenda of more and more, of extreme labor and permanent availability? Did it not just prolong the race we are struggling with in our capitalist environment? Wouldn't it be better to slow down, to take time? "Truth is Concrete" aimed in the opposite direction. Taking a break was not going to help. This machine did not set a task that could be fulfilled. It could not be easily commodified, nor easily consumed. There was no right time; it wasn't built around highlights. There was no best couple of hours to grasp it the right way. So there was actually not one marathon, but many individual ones: some shorter, some longer; some searching for depth in familiar topics, others searching for things one had no idea about yet. Having to miss out was part of having to make choices.

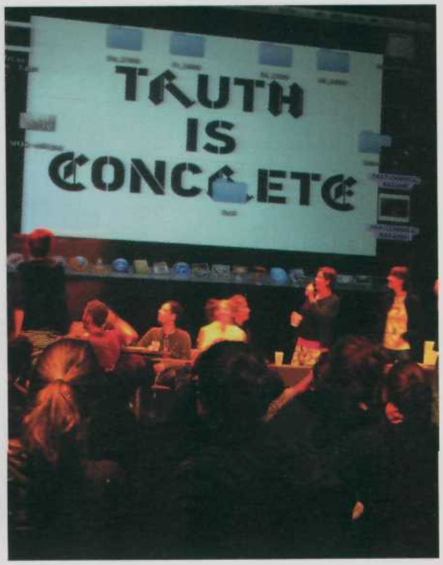
In this way, it was also a metaphor for political movements: spending an hour or so at Occupy Wall Street, you will talk to some people, see some tents, maybe smell some of the spirit. You could come back, listen-in to some committee meetings, maybe next time start talking yourself. Or you could move in. All is possible, but it will give you different intensities and insights. "Truth is Concrete" was not only interested in the intellectual intensity it produced. It was also interested in physical intensity. In the impact this meeting had on our bodies. In the here and now.

The machinic and rigid marathon running in the centre was surrounded by a camp-like living and working environment developed by raumlaborberlin (see p. 189)—a social space with its own needs and timings, creating a one week community, mixing day and night, developing its own jetlag toward the outside world.

The vertical gesture of the marathon machine was embedded in a horizontal structure of openness: with organized one-day workshops and several durational projects and an exhibition, but most importantly with the parallel "Open Marathon" based on self-organization: its contents were produced entirely by participants spontaneously stepping into the slots.

So was this all just too much? Maybe. But maybe we still don't have time to waste. The world keeps changing at a fast pace and the marathon was most of all a work meeting—an extreme effort at a time that still seems to need extreme efforts.


guest office
Open marathon


TRUTH IS CONCRETE

HERBST REMIXED
ART AND CRIME: LEGALLY ON THE EDGE
DMITRY VILENSKY / CHTO DELAT [RUS]

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