glossary

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Beyond the conventional usage of the language in contemporary art.

Terms associated with referential fields, as proposed by narrators in the course of seminars, to negotiate various positions, contexts and local narratives about contemporary art.

Content

Curatorial statement

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The *Glossary of Common Knowledge* (*GCK*), unlike an encyclopaedia, makes no attempt to unite all the world's knowledge in a single totalising system, or to assemble a variety of viewpoints under the roof of tolerance and inclusion. What makes the glossary different from similar efforts is that it does not make just one list of terms but is instead concerned with multiple lists. Each of its terms is always associated in different ways with terms from other lists and other contexts. Families of terms are thus created, and these families are the core of the glossary. Every term in the *GCK* has its own story, and every story has a narrator, who is present alongside the term. Indeed, it is only through the presence of narrators that we can build a glossary of common knowledge. The *GCK* therefore represents a multitude of first-person narratives, which confront and interact with each other.

The presence of narrators is something we have learned about from oral histories. The dialogical structure of oral histories and the presence of different protagonists have in fact made them one of the most important references for the *GCK*. At the same time, this model, especially in the form of interviews, has been an important research tool for compiling the glossary.

Although the spoken word is but one of the sources for the *GCK*, it is a key reference point for the entire work, and this is because we always associate a voice with presence. Our glossary seeks to redefine presence as something that is in constant tension with writing. Mladen Dolar, referring to a similar kind of presence, writes in his book *A Voice and Nothing More*: "The voice seems to embody a presence, a background for differential traits, a positive basis for their inherent negativity. To be sure, its positivity is extremely elusive – just the vibrations of air that vanish as soon as they are produced."[1]

While the *GCK* goes beyond the metaphysics of presence, it also maintains its active position. In this sense, the *GCK* is a collection, not of authentic definitions, but authentic gestures – subjective positions within a world of international languages.

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1 Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006), 36.

The point is not that we believe in the factual truth of oral histories, but rather that, with the help of such narratives, we try to change the existing order of things. Here oral histories interest us not primarily as alternative forms of historicising that are privileged over writing, but as a way to introduce multiple histories and truths, including the kind of psychological truths expressed in the imagination, symbols, and desire. Alessandro Portelli discusses all these things in his essay "What Makes Oral History Different". Oral histories are fragmented and tied to the memory and the subjective perspective of the individual, the group, or the class. For Portelli, while orality is "saturated with writing", the memory behind it "is not a passive depository of facts, but an active process of creation of meanings."[2] Not unlike oral history, our glossary relies on the differential credibility of memory, and shows more transparently the relationship between histories and their protagonists.

The *GCK* acknowledges the tensions between the oral and the written, between the norm and deviations from the norm. In a very similar way, Giorgio Agamben describes the relationship between the rule and life: "Neither written word nor living voice, the rule constantly moves between these polarities, in search of an ideal of the perfect common life that [it] is precisely meant to define."[3]

Through its reference to oral histories, our glossary stands in opposition to the institutions, classes, and elite practices that have dominated writing. Or, to put it better, it tries to create a model that offers greater possibilities for dialogue with those whose collective memories are yet to be written. History as a glossary of common knowledge is a history, not of the winners, but of diverse groups and individuals in various horizontal networks. In this way it becomes one of the most important tools in a new institutionality.

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2   Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different", in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, 2nd ed. (Oxon, UK, and New York: Routledge, 2006), 37. Originally published in 1979 in Italian, Portelli's essay first appeared in English as "The Peculiarities of Oral History", *History Workshop Journal*, no. 12 (Autumn 1981), 96–107.
3   Giorgio Agamben, *The Highest Poverty: Monastic Rules and Form-of-Life* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2013), 75.

Referential Fields

The referential fields (Historicisation, Subjectivisation, Geopolitics, Constituencies, Commons, and Other Institutionality) met the need for discussions that addressed various localities and temporalities. Contemporary art contains a variety of social, historical, cultural and political references that exist as referential fields outside the focal ideas, concepts, and artworks themselves. These references also condition the form and practice of artistic production. Since each narrator spoke from a particular point of view connected to their local historical and cultural conditions, choosing the ways in which they direct themselves to the world, thus each term contains extratextual fields of reference, which are made visible in order to disrupt the existing dominant discourse in contemporary art. As a consequence, both the structures and semantics of these fields are subject to certain deformations. Each term may be connected to any other in an unpredicted manner, often surpassing cultural and geopolitical borders in order to form new contexts, which nevertheless include, and depend on, the very function these fields have within the structure of the dominant art world. This function provides the background against which the restructuring may take place.

One of the most significant processes undertaken by the method proposed by the *Glossary of Common Knowledge* is a shift from the act of selection to the act of combination, resulting in an intratextual crossing of cultural boundaries. This may be especially visible in a proposition of artistic neologisms (*creleasure*), neologisms from critical theory (*heterochronia*), culture-specific terms (*kapwa, ñande/ore*, *travesti*). Throughout this process, the lexical meaning of a particular existing word also fades out and a new meaning fades in, although without the loss of the original meaning. Another level of relationships is to be seen in the organisation of specific semantic demarcations within the text, which give rise to intratextual fields of reference.

The various clusters of words that are interconnected, whether they are words with surpassed meanings or semantic demarcations transgressed by the narrative, are inseparably linked. They inscribe themselves into one another, every word becomes dialogic, and every intratextual semantic field is doubled by another. Through this multi-voiced discourse, every utterance carries something else in its wake, and thus the acts of combination unfold a space between them. What is said ceases to mean itself, so that what is not said can thus gain presence. The multiple meanings of words that depend on the cultural, social and temporal environments they emerge from and are used within are thus joined together in an unfamiliar way, and related through the different influences they have upon one another.

Note: The compilation of the terms in this book resulted from discussions in five seminars at the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, +MSUM in Ljubljana and one seminar at the Liverpool John Moores University. Each seminar was dedicated to a different referential field.

Historicisation

The topic of the first seminar of the *Glossary of Common Knowledge* was historicisation. The seminar was based on the idea of the informal systems of historicisation that are practiced by artists who have had to search for their own historical or interpretive context, because of the lack of a suitable collective history. In many parts of the world, the local institutions that should have systematised the neo-avant-garde art either did not exist or took a dismissive attitude towards such art. Consequently, the artists themselves were often forced to archive documents relating to their own art, the art of others, or broader art movements, as well as the conditions of production.

The seminar took place at the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, +MSUM, Ljubljana, Slovenia from 8 to 9 May 2014.

Introduction

Terms

Interrupted Histories – Ten Years Later

Zdenka Badovinac

Over ten years ago I curated an exhibition entitled *Interrupted Histories*. It stemmed from a then topical need to rethink the subject of historicising, which could also be called the narrator of historicising, since it is a particular voice – the teller of the story that remains present in it. Who is speaking and from where is crucial for our understanding of historicising.

I would like to explain at the outset what historicising means to me. It is no mere "making of history" with the idea of an end product in mind that is then upgraded as new discoveries are made. The emphasis is rather on discontinuities, on incessant interruptions, and on questioning the achieved results. Historicising is a history-in-becoming, something quite different from, and indeed, almost critical of, the process of merely including what is new into the existing system; it is based on a heterogeneity of approaches to and ways of dealing with history.

Figure 1: "Partisan Resistance Movement" in *20th Century. Continuities and Ruptures: A selection of works from the national collection of Moderna galerija*, exhibition view, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, 2011—. Photo courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

History has always been an instrument of the powers that be. After the fall of socialism, and with it the one-party systems in Eastern Europe, the groups trying to appropriate history grew in number. As alternative histories began to emerge, we witnessed almost equally intense attempts to erase the past, or rather, those parts of it that did not fit in with the dominant narratives of the various political groups. I would like to briefly describe how the Moderna galerija reacted to the danger of important → emancipatory traditions disappearing from our space. A few years after the *Interrupted Histories* exhibition, in 2011, we included a presentation of the art of the Partisan resistance in our permanent exhibition of the national collection of 20th century art, thus interrupting the national canon of modern art based on its linear development. Partisan art had nothing to do with the progression of modernist styles, evolving as it did within the frame of the Partisan resistance movement against the occupying forces in the Second World War, which encouraged the creativity of the masses. (Figure 1) Our next presentation of emancipatory traditions, which are currently equated with totalitarianism by right-wing politics, and as such relegated to useless historical relics, came in 2017: a documentary show about the monuments to the National Liberation Struggle erected in the time of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. Entitled *The Lives of Monuments*, the exhibition was staged on the initiative of and in collaboration with the students of the Department of Art History of the University of Ljubljana. (Figure 2) This → collaboration is an example of an alternative approach to historicising, since it arose out of an urgent need of the interested public – in our case, the need of the generation born at the time of the breakup of Yugoslavia – to understand the socio-political and cultural context of the monuments as well as the current antagonisms concerning their treatment and reception.

We can find a similar need expressed already in the *Interrupted Histories* exhibition, a need that essentially determines the subject of historicising: the need of the artists to better understand their work through their own local traditions.

Soon after the fall of socialism, the approaches to Eastern European post-war avant-gardes got caught between disparate interests: those related to the wish to create fairer, more just histories, and those dictated by the international art system and its market. In both cases the → construction of more complex local histories is a prerequisite for any further modernisation of the local art systems, which

Figure 2: *The Lives of Monuments*, exhibition view, Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana, 2017. Photo courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

includes more sovereign exchange of ideas at the international level. This does not imply merely making previously lesser-known artistic traditions more visible, but a complex treatment of the heritage of the avant-gardes, also encompassing the other models of cultural production which emerged out of said artistic practices.

The artistic models of historicising presented in the *Interrupted Histories* exhibition served as an aid in establishing dialogue with non-institutional producers of knowledge from a variety of → interest groups in the years after the show. In the confederation L'Internationale, these interest groups could be called constituents, i.e. partners with whom the → institution produces common knowledge.

Today we talk of the insufficiency or failings of expert knowledge and of the significance of bottom-up approaches and experiences. The global world seems too large to be encompassed with a single epistemological model. The increasingly intense migrations of knowledge and people are changing the Western epistemological models. The heterogeneous ways of historicising presented in the *Interrupted Histories* exhibition can be helpful today, in our time of increasingly extreme right-wing positions, xenophobia, and populism, all endorsing the → continuity of a history of a "pure" community, given once and for all. With the current arrivals of refugees from the Middle East and Africa, the structure of the population in Europe is rapidly changing. We are faced with the need for a different organisation of memory, one that would also allow a future for people who do not share our past. And once again, as often throughout history, it is artists who propose through their works ways to historicise an experience without its place in the existing histories and their methodologies.[4]

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4   Let me cite the example of a Syrian refugee documenting his own illegal journey to Europe, which was then included in an artwork, in Nika Autor's film *The Train of Shadows*, which opens with footage taken with a smartphone, a selfie of a "stowaway", a refugee hiding together with another refugee in the undercarriage of a train traveling from Belgrade to Ljubljana. (Figure 3) Arriving in Ljubljana, they met the artist Nika Autor, who was helping the refugees as an activist. The main question broached by *The Train of Shadows* is whether such footage can have its history also within the history of film. The established history of the cinema is here juxtaposed with amateur footage taken on a smartphone, which cannot and should not be pushed to the margins of history precisely because of the context in which it originated.

Figure 3: Nika Autor, *Newsreel 63 – The Train of Shadows*, 57th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, Slovenian Pavilion, 2017. Courtesy of the artist.

The *Interrupted Histories* exhibition called attention to the heritage of Eastern European avant-gardes that remains very much alive today. It is the legacy of the builders of alternative ways of cultural production, which also include various means of historicising.

Parallel histories

When we speak of the canonical history of the West, we are aware that in the Western world there has always existed, in parallel, much that has been marginalised or afterwards erased and forgotten. We are aware that today, even in the West, the number of subordinate histories is multiplying and that fewer and fewer people can identify with the unified collective narrative, which, as we increasingly discover, is linked to an imaginary community. As Homi Bhabha points out, in a period of time-space compression, hybridity replaces feelings of national and personal identity. In his view, today's archetypal figure is the → migrant who lives between different cultural spaces. Despite the elusiveness of the identity of the migrant, this nevertheless appears as a universally recognisable category.

When discussing the expression "collective identity", I said that its meaning essentially depends on the individual social and political context. I could say something similar about the term "parallel histories": it is used differently in different contexts. It varies substantially depending on which official history the little histories are parallel to. There exists, indeed, enormous differences between the dominant systems and their relations with subordinate systems. In regard to the dominant Western system of art we can say with certainty that it has always been much more flexible toward its marginal histories, which it has even been able to graft fairly quickly into the big history. The unofficial art that existed under the more rigid forms of communism, however, represents a different story; it attained legitimacy, for the most part, only after the collapse of the regimes. One of the essential features of art in spaces dominated by ideological art was its inherent parallelism. If, then, we today wish to develop in these spaces an art history that would be at all relevant, we must take into consideration the fact that there were always two entirely separate parallel currents – official and unofficial. Unofficial art was the only truly parallel art, since it never overlapped with official art. If we consider the full meaning of the word "parallel" then we must distinguish between parallel histories and subordinate histories. Of the latter we can say that they are historical lines that synchronously form the → networks of a system in which they continuously appear and disappear, interrupting and transforming each other. Subordinate histories are characteristic of all spaces and – at least in the spaces presented at out our exhibition – also imply an art that is subordinate to the art of the dominant political, ethnic, or religious communities and, in some places, subordinate also to the art of a diaspora or the art of the West. In short, we can speak of a system of interrupted histories, which would seem to be, for now, something negative that should be brought to an end. But despite such desires, interruption is in fact the only constant we can find in various times and places.

It would be a mistake to think that, with the collapse of the political regimes and the rapid acceleration of the processes of global integration, things would somehow automatically normalise, that interrupted histories would be done away with and art would organise itself as part of a system of continuities. On the contrary, after the fall of the communist regimes, just when we expected a great wave of normalisation, new interruptions appeared. Today we are witnessing, for example, amnesia about the communist past – but this is not amnesia about the degeneration of communism, but rather about the progressive humanist idea, which suddenly found itself erased from the public space. This contemporary interruption was possible, among other reasons, because of the existing tradition of the truly radical interruptions that had resulted also in the creation of parallel systems.

Mapping interrupted histories

We have stated that art history, in the sense of a unified collective narrative, exists only in the West and that other spaces are, by and large, spaces of interrupted histories. In this regard, interrupted histories are in fact individual stories that live separate lives from one another and that cannot be joined together, on the basis of unified standards, into a larger meaningful whole. These are smaller, fragmented systems that map the national histories outside of any broader international connections – or they map the little histories of individuals and groups that shape the unofficial mythologies of the given spaces.

One such system is the → self-historicising of artists who, lacking a suitable collective history, were themselves forced to search for their own historical and interpretive contexts. Because the local institutions that should have been systematising neo-avant-garde art and its tradition either did not exist or were disdainful of such art, the artists themselves were forced to be their own art historians and archivists, a situation that still exists in some places today. Such self-historicisation includes the collecting and archiving of documents, whether of one's own art actions or, in certain spaces, of broader movements, ones that were usually marginalised by local politics and invisible in the international art context.

Self-historicisation was only one of the systems that existed alongside the activities of institutions, which themselves have always been extremely diverse in the spaces of Eastern Europe and the Middle East. They range from thoroughly provincial museums to museums with enviable collections in Russia, the former Yugoslavia, Israel, and Iran. In some places – Palestine and Lebanon, for instance – they did not exist at all; only recently have smaller non-profit art organisations begun to compensate for this absence. Nevertheless, despite all these differences in institutions, we can say that they were what, for the most part, provided local artists with a national or ideological frame, even if had no informed relationship with either the narrower local art scene or the broader international context.

Artists today find themselves in a situation where, on the one hand, they are still to a large degree left to do their own historicising while, on the other, the newly interested West has already started to include them in its museum collections – where they find themselves → estranged from their own original context. Thus begins the musealisa-

tion of the East, a process that Boris Groys, when speaking of the art of communism, describes as "a consequence of the West's victory in the Cold War: we know from history that the victors always, in one way or another, appropriate the art of the vanquished". We have already stated that the musealisation of the non-Western world essentially means classifying it and making it more manageable. The greater visibility of the Other, then, does not automatically imply greater power. Why, therefore, should we be at all interested in modernising our art and its system of operations if it is clear that this does not enhance our sovereignty but instead takes it away?

In modernisation we see a double process. It is, simultaneously, both a possible means of achieving independence and a key method for new forms of colonialism. It is, indeed, a stimulant that, on the one hand, strengthens and, on the other, destroys. And as with any medicine, in these processes, too, dosage and combination with anything of a different "chemical makeup" are essential issues.

Today's split between tradition and modernity, which, especially in the non-Western world, is becoming ever more acute, is based precisely on the understanding that these two entities are fundamentally incompatible. We have already found that today traditional identity essentially implies a reiteration of something that supposedly cannot change over time. If we want today to historicise a certain artistic space – without abandoning it to the jaws of such dichotomies – our only recourse is to recognise both → the contemporary plurality of identities and the social, political, and historical specificities of individual localities. Only by taking account of both these things can we avoid both the traditional and modern reproductions of identity that are stimulated by the contemporary world of the media. We are speaking, then, of new possibilities that reside in a historicising that no longer views identities as finalised facts, but instead always allows for the discovery of yet-unlabelled subjectivities. If we want to talk about any sort of power that peripheral spaces might have for transforming the existing state of affairs, then we must look for it in this quality of being actively unlabelled.

We spoke earlier of parallel and subordinate histories – in other words, the informal histories that continue to be an especially characteristic feature of the non-Western world. In these environments, we could, indeed, speak of a whole range of informal systems, which people were compelled to develop alongside official political and military dictatorships so as to survive more easily. From the perspective of the modern world, these informal systems look like huge obstacles on the road to economic progress and the development of a mature political democracy. For this reason they are usually presented as features of the Other that need to be dispensed with as soon as possible for the good of modernisation. In its critical stance toward the world of modernity, art today often turns to what are essentially premodern systems in which it sees a certain subjective creativity that has almost disappeared from the standardised capitalist world. In this way it views informal systems as a positive; the Other is no longer merely the object of modernisation but has become an active Other. Here we are dealing not with any romantic nostalgia, but rather with a recognition of the modes of operation that, together with artefacts, compose the history of the Other.

The archive has perhaps become an overstressed concept in the last few decades of art criticism. Nevertheless, within specific institutional or artistic practices, archives do embody particular meanings. Michel Foucault, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), considers archives as:

> *systems of statements (whether → events or things) [...] one should seek the immediate reason for them in the things that were said not in them, nor in the men that said them, but in the system of discursivity, in the enunciative possibilities and impossibilities that it lays down. The archive is first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events. But the archive is also that which determines that all these things said do not accumulate endlessly in an amorphous mass, nor are they inscribed in an unbroken linearity, nor do they disappear at the mercy of chance external accidents; but they are grouped together in distinct figures, composed together in accordance with multiple relations, maintained or blurred in accordance with specific regularities [...]*[5]

Archives as tools for historicisation also raise the question of the canon, in other words, of "what can be said". Western art history functions in this sense, as a by-product of a sort of hegemonic archive that is constantly being reproduced through the educational system, and its permanence is thus guaranteed in the global media network.

Against this background, some questions could be posed concerning specific archives: where are they, under which circumstances have they been created, following which purposes and uses, and, finally, what are the instruments for the "frontier thinking" they are able (or not) to activate? In this framework, the relationship between modern/colonial comprises two sides of the same dynamics. As far as archives in Latin America are concerned, coloniality stands for the hidden face of modernity and its very condition of possibility. Censorship is also connected to closed archives, which are linked to dictatorial political regimes. They always hold the potential for promoting a rewriting of history.

Archives are also connected to the → geopolitics of knowledge, and can often be related to disputes concerning antagonistic definitions of artwork. They embrace some contradictions, such as the plea for memory in tension with the hegemony of the present, and the eagerness for visibility within the global media market that shapes present "reality" on the Internet. Within artists' archives, where an important part of artistic contemporary memory is kept, such conflicts most frequently arise as a result of the pressures imposed by the global market.

Archives are also tools to reflect upon contemporary art and institutional practices, as they can embody the crossroads posed by the work of art and documentation. In art museums, archives can be disruptive, as they present discrepant conceptions of artworks and alternative versions of institutional history.

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5   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 129.

Figure 4: Isidoro Valcárcel Medina, *Hombres Anuncio (Advertising Men)*, 1976. Photo courtesy of MAC USP Cidade Universitária.

Archive in the frontier: A short story

The Spanish conceptual artist Isidoro Valcárcel Medina (born 1937) travelled to South America in the years 1975/76. The map he sketched of this trip includes Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. He moved around with light luggage, willing to learn about the different places he happened to visit through the artistic projects he proposed *in situ*. In Brazil, he performed *The City and the Foreigner: Three exercises of approximation* (Figure 4), a series of actions he carried out in the city of São Paulo in the winter of 1976. In these Medina investigated the limits of communication by exercising a certain epistemology of the frontier. As a foreigner, he chose to explore the similarities between the Portuguese and Spanish languages, recording the hilarious conversations he engaged in by speaking Spanish with anonymous passers-by, all Portuguese speakers, in the streets of São Paulo.

The Dictionary of the Peoples was the second exercise of approximation that was part of the Brazilian actions. In this, Medina offered visitors to the Museum of Contemporary Art, University of São Paulo (MAC USP) a piece of paper on which was written: "I am a foreign artist visiting Brazil. I do not speak Portuguese, please, write here any word of your language". As a result, a list of words emerged with Portuguese in one column and Spanish in the other, the whole thing unedited. There is no logical order to the list – some words are repeated, others misspelt, some people included drawings and the sequence in which the words appear does not allow any logical organisation as a proper lexicon. The word "love", for instance, features six times, and "freedom" twice, in the resulting dictionary.

The third exercise of approximation in the São Paulo project was the *Touristic Visit*. The record of this last exercise has been kept in the Museum's archives in the format of a short note published in a local newspaper, inviting people to accompany the artist on a tourist visit to the city. Nobody showed up, recalled the artist in a recent interview. The records of this project, that is to say, the tapes on which Medina recorded the interview, the newspaper notes on the touristic visit, and the dictionary's loose sheets of paper, did not find their correct home for many years within the MAC USP's collection. Instead they drifted around, between the library and archives, not recognised properly as artworks. It has thus only been possible to show them very recently in an exhibition (2012)[6] of the artist's work in the same museum where he carried out the action forty years before. Here it should be noted that, as Boris Groys[7] warns, "the unexhibited artwork has ceased to be an artwork; instead, it has become art documentation. Artworks are manifested only in the exhibition". That is the performativity of the archive. In this sense archives are dialectical images, as they are able to connect the past with the present, and thus open up other possible futures.

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6 Exhibition *Não faço filosofia, senão vida: Isidoro Valcárcel Medina no MAC USP [I do not do Philosophy, but Life: Isidoro Valcárcel Medina in MAC USP]*. Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo, 29 November 2012 – 28 July 2013.

7 Boris Groys, *Art Power* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2008), 97.

Various practices of archiving, as well as the overall significance of the notion of an archive itself, largely depend on the historical → constellation of social forces. → The contemporary neoliberal arrangement turns archives and archiving into a very different game to the one that was unfolding during the second half of the last century. Following Foucault's analyses of governmentality, it could be said that during early modernity *raison d'etat* was the governing principle of a disciplinary power. Archives and archiving thus represented a vital part of the state statistics that helped the authorities to police and surveil the population. They provided information on each and every citizen, thereby making management and governance of the people more exact and efficient. In contrast, the liberal idea of governance was to make it not as extensive and as detailed as possible, but instead to economise with regard to the tools of government, i.e., to do away with what was seen as sluggish and overgrown state administration (as well as with the social services that they provided). This does not mean that archives have completely disappeared or become useless. On the contrary, new technologies really do enable a more invasive surveillance, both in scope and speed, and easy access to huge → data pools that facilitate, in a number of respects, the control of an individual's preferences, patterns of behaviour and daily routines. Nevertheless, the new digital technology that allows mass storage of data and the development of the World Wide Web that enables instant access to them are creating some other possibilities of using archives for different purposes. The issues surrounding archives are thus closely related to the rules regulating the access to and treatment of them, since it is the mode of usage that gives sense to any archival project.

Constellation Thomas Lange   Hildesheim, Germany, August 2014

Within the political-sociological-economic-historical field of ongoing modernity (roughly 1800 to the present day), capitalism reveals itself as a timeless, living and constantly changing and adapting, assimilating organism, that is in itself a key to the notion of the connection (not separation) of past and present. To make this visible with and within art a concept of critical analysis, of presentation, of exhibiting with and within constellations emerged at the transition from the 19th to the 20th centuries as an appropriate tool to reflect, comprehend and work with a notion of "history" which is – as Walter Benjamin put it in his text entitled *On the Concept of History*[8] – a present which is aware of the fact that it is addressed by the past, which the respective present remembers in a brief moment, a flash of acute danger. This was put in strong contrast to the always ready, accurate "truth" of history that historicism claimed to achieve. Moreover, the concept of "constellation" was put forward by Benjamin as a strong counterpart and only logical alternative to the narration of history as a form of linear progress.

Thinking and working with constellations is the key to Jacob Burckhardt's notion of history. He rejected in the mid-19th century the historical timeline of development, as well as the separation of historically relevant "fields" (the field of politics, the field of art, and so on) as an insufficient → construction. Instead, he saw the artistic wealth of innovations in the Renaissance, and its development of the ideas known as → humanism, existing at the same time as the political practices and barbaric

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8   Editors' note: Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume* 4*, 1938–1940* (Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 389–411.

deeds of criminal warlords (e.g., the Medici and many other families), who (besides financing art and scholars) obtained political and economic power through violence and force. From here on, thinking in constellations is inherent in the work of Friedrich Nietzsche, Aby Warburg, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, and Georges Didi-Huberman. Thinking of history in constellations is a much more plastic, fluent and dynamic notion, that takes into account what the idea of progression within a timeline of singular events neglects: the simultaneity of that which does not belong to the same time period, the anachronism and → heterochronism, the layers of different "historic" constellations (conventionally understood as periods of time: barbaric, ancient world, pre-modern, modern, postmodern or Pagan, Christian, and so forth) that are still present in every present.

In the light of the notion that history is a constantly changing creation of the present, those periods also appear not to be fixed but instead reveal the fluid and formable qualities of the past that feedback into the notion of the present. Understanding a moment in history in its constellation is understanding the process which is stored in it.

The insights into such created and formed images of the past shift and change permanently as part of a continually unfinished process. Thinking in and within constellations is the key to this shift in understanding history as an ongoing process, with no determined direction or aim. Constellations enable the understanding of the expanded and interwoven matrix of layers of time, revealing multiple connections to previous, present and future times. Constellations are configurations, montages, and interferences that enable us to better look at a specific historic place or moment in history.

Benjamin pointed out that ideas relate to things like star constellations to planets. They are neither terms nor laws, but instead make sense only because of their relative position. They thus exist only in the very place that emerges from a given montage. Thinking in constellations works on the ability to understand the "layers of time" while breaking the one-dimensional idea of timelines (of linearity), as well as the notion of strongly related cause and effect, or cause and consequence relations. (Burckhardt would not have suggested that the barbaric deeds and humanist ideas of the Renaissance are somewhat related through cause and effect, but instead have proposed something much more → baffling: they are related as two obviously and extremely contradictory and seemingly mutually exclusive realities that in fact go together very well, that reveal something together that is more than the two could reveal on their own.)

Moreover, constellations overcome ideas that are based on merely physical assumptions that one thing stands next to another rather than being overlaid, influenced and changed by multiple others. Constellations enable connections between things and incidents of very different origin; constellations even offer the chance to overcome the boundaries that separate the realm of thought from the realm of doing, the realms of "mind" and "body", and thus enable understanding of "thinking" (and producing of reality) through the "hand", through bodily actions and experiences, through the forming and arranging of materials, images, movements, bodies, and so forth; forming and creating interactivities that can also best be described as constellations. For Benjamin the image of the constellation as well as thinking in and with constellations enables a critical practice that the image of a progressing sequence does not allow: it opens the eyes and minds of historians and artists to the interrelations among past and present → events, so that they can

better understand that history is a time that is filled in the presence of a "now", as an interrelation in being (rather than "has been"). In *On the Concept of History* Benjamin points out that what "has been" is coming together in a flash with the now to form a new constellation.

The Contemporary Beatriz Herráez, Jesús Carrillo, Francisco Godoy Vega

Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain, July 2014

The term "contemporary" seems to go against the nature of a glossary, at least as the latter is defined in the standard Spanish dictionary: "a catalogue of obscure or unused words". By definition, the "contemporary" is the opposite of the "obsolete", and it is conspicuously used all around our "contemporary" culture as a synonym of brand new. Contemporary has become a "soft" signifier, incessantly claimed in the most diverse fields – from architecture to design, and from fashion to art – one which adheres to an uncritical experience of time. Departing from this approach, here we claim the disruptive potential of the term: anachronism or antagonism versus "the ecstasy of the present". The contemporary is thus what refuses to relate to its own time, in terms of adjustment or belonging. As such it was described by Agamben, as well as by Mallarmé, for whom there is "a present moment which does not exist". To feel this → discontinuity of time implies a further → estrangement that allows us to actually keep our situated and contingent positions.

I. The historical contemporary

"Contemporary" is not just contemporary. The term can be traced back at least to the 17th century, referring to what Rancière would call a new division of the sensible. This shift resulted from the explosion of the focal perspectivism of the Renaissance, due to the need to visually embrace the "expanding" world. New maps and taxonomies to control multiple coexistent "contemporary" differences were created. The rise of scientific positivism and biological racism, both operating within the "new imperialism", meant the climax of this system in the second half the 19th century. Another crucial "contemporary" turn in the world order came about around the 1930s and the Second World War. The new hegemony of the US devised a more harmonic way to deal with the others, favouring "good neighbourhood policies". Good examples of this were the exhibitions designed by Edward Steichen for MoMA: *The Road to Victory* and *The → Family of Man*, while the Institute of Modern Art of Boston was renamed The Institute of Contemporary Art in 1948.

In the 1980s, the so-called "end of history" came together with the dominant paradigm of multiculturalism. Yet this "contemporary" did not last very long, as it was replaced by a new, violent, and polarised backlash, one marked by war, global terrorism, and financial speculation – superseded by its own crisis. Altermundism and new political movements arose to confront this backlash, in what it was conceived of as a life-and-death struggle.

II. The contemporary as an artistic and curatorial methodology

At this moment, we perceive an urgent need to face the present by redefining the contemporary. We believe that our → temporality resists being named in affirmative and evolutionary ways. Narratives and poetics that display the disruptive potential of the experience of time are thus required.
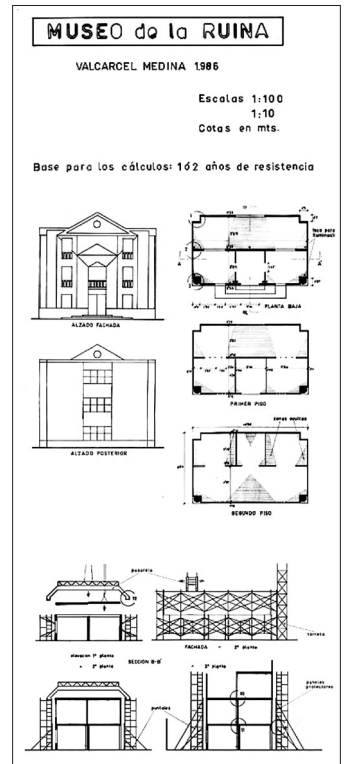

Figure 5: Isidoro Valcárcel Medina, "Museu de la ruïna (The Museum of the Ruin)", *Quaderns d'arquitectura i urbanisme*, no. 263 (Barcelona: Col·legi d'Arquitectes de Catalunya, 2011): 81–83.

Figure 6: *Minimal Resistance. Between late modernism and globalisation: artistic practices during the 80s and 90s*, exhibition view. Curated by Manuel Borja-Villel, Rosario Peiró, Beatriz Herráez, exhibition view, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain, 2013–2014. Photo: Joaquín Cortés / Román Lores. Courtesy of Museo Reina Sofía.

Figure 7: *Losing the Human Form. A Seismic Image of the 1980s in Latin America*, exhibition view. Curated by Red Conceptualismos del Sur. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2012–2013. Photo: Joaquín Cortés / Román Lores. Courtesy of Museo Reina Sofía.

Figure 8: *Affinities and contagion. A possible glossary of the poetic-political practices of the 1980s in Latin America*, seminar organised by Red Conceptualismos del Sur and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain, 2014. Photo: Joaquín Cortés / Román Lores. Courtesy of Museo Reina Sofía.

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Time Bomb (1990) by Pedro G. Romero (Seville, 1964), a "symphonic poem" that traverses Spanish history, works within this logic. This sound piece is an iconoclastic score of events spanning from 1966 to 1990: the terrorist attack on Franco's successor, or the noisy fireworks during popular celebrations in Valencia. To stop time, kill it, freeze it, hold it back, explode it. This is an archaeological method of inquiring history and confronting tradition. It is a *modus operandi* that stresses history and rebinds different strata of time, in order to imagine new narratives and meanings.

Museo de la ruina (1986), a work by Isidoro Valcárcel Medina (Murcia, 1937), presents an architectural project for a museum that could collapse at any time, given the weakness of its structure. (Figure 5) The → institution is unable to bear either its own weight or its contents: collections, staff, → temporality and so on. *Museo de la ruina* refers to the impossibility of articulating a master narrative, as well as to the entropy inherent to modern projects. These works were presented as part of *Minimal Resistance* (2013–2014), an exhibition of items from Reina Sofía's collection. (Figure 6) By recovering a number of artistic practices from the 1980s and 1990s that shaped inter-related narratives of resistance, the project questioned the conventional postmodern reading of "the end of history".

Valcárcel's proposal of inverting the museum's dynamics echoes the historical attitude of 19th century artist Melchor María Mercado (Sucre, 1819–1871). Through his album of carnivalesque images of the world "upside-down", Mercado denounced both the status quo of his own time and the persistence of colonial exploitation, even after Bolivia's independence. Mercado's work was shown in *The Potosí Principle* (2010), as part of a broader "upside-down" curatorial display working to undermine the colonial nature of Western history. This project introduced the idea of an "inverted modernity", which we could now describe as contemporary.

As a further development of *The Potosí Principle*'s radical reading of modernity, the project "Losing the Human Form" (2012–2014) stems from the collaboration between Reina Sofía Museum and La Red Conceptualismos del Sur. (Figure 7) La Red embodies a new kind of subjectivity, resisting the hegemonic paradigm of the art system both by working collectively and by endorsing alternative ways to relate the past and the present; an attitude that we may also designate as contemporary. For example, instead of a conventional exhibition catalogue, La Red released a glossary of entries, which were intended to work through affinities and contagion. (Figure 8) The glossary eventually delineates a fragmentary and committed narrative, in order to ultimately activate and destabilise "the contemporary".

The urgency to speak from the present leads to a constant negotiation with different and contradictory times. Such a negotiation is necessary to resist the ideological colonisation of the experience of time by the hegemonic "ecstasy of the present". The open question then is whether, and how, the museum could cope with this intense and shapeless contemporaneity. In other words, how to activate Valcárcel's poetical proposal from within the museum.

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Other analyses of the term can be found, for instance, in publications such as:
Bishop, Claire. *Radical Museology, or, What's "Contemporary" in Museums of Contemporary Art?* London: Koenig Books, 2014.
Meyer, Richard. *What Was Contemporary Art?* Cambridge (Mass.), London: The MIT Press, cop. 2013.

Smith, Terry, Okwui Enwezor, and Nancy Condee, eds. *Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity.* Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2008.
"What Is Contemporary Art?", *October* (2009).

Emancipation Bojana Piškur

What we mean when we say "left" and Yugoslavia are actually the three historical sequences which some political philosophers address as the "politics of rupture"; something that was completely different from the established state politics in Yugoslavia of that time. Those three sequences were the Partisan liberation struggle, the → self-management, and the non-aligned movement. But when we discuss the emancipatory potential of these historical sequences, we also bear in mind the specific cultural production of that era, which was inevitably linked to the social revolution and which had a deep impact on the cultural politics in Yugoslavia after the Second World War, especially after Yugoslavia's break with the Soviet Union in 1948. The question is: why were these "cultural revolutions" so significant?

Here we have in mind, for example, the art of the Partisan resistance during the Second World War. This cultural revolution did not only transform the inner order of culture or the position of the cultural sphere in the social structure, but, as Slovene sociologist, Rastko Močnik suggests, it eliminated the cultural sphere, which by its own existence embodies the "barbarity of classes", and re-established culture in the sphere of emancipation. In Slovenia the case was special, because the liberation movement was not directed by the Communist Party but by the Liberation Front which was an organisation that united a variety of antifascist groups, including cultural workers. Miklavž Komelj[9] noted that Partisan art of the Second World War was inherently political due to the circumstances of its origin. In this context poetry equalled combat, or to put it differently: words became weapons. (Figure 9) This is a really important point for today's debates about culture as a → common resource, about the democratisation of culture, access to culture, transversality and so on.

The second rupture is the historical sequence of "self-management" which had a profound influence in the sphere of culture as well. We are of course not saying that this model, which was imposed by the State, and by the Communist Party in particular, is something that can be taken for granted, because in the end it failed to be part of the actual struggle and became rather just a formal stance used by the ruling elite, very often highly → bureaucratised and a kind of farce. But in another way the 1950s was also a period of cultural blossoming in the former Yugoslavia. For example, the formal status of a freelance cultural worker was introduced, part of the national budget went towards numerous cultural activities, and modernism was introduced as the favoured style. Some of the main concerns of Yugoslav cultural policy at that time were including culture in the entire socio-economic context, and transforming citizens from passive users into active co-creators of culture; which is definitely something that could also be observed today in the context of the "commons". The emphasis was thus placed on the educative function of culture rather than on the artistic one, and museums were encouraged to address the entire working population. This was what the idea of self-management was about

Figure 9: Nikolaj Pirnat, *The Devil Stabbing a German (caricature)*, two-colour linocut, NN. Courtesy of the National Museum of Contemporary History, Ljubljana.

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9   The exhibition *How to Think Partisan Art?* conceived by Jože Barši, Miklavž Komelj, Lidija Radojević, and Tanja Velagić at Moderna galerija Ljubljana, Mala galerija, 22 December 2009 – 17 January 2010.
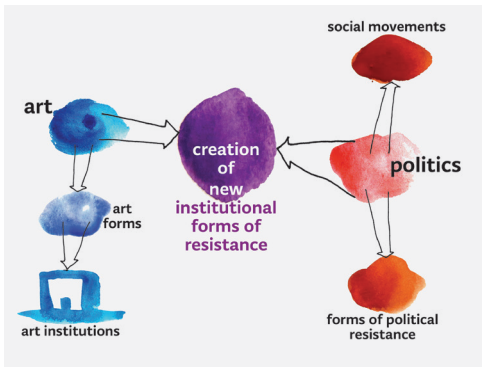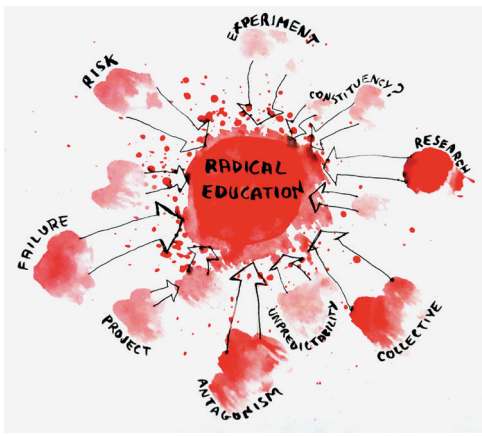
Figure 10: Đorđe Balmazović, *Radical Education*, watercolour on paper, 2014. Courtesy of the artist.

Figure 11: Đorđe Balmazović, *Radical Education*, watercolour on paper, 2014. Courtesy of the artist.

Figure 12: Exterior installation, 4th International Exhibition of Graphic Arts, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, 1961. Photo courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

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– every worker was brought into the decision-making process, including in culture, where the workers were called "cultural workers".

These ideas interested us very much, because we could compare some of the today's ideas about the new types of art → institutions and institutional experiments with those socialist cultural policies, museum models and emancipatory utopias. There are also some resonances with many current pedagogical/artistic/political issues around the educational turn. We thus worked in this direction with Radical Education (Figures 10, 11), a collective that was actively engaged in Moderna galerija's educational programs, linking institutions with social movements and so on.

Let us now go back to self-management. These emancipatory cultural practices took many different forms, including, for example amateur cinema and photo clubs, which were established in factories and other workers' organisations. They provided opportunities for avant-garde experimentation in the spirit of socialist self-management. This was really a special case, because in this way certain links were maintained between the so-called high culture and workers. There were also what was termed "didactic exhibitions on abstract art", whose aim was to insert the idea of radical abstraction into mainstream art. Moreover, in the museums of modern and contemporary art in Yugoslavia in the 1970s, art was brought out from such institutions and taken to factories, workers' associations and so on, where special seminars on modern art were conducted.

On the other hand, however, any opposition, even in the form of irony, was forbidden, because socialist art museums were ideologically linked to the officially promoted art, i.e. "socialist modernism" (for example, many Black Wave films were banned, film directors sent to prisons or not allowed to film anymore, and so on).

The third rupture that we mentioned was the non-aligned movement, and Yugoslavia fit well into the related discourse. Socialist revolutions had a lot in common with anti-colonial and anti-imperialist revolutions, which made the Yugoslav case of emancipation in the context of socialism particularly significant in this context. The non-aligned movement provided an opportunity for positioning Yugoslav ideology and culture globally on the basis of the formula: modernism + socialism = emancipatory politics. It was Tito who had revealed to the Afro-Asian world the existence of a non-colonial Europe which would be sympathetic to their aspirations. By bringing Europe into the grouping, Yugoslavia helped to create an international movement.

Here we would only mention one very unique case of the Ljubljana (International) Biennial of Graphic Arts, which started in 1955 in the Moderna galerija (in the same year as Documenta in Kassel). Its founder was Zoran Kržišnik, a long-time director of this institution, who saw the biennial as a possibility "for a projection of values such as the presence of freedom, modernity, democracy, openness and so on in society".[10] The biennial was set up to pave a way into the world, to introduce abstraction to the art world in Yugoslavia (following the period of socialist realism), and to prove that even "fine art can be an instrument of a slight liberal opening".[11]

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10 Beti Žerovc, *Kurator in sodobna umetnost, pogovori* (Ljubljana: Maska, 2008), 36–48.
11 Ibid.

(Figures 12, 13) It combined "a modernist concept permeated by a humanistic desire supported by political aspirations".[12] Kržišnik stated in one of his interviews that he showed President Tito that the biennial of graphic arts was actually a materialisation of what was being referred to as openness, which was then seen as → non-alignment.

Instead of being overly nostalgic or uncritical in accepting the ideas from the past, what we are interested in here are the elements, traditions, and references in those "revolutionary" experiences from the times of socialist Yugoslavia that can be extracted or recuperated to our own times of neoliberal capitalism. How applicable are these ideas for the development of international → solidarity. in the sphere of culture today, as well as new models of cultural and knowledge production? What are its emancipatory potentials? And, most importantly: How can we recover the lost and forgotten ideals of the three historical sequences mentioned at the beginning of this text, and how to → translate them into praxis?

Figure 13: Installation view with the international jury, 5th International Exhibition of Graphic Arts, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, 1965. Photo courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

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Žerovc, Beti. "Kurator in sodobna umetnost, pogovori". *Maska* (2008): 36–48.

Emancipation Dušan Grlja

Belgrade, Serbia, February 2015

Even though dictionaries show no major semantic differences between the two words, the meaning of the term "emancipation" can be differentiated from that conveyed by "liberation". This is possible since the meaning of a word is not given by a purely linguistic analysis of its semantics, but it is re-created in various social situations. The difference in meanings may thus depend on one's social position, political stand or passionate feelings. One really has to be passionately and vitally concerned in order to single out a word, and to counterpose it, to confront it and, even, antagonise it with another one. Speaking in terms of politics, these two words could be attached to the two progressive and mutually opposing worldviews of modernity – liberalism and Marxism. Accordingly, liberation would entail only the activity of removing certain restraints, of setting free from some kind of confinement, of letting something go. It is a sort of a unilateral act requiring a clear division between the → agency that liberates and the passive element that gets liberated. The term emancipation also entails the act of liberation, but, in this case, the → emancipated subject mostly carries out the activity, while the importance of liberating agency diminishes almost entirely. Therefore, emancipation is not only a temporal act, an → event, but also an activity, a continual and assertive action. It is a productive process of constructing a new subjectivity, one that is not only made free of existing constraints but also free to develop its multiple – individual as well as social – potentialities. Nevertheless, there is certain dialectic – contradiction and sublation – involved in opposing emancipation to liberation. Moreover, the two terms can be taken as different aspects or developmental strains of the same → universal modernist project, but only to enable a clear demarcation of their respective pertinent differences. Now, in the case of socialist Yugoslavia there was certainly an intricate and constantly shifting relation between liberation and

12 Ibid.

emancipation. For instance, during the Second World War the Peoples' Liberation Struggle was based on the need for liberation from both an external and internal enemy, but, in the course of that struggle, some emancipatory potentials were actualised – primarily the emancipation from the old social relations by practicing new ones. The same goes for the era of self-management socialism, whose credo "Socialist Modernism" directly fused the post-war liberal paradigm of modernisation with socialism as a transitory stage to a fully communist society. Since the process of emancipation is an interminable task, one remains faithful to it only as much as one can distinguish at every given moment liberation from emancipation.

Temporally Embodied Sound Colin Chinnery Wuhan, PR China, July 2014

Figure 14: Peter Cusack, *Favourite Beijing Sounds*, digital album, Sub Jam, Beijing, China, 2007.

History is usually conveyed by text, physical artefacts, photographs, or films. When sound is used as a vehicle of communication it is the recorded sound of an oral tradition in which history is passed down over time through personal or communal narratives. What binds this diverse practice of historicity is that each medium is the carrier of historical information to be learned and analysed by → the subject.

Environmental sound is rarely considered as a historical medium in itself. Sounds themselves are ethereal and fleeting, they are part of the "backdrop" on which more concrete historical information seems to be superimposed, and are rarely registered as information in their own right. However, sounds and smells have a more direct relationship with our emotional centres of memory compared with sight. In everyday life, a certain smell can conjure up a whole scenario that took place years or even decades in the past, as a kind of vivid memory or even re-experience. Sounds have a similar function in people, connecting us with involuntary or emotional memories – in other words, experience.

John Cage's revolutionary work *4´ 33˝* made us aware of environmental sound as part of our embodied consciousness, and sound art has been shaping the experience of our sound environment ever since. While we understand our experience of music or art comes from a historical background of formal creation, what is our understanding of environmental sound based on? It comes from the audio backdrop of our everyday existence, an amorphous history that is hard to categorise but rich in hidden detail precisely because this sound as such is embodied: so my term is "temporally embodied sound".

Environmental sounds, both natural and manmade, change over time. What sounds are heard at any given time, in any given place, are different, forming an integral part of our experience of time and place. Environmental sounds are altered by historical contingencies, and become part of history's fabric, but are not documented by official histories. They are only carried in the embodied memories of those who heard them at the time. These memories of sounds are, in turn, very often suppressed in order to prioritise more specific information.

In a project called *Favourite Beijing Sounds*, the musician Peter Cusack asked Beijingers a very simple question, as suggested by the project's title. Many responses included sounds ubiquitous in traditional Beijing, prevalent just a few years past, but rarely heard today; and this resulted in a debate on the disappearance of certain ways of life in the city. While it is obvious to most that Beijing's traditional way of life has gone, very rarely have people understood this as a fundamental change in our experience of reality. (Figure 14) This led me to develop *The Beijing Sound*

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History Project, for which a system has been developed to → reconstruct Beijing's history from the 1930s to the present day using only sound. For this to be possible, a long-term and painstaking process is now under way to recreate an almost infinite array of sounds that have either disappeared or are in a state of constant flux. Street hawkers' chanting, whistling pigeons, evolving transport technology, changing street language, revolutionary music, mass mobilisation, bands of Red Guards, radio propaganda, pop songs, the tanks and ambulances of Tiananmen Square on 4 June 1989 – all these sounds and many more are being recreated with the guidance of historians, residents, folk artists, collectors, museums, technicians, and theatre companies. Each sound has the potential to trigger further memories that will require an approximated recreation. The resulting → archive of sounds will constitute an alternative history with unknown consequences and potential. However, for any of this to be possible requires the slow but persistent unlocking of many Beijing residents' embodied memories of sound, ultimately to explore a different route towards historicity.

Estrangement Stephen Wright

Strange how many terms spring to mind with respect to historicisation. But, then again, historicisation is a strange operation, or at least, it ought to be made strange, so that a historical process is made to appear in → reconstruction as strange, as implausible yet undeniable as it was when being lived. So I guess my keyword in this regard has to be "estrangement". Estrangement is a polysemic notion, to be sure – that's part of its inherent strangeness – but I am hearing it in this instance with Brechtian echoes – an English rendering of the German *Verfremdung*. Or better still, the verbal form, *verfremden* – to make strange, foreignise, make odd, *weirden*, sunder appearance from a soul, and basically break down the trappings of lingering or → residual self-evidence. Come to think of it, I think I prefer the verb form in English as well, to *estrange* resonates not only as an active process but also as a kind of implicit imperative – the commandment of historicisation as I see it! I feel a still greater temptation to add a thought or two regarding the ways and means of estranging. All the tried and true Brechtian techniques are fine; the Russian formalists' *ostrenanie* has a definite kinship. But I am above all thinking of another mode of estranging, which can only be expressed through another word: *decreation*. It's an unusual word, but not a neologism, having been coined and conceptualised by the French philosopher Simone Weil in the 1930s, who used it to escape the sterile opposition between creation and destruction (which seems to me to be precisely what is at issue in historicisation): "Decreation: to make something created pass into the uncreated. Destruction: to make something created pass into nothingness A blameworthy substitute for decreation."[13] It's a pithy *condensé* of her thought, but suffice it to say that if to historicise is to estrange, that may be because it is a de-creative process, as destructive of the self-evidence of the merely existent (whose only merit is to exist) as it is creative of undeployed historical potential, passing the created into the uncreated.

13   Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 32.

The term "heterochronia"[14] tries to address the question of the politics of a time (chronopolitics) by looking into the relationships between language (→ representation, narratives), power, and temporality. This is both an epistemological question and a methodology for constructing history. Michel Foucault borrowed the term "heterochronie" from biological language in the lecture "Des spaces autres" [Other Spaces] (1967), and used it to interrogate the modern Western construction of time and its relationship with hegemonic historical narratives. Heterochronia does not refer to time as an abstract dimension of physics, but rather to time as a social and political → construction. Foucault thought of → archives, libraries, and museums as "heterochronias", political *dispositifs* that "accumulate time". A museum works as a time machine that configures chronological and visual fiction (Stephen Kern). What are the times that museums are accumulating? And what other times resist conventional narratives and reject accumulation as a historical method?

Building upon a critique of naturalised time already developed by Mikhail Bakhtin and Henri Lefebvre, Foucault's notion opens up the possibility of understanding the museum as a collective abstract machine to construct "other times", not only to question the storyline of the past but also to invent "other" futures. By claiming "other times", this project focuses on those temporalities that suspend, neutralise or reverse the dominant narratives of art history: those coming from linguistic, national and political minorities, feminist and sexual "molecular" movements, as well as other modes of perception and cognition (disability movements).

Heterochronia relates to a series of concepts coming both from the art practices that arose after the 1960s, and also from political movements and critical theory: the notion of "chronopolitics" (Paul Virilio) stresses the links among capitalism, technology, and temporal production; ephemerality and performativity can be understood as "operations within time" (Judith Butler), modernity as a "time in ruins" (Marc Augé); anachrony as the "opening up of history" (Georges Didi-Huberman) and the political → intervention as the possibility to "switch → temporalities" (Jacques Rancière); → the "contemporary" as a site of experimentation with multiple times (Giorgio Agamben); and "unproductive time" as a strategy to resist "acceleration" as the dominant time of modernity (Harmut Rosa).

Heterochronic reading as a historical method is an effort to produce "situated knowledge" (Donna Haraway) to subvert history in terms of a single thread of linear time ("the time of progress and the time of the winners" – Walter Benjamin) and to critically engage into a proliferation of (vertical or fractal) layers of time that fight to produce other histories.

We are currently exploring this critical methodology at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona – MACBA with the exhibition project *Past Disquiet: Narratives and Ghosts from The International Art Exhibition for Palestine* (Figure 15) curated by Rasha Salti and Kristine Khouri. *The International Art Exhibition for Palestine* was inaugurated in Beirut (Lebanon), in March 1978, and was intended as the seed collection for a museum in exile. Inspired by the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende (1971–73), or Museum of → Solidarity Salvador Allende, the museum took

14   In biology, the term heterochrony was first introduced by German evolutionary zoologist Ernst Haeckel in 1875. It designates an evolutionary change in the timing of development producing differences in size or shape in an organism. Stephen Jay Gould has recently redefined this term referring to changes in patterns of development.

the form of an itinerant exhibition that was meant to tour until it could "repatriate" to Palestine. During the Israeli siege of Beirut in 1982, sustained heavy shelling destroyed the building where the works were stored as well as the exhibition's archival and documentary traces. Incarnating the multiple themes and interrogations that have guided the resulting investigation, *Past Disquiet* will stitch together forgotten histories and map lost cartographies from recorded testimonies and private → archives. *Past Disquiet* interrogates exhibition history and the historiography of artistic practice and perception, and will also address the problematics of oral history, the trappings of memory, and writing history in the absence of cogent archives. The project will furthermore revisit the significance of political engagement in the 1970s, specifically in universes neither deemed vanguard nor mainstream, and thus rarely studied in prevailing contemporary historical narratives.

Figure 15: *Past Disquiet: Narratives and Ghosts from The International Art Exhibition for Palestine*, curated by Rasha Salti & Kristine Khouri, exhibition view, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2014. Photo courtesy of MACBA.

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Heterochronia Keti Chukhrov

Moscow, Russia, August 2015

It is traditionally thought that history is a hegemonic master narrative as against the subjugated → minor narratives that construct the diversity of "other" voices, times, subjectivities. However, the question might be whether the history that is thought to be dominating over various previously inarticulate agencies and → temporalities can be regarded only as the place of the dominant narrative's power. As such, the subsequent question would be: if the minor narratives rid themselves of the power of unified history, do they not by this token acknowledge the power of history's domination on the one hand, but also reside voluntarily in a certain "subordinate" position? Maybe by claiming one history for all as the condition of the non-identitarian → emancipatory program it would be possible to preserve versatility in form and emancipatory fervour as contents.

If we were to list the rebukes to humanism, starting with Nietzsche and continuing up to now, this would take us too far. However, there is a certain map of inhumanist or post-humanist views worth mentioning in terms of defining the motivations to reject the humanist project as something *passé*. Among the few of the kind are Althusser's critique of early Marx for his "humanist" lyricism; Gilbert Simondon in his overturned genealogy of → labour and technique, where it is technical merit rather than a human → subject that generates labour and hence culture; Bruno Latour with his criticism of anthropocentrism and his demand for equal grounds for any → agency whatsoever; Donna Haraway disputing the claim for the generic on the part of a human being as an authoritarian position of "a man"; and the accelerationist manifesto of Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams, which calls for "unleashing productive forces" of science and technology without the constraints of ethics in order to acquire the over- and post-human skills appropriate for the socio-technical evolution.[15]

One of the fiercest criticisms of the human condition comes from speculative realism. Its attack on humanism is not social or cultural, but is first and foremost grounded on the meta-philosophical sublation of philosophy's critical edifice. In this case, the human condition is disputed as the finiteness that philosophy claimed to overcome in the long run of its history. However, all such attempts in the history of philosophy are regarded by speculative realism as part and parcel of a human condition. One of the reasons for this was that idealist philosophy made an attempt to transcend human cognition, or to question the limits of human existence, but exactly such moves had often been the core of asserting what the human mind might be. Moreover, this relates to a history of philosophy in general – starting with Descartes, Kant and up to Marx. That is the reason why such philosophically biased inhuman humanism is considered to be nothing but the appropriation of → the Universal and the Absolute by the finite human mind. As Quentin Meillassoux puts it,[16] the effort of the finite human mind to exceed its finitude via thought leads nowhere but back into the limits of human consciousness, which cannot in the end exceed its own idealist illusions about the Absolute, cannot but install the correlationist pretension of grasping the inhuman by the human mind. This is the reason why speculative realism claims – as Yoel Regev put it – the necessity to go beyond this illusionary beyond of philosophic mythologies. In order to end up with the correlationist "beyond", speculative knowledge has to dispense itself of this beyond, as well as of including the ethical or metaphysical projections into the utter → autonomy of knowledge and rationality. Only then, without the screen of human subjectivity, can the Absoluteness of reality be at all addressed.

But what the fear of correlationism in speculative realism does not take into account is the following: it locates the problem of correlation between the solitary human subject and the multiple, objective and contingent reality. But it neglects and ignores that if this human subject is itself collective and multiple, then the relation with the world and reality might as well be constructed not between the subject of knowledge and the worldly matter, but also between those subjects themselves and in an interaction between them. They do not relate to the world

15 Alex Williams and Nick Srnicek, "#Accelerate Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics", *The Critical Legal Thinking – Law and the Political* (14 May 2013), http://criticallegalthinking. com/2013/05/14/accelerate-manifesto-for-an-accelerationist-politics/ (accessed 3 July 2014).
16 Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency* (Continuum, 2009).

as to their object of contemplation. But they, these subjects themselves, might as well be the reality, they are themselves the extension of matter and of the world's ungraspable realness – not just its observers. Since one might assert oneself not only as the one that reflects, studies the world or correlates oneself to the world as to reality, but also as the one that takes for that very reality first and foremost another human being. This would be a strongly disputable assertion, since in many sociological theories societies are constructed out of any agents – be they objects, animals, machines, languages, and so on. There is thus no need of any specific generic relation among humans.

One of the pioneers in defining the human via the generic (inter-human) dimension was Marx. In his *Economic Manuscripts* the human, generic and communist go together. The question is how to enable the dimension of the generic, and how to determine the de-alienation that Marx claims precisely on behalf of humans, and not create/make any contingent connection with anything else? Because it is due to this bond among humans that all other modes of alienation in nature, or the material world, are able to de-alienate. Marx answers as follows: if an animal forms matter in accord with the needs of the species, a man can produce things in order to meet the needs of other species/beings as well. In other words, the generic mode is in producing not for oneself and implementing this voluntarily.

One of the ways to terminate alienation for Marx is to prevent the sense of private property from superseding other senses. Private property forecloses the potentiality of the generic (Universal) dimension. The "human" is thus not the substantiation of some attributes, but rather a virtue of aspiring for the general, which in its own turn means made by a man not for himself but for others: other men or creatures.

De facto, it is exactly in the figure of a proletarian that evacuation of private property is accomplished. The proletarian undergoes the "impoverishment" of their humanness to the utmost, but that's exactly the point at which one can claim that very humaneness to the utmost. As Frank Ruda puts it, "it is impoverishment [*Entwesung*] of man that builds the condition for the fact that the proletariat as soon as it emerges at its material site implies an immediate dimension of universality which is addressed to anyone, because it is for anyone."[17]

This is because dispossession brings forth the *de facto* free space for the non-self being, being not as only the self, but also as non-self, because many conditions constructing the self – property, personal comfort, living standards, individual pleasures, fears and traumas, cognitive or creative achievements, recognition, and so on – are not implementable. This potentiality of the non-self is given to a proletarian *de facto*, but it becomes the opportunity to be exercised *in actu*. In other words, the absence of possession paradoxically becomes a starting point to question the potentiality of a non-self being and of de-alienation in the conditions of the utmost alienation.

The potentiality of the non-self is not possible in nature, it is unnatural. Instead it is something that might be exercised *in actu*. The human is thus general, but general – not in the sense that every individual gets a share of something to be distributed among the many. It means a demolition of the limits between the self and the non-

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17   Frank Ruda, *Who Thinks Reductively: Capitalism's Animals,* https://www.academia.edu/ (accessed 3 July 2014). Editors' note: The text has been removed from Academia.edu. A revised version of the text will be published in Slavoj Žižek, Frank Ruda, and Agon Hamza, *Reading Marx* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2018).

self, between personal needs and those needs that are not my own. This requires some kind of self-amnesia, or to apply another term used by Mikhail Lifshitz – "humane resignation", the transmission of which becomes the principal issue for art as its chief communist trait.

According to Lifshitz "humane resignation" is the principal issue of art, inasmuch as it presupposes the capacity of an artist to achieve the metanoic resignation of the self. In fact, the dimension of the "classical" preserves its importance exactly in this sense too.

When Lacan was analysing the structure of the "I", he was constructing both the "I" inscribed into a real life and the real life itself as the realm of the "Imaginary". Such an "I" nevertheless automatically becomes the "Other". This is because what I envisage as "me" is always the other, imaginary "I", since I might want to imagine myself as alien, quite in the vein of constructing a self-image out of phantasmatic desires. Hence Lacan's formula "I is the Other". But in this case "the Other" is nothing but the imaginary deviation from the "I", understood as the gap between imagination and reality. Consequently the concrete "Other" – another person which is not me – is only someone to be internalised by the "I" and in the "I". This formula of Lacan is thus inevitably stuck within a narcissistic framework.

In a case of "humane resignation", the "I" is consciously put aside in favour of the non "I". Such resignation of "the self" has nothing to do with the phantasm of the "Other" mimicked by "me" when the narcissistic place of the "I" is preserved. Self-amnesia is a radical turnover of the anthropological order of society. This is not at all the case of supersession of the self by the super-ego or the Big Other of any kind – which is a classic case of rejection of the self in the name of sublime issues, duty, God, responsibility, and death: in other words everything that exceeds the pleasure principle on behalf of the super-ego's control.

In a case of self-resignation "the Other" can only appear after a recession of the self. This recession is not sacrificial, but is metanoic; metanoia is caused by involvement into reality, which can only unravel via such self-recession. This reality is not the world seen by the "I" or "me", but it comes forth exactly when this unsurpassable division between the "I" and not "I" is surpassed, destroying the natural psychics and anthropology of the interrelation between the subjective and intersubjective, the individual and the collective.

Humanism Meriç Öner   SALT, Istanbul, Turkey, April 2015

Departing from the elaborate discussion of "humanism", it is interesting to note down different connotations of the use of the word "human". Two uses, hypothetically the most common, present themselves in stark contradiction to one another in essence. It is quite difficult to pick which use to mention first, because it will automatically turn into a ranking of the two. With this in mind, let's talk about the "human" that identifies the "good-doer". S/he surfaces when there is something that it is inevitably "human to do". This kind of "human" is abundant in simple, maybe even naive, acts of expressing a preference for peace over war, of being willing to help those in need, and so on. The other common use of the word refers to, to put kindly, the "sloppy". S/he is excused of mistakes by the potentially superior others on the acceptance of being only "human". This use inadvertently emphasises loyalty and admiration to orders, and to the tiniest bit of anything considered

scientific, condemning the human to its fate of being imperfect. The good-doer and the sloppy share one aspect, which is the use of "human" as a status. When a dog is a dog, yet the human is a status, the mind boggles as to whether our understanding of the "human" is natural at all.

Intuition Meriç Öner

SALT suggested the term "intuition", with the aim of revealing the interrelations among research and programs that are unlikely to appear without specific inspections. Considering historicisation as an intentional act, the term "intuition" was selected to demonstrate a distinction between what can be considered the most common cultural method of historicisation, the act of archiving, and a more fluid approach that builds new conduits of research and knowledge through non-systematic accumulation. SALT's toying with the term intuition is an attempt to define the grey areas in the ways cultural institutions function in reality, and it also speaks of the aspiration to individualise the very idea of the form of the → institution.

SALT proves to be resourceful in such an inquiry, primarily due to its non-hierarchical and non-departmental structure. This can be observed in a SALT map generated by the workshops titled *In Situ Qualitative*, that describes decentralised work patterns and the attitude of collaborating with external individuals rather than creating a workforce that aims to grapple with numerous types of expertise. Such a setting allows for informal and multidirectional exchanges in the development of "programs and research", the main office where the SALT team organises their thinking to incorporate contemporary art, architecture and social historical → archives, that eventually lead to related exhibitions and public programs. In the workshops, SALT's programmers took the institution's long-term programs as case studies to define qualities that appeared to influence their cultural practice. Different aims and outcomes, including intuition, were specified and voted upon for each program. Surprisingly, exhibitions tagged with the quality intuition do not share obvious characteristics, such as belonging to the same discipline, era, medium, or geographic area, nor were they treated similarly in development. Their particular intuitiveness lies within the context that conceived them and the interactions among the programmers, researchers and artists who originally initiated them. These interactions refer to conversations and discussions unearthing various urgencies, and exploring them with multiple inputs.

The examples include the mid-career exhibition of Hassan Khan, an artist who had yet to present a major exhibition of his work in the region within which his practice was developed, and these two programs, the most conventional examples for an institutional setting, being contemporary art exhibitions, were formed in response to current debates and a feeling of timely urgency. Dramatically different, yet of the same medium, the exhibitions *IStory* by Hrair Sarkissian and *One, No One and One Hundred Thousand* by Elio Montanari, presented two artists who share very individual approaches to personally constructed, rather than historically embedded, activities of archiving. Stemming from a shared → interest in a design of material experiences and their immaterial experiments in the recent past, the exhibitions *Salon* and *Global Tools* formalised research in utterly distinct ways. The former performed the paper document by (re)placing a set of period furniture in a selectively reproduced domestic setting, whereas the latter initiated a live discussion out of the documentation of a 1970s experimentation from a non-school of design.

Figure 16: Duygu Demir and Merve Elveren, "Gülsün Karamustafa", work on paper, A3, 2013. Chart of SALT-based influence in making the exhibition *A Promised Exhibition of Gülsün Karamustafa*. Courtesy of Duygu Demir and Merve Elveren.

Such seemingly disparate yet related → interventions define the institution's practice, since it builds an invisible circuit in the background without being overly concerned about servicing the available and complete. It leads to a commonality of individual interests, for example when Simone Forti and Jeremiah Day's performance *Body Mind World*, without explicit pre-motivation from the programs team, met the works of the Body Seminar Group of Global Tools in the same time frame. The act of an institutional subliminal consciousness is straight and obvious in the sources-map that explains how SALT's two and a half year programming fed into Gülsün Karamustafa's exhibition. The underlying topics of *A Promised Exhibition* were visited in diversity, by contributors from a range of backgrounds at SALT. The sources map (Figure 16) voids the idea of "intuition", by qualifying a number of former programs as pre-emptive and post-intuitive of the final presentation. An exhibition that potentially offered full-circle closure on some of the debates held earlier within the institution.

The cultural institution has long been a powerful tool for recording and resurfacing memory, and it is challenged to become more so within contemporary environments charged with socio-political conflicts and locally the sufferance of acute amnesia in Turkey. These environments are inherently full of states of urgency. One fine mark of the intuitive is its openness to an agile attitude that can speak to the world on an immediate and daily time frame. SALT's experience with agility was demonstrated in the 2014 program *One Work*, a serial exhibition of borrowed works from the L'Internationale member collections. Running continuously throughout the year in different corners of the three venues of SALT, the program mirrored the dynamic and political tension on the streets of Istanbul in the form of internationally acclaimed artworks.

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interventions 187
self-reflexive 305

Paralleling its historicising role, the institution builds a → self-reflexive history as it continues to produce narratives and define itself as having a socially engaged position through them. Following a tangible external rhythm, SALT does this through the rapid sharing and free flow of information and knowledge. Under such circumstances, acknowledging intuition as a key device is an invitation to read the institution as a free-flowing web of materials in action, as opposed to a linear and mechanical understanding of it.

Pathological Fracture Ania Szremski

Cairo, Egypt, May 2014

In medical terminology, a pathological fracture is a broken bone caused by a specific disease – osteoporosis, cancer, cysts, genetic syndromes, or the more nebulously defined "frailty syndrome" that afflicts the aging and geriatric. While in a young healthy body, a broken bone may often mend itself to become even stronger than it was before, a pathological fracture will not knit itself back together to engender a new vigour, but persists, achingly, and catalyses the slow decline of the organism.

The easiest way to narrate a history is to identify a certain breaking point, and then point toward a resulting mending process (which should ostensibly lead to something new) or the heroic death or failure that this break produced. But in Egypt, a modern art history could rather be narrated as a series of lingering fractures,

wounds and ailments that persistently engender new irritations and complications. Take, for example, a strange series of India ink drawings by Abdel Hadi Al-Gazzar, the best-known Egyptian painter of the 20th century, who has been written of as the son of Nasser's "revolution" and the documentarian of the great nationalist period that flowered with the end of the British occupation. But these strange drawings produced in the 1960s, depicting frail and abused half-human-half-animal bodies tormented by strange technological apparatuses, have little to do with a clean break with history, but rather suggest a chronic pathology with long-lasting symptoms that have a different sort of transformative potential.

Phantom (Pain) Gabi Ngcobo

Re-entering history is an endeavour that permits us to pursue the past with a blindness that seems virtually impossible to achieve, it is a pursuit of the unknowing grammar of engaging phantoms or ghosts. Revisiting history in a search for meaning in the present is a pursuit of something that can't even see itself in the mirror, of answers that have no questions, at least not yet. One certainly does not want to tackle a ghost head on. What is required is an apparatus that allows us a kind of blindness through which may surface a newly considered economy of commemorating, one that is stripped of accountability, of ideas of nation building and one open to moments of surprise, moments that are neither depressive nor awkwardly hopeful.

Figure 17: Donna Kukama, *Not Yet (and No One Knows Why)*, video of a performance, 4´ 56˝, 2009. Courtesy of the artist and Blank Projects, Cape Town and M HKA.

Historical legacies and their relevance and impact on contemporary art take the battle scene as a metaphorical site in which the main concern is not winning or seeing others suffer, but rather an observation of the everyday practices that have been characterised by political legacies that have shaped the pile of history's debris. History acts as a phantom limb; a → pathological illusion in which pain exists even in an absence and because of absence – it ceases to hurt but remains in one's memory. Often, a commemoration is its prosthesis. As South Africa commemorates two decades of democracy one wonders if art historian Ashraf Jamal's cynicism, as expressed written in response to "a decade of democracy" in 2004, still holds its mocking tone the same way it did ten years ago. "How, then, to commemorate? Where does one begin?" asked Jamal and went on to answer, "The fact is one doesn't, for South Africa, irrespective of the history it has constructed for itself, remains a society that lives with the terrible unease of never having begun. It may suppress this unease; indeed, it would seem that South Africa's finest talent is its ability to draw a rabbit out of a hat and call it history".

Is history then a phantom; is it all in our heads? If, hypothetically, Nelson Mandela never died but instead became younger each year, would his life be remembered or his death be forgotten? … "If the past were to be postponed into the future, would this moment be a memory?" (Donna Kukama)[18] (Figure 17) … The "born frees", a term used in South Africa to refer to those born after 1994, turned 20 alongside a democratic South Africa post-Mandela, and voted for the first time on 7 May 2014. Their vote was not driven by pain, but one wonders if they experience phantom pains and if they are recognised as such.

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18   Editors' note: The quote was later published in *Contemporary Citizenship, Art, and Visual Culture: Making and Being Made*, eds. Corey Dzenko & Theresa Avila (New York: Routledge, 2018). "This interrogative is the title of Kukama's 2009 performance as part of the NON-NON Collective's Mass Action Strike staged at the Johannesburg Art Gallery."

At M HKA, the Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp, we have discussed the overall term "historicisation" from what we imagine it is a local point of view. Although our city is located almost at the epicentre of Western Europe, in what Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas has famously termed "Eurocore", and although it is a commercial hub with a port that is still one of the twenty largest in the world, Antwerp itself is surprisingly inward-looking. Sometimes it feels as if this whole area – from Hamburg in the north to Paris in the south, from London in the west to Frankfurt in the east, with the Low Countries in-between – consisted of many different pockets of provincialism, wrapped in a thick blanket of suburban self-sufficiency.

So, how does our geographic position influence our thinking about history and the ways in which it influences how people see themselves in the present? That would be one way of understanding "historicisation". How does belonging to a "centre" (regardless of the peripheral position we, like nearly everyone else in our region, occupy within it) affect our self-image in relation to the past? Does the "safe" location of Antwerp, Flanders and, to a lesser extent, the whole of Belgium inside bourgeois well-to-do Western culture make us less susceptible to playing identity politics with history? The opposite seems to be true, sometimes. There is nationalism, regionalism, localism. There are historical grudges and counter-grudges. Yet historicisation, in itself, does not endorse or promote any particular approach to history. It can be both "positive" (a conceptual device that anchors the present in the past through the slowness imposed by reflection) and "negative" (an excuse to cling to history, or even synonymous with revivalism, eclecticism or other attempts to settle scores with the past).

In M HKA's more specialised context of Flemish and Belgian contemporary art and visual culture, two remarks on historicisation seem pertinent:

First, as already indicated this part of Europe is wealthy and densely populated, and has been so for a millennium already. Its culture is, broadly speaking, more to do with accommodating new things and ideas into existing → constellations than with creating them from scratch. In a firmly established and supposedly self-assured cultural landscape, there seems to be less need to rely on references to the innate qualities of "nature" or "the people" or other such notions that "younger" nations often use (or abuse) to construct a sense of identity for themselves. Against this background, historicisation might be called the natural cultural condition of the Low Countries, especially of their Catholic provinces.

Second, in Belgium, the "contemporary art heritage" (a somewhat oxymoronic neologism recently coined to name an umbrella organisation for the leading Flemish museums of contemporary art) has, at least since the 1970s, been rather well integrated into the Western mainstream. Artists such as Marcel Broodthaers, Panamarenko, Guillaume Bijl, Lili Dujourie, Jan Vercruysse, Thierry De Cordier, Raoul De Keyser, Marthe Wéry, Luc Tuymans and others are known in a wider European and global context, along with some other art professionals – the recently deceased Documenta 9 curator Jan Hoet comes to mind, but also gallerists such as Anny De Decker and Bernd Lohaus of Wide → White Space in Antwerp (1966–1976) or Fernand Spillemaeckers of MTL in Brussels (1970–1978) and, of course, all those famous Belgian private collectors.

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constellations 19
white space 140

This could be interpreted to mean that historicisation, in our immediate context, is less about restoring the proper place and value to recent local history in the international context, and more about an analysis of history and historicity as overall concepts. And that would not be untrue, but it is worth remembering that the institutional infrastructure for contemporary art remains weak in Flanders, and even weaker in Belgium as a whole. The museums of contemporary art do have collections, but these have not been very strategically configured or sustained. They do make exhibitions that are not without international visibility and relevance, but these *"kunsthalle"* functions also need to be structurally and financially strengthened.

Figure 18: Paul De Vree, *Hysteria Makes History*, 1973, Collection M HKA, Antwerp / Collection Flemish Community © M HKA.

M HKA's interpretation of historicisation shall be seen in the light of this structural lack that we are currently doing our best to address and remedy, in a political situation that, despite economic difficulties, appears to focus thought on the future of Flemish culture. We are doing what we can to ensure that M HKA will, in the foreseeable future that is also part of historicity, become a "real" and "proper" museum of contemporary art with good facilities and a strong financial base.

That is one important reason why, after having considered several terms, such as "reconfiguration" or "reconstitution", for describing how historicisation might address what is to come rather than what is gone, we arrived at the term "reconstruction". We might say that there is – should be – no deconstruction without reconstruction. That, anyway, is one interpretation of what Antonio Negri said at the L'Internationale conference in Madrid in March this year... In the case of M HKA, it is true both metaphorically, as an indication of our ambition to present an exhibition programme that does not lose itself in the minutiae of art-specific deconstruction, and in a more straightforward way. We are already planning to remodel the ground floor of our building next year, in a move designed to attract and sustain → interest in our collection as we prepare for an anticipated and much more thorough overhaul of our facilities.

There is, as we hope that M HKA's future plans demonstrate, nothing reactive or reactionary about reconstruction. Instead, we think the term is an example of how the prefix re- can be turned around to point forward, towards a future that has a chance to become brighter. When institutions are reconstructed, this means more than just reorganising or rebuilding them. When terms are reconstructed, there is no need to gut them completely. The lingering resonance of older meanings can be something constructive, such as the echo of constructivism in deconstruction and of deconstruction in reconstruction...

Hannah Arendt writes in *On Revolution* that this term was used, before 1789, in a more technical sense (as when we speak of an engine doing "a certain number of revolutions per second") to describe what we today would probably rather call "evolution". The unpredictability and violence of the French Revolution changed the meaning of the word and the tone of the prefix that defines it. And then there is "reform", which can also be interpreted more or less violently, as in the educational or penal systems. Would it be too pretentious to suggest that reconstruction, as a term and a practice, might be used in such a way that it serves both revolution and reform? (Figure 18)

Self-historicisation refers to any informal system of historicisation that is practised by artists who, because of the lack of a suitable collective history, have had to search for their own historical or interpretive context. In many parts of the non-Western world, such as Eastern Europe during the socialist period and even later, the local institutions that should have systematised neo-avant-garde art either did not exist or took a dismissive attitude towards such art. Consequently, the artists themselves were often forced to → archive documents relating to their own art, the art of others, or broader art movements, as well as the conditions of production.

Self-historicisation can be found in a number of different international contexts, and should in no way be viewed as the exclusive domain of non-Western artists. Nevertheless, given the existing interests of the globalising art system, we need to draw special attention to the differences within a world that seems increasingly homogeneous – especially, the differences between regions that are less standardised and regulated and those that are more so. It is in this context that I view the significance of self-historicisation, which in some places still represents one of the most important, if not the only, form of historicisation.

Among other things, self-historicisation reminds us that the dominant systems of art history are unable to present the state of affairs in a global world of differences. They are only superficially adapting to the new situation, mainly by including more and more art from around the world. But even as they do this, they remain essentially the same and, indeed, only further strengthen their power. Today the large hegemonic museums in the major Western art centres loudly claim to be presenting the global history of art, but they continue to speak about this history in the singular and from a single point of view. The Centre Pompidou, for example, is "going global", the director says. Their main objective, however, is to preserve their influence and accumulate as many works as possible for their new universal collections. The primary motivation behind these new → universal histories remains ownership, and this is something that is impossible to oppose through counter-narratives, which would sooner or later be incorporated into the dominant stories. Such processes need to be exposed once and for all as processes of alienation. We need to advocate a multiplicity of narratives – ones that include transparent processes of their own emergence and their true location. Here a special place is occupied by self-historicisation, which is tied to the lasting and personal presence of the narrator.

The archives of self-historicisation include local marginalised art traditions presented by artist-archivists, and not from some external, objective position, as their own personal involvement in these traditions is viewed as essential. The artists are not merely interested in → correcting existing histories; they want to bring attention to the fundamental principle underlying the creation of these histories, the involvement of the individual, which always means excluding something. In place of universal collections based on the concept of power, they advocate universal archives, with all the heterogeneity, lack of system, and incompleteness inherent to such endeavours. Art archives created in self-historicisation processes underscore not only local identities but, even more, the universal experience of otherness. They are not so much about documents that testify to the authenticity of present or past. Rather, the artistic traditions they represent are here collected together with

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correcting 230

the traumas of the region, with everything that was repressed by the collective consciousness and repeated in the unconscious.

A number of important Eastern European artists – Artpool (György Galántai, Júlia Klaniczay), Zofia Kulik, Július Koller, and Lia Perjovschi and the CAA (Contemporary Art Archive), among others – have devoted a large part of their work to creating archives that today serve as vitally important sources of knowledge about unofficial art and the conditions of its production in countries under socialism. (Figure 19) We can trace the Eastern European tradition of art archives developed by artists out of the need to contextualise their own art practices all the way to the present day. Here I want to mention especially the archives created by the group IRWIN, which I think are important not only because they include marginalised traditions, but also because they are explicitly concerned with the principles of marginalisation and the creation of history.

The question of how ideology and capital manipulate us through images has been an object of IRWIN's research right from the beginning. In 1984, they began work on the painting series *Was ist Kunst?* (Figure 20) which, after its completion in 1996, gave rise to a new series of works, *Icons*. The series *Was ist Kunst?* is an archive of images that derive from a variety of contexts, such as folk art, the Russian avant-garde, communist symbols, Nazi art, and modernism. The members of IRWIN saw the series as a kind of slot machine, in which the different motifs were colliding with each other for more than a decade, so as to generate, in 1996, the IRWIN "icons" – the motifs in *Was ist Kunst?* that were most often repeated by the five members of the group. In this manner, IRWIN specified five motifs, which they have been repeating in their work from that time to now. This process is presented by IRWIN in a grid of horizontal and vertical lines, which remind us that there is no single archetypal icon; there is only a classification table of images. In IRWIN's grid, which acts as a system of differences, the five main motifs that emerged after a decade of collisions in *Was ist Kunst?* appear on the horizontal lines, while variations on the motifs by the five individual group members appear on the vertical lines. IRWIN's classification system is based on a common generic principle tied to the eclectic cultural traditions of small nations.

Figure 19: "Artpool" in *Interrupted Histories*, exhibition view, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, 2006. Courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

Figure 20: IRWIN, "Was is Kunst?", 1984–1996, *NSK from Kapital to Capital: Neue Slowenische Kunst – The Event of the Final Decade of Yugoslavia*, exhibition view, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, curated by Zdenka Badovinac, 2015. Photo courtesy by Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

Another project in which IRWIN illustrated how history emerges was *East Art Map* (2002–2005). Here the goal was to map Eastern European art from the past fifty years. They invited experts and artists from the different Eastern European countries to work with them by proposing the most important artists from their own areas, and highlighting the connections between local artists as well as their connections with Western artists. The results were then put on a map, with red lines showing the connections between individuals and blue lines those between groups. Even at first glance we see that the map is not particularly systematic, and that many artists have been left without any connections. In their introduction to the accompanying book *East Art Map*, in which various texts dealt with specific topics relating to Eastern European Art, IRWIN assessed the results of the mapping project. They described their map of Eastern European art as an arbitrary work, since other names might have appeared on it as well. They also found that for the most part the selectors had not provided information about the relations between local artists or comparisons between East and West. They also noticed that the different selectors had used very heterogeneous – that is, unsystematic – criteria in their selections. Finally, they said they were not surprised by such results, which were, after all, the consequence of several decades of Eastern European isolation.

Despite the fact that the selection of the represented artists was not made by IRWIN themselves but by the curators and artists they had invited, one of the key results of the project was, surely, the group's discovery that it was (and remains) impossible to forge a collective narrative of Eastern European art. The IRWIN group have themselves, since the early 1990s, carried out many projects where they tried to determine the connections that Eastern European artists have both with each other and with artists from other areas. All this served the effort to construct a history. Connections, referential fields, and collisions that generate the icons without which we could not imagine the histories that have been written up to now – these have always been of crucial importance in this construction. For future histories, it seems, one of the essential questions will be that of the collection versus the archive, a referential system of artefacts or a heterogeneous apparatus of remembering.

Self-historicisation Meriç Öner   SALT, Istanbul, Turkey, April 2015

Turkey, a supposed democracy since 1946 although with three official military coups in 1960, 1971 and 1980, presents a common split between a form of state-condoned art and an independent collective contemporary art practice in recent history. Yielding to changing dynamics that prompted national visibility in multiple aspects, the state remained indifferent but was the beneficiary of various internationally acclaimed art events that started slowly in the 1990s. The visual art scene of the 1990s in Turkey depended on a younger generation of curators and artists. Even though an imagined flawless → continuity of practices would entail a discussion, it is known that there were influential art collectives and individuals active earlier than this, throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Three particular → archives available at SALT Research provide details of different historicisation processes. One is the archive of artist Gülsün Karamustafa, who single-handedly kept works or documentation of works from the early 1970s to today, typically identified as an act of "self-historicisation". The second archive, by artist Yusuf Taktak, presents documents related to institutions, galleries, and exhibitions dating back to the 1970s and 1980s in Turkey. Former director of the Museum of Fine Arts and a consummate researcher and (document) collector, Taktak practices another type of historicisation. In what might be called an "induced-historicisation", over time the mixed archive becomes public information open to multiple interpretations. The third particular archive is that of İsmail Saray, artist and activist on art workers' rights. Having definitively moved to London in 1980 due to the oppression he faced in Turkey, Saray continued his contact with fellow artists, even producing artworks by sending instructions from afar. Collected from locations in both countries, from Saray's home in London, his → family home in Kütahya, and his colleagues' archives in Istanbul, the archive holds immense documentation of his practice and activities. Since Saray is considered a key figure in understanding conceptual art in Turkey, this archival work could be described as a model of "reviving-historicisation" by an institutional attempt and effort.

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The machine of historicisation of contemporary art is definitely organised hierarchically, so that numerous artistic practices and theoretical researchers of the so-called socialist and post-socialist period are absent in it. This absence is conditioned not only by a certain hegemony of the so-called "Western" contemporary art canon, but also by the very specific interpretation of the socialist legacy – both by the Western "left" and "non-left". This socialist background is treated as one of the regional cultural narratives from elsewhere, and thus numerous → emancipatory and conceptual non-Western cultural experiences are collected into the global art database as local modernities. But in this case, modernity becomes a diversified collection of local histories. What is ignored here is that the socialist project and its avant-garde practices were politically and culturally more mature and modern than any modernity evolving in the conditions of the capitalist state. Ignoring this condition in the realm of contemporary capitalist realism leads to the situation that the global historicising art-machine welcomes regional stories much more willingly than any legacy constructed as a form of conceptual → agency on behalf of socialist and communist conditions.

Another aspect of the way global art's historicising machine works is that its tools are focused on gaining the institutionalising power of a narrative, rather than accomplishing any historical record.

It is thus no surprise that all the late socialist and early post-socialist conceptual collectives and their creative projects had been functioning as quasi-institutions – both in production and → representation.

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Temporalities Jesús Carrillo, Francisco Godoy Vega

Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain, July 2014

"Península. Colonial processes in art and curatorial practices" is a collective research project that questions the narratives of art and culture on the Iberian Peninsula, digging in the colonial foundations of its power structures from the past to the present. The group consists of around 50 researchers from very heterogeneous backgrounds: academics, curators, artists and activists, linked by informal bonds of affection, common → interests, and political commitment.

We endorse a notion of research that works against the grain of the neoliberal logic of academic and artistic production. We conceive it as a situated and performative process, which both resists and exceeds hegemonic forms of circulation and accumulation, and contributes to common and → emancipatory forms of knowledge.

We explore methodologies that challenge the Anglo-Saxon cannon and enter into a dialogue with the Latin American theory of coloniality and → decolonisation, thus inverting both the North-South direction of academic and artistic trends and the East-West logics of Spanish and Portuguese colonial histories.

By the term "temporalities" we mean the plural experiences of time which are at the same time silenced and produced by the colonial processes. We claim the emancipatory power of these temporalities to challenge and subvert the hegemonic articulation of time and its narratives. We denounce a double fallacy with regard to time, as follows:

Figure 21: *The Potosí Principle: How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?*, exhibition view. Curated by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, Max Hinderer, Alice Creischer and Andreas Siekmann. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2010. Photo: Joaquín Cortés / Román Lores. Courtesy of Museo Reina Sofía.

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Figure 22: *Cooked and Raw (Cocido y Crudo)*, exhibition view, installation work by K'cho (Alexis Leiva). Curated by Dan Cameron. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 1994–1995. Photo: Javier Campano. Courtesy of Museo Reina Sofía.

Figure 23: Cinemacopains, *Territorio Doméstico*, 9´ 8´´ video, 2010, posted on YouTube on 14 April 2010, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUTW6clGcRM.

– There are two completely separate temporalities: that of the master, "modern time", and subaltern temporality: primitive, popular, indigenous, usually identified with the past, and ready to be expropriated or abolished on behalf of the idea of progress and civilisation. This dual temporality is nothing but an interested projection from a colonial power, which has been very successful in reproducing patronising forms of representing the others. In Spain, the *Universal Exhibition of Seville* in 1992 marked the neo-colonial attitude promoted by the → slogan "The Age of Discovery", making a distinction between one master modern project and a subaltern that was the object of conquest, study, and colonisation. From a radically different perspective, the exhibition *The Potosí Principle*", (Figure 21) although presenting a radical critique to origins of modernity, fell again into schematic binarisms through a Marxist dialectic, reproducing the Northern imaginary of the subaltern → South as past, primitive and precapitalist. This approach of the German curatorial team was contested by the fourth curator, who resigned from the project, the Bolivian sociologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, with the publication *Principio Potosí Reverso*.

– There are multiple temporalities coexisting, juxtaposed, and in global harmony. This discourse hides and naturalises the colonial and postcolonial order, in which the time of power – most often financial power – is ubiquitous but never made visible. As many platforms have already pointed out, *Magiciens de la Terre* (1989) in Paris was the most evident initiative in this sense. In Spain this approach arrived with the exhibition *Cocido y Crudo* [*Cooked and Raw*], curated by Dan Cameron, with a global but more art-system feeling in the selection of the artists. (Figure 22)

We are aware that the term temporalities conveys the ambivalence of endorsing this hierarchical structure of time by separating one hegemonic temporality from many subaltern and partial ones (always in the "past") while designating, at the same time, a plurality of coexisting chronologies in a post-historical time. Our challenge is, thus, to find, in the ambiguity of the concept, the possibility to blow up hegemonic chronologies and to release agencies related to other forms of time experience. In order to do that, first we need to recognise the → continuity between the colonial past and the current global temporalities, and the fact that coloniality is a continuous and dynamic process producing many diverse forms of experience of time and time narratives connected to each other by many forms of power relations.

This awareness may allow us to unveil the subtle interaction of historical temporalities and contemporary temporalities in the production of colonial, class, and gender structures, and may allow us, as well, to fight against certain reactionary "pathologies of memory", such as "the end of the history" and "déjà vu".

It may allow us, finally, to open spaces to qualitatively different notions of time and to "occupy" and "invert" existing ones: fictional time, indigenous time, sexual time, dream time, play and fiesta time, lazy time, the time of the → migrant, the time of the frontier, the time of enclosure, the time of revolt. These times have been developed not only in a "representative" manner, but also in a committed and activist way by artists and collectives, some of them also members of Península. For example, in relation to the time of the frontier, artists such as Daniela Ortiz and Xose Quiroga, both members of Península, have deeply engaged with social movements against the racist raids carried out by the Centre of Immigration Detention and related deportation flights. In curatorial terms, the time of the frontier with

the North of Africa was already questioned 1998 with Almadraba, a project based on the three corners of the Southern Frontier: the Moroccan, Spanish, and British.

Similarly, Territorio Doméstico – a collective of immigrant domestic workers – have used performative strategies to fight against social discrimination in relation to the time of the → migrant on the streets. (Figure 23) Sexual time has been posed as a central issue in many movements of the "post-porn" scene in Barcelona. As Lucía Egaña Rojas, a member of Península, has noted in her research, there is a fundamental *sudaca*-transfer on the configuration of that sexually radical time. Finally, the time of the revolt was particularly dense in the context of the social movements related to 15 May 2011, as has been documented and → intervened from the very inside by artists such as Oliver Ressler and Cecilia Barriga. (Figure 24)

We are not proposing a recovery of subaltern histories, as postcolonial studies have claimed, but a radical openness to a plurality of time narratives which are not anymore isolated but may relate in antagonist, dialogical, or promiscuous ways. These temporalities are not just there waiting for us, well-intentioned artists and scholars, to activate, but instead require radically different ways to "make memory" and historicise that necessarily destabilise the position of the story-teller her/himself and the whole structure of knowledge production and circulation. In a modest but committed way, Península is rehearsing the interference of different narrative and circulation modes that pollute each other, mixing strata of past and present, recognising the contingent and performative nature of the task, and its transformative and political potential.
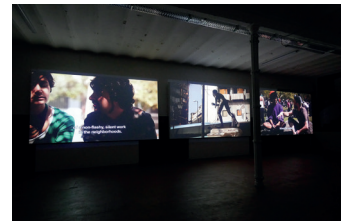

Figure 24: Oliver Ressler, *Take the Square*, 3-channel video installation, 2012 (Installation view: "Confronting Comfort's Continent", Fundation Fabbrica Del Cioccolato, Torre-Blenio, CH, 2016).

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Tendencies in Art Dušan Grlja

The expression "tendencies in art" is typically used to depict artistic currents or trends – in terms of form, subject, style or any other aesthetic dimension. However, in the ex-Yugoslav region, it also involves certain historical connotations ranging from socialist-style censorship (accusations that an artwork or art movement promotes "bourgeois or other anti-socialist tendencies") to significant art movements like the New Tendencies (where the term tendency refers to a willingness take different course of action, another direction, and so on). (Figure 25) However, in the broadest etymological sense, the Latin noun *tendentia* is derived from the verb *tendere*, meaning to stretch, stretch out, extend, and apply tension (coming from the same etymon). Like in archery, this involves putting tension on a string and arching the bow in order to shoot an arrow at the desired target. The word tendency thus refers to a motion in a certain direction, implying an effort to make things go towards a certain goal. On the other hand, in everyday speech the word tendency refers to something that is not yet fully visible or clearly discernible, something that has yet to develop completely. It is this eminently active, purposeful and practical, yet undecided, dimension of the term "tendency in art" that I find well worth tackling.

The term tendency is not even remotely new. Nevertheless, what is historically changeable does not mostly involve the words themselves, but the meanings they convey. In most cases new terminologies are made out of "borrowed" words from other fields of knowledge. Maybe what is involved in coming up with a new vocabulary or "language" is precisely the → estrangement of the existing terms – taking them from one familiar context and transposing them to another. So, my invitation to rethink the notion of tendency would be to disengage or suspend the usual
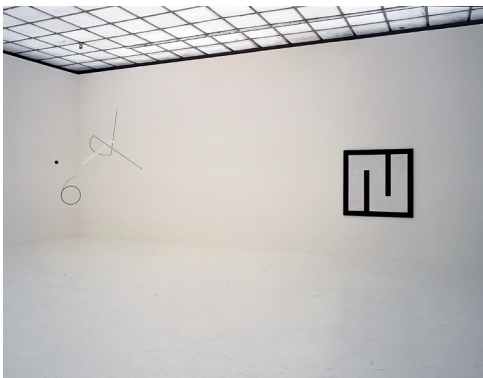

Figure 25: Vjenceslav Richter (New Tendencies), "An Object as a Space Subject. Reflections on Exhibitions", 1968 & Juraj Dobrović, "Spatial Construction", 1966, in the *Low-Budget Utopias* exhibition, Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana 2016. Photo courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana. Courtesy Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb.

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meaning of the word in the sphere of art (in the abovementioned sense of currents or trends), and to infuse this term with the meanings mainly connected to Marxist discourse (ranging from theoretical and political connotations to the verbiage of everyday life under socialism) in order to see how it works and to try to make it useful for us today.

Instead of embarking on such an ambitious task, I would rather allude to those meanings of the word tendency while presenting some of the reasons – especially one connected to an exhibition-making project – that led me to choose to deal with this term in the field of art. As a member of the Prelom Kolektiv, I actively participated in a long-term regional → collaborative research project, *The Political Practices of the (Post)Yugoslav Art (2006–2010)*, about the cultural – artistic and political – heritage of the socialist Yugoslavia. However "retrograde" this project may seem, it had a more or less articulated theoretic-political background in the Belgrade-based journal *Prelom*. (Figure 26) The term "*prelom*" can be translated in a broad sense as a break, implying a physical act of breaking, but in a specific sense, *Prelom* took its meaning from Althusser's concept of *coupure*, rendering it a synonym for an impossible and yet necessary notion – revolution. Stemming out of an educational project by the Belgrade Soros Center for Contemporary Art in the late 1990s, the editorial board comprised mainly of art history and sociology students who had the opportunity to develop and further galvanises the existing artistic and theoretical, cultural and political networks across the former Yugoslavia. The *PPPYuArt* (Political Practices of (Post)Yugoslav Art) project involved WHW (Zagreb), kuda.org (Novi Sad) and SCCA/pro.ba (Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art), and later included other artistic, theoretical and political groups.

Figure 26: *Prelom. Journal for Images and Politics*, no. 8, 2005, magazine cover.

Figure 27: *Kontakt*, exhibition view, Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade, 2007. Courtesy of Kontakt. The Art Collection of Erste Group and ERSTE Foundation.

For me, the inspiration to articulate the general outlines of this inquiry within the Prelom Kolektiv was the 2007 *Kontakt* exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade – showcasing the Erste Bank's collection of East European neo-avant-garde and conceptual art. (Figure 27) The artworks were presented in a curatorial and architectural setup that embedded them within a very well-known discourse. The ideological outlook of the exhibition suggested a convenient story of the "brave artists" that fought for the freedom of expression in the midst of totalitarian communist societies, therefore ultimately creating a narrative that legitimises the current neoliberal situation after the so-called democratic revolutions and transitions to free-market economies. The main idea was to struggle against those ideological → representations of the socialist past by making (self-) educational case-study exhibitions that would offer tools for revealing the historical, social and political contexts of the artworks or art concepts and movements.

It was precisely the development of this project that sparked the idea of revisiting the notion of the term tendency in art, since it enables a broader and more illuminating perspective on the historically variable production of art's meaning and effectivity. The elucidation of historical contexts allows for the insight that the tendency of an artwork or art movement could significantly differ in diverse historical, political and economic circumstances. For instance, while the tendency of conceptual art was founded some 35 years ago on the critique of artwork as commodity (revolutionising the art form by depriving it of a fixed object and making it in fact just a communicated idea, bodily gesture or something else that could not be easily materialised as a thing that could be bought and sold), the tendency of the same conceptual artworks as exhibited in *Kontakt* becomes a willy-nilly apotheosis of the present neoliberal condition (especially in terms of the ongoing economic trans-

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formation that favours the circulation of immaterial commodities as the source of profit). Therefore, inquiring into and discerning the tendency of art involves radical historicisation: questioning and revealing the determinants of aesthetic, cultural, social and political contexts of the meaning – or the effects – produced by art. Since the meaning (or effectivity) of art is always an outcome of the forces operating in a particular institutional context, the research based on the notion of tendency can become an active power on the socio-political battlefield of art.

Now, this can easily be understood as some neo-Nietzschean war of interpretations, or even as a post-Marxist discursive class struggle. In the case of the *PPPYu-Art* project, it might have been just like that, since the strategy was to → intervene in the ongoing production of art history, and, hopefully, of history in general. (Figure 28) Moreover, in order to get out and be present on the relevant "battlefields", the collaboration with and funding from the Erste Bank Stiftung was welcomed. This enabled the publication of the 2009/2010 *PPPYuArt* final exhibition catalogue that was supposed to deliver a left-flank blow to the ideological discourse of East European art. Nevertheless, it was quite easily digested by the ongoing historicisation processes, leaving us wondering if we did, in spite of our enthusiastic criticism, just add to the process of value production, unwittingly enabling with a colourful publication the continuation of art historical discourse construction under the auspices of the bank's funding and its auxiliary bodies (the Erste Stiftung also has a network of transit galleries)? The true materialist lesson thus teaches that efforts to "reveal" or, conversely, to "determine" the socio-political tendency of an artwork does not take place only on the discursive battlefield, but at a more rudimentary level of social institutions and the political economy that determines them in the last instance.

Hopefully the term "tendencies in art" can thus be used as a starting point for a broader discussion on the relations between art and politics, ideology and the political economy of art, in different local contexts as well as in the broader global one. In general, one speaks of tendencies when one really wants to map the → constellations of forces that carry out certain agendas, in this case in the field of art. But the tendencies in art can only be properly discerned and actively dealt with if they are considered in their interplay with the ongoing historical changes in the cultural, political and social relations of production. Maybe today it is much more difficult to distinguish and determine historically new tendencies, since there is no general sense of what should be mainstream or institutional art, and, moreover, what could be a viable alternative to contemporary predatory capitalism. Perhaps detecting and aiding some transformative tendencies in art (those that seek to change, transform and revolutionise the very → institution of art – its practices, meanings, and power relations, its social significance, its political economy), can open perspectives for a broader social transformation.

Figure 28: *Political Practices of (Post-)Yugoslav Art (PPPYuArt): RETROSPECTIVE 01,* "Chapter 6: Two Times of One Wall. The Case of SKC in the 1970s", curated by Prelom kolektiv, exhibition view, Museum 25th of May, Belgrade, 2009. Photo: Vladimir Jerić Vlidi (flickr.com/photos/vlidi, CC BY-SA 3.0).

Note: The meta-narrator of common stories was a role initially assigned to Stephen Wright by the curators[19] of the Glossary of Common Knowledge in the first seminar, on historicisation, in order to report on the discussions that had occurred among the various narrators taking part in this project. Wright as the meta-narrator also proposed the term → estrangement and instead of a synthesis of the narrations he produced a text on the role of meta-narrator as a result of the discussions he had followed, as seen in the passage below.

Because the narrator emerges from the narrative, which emerges from the narrator (leaving us with a chicken-and-the-egg conundrum with respect to anteriority), the narrator is in inherent excess with respect to a narrative – at once its progenitor, its progeny and something more, inasmuch as always able to generate more narrative and hence more narratorial surplus. Though immanent to narrative – and by no means transcendent to the narrated world, beyond which narratorial subjectivity has no purchase – the narrator is in a situation of what one might describe as constituent immanence, in a kind of dynamic feedback loop with the "unfolding" narrative. But since narratorship finds itself in a relationship of structural excess with respect to a narrative, this begs the question as to how a "meta"-narrator be understood: isn't the term itself a kind of pleonasm, "reduplicating" as it were a quality inherent to narratorship in general? Isn't every narrator a "meta"-narrator with respect to their narrative? But when assigned to the presumably ineffable, or at least, a pre-effable realm of the narrative beyond, in a situation of a constituent → constituency, self-reflexive → reflexivity, like one mirror surface placed upon another, the question inevitably arises: Can the meta-narrator speak? It's kind of a weird question, since, on the face of it, meta-narrators would seem to have a privileged access to speech, enjoying some kind of epistemic, if not indeed ontological, superiority over "mere" narrators – those garden-variety storytellers, whose humdrum accounts become historically meaningful only when ramped up to some higher plane of diegesis by a meta-narrator. But if by definition all narrators are in a trivial sense "meta-narrators", this would seem to rarify the category of meta-narrator to a logical abstraction – a sort of notional, → pathological zenith of narratorship. This is a considerable problem for anyone assigned meta-narratorial status, since it deprives them of the means to talk their way out. And of course, the whole point of the narrative-immanent category of subjectivity known as narratorship is to spin a yarn… So if all narratorship is basically meta-narratorship, then what "methodological" gain is to be achieved by front-loading that prefix onto the noun? Presumably, the distinction (as narrators are to narrative, meta-narrators are to meta-narrative, or – why not? – proto-narrators are to proto-narratives, and so on) came about because of the crucial importance of narratives as engines of identity-making on both the individual and collective levels. Narratologists such as Hayden White, Alistair McIntyre, Gérard Genette and Paul Ricœur have developed sophisticated systems of "narrative identity" by which communities create collective self-understanding and a sense of a common destiny through a complex weave of stories, which present themselves to individuals as "scripts" through which, or in opposition to which, their lives take on meaning. Such theories of narrative identity sought to avoid at once the perils of essentialism – there are no given meanings, only stories with which to identify – and the pitfalls of relativism – there is no "outside" of narrative as such. As such, narrative-identity theory has proven to be empowering for the development of → self-historicisation and counter-historicisa-

19   Editors' note: Zdenka Badovinac, Jesús Carrillo, Bojana Piškur.

tion processes that seek to challenge the hegemonic accounts of history. The blind spot, though, of much narratological thought has been an adequate understanding of narratorship – as if the "who" doing the telling was less important than the "who" whose story was being told. And this is no trifling oversight, but transforms narrativity from a means of experimenting with the fluidity and plasticity of identity to a mode of potential reification. If we are inherently caught up "in a 'web' of relationships and enacted stories" (Hannah Arendt), or "in *Geschichten verstrickt*" (Wilhelm Dilthey), the only way out is through telling – as a narrating subject. To submit to an assigned narrative role, as a character and not as a narrator, is to find oneself "spoken" before one has even begun to speak – the tragic dilemma which obsessed so much late-modernist literature, none more persuasively and hilariously than Samuel Beckett's trilogy, *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *The Unnamable*. Narrating is pliant and supple; narratives, once narrated, quickly stiffen, solidify, become thing-like. This gives some insight into the need for a typological distinction within narratorship – though not the one that meta-narrator seeks to name. The narratorial subject of the story once told – the process historicised, the contingencies accounted for, the life and times become narrative – may be properly described as *homo narrator*: the narrative manager of contingency. But no further excess can emerge from such a narrative (only from its interpretation – which is another story); to put it more dramatically, *homo narrator* names the ultimate triumph of narrative over living experience, the very epitome of a meta-narrator. It is here that a mode of counter-narratorship can be usefully introduced – the positionality of *homo narratans*, the narrator enacting narration, the narrator-in-the-throes-of-telling, coping with multiple contingencies as they crop up in the course of the story. Nothing could be further from meta-narratorship, yet nothing could be closer to the counter-hegemonic spirit of "othering" existent modes of historicisation. *Homo narratans* names the position of the artist in the now widespread mode of activation referred to offhandedly as the "artists talk" – a way of narrative meaning-making and of activating art outside the still hegemonic realm of the exhibition. *Homo narratans* names the narratorial engagement of Red Conceptualismos del Sur as they tellingly seek to disengage from narrative (or even meta-narrative) capture by repurposing discarded narrative fragments into new episodes or incident actions, which are themselves linked to other actions and together constitute a narrative assemblage. But these historicist assemblages are possible and meaningful only if inseparable from their narratorial engine – unable to stand alone as narrative, but only to move as narration. For it is only then that they engender surplus. Time for stories.

Subjectivisation

The narrators describe the consequences of the discursive and practical realisations of subjectivisation, which happen outside the models of representation or categories, in the interstices or spaces of transition, constantly "in becoming", in the formation of one subject in relation to another. They speak of subjectivisation not only as a process in which an individual affirms or chooses his/her role in society as an autonomous entity, but also as the impossibility of choice or affirmation under neocapitalist production conditions, and as the highly regulated pursuit of the realisation of one's aspirations or potential, which manifest as tension, exhaustion, or non-stop production. Similar processes of transformation affect the status of art or an artwork, in the form of ever-changing installations, interventions, performances, collages, and as readymades, immaterial or time-based art, rejecting the criteria of quality for those of subjectivisation, determining what a work is or produces in relation to other works, rather than what it is in and of itself.

The seminar took place at the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, +MSUM, Ljubljana, Slovenia from 12 to 14 December 2014.

Introduction

Terms

Time-specific Exhibitions. The Rise of Lecture Performances, Precarious Text, Concert Economy, and Other News from the World of Art Ekaterina Degot

Note: In recent years performative art practices have spread through the field of exhibiting. The lecture by Ekaterina Degot focused on case studies of exhibitions that are mainly derived from her curatorial practice. She posed a question of the impact of such time interactions on our idea of → the contemporary, the production of images and the art economy. The following text is a transcription from her keynote lecture at The Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana in December 2014, which was part of a two-day seminar on Subjectivisation.

I will talk about the notion of "time-specific display", which is obviously a take on "site-specific display". I would like to start with showing an image by the conceptual artist Yuri Albert, who belonged to (probably) the last conceptual art generation in Moscow, and who is still active in Moscow and Cologne. In connection with his work I will address his solo exhibition *What Did The Artist Mean By That?*, which we made in → collaboration and which took place at the Moscow Museum of Modern Art (MMOMA) in late 2013. The image is an appropriation of a Soviet cartoon with two characters that also appear in other cartoons appropriated by Albert. The ape represents a modernist artist and the other character represents "a good traditional artist". The ape is very happy because of the object it sees, while the traditional artist is unhappy. To me, this image represents the main modernist critical narrative in art, which is about the reification of the object, or if we speak using more art-historian language, the isolation of an object in space. This isolation is a take on the status of a commodity. In this case it is actually not just a commodity but rather a dollar sign; money rather than a commodity, since a Soviet artist did not really see any difference between the two. I would like to underline that this is an appropriation of a Soviet cartoon.

Isolated reified objects are represented in a → white space, in a white cube, which is still the case for many gallery exhibitions, art fairs, and museums, but this is not how modern art actually started. In comparison, the Annual Paris Salon of 18th and 19th centuries portrayed a very different, very dense exhibition space, which may be seen in an 1825 painting by François-Joseph Heim *Charles X Distributing Awards to Artists Exhibiting at the Salon of 1824 at the Louvre*. In contrast, in classic modernist images we are contemplating an object that is completely isolated; we are not distracted by anything else when looking at them; they are shown completely out of context.

The caricatures by the 19th century French printmaker, social critic, painter and sculptor Honoré Daumier might resemble "contemporary research installations" in a surprising manner. At the time, the paintings were shown next to each other and the museum/salon visitors held books and read texts, similar to what is very typical for a contemporary exhibition visitor, especially the professional one who tries to compare what they read to what they see. The white cube is thus a comment about the idea of commodity, that was acquired by the contemporary art world with the rise of the private market.

The next example is a research installation by the art duo Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme working in the field of sound art, who have just shown their work in Cologne. Their work is one of the examples of the type of display inspired by the Belgian poet, filmmaker

and artist Marcel Broodthaers. This applies another narrative, which we see throughout the 20th century.

The first one, which I mentioned above, was the isolation of the object in space, and the avant-garde potential of such display is already fading. We know it rather from the context of very quiet museums or even art fair exhibitions. Another narrative, which is still very active today and even growing, is the identification of art not with an isolated object, but with a complex display making use of various principles, and the display of different texts, images, and objects. Sometimes it is very difficult to tell the border between curatorial exhibition and artistic installation, research installation or documentation installation, and so on. And if we remember the predominant model of curating of the 1990s, in which the role of the professional independent curator actually became more prominent (as seen with people like Nicolas Bourriaud, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Viktor Misiano), such individuals were talking about working in a creative process together with an artist. This process of working together with an artist became an important part of the curatorial task, and this was something new, that was not yet shaped.

In the last few years we see a different model of curating, which I also belong to, where curators work with objects or projects which already exist, although they might arrange them in different → constellations or combinations, giving them new meanings, using them in a way as readymades, using historical and non-art materials. And in so doing they are very close to what artists are doing.

This complex way of displaying is, I would say, the most typical form of contemporary art. In the first place, contemporary art → institutions can be defined as institutions of display, even if they have educational and other tasks. Still the ultimate question is what they are showing. They can of course show very different things, it doesn't even have to be an exhibition but something different like a performance, and nevertheless they still have to show something. They become institutions of display.

Another very typical question that professionals in the art world are asking each other is the question of time. The showing of installations actually requires a lot of time. For instance, a person who has not yet seen a biennial asks someone who has already seen it: "OK, how much time will it take?" This is a very common question, or restated in another form: "Are there many installations?" Then one could answer: "No, no there are just visuals and the rest are sculptures, you can see it very quickly." Or in contrast: "No, you have to spend the whole day, you'll be there for a long time." This information is not available anywhere else, only shared between us. In other cases, when you are going to a theatrical performance or to a cinema or concert, or if you buy a vinyl record, it is the convention to have some information about how long the work will take to consume. You for example know that it will take two and a half hours with a break, or just two and a half minutes, and then you can make a plan. For example, I feel very frustrated when my students start showing a video without telling me how long it will be. One doesn't really know. Should one be prepared for two minutes or for 45? I would prefer to know in advance.

In seeing an exhibition this time dimension is somehow hidden. And it is never expressed directly and openly that contemporary art also requires time. There is still a strong notion of the model of contemplating art. Let us imagine a person who is walking around the Louvre, let us imagine that there are no tourists, the person is there alone and is contemplat-

ing *La Gioconda* or something else for however long, however long *La Gioconda* will take him or her. We still think about contemplation of art as some sort of free creative process, but of course this is not the case. If you wish to see something, you always have to choose. Will you watch the whole video or just two minutes? So → temporality is very much present in contemporary art, but not really addressed.

Now, I will take one step back, and say that we are already thinking of an artwork in a temporal way with a well-known notion of "time-based art". This term was invented in the context of museums, if I am not mistaken, because museum workers had to create categories for the works such as videotapes (documentation of performances, videos, films) to be kept in storage. Besides having a temporal dimension, many of these works started to question the dimension of temporality in general. For instance, we all know that the most typical form of video now is a loop, and there are many things written on the subject. This simply started as a useful technological solution for showing videos, but artists started to think about it in a more complex way.

I can refer here to two well-known works. The film by Clemens von Wedemeyer *Otjesd (Leaving)* was shot with a moving camera, and he created a loop in which you almost do not see the cut, and the film thus creates a surrealistic situation with a woman not being able to neither enter the Embassy territory nor leave it. So this is a staged surrealistic situation, which is a take on the notion of the loop. Another example by the same artist is one of his latest films, *Against Death*, in which this loop represents the situation of immortality.

The theme of a loop is also addressed by David Claerbout in his work *Bordeaux*. This is not really a loop in repetition. We assume at first that it is the same film, but in fact it is not. The film was shot 24 times, and the same scene with the same actors, totally identical, was shot 24 times at every hour of the day. The light situation changes a little between two shots. One doesn't really see any difference at first glance, but if one happens to watch all the 24 hours or if one goes away and is back at the exhibition the next day, one might be surprised to see the same scene set in the evening rather than the morning.

Time-based art is already very well known. We are writing about it, we are thinking about it. But a question remains, how to show the time that the making of the work took. In another work, *Letters to Émile Bernard*, Yuri Albert rewrote Van Gogh's handwriting. He also copied Van Gogh's letters to his brother Theo, and other texts important to him. By doing this Albert slows down the process of reproduction, revealing how long it really took to create these works. Another artist who has done projects that deal with time is Josef Dabernig, who was also mostly working with the notion of writing. With an artwork we cannot really be sure how long it took to be made. Even when it looks like a traditional painting, it might have been done very quickly. A sculpture may have been 3D printed; the making of a painting may have been outsourced. Writing, however, is still difficult to outsource, especially handwriting. In writing and handwriting a temporal dimension is still somehow present.

In these cases, we are speaking about art in real-time. Not in some imaginary time, as in a video-loop, which is a symbol of time, a represented time, surrealist time. It is instead real-time, making visible that time in which the artwork was made and is presented. If you start to read all the texts it will take you a lot of time, and in handwriting one becomes aware of that. It is exactly the same as it is with art in a site-specific situation, where the white

cube was suddenly dropped and an artwork was presented in some real situation, in a real space. In the same way, we are becoming aware of the time in which the work was made.

Because time is abstracted we never think about calling it "white time", as we do with → white space. A white space is an abstracted space, and every curator knows that every white space is not as white as it might seem in the sense of being totally abstract. Anatoly Osmolovsky once made an artwork, which I like very much. It was called *The Critique of the State of the World*, and shown in the Central House of Artists in Moscow, which was supposed to be a white space gallery. He placed some really white and really flat surfaces on the walls of the gallery, so it became clear that they were not actually white.

This means that it is only our abstracted thinking which makes us think that this is a white space. Every white space, as every curator knows, has some fire extinguishers, exit signs, and other stuff that is not completely abstract. We just make ourselves and our visitors forget about this. Every space can be seen as a site-specific one, and especially those post-industrial spaces which most of art projects are using now. The bottom line here is that in much the same way we are not really reflecting on the fact that artworks also take time to be produced, and especially that they also take time to look at them. So this is the core of the abstract notion of "white time". The concept of time-specific display is making us aware of the time of a display, in the same way as site-specific display makes us aware of the space.

I will present two forms of time-specific display. One is a lecture performance, which is a very typical genre today, and the other is an exhibition, which is working with → temporality.

With the lecture performance, I would refer to a performative symposium *Reports to an Academy. A Non-academic Symposium, Performative or Otherwise*, which we just did with David Riff in Cologne, in Akademie der Künste der Welt, this strange institution where I work.[20] The symposium was organised in Kunstverein on the topic of *Ein Bericht für eine Akademie/Reports to an Academy*, bearing the title of one of Kafka's famous stories. The protagonist of this story is an ape, who ends up in a zoo and has for many years lived among humans. The ape thus becomes a human, knows how to be human, and that means drinking whisky, smoking, and so on. The ape has all the habits of being human but remains an ape, who is given a choice of staying in the zoo or appearing in a *varieté*, with the ape preferring the latter. The distinction between the zoo and a *varieté* was very important to me, because in a zoo the subject, even the animal subject, becomes an object. I would say this is a metaphor of an exhibition in which everything, even the living, become an object. In contrast, a *varieté* gives the possibility to perform, and this is why the ape in the story becomes an artist in this manner. In the symposium all the artists who we invited gave different types of performances, but very often around the notion of a lecture performance, in which a person is showing images and commenting on them. For example, Uriel Orlow, who opened the symposium, was reading a Kafka story and then commenting on it.

20 I just have to note that everyone assumes this is an educational institution that we have students and professors, but this is certainly not the case. It is some sort of a workshop academy of different people in the city of Cologne, and we don't even have our own space.

During the symposium Gabriel Dharmoo was doing a music performance with images, entitled *Anthropologies Imaginaires*, Keti Chukhrov also presented her new piece. And with Christian von Borries we were looking for new subgenres of the lecture performance genre. He first appeared on iPads, and during this whole time it was unclear whether he was sitting nearby or somewhere in Hong Kong. In fact, it was a site-specific lecture performance, which took place at one specific location and not in some abstracted place. Time was also very much a part of it, because Christian was appearing in a live-stream on the kind of mobile devices which everybody has now, and only later appeared in the space in person.

The lecture performance genre is very interesting because we still do not know how to define it, where the border is between a lecture performance and a lecture. As a lecturer I am all the time showing images, commenting on them, and I ask myself in what moment it will become a lecture performance. On the part of an artist there are several reasons for using this genre. It is one method to achieve the de-alienation of an artwork, in which an artwork is represented by the body and voice and by the presence of the artist him- or herself. On the other hand, for those coming from the academic field, the driving force behind lecture performances is the precarity of those academics that have to enter a field of mass media and pop culture, like ours. For in comparison to the academic field, that of contemporary art is pop culture.

Another reason for the widespread use of lecture performances is the process of merging of the roles in production, distribution and display. Again, if we look back to the 19th century, or even to the beginning of the 20th, the processes of production, distribution and display were very much divided by the division of labour, which was taking place in different places, done by different people. The artist was producing an artwork, someone else was distributing it, if there was a distribution through a gallery, for instance, and the display was also something done by other people. But in → the contemporary iPhone production of an image, the distribution of it, and the display, all happen at the same time on the same device. The same thing happens to the contemporary installation work, which artists and curators are doing together and all those processes are thus being merged. A lecture performance is likewise one of these things, and here I have in mind in the first place a lecture performance with images.

Of course, there are also more traditional performances, where people are making some sort of a theatre in the manner of Fluxus, or even in the way of Marinetti's first performance. But I would say that the predominant model today is a performance with continuous image production, which is for some artists certainly just another form of research installation. Some even openly propose that "it depends on the condition of invitation, I can present it as an installation if there is space for it, and I can also do a lecture performance, just for one evening." In each case it will mean a different economy.

Indeed, one of the reasons for the raise in the number of lecture performances is also the partial shift of the art economy towards a concert economy, from the economy of creating a unique work, which is presented in space and ideally sold through the gallery to an individual consumer or a museum. We are now increasingly talking about a concert economy, in which the artist is doing something ephemeral, like a performance or an installation, which is then dismantled, or a lecture performance for which one receives a fee. This is an

economy that is closer to pop music, and I think we are just at the very beginning of this process, and we have to think really conscientiously of the consequences it will bring.

Another work I wanted to bring to your attention, which has also been shown during this three-day symposium, is one by Fadlabi & Lars Cuzner, two artists that are based in Norway who are researching and exploring the notion of a human zoo. One of the first exhibitions of that kind took place in the early 20th century in Oslo, where a village of Congolese people was created and those people were playing the roles of themselves. In fact, however, those people were not even Congolese, they were from another African country, but for some reason they had to play Congolese. The Oslo bourgeoisie was observing them, and journalists were writing horrific, racist things like: "Ah, we now understood how good it is to be white." This is a totally impossible. shameful and embarrassing page of Norwegian history, which the country tried to erase. Fadlabi & Lars Cuzner – not Norwegians themselves – tried to rediscover this page and succeeded in creating a very embarrassing and difficult situation for everybody, because they announced that they will be recreating this human zoo. They announced a re-enactment, and local journalists became horrified that the story would repeat itself. In the end, the artists built a village and invited a number of people with dark skin, but it was not clear who played what role, since they invited journalists and some other people who were either Russian or Afro-American or Afro-Norwegian. The situation became extremely embarrassing and there was a big discussion in the Norwegian press, which became politically very important.

But this is just the pre-story. The real story is about us inviting them to a lecture for *Reports to an Academy*, and we assumed they would do some sort of lecture performance about this project. What they showed was actually a video about this project with participation of Susan Buck-Morss, and some other theorists. But instead of just showing a film with documentation about the project they staged some sort of a bar, and then stayed at this bar and commented a little bit on the film, but did not give a lecture, not in any really meaningful way. They also asked other people to join them on stage, drink a beer.

What they did was basically put a video installation on stage. However, in such an installation the viewer has the possibility of leaving or coming back later. Instead, they made us watch the film, but not in the controlled and isolated environment of a film theatre. They showed a sort of animated video installation, of which one aspect was that every display is now understood as performative.

Because every time artists exhibit research installations or documentation installations they place them in a different setting, which depends on the space, curator, or context. In this way every time an installation is shown it also becomes a performative iteration on some sort of a matrix that exists somewhere. If we remember the early avant-gardes, something similar already existed. Famously, in 1909 Kandinsky said something different, suggesting that artists should stop being performers in a musical sense, should stop performing someone else's music, and rather they should become composers. What has happened now is that artists are composers who are performing their own work. The artists have to invent their own work, but then they also have to perform it. And even when they are outsourcing some of the work they still have to present it. One can say that this is what Kandinsky did, because he did not invent abstract art, he just saw one of his paintings, which was turned 90 or 180 degrees, and said: "Oh, this looks nice!" So he basically made

a gesture that is actually similar to Marcel Duchamp's, by turning something, doing a performative gesture, so it becomes a work of art.

Now, in the last part of my lecture I will refer to a solo-show by the previously mentioned conceptual artist Yuri Albert, which we did together at the Moscow Museum of Modern Art. The title of the show was *What Did the Artist Want to Say with That?.* We tried to be secretive about what the show would be, and it was just announced that it was a major retrospective of Yuri Albert's work, something which had not yet happened on that scale, and the audience at the vernissage, the artists and curators, were expecting to see his works, but they only saw texts in the places where the artworks – mostly paintings – were supposed to be presented. When preparing the exhibition I asked different people to contribute descriptions or analysis, comments about those works, and I also wrote many of them myself. Many contributors were well known to the Moscow art audience. Most important to us was that they were shown in the same way as real artworks. If it was a video projection then the text was also video projected; if it was an audio work then the text was narrated; but mostly, as I said, there were paintings. This was the situation for the vernissage, then gradually, during the duration of the show, works started to appear by covering the texts. Gradually the images were covering the texts, and at the very end of the exhibition there were just images. What was important for me is that there was not a moment where this gesture was expected or revealed. So people could not really compare the texts to the images, and they always had to use either their imagination or memory.

The show was very revealing to me about the relation of text to image. Especially in the field of contemporary art, to which Yuri Albert belongs, this relation was radically rethought. Normally it is said that the image is rich, whereas text is an instrument of reduction. Conceptual art is thus always criticised for being something flattening. As a critic I often heard such criticism of this critique: "It is not everything, your text is not enough, the artwork has so much more potential." The text is seen as something flattening, which is somehow killing the richness of the associations inside an artwork.

At the Yuri Albert show we had a totally different situation. It was the image that was killing the text. When reading the text you could have imagined different things if you didn't know the work. And then when the artwork was hung over the text you could say: "OK, this is just that." All the imagination was gone, there were no versions anymore, all the potentiality was gone, and the varieties in your head were killed. The visitors to the vernissage (mostly artists, curators, and other such professionals) found themselves a little bit frustrated, but in a pleasant way. They were very excited about it, but still, it turned out that to read a text took much more time than it would to see an image. They first tried to read, then found out that it was impossible to read and socialise. So people had to choose how to use their time – and I didn't even plan this – it just turned out that temporality works in this way.

People started to nervously take photographs of the texts because they knew they would not be able to find them anywhere else. There was thus a frustration about the texts, which had a precarious character. In a way, at an art exhibition or when contemplating some artistic ensemble, you have an overview and can see it even if it is too big. But with a text, as Lessing points out, especially with poetry or listening or oral poetry, which he was

mostly referring to, the work is disappearing in time. You have to remember very well what you heard, since when coming to the end of a poem you might have already forgotten how it started. And this makes people a little nervous. Lessing actually described the difference between poetry and painting, that poetry is much more precarious, since it is linear and represented in time.

Many of the early avant-garde artists who specialised in text also followed this line of thought. Kruchenykh for instance, friend and colleague of Malevich – much less known, but a great poet and also an artist – was experimenting in writing texts and simultanisation of the text, where the letters were appearing not in a temporal line but somehow as an image. They were very much aware of the difference between the linear temporal character of the text and special character of the image. They were deconstructing the goal of specialisation. Now what we are witnessing, and what I am also interested in, is rather the temporalisation of an image, an injection of time and understanding the temporal specificity. This helps us to discover the very character of the notion of contemporaneity. I am thinking more and more that the notion of contemporary art is something very specific, which was supposed to come instead of the special art in space. Instead of art in space there is art in time. This is about a very old distinction between temporal arts (theatre and poetry, which were oral, and music), and special arts (architecture, painting, sculpture). The contemporaneity lives strangely today in an ahistorical way. We find this contemporaneity in the timeline of a Facebook account, which is constantly changing, like our exhibition.

And maybe the last thing to say to finish this short sketch on → temporality in contemporary art is a profound shift in the cultural idea of immortality, which greatly influenced all these temporal shifts. For Yuri Albert, and many conceptual artists – at least in the Moscow conceptual circle – they have something of a cemetery of artworks. Albert is, for example, working a lot with burnt images. His series of black paintings *My Favourite Books* is painted with the ashes of burnt books written by Balzac, Pushkin, Swift, and Rilke. These books disappeared in this blackness and the geometry of modernism. All the possible narratives, characters, and emotions you might have had while reading them are now simply gone. The notion of the death of art is certainly there, but also art is becoming not just death but the instrument of death. Anyway, this immortality, as represented in a burnt book, and in the form of a memorial, is something conceptual art is working a lot with (Ian Finlay, On Kawara). These cemeteries are in a way a condensation of something, which has once been but is now represented as a condensed sign, and this deep cultural memory of what our post-mortem existence should look like in a book or painting has significantly shifted, as outlined in this brief review of the temporal shift in contemporary curatorial and artistic practices. We know about this phenomenon of post-mortem websites or post-mortem accounts of artists on social networks. People do not really know what to do with them. Nobody is closing them, and it seems they have become monuments in time, instead of creating a break by making a monument in form. These are temporal extensions and nobody yet knows how to work with them, even specialists working for social networks. While there is still no social consensus about this, it's an issue that artists are starting to explore.

This was a brief talk about the temporal shift in contemporary curatorial and artistic practices.

Figure 29: Hélio Oiticica, *Eden*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1969. Courtesy of César Oiticica Filho.

Figure 30: Bali Hai, Jimi Hendrix Sets Guitar on Fire at Monterey Pop Festival 1967, 40˝ video, 1967, posted on YouTube on 25 October 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3U5dvC5qr6Y.

Visiting all sorts of contemporary exhibitions, one can wonder if art is still able to transcend spectacularisation. The conviction that leisure provides clues to safeguard a sensory, experiential journey represents a skilful method, but what is to be done in practice with regard to this?

The proposition of creleasure arose in Hélio Oiticica's exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery in London (1969), as a development of the artist's ongoing struggle against finished forms. (Figure 29) Combining a set of "penetrables" with different sensorial properties opened up for the participation of visitors (sand, leaves, straw, water), this historical show marks an undeniable inflection point. Oiticica realised there is no true life for art under the pressures of → institutions or their artificial light. In fact, behaviour had already been a constituent part of one of his recent projects (*Eden*). As a reader of Herbert Marcuse, he introduced the notion of "non-repressive leisure" for the promotion of experimental proposals. In doing so, he achieved a wider understanding of artistic production and economy.

Notwithstanding the first negative resonance, how can one make the most of an inactivity? Can one conceive giving up producing and remaining a participating citizen, or at least still belonging to the collectivity as a full member?

Oiticica's permanent drive to act in different directions, assuming social, psychological and ethical convictions, was made possible through a great emphasis on collective manifestations generated by music (samba, rock, rap) and → dance. Alongside arguments stressing the active role of the artist, there would also be room left for a very different activity, something like enjoying idleness. Questioning his own routine of producing objects to be exhibited, Oiticica gave his participatory program a key requirement for deceleration, allowing new assignments and powers to both parts of the process – proposers and participants.

In order to make creleasure a real proposition, a couple of specific aspects needed to be settled. Imagine a piece of clothing or an object as an extension of your skin – in this context, Oiticica has outlined the concept of "world-as-shelter". And then imagine the fusion between object-subject and you get the fundamental dimension of body-wise: Jimi Hendrix setting his guitar on fire at Monterey Pop Festival in 1967. (Figure 30) Intrinsically articulated, these two concepts are the grounds for a space that is no neutral location, but an atmosphere, more like a climate or environment.

This very brief introduction is fundamental to grasp how an artistic program can turn its formal nature and nurture into political subjectivity. We are now the witnesses of a movement towards the opposite direction of the culture of laziness – the hyperactivity of artists, curators, and gallerists going crazy because of the hundreds of fairs and biennials happening simultaneously. One could almost argue that the everyday life of a successful artist is not too distant from that of any CEO working for a corporation. Not by accident, attention deficit disorder is a consequence of an inflated degree of activity.

This diagnosis is a decisive factor to be mentioned here. The underlying issue is to develop new strategies for slowing down. According to Felix Guattari's comprehension of → the contemporary way of life, to be concerned with subjectivity is to

reflect on a process that has jeopardised its exteriority at various levels, i.e. social, animal, vegetal, cosmic (or energetic).[21]

In a world overloaded with a multitude of tricks coming from the entertainment industries, is it still reasonable to stand up for (more) leisure?

In other words, to combine deceleration with urgency leads to one of the main philosophical issues of the digital era. As writers, we have all experienced that the final text is just the last and temporary version, or, let's say, a virtual form until another one appears. Caught up in muddled projects endlessly being remodelled, this indefinite number of drafts only contributes to increase a rhetoric based on unsuccessful attempts. What does it mean that any representation is doomed to remain a work in progress, like a failure?

It is impossible to avoid here the remembrance of F. Scott Fitzgerald's successive bankruptcies (*The Crack-Up*, 1945). Of course all life is a process of breaking down… It is less about voicing a nihilist drive than putting down the emphasis on productivity – "knowledge production" is the daily leitmotif of neoliberal systems. Paul Lafargue denounced the social and mental structures of → labour in his *Le Droit à la paresse*[22] (1880), a classic essay to understand the supreme values of the 19th century. Ultimately, Lafargue and Fitzgerald gather the main features of → the contemporary, albeit erroneous, notion of a → loser, whose disorderly condition originates from all sorts of inflations: unemployment rates, lack of integrity and ethical practices, bankruptcy proceedings.

Particular emphasis should be placed on the context of the Industrial Revolution here. Now since the Great Depression of 1929, at least once a decade the world has been undergoing a (new?) financial crisis, whose impacts are likely harmful to a growing city in peri-urban zones. In a society exposed to precarious employment, pleading for the "right of laziness" is a disturbing claim for both conservative and socialist regimes. Because it makes a minimal performance possible (a continuing operation or, as said by Fitzgerald, moving on is a necessary task, despite an immense drive to resign), the statement "I need to feel functional!" is a deep appeal for mercy from a depressed person asking for some medication to relieve intangible distress.

It is self-evident that the turn into our digital age has disseminated a collective machine addiction. If understood in the existential register of being body-wise, leisure is the opposite of entertainment. It is more like a temporary rest, given that the unbearable need to respond to the requests of others is getting stronger and stronger. Digital contacts on flat screens are actually the primal source of the rhythms inside any urban being. Totally internalised, mobile applications and portable devices are the uncanny wires of human brains.

One must assume that unfettered access to all virtual devices multiplies the experience of misery. Swinging in one of Oiticica's famous hammocks is now impossible to imagine, what with users polishing their nails and plunged into a mood of distraction, as theorised by Walter Benjamin. In spite of navigating through the open arena of art, left as an active void, such users will be browsing a succession of links, checking online messages that drop at every minute. Inactivity as a creative space is thus perhaps the motto needed to preserve civilisation and freedom.

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21 See Felix Guattari, *Les trois écologies* (Paris: Galilée, 1989).
22 Editors' note: in translation *The Right to be Lazy.*

Dancing as Insurrectional Practice Rasha Salti

Few political events have been exposed and "experienced" globally as live broadcasts as the insurgencies in the Arab world, or what the mainstream media have decided to refer to as "the Arab Spring". With television spectators, YouTube and Facebook users across the world witnessing news reports as well as "unmediated" live video streaming from the heart of the action, it would seem that the famous adage from the 1960s, "the revolution will not be televised", no longer holds. The common denominator to the body of videos across countries that have experienced insurgencies is that first and foremost they address the civic imaginary of the viewer, whether produced by insurgents or the regimes' security departments. They are at war; the first speaks the language of → emancipation (speaking, doing and recording what the regime has ordained as "prohibited") while the second speaks the language of fear (uninhibited administration of violence, threat of social collapse and chaos); the first articulates the idiom of individual agency within newly forged plural, diverse citizenship, while the second reinforces the language of sectarian community and difference; the first has marshalled creativity using the arts, playfulness, humour, theatricality and the carnivalesque, while the second has rallied the endorsement of famous stars from pop music and television serials, arguing in the chilling language of → conspiracy, *realpolitik* and pragmatism.

The seductive power of the unmediated *in vivo, in situ* video record of the lived experience transmitted in real time and raw is tremendous. And yet, it cannot stand in for the actual experience of being there, nor does it convey the full complexity of the political subjectivities being formed. Thus, as spectators, we can only be prognostic or speculative in sketching the contours of these new political subjectivities. Being there, standing in Tahrir, in the processional marches on Alexandria's seaside corniche, or hemmed in a street in Homs, Harasta, Douma or Idlib in Syria, is first and foremost a physical experience. The crucible of this reclaiming of political → agency, re-articulation of the civic self and forging of a new body politic, is the body. In socially conservative societies like Egypt and Syria, where the organised and outspoken political opposition to despotic regimes was political Islam, ideologies that abnegate, demonise and police the body, this new political subjectivity promises to coalesce, come into being and engage with the religiopolitical in unexpected and interesting ways.

In the first two years of the insurgency in Syria, the centrality of the body in the daily chronicles of street protests was obvious, specifically in one of the most surprising features of the insurgency, namely, dancing. Invariably, in freezing cold and excruciating heat, at night and during the day, and even in some funeral processions, insurgents dance the *dabkeh*, a countryside folk tradition, and common to the Levant in myriad varieties, performed as a celebration. In its miraculously steadfast and tireless commitment to reject indulging the regime's language of violence and terror, these creative strategies contributed to forging the new civic engagement and political subjectivity.

Decolonise: to operate on the nodes of hegemonic affect.
Decoloniality: a program of hybrid tactics that traverse materiality and writing, memory and → archive, affect and body.
Decolonisation: a collective process of subjectivisation.

> *Note: The subject of the decolonial revolution does not exist. It is produced in the process of decolonisation.*

The program of action for operating on contemporary coloniality begins by fragmenting the binary code through which we understand colonial violence in the neoliberal era. This is a binary code of simple divisions between the past and present, the north and → south, the First and the Third Worlds.

The process of decolonisation requires various forms of anti-racist, migrant and subaltern oppositions. However, these strategies alone do not succeed in modifying the Eurocentric and logocentric terms that regulate the truth-body and hierarchise lives, as well as legitimise and naturalise the process of hierarchisation. The truth-body is reproduced through techniques of racialisation and sexualisation operating and legitimised in Europe today. To decolonise affect is thus to reinvent subjectivities that escape the truth of the body produced by colonial violence.

The knowledge and poetic-political strategies accumulated by a critical diaspora responding to the first signs of neoliberal colonial violence in the 1980s offer clues here. Valerie Mason-John aka Queenie, CambellX, Adrienne Rich, Black Audio Film Collective, Pedro Lemebel, Nestor Perlongher, Audre Lorde, Cheryl Clarke, Gloria Anzaldúa, Pratibha Parmar, Essex Hemphill, May Ayim, Strange Fruit, Kanak Attack and Salon Oriental together irritate the binary codes of simple divisions that divide up and reduce affect to the modern, humanist and Eurocentric sensibility. Fatima El-Tayeb (2011) calls this displacement, accumulation, and activation of multiple and translocal strategies creolising theory. The decolonising process of subjectivisation includes creolising tactics: ridding theory and poetry of its pretensions by exploring the often tense relations between specific circumstances and universal conditions, local applications and global connections, without dissolving them through a → universalising model of interpretation.

If the subject of the decolonial revolution does not exist it is because it must be produced through a hybrid program that operates on various levels: between the dominant narratives of history and the sensibilities that these produce; between the conditions of the production of knowledge and the materiality of the body. If this body is marked by the colonial system of writing that we know as the truth-body, the subject of decolonisation is produced and invented through this very same process of writing, of reconstituting and inventing the archive. This writing – this process of subjectivisation – is a decolonial program that irritates and dismantles the modern, humanist and Eurocentric sensibility, making a cut in the flow of modern-colonial affect.

Decolonisation is a process of collective subjectivisation, a violent program of re-writing the subject-body and dismantling the truth-body. Decoloniality rehearses a violence that consists of denaturalising and de-ordering hierarchies of affect by putting into practice the strategies invented by micropolitical struggles, which together have managed to break the linearity of history and the linearity of the

truth-body. Practices of sexual disobedience and the black and radical feminisms have developed these collective practices of resistance, self-production, forms of opposition and poetic-political writing.

All too often the anti-colonial and anti-racist discourses forget and ignore the production of these knowledges and end up repeating the key terms of hegemonic affect: humanism/genocide, modernism/colonialism. This erasure and forgetting reproduce discourses rooted in shame and colonial guilt. The repetition of this divided affectivity, in turn, collaborates actively to erase and eliminate the archive of resistance of the critical diaspora. Resisting the discourse of shame – not from the → South but from the centre of production of the colonial truth-body – is an act of radical revenge and a strategy of rewriting.

Program:
1. Produce a new body, → intervening precisely where the techniques of racialisation and sexualisation divide up affects and design hierarchies in the world.
2. Activate and invent a radical archive that serves the memory of this body in decolonisation.
3. Intervene in the technologies that silence resistances and invent counter-technologies. Reappropriate the languages and voices of distinct micropolitical struggles. Understand their contributions to the decolonial program.
4. Exercise radical revenge through writing as direct action. Rewrite-inscribe to restore the erasure. Traverse the inaudible and unsayable fields of coloniality. Invent the archive.
5. Write, resist, create alliances and modify affects.

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Evidence Jabulani Chen Pereira

Johannesburg, South Africa, December 2014

Evidence is my chosen word; after all, it's the most desirable word when one emerges from a traumatic experience such as conflicts of all kinds, any infliction aimed at harming citizens, our lands or our values related to how we understand freedoms and human dignities. The plurality of freedoms and dignities helps me frame the diverse understandings of these words and how we experience them.

Evidence in all respects is the action and/or the tangible piece of a document we have that allows us to believe in either retributive or restorative justice. The notion that evidence heals has been a misnomer in South Africa, Argentina and other countries that experienced dictatorships and wars. Photography has always been the grounded medium for producing evidence-based work related to human atrocities. The idea of the iconic emerged from the idea of what Roland Barthes calls the "punctum", the image that stings. The way in which our voice on truths has emerged from the iconic brings into question how we regard the notion of disposable people. Those who did not fit into the iconic frame, the nameless, voiceless victims. These narratives cloud and direct our methods of → representation and framing of evidence.

What happens when evidence is "tampered" with, in this contemporary age, and is it ethical to fictionalise truths. To present ephemera in all its forms as evidence of a body, identity and other constructions we opt for as constructions of space and time.

Fragility Jesús Carrillo, Francisco Godoy Vega

In 1989, Félix Guattari argued that reality was structured according to three ecologies – the environment, social relations and subjectivity – whose balance would be under a constant threat of damage due to external factors and internal entropy alike. Guattari's approach, carried out during the end of the so-called Cold War, proposed such damage as a system founded on the fragility and constant risk of collapsibility that the strata of these ecologies would live within. The concept of fragility allows for creating a diagnosis about the unstable balance in which contemporary society is built and its process of subjectivisation, functioning, from a materialistic point of view, beyond the threat of strictly symbolic instability. At the same time, fragility would contain an inverted revolutionary potential that would operate at the intersection of the ecosystems with "the molecular domains of sensibility, intelligence and desire".[23]

Fragility would then allow forms of the → common that can activate, from below, alliances between the molecular domains and the ecosophies of the social and environmental relations. Recently, Paul B. Preciado made the call to be weak and despicable, "because it is through fragility that the revolution operates".[24] Fragility would be a "war machine",[25] a tool for dismantling of the regulated forms of indoctrination that the *dispositifs* of the State and market generate. Dismantling these structures assuming the minority of the fragile would allow us to invent from failure, and to live a more sensitive experience through an ecosystemic vision that activates the fluidity among these ecologies. Appropriating a category such as fragility – often used with reference to financial, architectural and tectonic systems, and in discussions on global warming – also allows a process of semantic inversion to think about the systemic problem of → the subject, as well as the *dispositifs* of power/knowledge alike, from which to revindicate the power of the "practices of liberty"[26] exerted on everyday life.

Fragility from *nuda vida*

The active recovering of fragility would be an affront to the principles of "liquid modernity" set out by Zygmunt Bauman[27] as a frame of a paralysing fragility, generated by the alleged death of the subject and the omnipresence of consumption and simulacra. This approximation to fragility would eliminate the material conditions of production and empowerment, proposing a nihilist paralysis of the weak.

23 Félix Guattari, *Las tres ecologías* (Valencia: Pretextos, 1996), 10.
24 Paul B. Preciado, *El coraje de ser una misma* (20 November 2014), https://comitedisperso. wordpress.com/2014/11/20/el-coraje-de-ser-una-misma/ (accessed 5 August 2015).
25 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "1227 – Tratado de nomadología: la máquina de guerra", in *Mil mesetas. Capitalismo y esquizofrenia* (Valencia: Pre-textos, 2004), 359–432.
26 Michel Foucault, "La ética del cuidado de si mismo como práctica de libertad (diálogo con H. Becker, R. Fornet-Betancourt, A. Gomez-Müller, 20 de enero de 1984)", *Revista de Filosofía* 10, no. 15 (October 2000): 257–280.
27 Zygmunt Bauman, *Amor líquido: Acerca de la fragilidad de los vínculos humanos* (Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2005).

Figure 31: *Mixed Use, Manhattan, Photography and Related Practices 1970s to the present*, exhibition view. Curated by Lynne Cooke & Douglas Crimp, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2010. Photo: Joaquín Cortés / Román Lores. Courtesy of Museo Reina Sofía.

On the other hand, our appropriation of fragility would propose a critique to the narrative and reproduction of the frail as a withdrawal towards the individual, the narcissistic, the regressive.

For Giorgio Agamben, contemporary societies are founded on a bio-politics that generates a planetary management of life as a *nuda vida* or bare life, operating a distinction between those lives that deserve to be lived and the *homo sacer*; in other words, the expandable subject. In the same direction, Judith Butler has pointed out precariousness and vulnerability as inner elements of the Post 9/11 global system. These elements would be founded on the violence of the hierarchy that produces the expendable lives proposed by Agamben, lives "that don't even deserve to be mourned" in Butler's words; however, they have a resistance potential, which the US thinker locates in the performative practices of the excluded subjects themselves and on the capacity of the States to generate a "global justice". For Butler, precarity "designates that politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death",[28] whereas vulnerability would have a more immanent character where "each of us is → constituted politically in part by virtue of the social vulnerability of our bodies [...] → Loss and vulnerability seem to follow from our being socially constituted bodies, attached to others, at risk of losing those attachments, exposed to others, at risk of violence by virtue of that exposure".[29] Both Agamben and Butler take some ideas from Michel Foucault, who had already suggested fragility as an element that shows the external conditions that subjugate the subject and its transformative potential. For the author, any diagnosis about the present conditions requires an exercise, since:

> *It is not about a simple characterisation of what we are, but – following lines of fragility in the present – of being able to understand why and how what-it-is could no longer be what-it-is. In this regard, any description must be done according to this kind of virtual → fracture that enhances the space of liberty, understood as space for concrete liberty, of possible transformation.*[30]

This "possible transformation" would operate within the alliance of certain non-normative subjectivities – the crippled, the lumpen, the queer, the indigenous, the rationalised, the → colonised – that would have the ability to activate that power in the present. It would thus not be about an empowering identity proposal from the homosexual, the marginal or the sick, but a proposal about processes that shows the factors that determine that not all of us are as frail or expendable, and that there is some common fragilisation that has a potential to build up a → common. On the other hand, this alliance would disarticulate the distant relationship between subject and object taking multiple → agencies that would pass through animal or vegetal becoming, challenging the Westernised structure that separates us from those other ecologies outside the subject. It would be about defending the damage as a place of enunciation and the configuration of new ecological alliances that spill over the postmodernism nonaction and the trite Marxist "exploitation of man by man". At least in southern Europe, the deep veil of the crisis system has been moved, showing what is not recent, and what has been concealed on this side

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28   Judith Butler, *Marcos de guerra: las vidas lloradas* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2010), 46.
29   Judith Butler, *Vida precaria: el poder de la violencia y el duelo* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2006), 46.
30   Michel Foucault, *El yo minimalista y otras conversaciones* (Buenos Aires: La marca, 1996), 121–122.

of the world by a series of "bubbles",[31] that have burst and now need to be recomposed from "global justice" paradigms.

Fragility from certain artistic practices of the MNCARS Collection

From the 1960s on, several artistic practices have proposed an alliance based on intersubjective collective work and by seeing the environment from perspective of fragility as an ecological power, in order to create and live together. In these practices, the frail would be a space within which to activate the pulse of life in view of a necrocapitalist system. Artistic practices have mainly faced this system of fragility from the molecular domains of desire, affections and sensibilities towards social, ecological and architectural systems. An example, perhaps too explicit, was *Projects: Pier 18* in 1971. In this project, 27 artists – all of them male –, among which were Vito Acconci, Gordon Matta-Clark and Italo Scanga, put their bodies in constrained situations, confronting the fragility of the abandoned and decayed NY pier with their own corporality. Paradoxically, these artistic actions were taking place in the same space as other affective and sexual alliances that were even more fragile and quotidian: the pier as a place of homosexual cruising, as was presented in the 2010 exhibition *Mixed Use, Manhattan*. (Figure 31)

In the Spanish state, Ocaña and other agents of Barcelona's counterculture of the late Franco regime and transition period, developed an accurate exercise of life. With his actions, Ocaña situated the → transvestite body and subjectivity at the centre of the social debate through parody and appropriation of popular culture, activating the fragility of sexual ambiguity with an approach from the tacky, kitsch, camp and queer. While the body will be the centre of this attitude of inversion when treating himself as a "lost decadent", the same occurred with some of his sculptures and paintings, in that "it could be either the Virgin Mary or any whore from the Rambla", as Ocaña pointed out. In the video *Ocaña, el ángel que canta en el suplicio (Ocaña, the angel who sings in the torture)*, 1979, by Gérard Courant, Ocaña assumes his fragility in front of the iconic Marilyn Monroe: "You are not aware of how much I suffer, you are not aware of the sadness I have at night", he says in the subversive gesture of activating his fragile figure in the Berlin cold outside the Brandenburg Gate. (Figure 32)

The very same principle of affirmation of fragility to confront different ecologies from the molecular domain of desire is present in other artists' work. In Chile, for instance, Carlos Leppe used transvestism and patches as tools for denouncing the system of corporal repression that existed during the early years of Pinochet's dictatorship in *El perchero (The Clothes Rack)*, 1975. (Figure 33) Diamela Eltit in *Zona de dolor I (Pain Zone I)*, 1980, did something similar when proposing a healing act for the triple discrimination that the sexual workers of the city were undergoing, in a gesture in which the writer and performer sees herself. (Figure 34)

> *Without forgetting the suffering and urgency, my own social stratum and the mental abandonment of those deprived from exerting their thought (…) the pain of legal distance, favouring so the pamphlet, the mystical acts, the desire for corporal abstraction as a way of power, alcoholism, certain kinds of delinquency, any kind of clinical madness. I depart from these entities waiting for the cleansing as long as the social coordinates we are used to obey are resolved.*
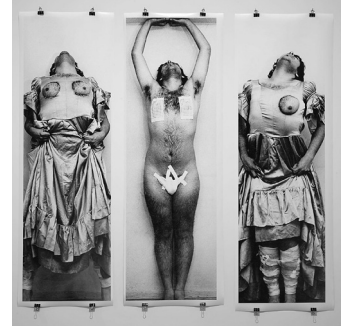

Figure 32: *Gérard Courant, Ocaña, der Engel der in der Qual singt (Ocaña, el ángel que canta en el suplicio)*, Super 8 film, 10′, 1979. Courtesy of the artist.

Figure 33: Carlos Leppe*, El perchero (The Clothes Rack)*, photography/action, overall: 173 x 180 cm / each part: 173 x 58 cm; edition/serial number: 3/5; gelatin silver print on paper, Santiago de Chile, 1975. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía Collection.

Figure 34: Diamela Eltit, *Zona de Dolor I (Pain Zone I)*, video, 16′ 39″, 1980. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía Collection. Courtesy of the artist.

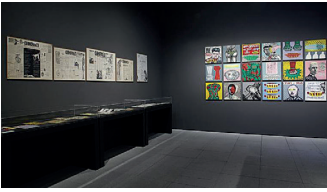31   Peter Sloterdijk, *Esferas I. Burbujas, Microesferología* (Madrid: Siruela, 2003).

At the same time, in different actions Las Yeguas del Apocalipsis were dealing with bigger systems through the micro-politics of the fragilised body: from the heteropatriarchal foundation of the University of Chile (1988) to the *cueca sola*[32] of the mothers of the forced disappeared in *La conquista de América (The Conquest of America)*, 1989, that was presented in the 2012–2013 exhibition *Losing the Human Form. A Seismic Image of the 1980s in Latin America*. (Figure 35) Meanwhile, in the performance *Hospital del trabajador (Worker's Hospital)*, 1980, Pedro Lemebel recovered the real immolation of the citizen Sebastián Acevedo that occurred years before in the city of Concepción. Acevedo reached the full political and symbolic potential of the body fragilised by the dictatorship, setting himself on fire and demanding an urgent response: his sons' whereabouts, who went missing under the regime. His action gave force to the birth of the Sebastian Acevedo Movement Against Torture that, working from the principle of non-violence, activated the Chilean public space by pointing out the places of torture and → missing people. Along these lines the Argentinean *Siluetazo*, 1983, also implied the transference and inscription of a social demand (turn up alive) with the present bodies in the public plaza: a process of lending the body, in the already decadent but still genocidal Argentinean dictatorship, where it became re-exposed for the fragile and possibly missing.

Apart from the corporal politics developed against dictatorships and transitions to democracy, sexual politics, and AIDS in particular, are those that have insisted on this question in a clearer way. Radical Gai and the LSD collective did the same in Madrid in the early 90s through a shared appropriation of the public space; right before, the artist Pepe Espaliú had mobilised a collective subjectivity to share the stigma and social burden that symbolised his own body in the action *Carrying*, 1992. (Figure 36) The artist was carried and passed from hand to hand during the action, which was carried out in Madrid from Galería La Máquina Española to the Museo Reina Sofía, where he was received by the museum's director, María de Corral. The next year, Espaliú performed his last artwork, *El nido (The nest)*, in Arhhem. For eight days, he climbed up a tree with a nest in the Gemeentemuseum's garden, where he took off one of his eight garments and walked an increasing number of times around the trunk, subjectivising the building up of the nest, activating the fragility of his sick body, but also of the house as a place of presumed safety. These examples, connected to the lines of research and recent acquisitions of the museum, have been working on the basis of this common fragile subjectivity, weaving new ecologies for creation and cohabitation. To them and us alike, fragility is not the premise of a dilapidated future or heroic martyrdom, but a space to activate the power of life against a necrocapitalist system.

Figure 35: *Losing the Human Form. A Seismic Image of the 1980s in Latin America*, exhibition view. Curated by Red Conceptualismos del Sur. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2012–2013. Photography: Joaquín Cortés / Román Lores. Courtesy of Museo Reina Sofía.

Figure 36: Andrés Senra, "1 December 1993 International AIDS Day, Madrid, Puerta del Sol". Still frame from *20 retratos de activistas queer de la Radical gai, LSD y RQTR en el Madrid de los noventa (20 Portraits of Queer Activists from the Radical gai, LSD and RQTR in Madrid from the Nineties)*, 2h 8´ 49˝, 2014, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte. Reina. Courtesy of the artist.

32 *Cueca* is a traditional Chilean dance that the Mothers of the Disappeared transformed into a lonely dance of waiting and until their → family members appear again.

One of the crucial movements in the art of the 20th century is the one away from making decisions about "quality" based on an idea of subjectivity detached from an assessment of how the individual relates to society. This relates to two contradictory insights.

The first one is Hannah Arendt's insistence, in *The Life of the Mind*, that judgment cannot be reduced to the criteria we might establish for it before the fact. We should not try to justify quality as another form of quantity. Any real notion of quality is based on a radically unpredictable act of judgment that manifests free will. Subjectivity is, therefore, ethical.

The second one is Marcel Duchamp's revelation of his "readymade" a hundred years ago, which transposed the quest for quality into an analysis of function. He appeared to celebrate chance and move away from the established form of subjectivity that we might term "being an artist" – but secretly he remained a very talented genius.

Duchamp's stance was further radicalised by Robert Filliou – the self-professed "genius without talent" – when he formulated his *Principe d' equivalence (Principle of Equivalence)* fifty years ago. (Figure 37) "Whether a work of art is well made, badly made or not made at all seems indifferent to me, from the point of view of permanent creation." This puts the ethics and aesthetics of subjectivity into question.

But back to our chosen term!... In 1993, the organisers of Antwerp's year as European Cultural Capital published the book *About the Interesting: Discourse and Literature*, with contributions by Umberto Eco, Jean-François Lyotard and others. Twenty years ago, under the indirect influence of Bruno Latour's *Actor-Network Theory*, a new generation of artists began to question the ethics and politics of subjectivity. From "Relational Aesthetics" in the mid-1990s until "Post-Internet Art" today, subjectivity remains the least understood factor in the smooth functioning of the → Network, whether it is seen as a web of human social relations or a technological → *noosphère*.

Yet in 2014, it is still impossible to programme a museum of contemporary art without taking an informed and critical position on subjectivity. Two words are almost impossible to let go of: "important" and "interesting". They sound vague and self-righteous while in fact they attempt to look beyond the understanding of subjectivity as something purely individual. Both words try to introduce an element of social comparison into the notion of quality. More interesting than what? More important than whom? And why?

Importance is somehow less subjective than interest. But even interest is a social notion – and not just in the sense of the money we pay to be able to borrow money. The Latin expression *inter-esse* is translated as "to be between, make a difference, concern". These definitions all imply that interest is to do with a certain plurality; it would be much harder to be "between yourself" than to be between yourself and someone else, and difference always concerns a comparison between at least two things (or two aspects of one thing). (Figure 38)

Figure 37: Robert Filliou, *Principe d' equivalence (Principle of Equivalence)*, mixed media, 200 x 1000 cm, materials: wood, iron, felted wool, 1968. Collection Centre Pompidou, Paris. Photo: © M HKA.

Figure 38: Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven, *Nursing Activities, Firect (Pulverising)* (detail), 1995–1998. Collection M HKA, Antwerp / Collection Flemish Community, © M HKA.

Nevertheless, interest remains a good approximation of what "enlightened" or "progressive" subjectivity might be today. And in the life of an → institution, it is a rather useful state of mind. Interest is grounded in an emotional conviction on the one hand and rational analysis on the other. It is slower and more thoughtful than, for instance, "enthusiasm" or "urgency". Therefore, it is more → sustainable and less prone to political and managerial mood-swings.

Enlightened, progressive professionals – and members of what is called the "interested public" – should bear in mind the two etymologies of interest: the *inter* that connects us to other subjects and the *esse* that reminds us that we should have some idea about existence. And of course, interests also remind us to be critical of that other unresolved topic of Western civilisation: Immanuel Kant's notion of "disinterested" spectatorship…

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Kapwa Zoe Butt

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, March 2015

Kapwa[33] is an indigenous Filipino (Tagalog) term of psychology whose root is anchored in pre-hispanic, pre-colonial thinking, a cultural ethnic attitude of "the self in the other". This is a relational attitude between generations, where each individual acknowledges their relevance and responsibility to carry forward their ancestral collective significance, and in particular with respect to their local community and natural environment. The "self" is an integral part of the "other", and thus intertwined, an action outside of the self is innately an action within. Such an attitude can be found in the diaspora of Asian psychologies, most coherently expressed by the renowned Vietnamese Buddhist Thich Nhat Hanh:

> There is the collective consciousness and the individual consciousness. Our individual consciousness is made of our collective consciousness, and our collective consciousness is made of our individual consciousness. We reflect everything. And everything reflects us. And the process begins with yourself.

In short, the *kapwa* of an individual can be likened to a kind of ethical spirit of relational subjectivity (within Confucian thinking the concept is referred to as *ren*), whereby the actions of one can be said to represent the actions of a collective and, in turn, to speak with respect to the order of the universe. Unlike concepts of "The Other" that place the self as something that it is not, the relational concept of

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33   "… *kapwa* means 'of same nature', 'equal status', 'partnership', 'shared orientation' and 'shared identities'. The prefix *ka* means 'co-equal', 'togetherness', 'the sharing of the same identity', and 'the commonality of experience', as in *kapatid* (sibling – literally, one who also, like oneself, split from the same umbilical cord) and *kasama* (companion). *Kapwa* refers to the emphasis placed on being part of any social collectivity, as in *kapwa-tao* (fellow human being/s)… Because of its strong egalitarianism, *kapwa* provides the norm for → interdependent relationships: that each party be treated fairly as human equals, despite the different social and economic statuses." See F. Landa Jocano, "*Asal* (Sensibility): The Expressive Core of Filipino Value System". *Punlad Research Paper*, no. 4 (1993).

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kapwa understands that everything within and beyond is an extension of the self, and ultimately representational of a harmonious community.

Such non-Western or indigenous forms of discourse on human subjectivities have been significantly eroded under the colonial project, whereby foreign economic and linguistic systems were imposed on communities, thus inherently altering their relational concept of human → sustainability. As Professor Paredes-Canilao points out:

> *… we find in Chinese and Filipino cultures discourses that are more ontologically, epistemologically and culturally empowering for the → decolonisation and cultural politics of colonised subjects. These discourses express and construct a notion of self-identity that is integrally connected to others and to the bigger cosmos. This is the moral force binding intercultural community that is found wanting in the postmodern desire for difference.*[34]

Such moral force, a particular respect for or belief in the need for balance and harmony among thought, action and impact on the animate and inanimate worlds, is also a model discussed by Professor Prasenjit Duara in his book *The Crisis of Global Modernity: Asian Traditions and a Sustainable Future*, where he calls for a new ethic of human → agency, highly critical of the neoliberal individual in its creation of nation states for their erosion of respect between man and our interconnectedness with the physical, spiritual and cosmological worlds.

While choosing to unpack the relevance of *kapwa* as a basis for re-thinking the aesthetic and artistic traditions of subjectivisation, this is also a useful prism to challenge the concept of artistic → labour within a certain practice, and particularly for challenging ideas of individual socio-political responsibility in artistic communities. I am struck by how many artists across the postcolonial world are responsible for initiating spaces/→archives of cultural public relevance and, in turn, directing, sustaining and ultimately informing their communities about the necessity of a historical consciousness that embraces the idea of *kapwa* at its core (here I think particularly of the *Long March Project* in China; *Lugar a dudas* in Colombia; *Centre for Historical Reenactments* in South Africa; *Bophana* in Cambodia to name but a few).

While *kapwa* may be linguistically located in the Filipino cultural psychology, its ethos can be located in a number of differing transnational artistic practices, with differing terms, across the field of contemporary art, particularly in Asia. Recalling aesthetic traditions intimately linked to spiritual values, artists refer to the interconnectedness of the animate and inanimate, perhaps framed between what is institutionalised and what is intuitively experienced – be it through the documentary retelling of religious discrimination in South Korea through shamanistic texts (Park Chan-Kyong, South Korea); the wilful investment of "belief" in informal collectivised faith in the healing that occurs within supernatural traditions (Truong Cong Tung, Vietnam); most tellingly, *kapwa* is encompassed in the filmic works of the Filipino artist Kidlat Tahimik, a member of the Third Cinema Movement. His life's work is committed to an awareness of how his moving image novellas, that span a 35-year period of production, present his "self" anchored in the local traditions of time, while simultaneously enduring colonial and capitalist dictations of class and representations of self-hood (i.e. in economic terms). His filmic collages in essay form stunningly illustrate the resistance to, and embrancement of, the flow of the

Figure 39: Kidlat Tahimik, *Bakit Dilaw Ang Kulay ng Bahaghari (Why is yellow at the middle of the rainbow?)*, film/colour, 175´, Philippines, 1984/1994. Courtesy of the artist.

Figure 40: Kidlat Tahimik, *Memories of Overdevelopment*, film/DVD, OV (English), 33´, Philippines, 1984. Courtesy of the artist.

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34 Narcisa Paredes-Canilao, "Decolonising Subjects from the Discourse of Difference", *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* (2008), Baguio: University of the Philippines.

dollar as a symbol of progress but at a great sacrifice of one's *kapwa* (see *Why is yellow at the middle of the rainbow?* and *Memories of Overdevelopment*, in particular). (Figures 39, 40)

Loser Manos Invisibles

The loser is the flip-side of the neoliberal subjectivity story, the tarnished back of the gold-medal in the all-encompassing race to capitalise upon the self. The loser is one of the possible outcomes in the constant compulsion to organise one's life as an enterprise, in which the main commodity for sale is oneself. In the on-going contest of the market economy of the self, the loser is the one who didn't win, who could not, who gave up, who got exhausted, who became depressed, who found him or herself alone… the one who lost.

His or her fate has to do with an individual failure: s/he did not play her/his cards well, did not make the right choices, the right investments, the right moves. S/he was personally unable to conform to the social norm of success and regular happiness and thus deserves our pity, but not much more: in the neoliberal world of equality of opportunity, we are all responsible and in control of our own destiny. Our future is entirely in our hands, it only depends on our individual efforts, our talent, our insight. Bye-bye to any collective account, any link established with backgrounds, circumstances, contexts, let alone structural relations of class, race or gender… Tales of heroes who come from the bottom and end up rich and happy are there to tell us that anybody can triumph if s/he strives enough – the American Dream comes true.

However, neither failure nor victory are definitive: the wheel of fortune goes on and on. Both winner and loser are thus unstable positions – there is always a chance of falling, an opportunity of picking oneself up again and getting back into the game. In the psyche of the entrepreneur of the self, the loser is therefore that Other whom the winner must foreclose in order to keep playing and enjoying the game – the ghost who haunts his/her nightmares, who reminds her/him that s/he can fall from grace, the one who invokes the fragility of her/his own success, the costs of the competitive race in one's life and in the lives of others (what about all those who fell on the way?). Both a spur and a source of fear and guilt, the loser is the spectre of → fragility that the winner has to exorcise time and again in the everyday battle to keep his/herself in the market game.

Several means are deployed to accomplish this exorcism: coaching techniques, self-help books, pharmacology and frenzied consumption come to the aid of the entrepreneur of the self, calming anxieties, containing panic and providing hyper- identities and readymade affects to cling to. They pick up the baton from old Fordist institutions that no longer offer support, recognition or protection to increasingly individualised individuals, all too lonely in a complex and risk-ridden world.

So understood, the loser is not just a person who had bad luck in life and may need a little help from somebody, be it the State, a charity or his/her community. Nor is it a stance to occupy and resignify, as a marker of resistance to the hegemonic subject, because it is itself → constitutively inherent to it – the loser never exists by him/herself but only in relation to its opposite, as that inadmissible shadow which the winner both needs and rejects. In the context of competitive normalisation,

both winner and loser are ways of staying stuck in the mode of subjectification which make us entrepreneurs of the self.

If there should be resistance in the sphere of subject formation, where indeed the neoliberal technology of → power has a major field of application, a move outside such frame is required – one which might help us to subtract ourselves from the winner/loser dyad as a dreadful alternative. The good news is that such moves of subtraction are already happening, everywhere. Here are two possibilities at hand:

First, becoming anyone, enjoying the subtle liberation of not being anyone in particular, willingly abandoning the unceasing (and exhausting) capitalisation of the self. The politics of anonymity are one good example of such a becoming: in the 1990s, many artists and activist all over Europe and the Americas took faceless or multiple-use names, such as Luther Blissett, as a way out of the competitive commodification of the self, already installed in the world of art. (Figure 41) Such a gesture was also a means of acknowledging that creativity is always a matter of the many, that the brilliant idea doesn't belong exclusively to the genius, but has a lot to do with being embedded in rich social environments and feeding on them.

The occupied squares movement (including the Arab Spring uprisings and the worldwide Occupy movement) offer a recent and slightly different example of the same becoming. The people in the squares didn't have anonymous voices, they did talk in their own name, but not in an attempt to make a big name for themselves – they did so to make their voice heard, as one specific voice among many, as a particular grain in the pomegranate of the square, not detaching themselves from the multitude, but joining the singular and the → common in what was called a politics of anyone.

The second move away from the winner/loser dyad is also very much linked to the experiences of the occupied squares, and it has to do with care as a daily activity which sustained the movement. Care presupposes a break within the neoliberal logic, which urges us to be individually responsible for ourselves, enclosed in our egos, caught between the narcissistic enjoyment of our personal successes and the shame for our personal failures. The usually invisible activities of care reveal the fallacy of the self-made man, the independent healthy and young adult who appears on the earth ready for adventures, relying only on his own strengths. They show to what extent we are part of the ecosystem we are embedded in, and how care for the self is inseparable from the care for others and the environment, as the Indonesian concept of → *kapwa* shows us.

Historically, in the Western world, care has been enclosed within the private walls of the household. In the context of neoliberal hegemony, it has been charged with a negative connotation, being experienced as a costly burden on carers and as a humiliation by those who need to be cared for. Nevertheless, new social movements are increasingly recognising and practicing care in the public sphere, as a general social function, necessary to build a different and less predatory world. They encourage us to put care at the centre of our practices and thoughts as a major foundation for citizenship (*carezenship*), as primary social bond, as imperative to take charge of the unsurpassable horizon of human → fragility and → interdependency. In doing so, they show us a promising way out of the neurotic self of late capitalism. (Figure 42)

Figure 41: In 1994, hundreds of European artists, activists and pranksters adopted and shared the same identity of Luther Blissett.

Figure 42: Yo Sí Sanidad Universal, *Vigilia Jeanneth*, 8′ 47″ video, posted on YouTube on 6 November 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CbR4N373-s. Filmed by Cecilia Barriga. A performance of carezenship *Todas somos Jeanneth (We Are All Jeanneth)* in memoriam of Jeanneth de los Ángeles Beltrán Martínez, who died because of the decree-law excluding migrants from the national healthcare system.

Figure 43: New Collectivism, *Youth Day*, a rejected poster proposal, 1987. Courtesy of the artists.

In the last decade of Yugoslavia's existence, when all that remained was the pretence of believing in the socialist system, the collective Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK) engaged in a reckoning, not only with the extent government but also with the gradual disappearance of a firm symbolic order; this was not simply a problem with the state of Yugoslavia, but a universal subjective disorientation in the contemporary world.

The NSK collective was founded by three groups sharing similar retro-avant-garde concepts, Laibach, IRWIN and the Scipion Nasice Sisters Theatre (SNST), in the Orwellian year of 1984, the moment of transition of a society of discipline to a society of control.

Laibach's 1982 statement reflected not only the totalitarian impulses in the Yugoslavian one-party system, but also the general colonisation of subjectivity by the Big Brother that was the epistemological, monetary, religious, cultural and media domination and the power of technological control exerted by the West: "All art is subject to political manipulation, except for that which speaks the language of this same manipulation." About a decade later, Slavoj Žižek characterised this type of approach as over-identification: "The strategy of Laibach 'frustrates' the system (the ruling ideology) precisely insofar as it is not its ironic imitation, but over-identification with it – by bringing to light the obscene superego underside of the system, over-identification suspends its efficiency." There is no need to underline how irony and criticism best serve the system itself, especially the capitalist system. In his writings from the late 1980s and early 1990s, Žižek emphasised that the uneasiness triggered by NSK even in some left-wing critics of the system stemmed from the fact that the collective had never assumed a clear and unambiguous critical distance from the government, and from the assumption that ironic distance is automatically subversive.

One of the heights of provocation, which was among the main tools of NSK in the 1980s, was reached in 1987 with a poster for the Day of Youth, a holiday celebrating Tito's birthday. New Collectivism, the design group within NSK, took part in the national competition for the best Day of Youth poster. They based their entry on a 1936 Third Reich propaganda painting by Richard Klein and won. Part of the reason may be that the poster reminded many of socialist-realist art, the memory of which was already being eroded in Yugoslavia. The artists kept the athletic male figure, but removed the Nazi symbols and replaced them with Yugoslav ones: the Yugoslav tricolour of red, white and blue, the five-pointed star, the six torches from the Yugoslav coat of arms representing the six republics of Yugoslavia, and a white dove. These symbols replaced the Germanic eagle, the Nazi flag with the swastika and the coat of arms of Nazi Germany. This montage was only noticed by the government after the jury had already proclaimed the winner; what followed was a scandal beyond compare in the cultural history of post-war Yugoslavia. (Figure 43) Žižek wrote about the poster affair in "A Letter from Afar" in 1987. In that essay, he emphasised that NSK:

> draws attention to the fundamental phantasms, the phantasmic myths and constructs on which our national identification is based. But it does this in such a way, through a whole range of alienation processes (the montage of heterogeneous, incompatible constructs; the reiteration of the phantasmic construct in its literal imbecility, in the exposed shape that must remain hid-

den in everyday life, etc.), that we are able to achieve distance from these phantasms.

It was Laibach that first started moving signs from one context to another, beginning with the group's very foundation in 1980, when it chose to call itself after the German name for Ljubljana. Numerous public reactions as well as the official prohibition of the name in the years 1983–1987 show just how jarring this choice was, given the still enduring memory of the occupation of Ljubljana during World War II, when the German name for the city was last in use. One of the fundamental post-war constructs, the basis for the national consciousness in Slovenia and elsewhere in Yugoslavia, was the partisan resistance to the occupier. All that the post-war mythologisation of the national liberation struggle served was obviously empty state rituals.

Figure 44: Laibach, *Opus Dei*, album cover, 1987.

In addition to the name, Laibach's key symbol is the cross. The Laibach cross does not refer only to Kazimir Malevich's suprematist motif, but also to the black cross that marked German military vehicles and aircraft during World War II. The black Laibach cross on posters, on fanzines, on paintings, on the sleeves of the members' uniforms, on flags at concerts, on albums, does not serve any social identification purpose, and is simply a sign of social fascinations. Žižek wrote, on various occasions, that NSK's metaphors brought their opponents face to face with their own nightmare, which does not tolerate reflection, with the unbearable core of the pleasure made possible by the limits set to us by the big Other.

On the one hand, NSK performs the roles of totalitarian types in Nazi or socialist regimes; on the other hand, and at the same time, it speaks about the repressive power of the media and the totalitarian impulses in Western pop culture, where the boundaries laid down by the master have become unrecognisable. From the very beginning, Laibach has been uncovering, through its performances and music, the obscene aspects of both Eastern European and Western societies, including by citing Western hits at various points in its discography. One such example is Laibach's song "Geburt einer Nation" from their album *Opus Dei* (1987), a version of Queen's 1985 song "One Vision", except that it is sung in German.[35] (Figure 44) Global popular culture and global technological control have remained at the centre of Laibach's interests until the present day, for instance in their song "The Whistleblowers": "From North and South / We come from East and West / Breathing as one / Living in fame / Or dying in flame." Here, Laibach draws attention to heroes like Edward Snowden and Julian Assange, who resist contemporary totalitarianism.

While Laibach today has a more pop-cultural image, in the 1980s it was much more explicitly totalitarian and → bureaucratic. The entire NSK at that time worked on deconstructing the state, its ideology and artistic system, including through hierarchical organisation schemes, manifestos, programmatic texts, declarations, interviews with pre-written programmatic statements. All these texts and schemes speak about the subjection of the individual to the collective, or in other words, about ideology replacing an authentic form of social consciousness.

It could be said that through its manifestos, NSK wanted to take the place of the Other. The non-functioning of the other has also been noted in manifesto form by Alain Badiou. By deciding to write philosophy in the form of a manifesto,

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35   "One Vision" was inspired by concerts where the audience in their thousands automatically repeated the band members' gestures.
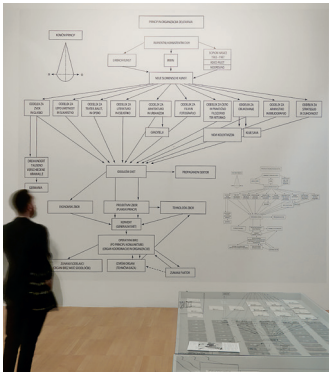
Figure 45: Laibach Kunst, "Organigramme", 1982, *NSK from Kapital to Capital: Neue Slowenische Kunst – The Event of the Final Decade of Yugoslavia*, curated by Zdenka Badovinac, exhibition view, 2015. Courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

Figure 46: "NSK State in Time passports", *NSK from Kapital to Capital: Neue Slowenische Kunst – The Event of the Final Decade of Yugoslavia*, curated by Zdenka Badovinac, exhibition view, 2015. Courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

Badiou drew attention to the importance of actualising philosophical endeavours. The actions of NSK and Badiou resembled those of the early 20th century avant-garde. For Badiou, the mobilisation potential of a manifesto does not stem only from its future-oriented contents, but from its producing and subjectivising the present. Ever since their founding, the central theme of all the NSK groups has been the state, both a specific state, whose national myths appear in their work, and the state as an abstract organism, the law on which all concrete ideological constructions are based. (Figure 45) Thus, NSK did not only deal with the dissolution of Yugoslavia, but with the dissolution of the symbolic order in general. This is why NSK never was a typical Eastern European dissident art project. Since the collective was more interested in finding out to what extent the big Other was still operant than in providing clear, unambiguous criticism of the extant regime.

In NSK's work, the concrete state of Yugoslavia was only a singular manifestation of the abstract organism of the state, but also, paradoxically, a foreshadowing of another concrete state – that of independent Slovenia, formed in 1991. Based on this, it could be concluded that with the founding of Slovenia what NSK had predicted came true, and that in this sense NSK's work might even be nation-building art. It may have been in order to avert just such a fatal misunderstanding that in 1992, NSK founded the NSK State in Time, fundamentally distancing itself from the nation state as well as from the national culture.

It is true that this distance had been maintained by NSK since the very beginning. To start with, the naming of the collective itself was a performative gesture. The act of its naming appeared to be a call for a new national art, but at the same time, NSK distanced itself from such art by using the German language. The founding document of the IRWIN group calls for a new Slovenian art, but at the same time, it describes such art as deeply eclectic, and over-identifies with this very eclecticism, with the impure culture of small nations on the edge, through its principle of potentiated eclecticism.

The SNST over-identified with a state that is somewhere between a real state existing in this world, and the City of God as described by Saint Augustine. The SNST's methods of spreading their ideas included so-called sister letters. In the first sister letter, they stated that the theatre was the state.

> The outer, manifest part of the Scipion Nasice Sisters Theatre presents an image of a solid and geometrically utopian Existence, whereas its creative inner part is an image of the conflict between Emotions and Style in their inevitable and all-renewing sacredness.

As stated above, the whole of NSK's work reflects the problem of the non-functioning of the state, a particularly tragic real-life manifestation of which was the war in Bosnia and Hercegovina (BiH). With regard to this, Žižek says that the war in BiH may have been a consequence of an absence of a unified state authority above ethnic divisions. He speaks of the NSK state as of a contemporary utopia of a new state, a state without a territory, an artificial structure of principles and authority.

The NSK State in Time, which may now be the largest artistic state in the world, counting 14,000 members, has become independent of NSK itself and is governed by its members. Today, this artistic state draws attention to the importance of idealist visions for the survival of the state in the sense of shared principles and laws,

without which no human society can function. When artists take the law into their own hands, they most certainly do become political subjects. (Figure 46)

Radical Imagination Bojana Piškur Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, Slovenia, April 2015

What is radical imagination? Radical imagination is a process of "constructing something", and this something has to do with procedures of subjectivisation. Radical imagination is not merely about the certain political potential of an artwork or its → emancipation from a representational regime, but about desire as the driving force of exploration, which surfaces at some fundamental encounter at the junction of politics, art, philosophy, or madness… and while doing so venturing into unknown territories, taking risks that could potentially lead towards something new (for example, breaking the habit). Imagination and desire are closely connected. Desire in a sense of being a mode of production and constructing of something (for example, a will to live, to create, to love, to invent another society, another value system).

Imagination already ceased to be the medium of knowledge very long ago, with the birth of modern science, and has merely become something excluded from real experience, a subject of "mental alienation" as Agamben put it. (In Antiquity the imagination was the supreme medium of knowledge, enabling in phantasy the union between the sensible form and the potential intellect. For example, the role dreams, visions and so on played and still play in some cultures.)

Which basically means institutionalised discourses and the authority of knowledge always take over the imagination – a history that is not yet. Of course, this take-over cannot be prevented but once we rethink art in a different way; not necessarily as representations, but rather as intensities or affects, where art has a performative rather than representational character – then there is a potential for possible new transversal alliances based on a different kind of "poetics of a political".

But what kind of politics are we actually talking about?

In order to attempt to answer this question let's go back a bit. Art, as we have learned through various narratives and concepts has to do with history. More importantly, art, as we know it through various forms, is already part of the past, and it is, to put it plainly, composed of the identifiable and formalised affects that become such through numerous encounters with different bodies, objects, ideas, institutions, etc. Both the State and the → Institution fear the unknown affects, because these threaten the established order and, for that matter, anything that is fixed (identity), confined (aesthetics) and taken for granted (representation). But something, a force, always escapes this confinement, and that is where the encounters between art and "other bodies" should be investigated. Susan Buck-Morrs has proposed the idea of somatic knowledge,[36] which she understands as a way the body senses reality in an animalistic or biological sense. For her, this kind of aesthetics is a body's form of critical cognition, a knowledge that can be trusted politically, because it cannot be instrumentalised. And if we think of art as a "bloc of affects and percepts", then art is like an electrical shock, which always happens as "→ event" and only at "this" very moment.

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36 Grant H. Kester, "Aesthetics after the End of Art: An Interview with Susan Buck-Morss", *Art Journal* 56, no. 1 (1997): 39.

Figure 47: Tomislav Gotovac,
Cleaning Public Spaces, installation,
mixed materials, 1981. Courtesy of
Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

Figure 48: Marina Abramović,
Rhythm 0, installation, 1974.
Courtesy of Moderna galerija,
Ljubljana.

Well, museums, of course, cannot "store" affects the way they store objects, but their task remains, nevertheless, to preserve all that which makes art, art. And art, as we already know, is made of affects. On the other hand, a museum itself is an affective body too, which to some extent defines and "orchestrates" other bodies (things, objects, ideas, other affects, and the like).

However, there is a difference in the way bodies were affected, for example by Tomislav Gotovac, when he cleaned the streets of Zagreb in 1981, and by the → residue of that event, a pile of garbage, now in the 2000+ Arteast collection of MG (Figure 47); or another event from the same year, where Gotovac walked naked in downtown Zagreb. This event was an unmediated experience, but only until its affects were recognised as "signifying gestures", perceived as a threat to the order of the State (after seven minutes Gotovac was arrested by the police). Now, what are the prospects of affects in the "zone" of a museum? A museum, like any Institution, attempts to prevent the appearance of uncontrolled affects. There are, however, exceptions. Well-known is the performance *Rhythm 0* by Marina Abramović from 1974, where she "offered" herself to the public in a gallery as a passive object, and during which the visitors could do anything they wanted to her. Abramović purposely exceeded her power of being affected to such an extreme that after the performance was over, and she became a subject again, the public could not bear to face the artist any longer, and literally ran away from her and the gallery premises. What happened was that the "threshold of intensity" had been crossed, and subsequently a difficult encounter transpired. (Figure 48)

So what is the connection between affects and politics in the context of a museum? How do museums deal with the "limits of being affected", and what do these excesses produce, what kinds of subjectivities are constructed with these encounters?

I will talk a bit about a project/method/encounter called *Radical Education (RE)* that happened in relation to/with Moderna galerija from 2006 on. The people involved in this process came from various domains: political activism, migrant movements, anarchism, art, anthropology etc. There were many debates from the start, for example about participatory-multicultural projects, because, for one, we did not want *RE* to be understood as a kind of participatory project within an art institution, or as part of the prevailing multicultural paradigm. Our opinion was that such temporary → solidarities, such identifications between minorities, marginalised and other groups – "the projections of politics as other and outside – only detract from a politics of here and now". The idea was to create a contact surface between social movements and the art institution, and to invent → new institutional forms of resistance, new political subjectivities, new affective excesses, so to speak.

But more important than creating a space within the space of an art institution was the involvement with certain materials of expression, with groups and individuals, and always with an outside to open up a new universe of reference. This meant that we began to ask what, why and how is it that my body agrees with the other affective body? Or put another way, what can my body actually do, what is it that is → common in my body and another body, what is the "meaning" of the encounter, for example between an art institution and a social centre?

One of the aims of *RE* was to define common investigations between the two fields, art and politics, and to ascertain, through concepts such as power, work, labour, aesthetic experience, affects and other subjective components embedded in the

work processes and the work itself, and so on, what is it that art forms and forms of political resistance have in common? For example, a question that we found very important and around which we organised a series of seminars, "Resistance as Creation", together with → migrant workers, political activists and cultural workers in the Ljubljana social centre, was: What is creation, what is radical imagination? Not only from the perspective of artwork, but also from that of the production process being an aesthetic experience itself. Is manual work as such an aesthetic experience? What about art which repeats → labour? Is this experience limited only to the spaces of art museums, or can it spread everywhere? Is it a collective creation by the artist becoming a collective worker or a → representation made by an individual? Can art function as a tool of political → emancipation? It is important to emphasise that *RE*'s goal was not only to compose a meaningful and relevant set of questions, but, above all, to implement and confront those questions in collective situations, to democratise expert knowledge and to produce common knowledge instead. Under the term "common knowledge" we understood a form of theoretical thinking accompanied by politically active attitudes, to test its social effectiveness and enhance the support and strategies to common areas of conflict.
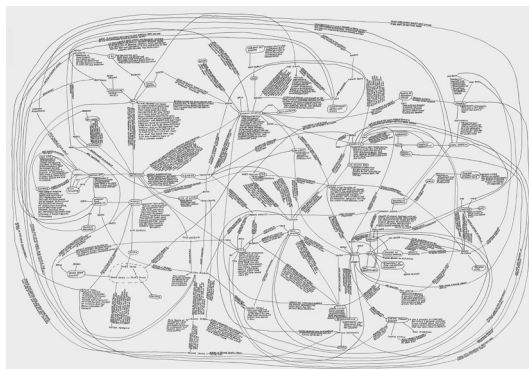
Figure 49: Minna Henriksson, "Ljubljana Notes", 2008, drawing, a part of *Politicisation of Friendship*, Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, +MSUM, 1 July 2014 – 5 October 2014. Courtesy of the artist.

Recently, madness has been one of the domains within the exhibition *Politicisation of → Friendship* held at the Moderna galerija, where madness transversed art and politics. Similarly, as with *RE* before and based on the same points of departure, madness, or more precisely the anti-psychiatric movement from the 1980s, entered the space of an art institution (that is – Moderna galerija). Madness was here understood as something that creates paradox within an institution, madness as thinking that discomforts, all the while escaping control, stretching the limits of the affective excesses of an institution. People from the movement told us: it is not about problematising madness as such, but society's attitude towards it. Madness is one of the creative principles and a driving source, and it should be protected as such. Collective by nature, it becomes tragic when a person is stranded alone with it.

We have learned from *RE* that what art and social movements, and lately anti-psychiatric movements, have in common is not their content, such as the views of art on social resistance. It is also not the assumption that the site of artistic transformation can also be the site of political and social transformation. It is rather the questions of how to not be separated from our power of acting, and how to produce adequate ideas, which concern not only individual forces, but also collective bodies forming common notions or common relations between bodies. (Figure 49) For example, if there is a resonance between art and "resistant corporealities" then art can eventually become a resource for revolution. At their most powerful, at the point of conversion, these kinds of resonances can become so "overwhelming and bodily that they defy representation".[37]

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37 Gaston Gordillo, *Resonance and Egyptian Revolution* (6 February 2011), http://spaceandpolitics.blogspot.si/2011/02/resonance-and-egyptian-revolution.html (accessed 24 April 2015). "Ideology, → slogans, and speeches are all part of resonance, but at its most powerful moments resonance is sheer affect: bodies joining forces to control space and voicing their passions through openly gestural expressions (chants, screams, signs) …"

I understand subjectivisation to be the formation of a subject in relation to another. In this sense it is subjectivity in becoming, defined by what Felix Guattari saw as its "polyphonic" nature, open to and formed by many different inputs and influences whether they be psychological, cultural or political. Within this, and imbuing the notion of subjectivisation with a sense of political → agency, I propose the term self-determination.

Understanding self-determination as an ability to determine one's own course can, in many respects, be seen as a product of Immanuel Kant and Enlightenment thinking. Opposing the proposition that we are unable to steer events in the face of higher forces such as nature and religion, thinkers such as Kant proposed that understanding our ability to "self-determine" thoughts, feelings and actions (thus linking self-determination to notions of free-will) was crucial in realising our capacity to shape → events in the world.

In the second half of the 20th century self-determination entered mainstream political discourse during the post-World War II settlement. It is tied to the establishment of the United Nations and a country's right to choose its sovereignty or political orientation, free from external influence. By 1960, with the introduction of the UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and People, it became tied to the struggle of countries under colonial occupation, linking the discourse on self-determination specifically to the process of decolonisation. Indeed, it has underpinned colonial struggles and the rights of indigenous people, as countries or communities forge a new path for – and awareness of – themselves. Here the notion of self-determination constitutes what Benedict Anderson in the early 1980s defined as the prospect of *Imagined Communities*. Today, its resonance is most widely felt amongst those eager to banish the remnants of imperial rule and to understand how a collective identity, itself formed by a multitude of subjectivities freed from historical imposition, might articulate itself. It runs through the present political demands across the globe for new forms of political representation as new collective subjectivities form, and as they articulate their grievances and desires.

Within Europe, the continent from which I myself narrate and we as the Van Abbemuseum speak from, the question of self-determination (as a process of subjectivisation) is particularly pertinent as states attempt to free themselves from the bind of political unions (the United Kingdom, the Spanish Republic or the EU itself) from which they feel democratically excluded or that are driven purely by economic growth. Within this context, self-determination opens up a complex, often troubling field of debate, as it complicates accepted binaries of nationalism and internationalism, demanding that political subjects define their position and project their future beyond this simple bifurcation. It asks that we think again about the political formations of which we are a part and how we might re-imagine our role within them. In this sense, self-determination (as a process of subjectivisation) stands vehemently opposed to reactionary nationalism. Instead, it demands that we speak beyond established boundaries, whether they be the physical borders of nation states or ideological framings of left and right.

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Within the current political conjuncture, wedded as it is to an outdated and dysfunctional neoliberal economics, the lure of self-determination for different types of political and ideological formations is potent. It means refusing the dominance

of external forces, whether they are systems of governance or the market, and actively engaging authority and power. Yet the appeal of self-determination is that it goes beyond resistance to propose new social or political formations founded on emergent collective subjectivities, as yet unrealised or unforeseen. In this sense it appears to have affinities with Gramsci's notion of the "organic intellectual", who is tied to a collective political project, though often with no party to turn to. Here, culture is fundamental to any subjective process of self-determination, laying the ground upon which identities take shape and democratic processes can be formed. Culturally, self-determination thus opens up a vital space within an ever increasingly constrictive political and ideological sphere for how artists, practitioners and institutions define who they are, on what terms they operate and in relation to whom. Yet here we must insist on speaking of self-determination in relation to subjectivity: not for art to be self-determining, but artists; not museums, but those who engage with them. Self-determination, wherever it appears, must thrive off its subjective impulses.

Gerald Raunig has effectively identified the current ebbing away of the social democratic paradigm in Europe with the need to re-purpose institutions as the very sites where a new democratic process can be re-thought. He sees these as places of → resistance against the dominant order, defined either by the thrust of neoliberal economics or reactionary political forces. Breaking the false choice between these two positions is one way in which cultural institutions might play a leading role in what Raunig defines as "reinventing the state". Raunig argues that cultural institutions are ideally placed to take on this role as they are able to foster an "odd mix of claims of → autonomy, frequently an experimental orientation, the self-evident expectation of critical stances and attention to political topics [that] enhances the potential for free spaces and turns art institutions into exceptional cases in comparison with other state institutions or those partly funded by the state."[38]

With this in mind, the challenge for institutions would be to open themselves up to become institutions of → the common, meaning they make their resources, heritage and expertise available to all. More than this, however, it also entails institutions engaging in "a constantly present production of the common", what Raunig sees as the "concatenation of singular currents, of the re-composition of multiplicity: the common as the self-organisation of self-cooperation". This state of constant re-formulation and re-articulation holds resonance with Guattari's understanding of the "polyphonic" nature of subjectivisation, contingent as it is on the ever-unfolding and pluralistic forces at play in any given conjuncture.

Here, the cultural and political potential of institutions is understood precisely through the framework of self-determination – both on the level of how they operate and how their perpetual process of becoming might play a leading role in new political formations. So, as museums redefine their public role as the state resets its relationship to museums and cultural organisations, the need for and potential of self-determination is both prescient and powerful.

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38   Gerald Raunig, "Flatness Rules: Instituent Practices and Institutions of the Common in a Flat World", in *Institutional Attitudes: Instituting Art in a Flat World*, ed. Pascal Gielen (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2012), 168–178.

Self-representation Meriç Öner

Contemporary society is outspoken with personal statements of the self. Be it a constructed identity or the genuine bearer of singular ideas, one's self is rendered explicit via ordinary daily tools, including the typical social media channels. In the digital world of "followers", we hold the power of creating liabilities between the statements and the actions of the self. This power has the capability of turning every one of us into representatives of our presented selves. It is much easier to follow the popular, the mediatic and provide criticism, as it is exercised in media itself. However, the liabilities of being followed are even much stronger among a circle of → friends. SALT suggests discussing self-representation by examples of the people we befriend and follow, artists and collectives who work with different tools of representation. This discussion includes works and projects by a young architecture collective Architecture for All, Syrian/Armenian artist Hrair Sarkissian, artist, network analyst Burak Arıkan, and the exhibition *Disobedience → Archive (The Park)* by Marco Scotini and Andris Brinkmanis, which was shown in spring 2014 at SALT. Selected works and projects discuss how the ideas of "the self" are represented in various public manifestations. The exhibition demonstrated an example of resistance from the self towards the follower when the self is demanded to package itself into a representation.

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The Subject Marko Jenko

In 20th century philosophy, there are numerous theories, which cover the question of (political) subjectivisation or, generally speaking, the process in which an individual becomes a (political) subject. The abundance of these theories is in part due both to the growing impasses of capitalism and the failure of past → emancipatory projects, especially in terms of communism, the catastrophe of Stalinism and so-called really existing socialism. One could, as a starting point, take Louis Althusser's theory of (successful or failed) ideological interpellation and consequently grasp other famous theories of political subjectivity, from Alain Badiou's fidelity to the Truth-Event, Étienne Balibar's *égaliberté* or "freedom-in-equality", Jacques Rancière's *mésentente* or "misapprehension", to Ernesto Laclau's take on hegemony, and many others.[39] In view of these well-known developments of 20th century philosophy, of what they reject, criticise or even obscure, including the turns of so-called structuralism, post-structuralism and/or the postmodern "death of the subject", which saw the supposedly liberating proliferation, especially in political thought and Cultural Studies, of multiple, emphatically particularised forms of subjectivity, it is perhaps still rightly scandalous to take into account that Jacques Lacan, within the frame of his return to Freud, actually also returned, after his initial rejection of it,[40] to the modern rationalist and ultimately → antihumanist notion of the subject, introducing a distinction between the subject and subjectivisation, thereby reasserting the Cartesian cogito, not only as the subject of the unconscious, and actually going beyond the unconscious, but also as the subject of modern science, which simply cannot be seen as just another narrative from any pluralist and ultimately historicist-relativist perspective. After the advent of modernity, which is nothing but a series of cuts and inaugurations, be it in science, art, etc., there simply is no way back, not even for the West. To claim otherwise – if we paraphrase Žižek – would mean succumbing to the cognitive suspension, typical of

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39 See, for example, Slavoj Žižek's *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*.
40 See his "The Mirror Stage" in *Écrits*.

Cultural Studies and performative theories, and abandoning the consideration of the inherent truth-value of a certain theoretical practice under consideration, now focusing merely on unearthing its hidden patriarchal, Eurocentrist, identitarian, and so on, bias, thereby reducing everything to a historicist reflection upon conditions in which certain notions emerged as a result of historically specific power relations. So it is crucial to emphasise that for Lacan modern science is absolutely *not* one of the narratives comparable in principle to other modes of cognitive mapping – modern science *touches the Real* in a way that is totally absent from premodern discourses.[41] Of course, the joint question of modern science and the subject also bears on the topic of sexuality from Freud onwards.[42]

Lacan's reassertion of the subject, or the Cartesian cogito as the birthplace of the modern subject, is far from being a return to a "pacifying image of the transparent Self" or the possibility of self-aggrandising mastery. What this reassertion returns to, or what it shows in a thorough Freudian rereading of Descartes, and then of Immanuel Kant, is the cogito's unacknowledged kernel: the radical contraction or self-withdrawal, (Hegel's) "the night of the world", i.e., the subject as barred, decentred or, in other words, as the ontological gap that precedes any gesture of subjectivisation, → historicisation or symbolisation (in clear contrast to Badiou, Rancière et al.). To resume Žižek, what comes to the foreground here is the threat of madness, strictly constitutive of modern philosophy from Descartes onwards, and inherent to rationality as such. No wonder then that the unconscious too can be in part described as a thoroughly rational machine, following the logic of the signifier (metonymy, metaphor, as in the interpretation of dreams, jokes or → pathology of everyday life). The Cartesian subject is therefore, and obviously, not the self-transparent ego, nor is it simply man or the presupposed psychological inner wealth or depth of a person: "[...] the Cartesian subject emerges precisely out of the 'death of man' [...] the Freudian unconscious emerges through the very reduction of the person's substantial content to the evanescent punctuality of the cogito".[43] The key "feature" of the subject, prior to any form of subjectivisation (namely that one is always already a subject, it is not simply about becoming one), is therefore, the reduction of all substantial features or history. It's as if the subject survived its own death. Here, we are obliged to think utter desubstantialisation, so to speak, the zero point, "a subject bereft of subjectivity (of the self-experience of a historical agent embedded in a finite horizon of meaning)". To quote Žižek again: "What kind of monster remains when we subtract from the subject the wealth of self-experience that constitutes subjectivity? [...] the Cartesian subject *is* this monster that emerges precisely when we deprive the subject of all the wealth of the 'human person'."[44] Consequently, we are all already this "monster" or "horror of a human being", if we thus dramatise the somewhat bleak view of "human nature" in psychoanalysis. The subject thus also stands for the primordial impossible forced (not free) choice by means of which we choose (or not, as psychotics prove) to be "in this world", or in other, *vice versa* terms: the subject is the negative gesture of breaking out of the constraints of Being (context, particular life-world, circumstances, etc.), which actually opens up the space for future subjectivisation. The subject is thus from

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41   Slavoj Žižek, *Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism? Five Interventions in the (Mis)Use of a Notion*, 218–19.

42   See Alenka Zupančič, "Sexual Difference and Ontology", *e-flux journal 32* (February 2012), http://www.e-flux.com/journal/32/68246/sexual-difference-and-ontology/ (accessed 16 February 2015).

43   See Žižek's introduction to *Cogito and the Unconscious*, which includes Mladen Dolar's "Cogito as the Subject of the Unconscious," an overview of Lacan's grappling with the Cartesian cogito, namely in Seminars XI and XIV, and of Lacan's difference here in comparison to structuralists and post-structuralists.

44   *Cogito and the Unconscious.*

the very start "originally in discord with its contextualised situation", inasmuch as something in it "resists full inclusion into the context".

If we leave aside certain psychoanalytical aspects (subjective destitution, and the like) or some of the nuances of the knot between subject and subjectivisation (how the latter, in its circularity or as an emphatic engagement or assumption of fidelity to the Truth-Event, sustains, but also fills in the ontological gap that is the subject, as does the reterritorialising proliferation of particularised subjectivities and bodies), we should simply underline the obvious, namely, that the subject is nothing but pure negativity, an absolutely inherent obstacle, an internal, ontological limit and not an external, epistemological border. From this point of view, if we were to add that in psychoanalysis the subject is first and foremost hysterical (perceiving itself as out of joint, minimally excluded from the order of things or from the positive order of entities), it is perhaps no coincidence that Rancière's description of the process of subjectivisation[45] begins with a denial of an identity, with hysterical non-recognition or disidentification, i.e., the impenetrability or non-transparency of oneself to oneself. (It is hysteria that is or can be most challenging, so it shouldn't be surprising that in Lacan it is the hysteric's discourse that actually produces knowledge.) Here, *decenterment* and Lacan's term *extimacy* (the intimate is outside of you) also play a crucial role: one is robbed even of one's innermost self, if you will, of one's untarnished intimate self-experience, of how one really feels. This in turn completely rearranges what we deem subjective or objective. It will suffice to say that this opaque impenetrability, which does not imply depth, also points to the psychoanalytical question of the object (cause), which is not independent of the subject, but is the subject itself in the mode of objectivity. We first catch a glimpse of this enigmatic aspect of the objective-subjective, which also concerns the unconscious (inasmuch as the social too comes to lay itself down on the analyst's couch), with Marx's commodity fetishism,[46] and then, undoubtedly even more harshly, with Lacan's concept of fantasy, which ultimately, as a frame, teaches us how to desire.[47]

Clearly, we are far from the usual (mis)reading of the cogito as "the agency of manipulative domination responsible for all present woes", from Western, Eurocentrist, colonial, patriarchal, capitalist oppression, "phallo-logo-ego-centrism", to ecological catastrophes, etc.[48] In fact, one could argue that it is only now, after the atrocities of (not only) the 20th century (slavery, genocide, concentration camps, gulags, apartheid, and so on), after the emergence of the proletariat (of subjects selling their substance), and new, unprecedented modes of violence in the 21st century, that we can actually grasp the radical aspect of the notion of the subject and cogito, not simply as the looming fear or prospect of losing everything, even loss itself, but of a constitutive trauma that has always already happened: the birth of the subject itself. Furthermore, what we come to witness with the advent of neurosciences, epigenetics, especially the question of Alzheimer's disease, of autism or, more generally, with the growing global phenomenon of utter indifference to the Other (almost as the other side of omnipresent activism), are so-called post-traumatic subjects, which after experiencing the brutal intrusion of a horrific trauma (wars, terminal illness, natural disasters, etc.) attest to the fact that "the subject cannot be identified (does not fully overlap) with the stories it tells itself about itself, with the narrative symbolic texture of its life: when all this is taken away,

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45 See his article "Politics, Identification, and Subjectivisation".
46 *Capital*; "metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties of commodities".
47 See Žižek's *The Plague of Fantasies*.
48 Again, cogito is anti-historicist: for a different, truly radical take on Eurocentrism, the West, enlightenment, and modernity, see Žižek's *Living in the End Times*, 279 sqq.

something (or, rather, *nothing*, but a *form* of nothing) remains. From this perspective, the question of the subject now starts to point toward one being deprived even of unconscious formations encapsulating a variety of libidinal investments. The cogito is therefore, a very real abstraction: the post-traumatic subject, as Žižek says, is the historical "realisation" of the cogito. For the brutal external intrusion to actually be experienced as traumatic, the original trauma must reverberate in it. No wonder there's so much resistance to the cogito. It is precisely the universal common we all already share as speaking beings. Here, we find a clear way out of the thinking within the box of so-called democratic materialism or with contextualisations as our ultimate horizon, which amount to nothing but discursive historicism, where everything is just due to the particularity or locality of bodies, language, etc.

It would be wrong to think that all of this does not concern art, or that it never concerned it in the past, especially insofar as art, more than not, can also present us with a response to concrete circumstances or context, which never fully overlaps with itself in any given historical period. We can clearly see how art, in terms of → universality as a cut in the order of things (and therefore not as globality), maintains or simply shows, even in spite of itself, or this or that intention, this → fragile point of the subject, especially in the way it can distance ourselves from ourselves (feelings, emotions, affects, thoughts, habits, etc.) or starts from this very pre-existing disjointedness. (It suffices to say that the promise of art as a subjectivising power remains to be analysed.) To continue, we should say the same about art history or any theory of art, inasmuch as interpretation is concerned – or the sudden impossibility of interpretation as deciphering, now faced with *nothing* or the form of nothing. What is there to interpret? How about artworks, which truly come across or "function" as completely indifferent to spectators, not even in the frame of Michael Fried's absorption? If we remain on a general level, within art history, we could say that the question of the subject first emerges with the emergence of the "I" or the "stuff of the I" (as the ego, but also the unconscious libidinal wealth of a particular person), namely, during the Renaissance, and quite unsurprisingly together with painting, or more precisely, with the advent of perspective and frame (*quadro, tavola quadrata*), which at the time could still hold or encompass the entirety of the human body. According to Gérard Wajcman, who actually sees art as the safeguard of the subject, it is exactly this "I" that will later lay itself down on Freud's couch.[49] Not only does the modern age in painting bring about the fall of perspective, but also, and actually, a deframing, when a painting also ceases to be a window, so to speak. It is clear, from this point of view, that Malevich's *Black Square* is no window, if not a window with a view of nothing or simply one of the forms of this nothing. Furthermore, as post WWII painting shows us, the deframing of painting has consequences for the body (deserving to be its own term), losing its ground/frame and returning with a vengeance (Bacon, Pollock et al.), and bearing upon the emergence of new art practices.[50] What we're ultimately dealing with here is the simultaneous deflation of meaning (also narcissistic self-expression) and resemblance to the art of the 20th century, which also has its consequences for interpreting.[51] In fact, it is modern art itself that already reaches far beyond the usual handy historicist critiques of it supposedly being individualist and formalist, also in terms of the object, the question of which it actually completely redefines.[52] As far as interpretation is concerned, or its materialism, we can follow its vicissitudes in

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49 See his *Fenêtre*.
50 Body art, performance art, and some later, quite dubious postmodernist practices of returning to the real of the flesh, etc. – see Laurence Dorléac's *L'Ordre sauvage: violence, dépense et sacré dans l'art des années 1950–1960,* and *Où va l'histoire de l'art contemporain?*
51 See Wajcman's intriguing suggestion of materialist iconography in his brilliant *L'objet du siècle*.
52 See, for instance, Yve-Alain Bois's "Whose formalism?" in *Art Bulletin*.

the (thoroughly modern) question, the details of which Daniel Arasse remains the key art-historical theorist. If by definition the marginal and subversive detail, at first, implies the possibility of interpreting as such, namely as deciphering, even of unearthing meaning (allegories, symbols, metaphors, etc., when the visual transforms itself into a text, even a story of a certain time, place or individual artist), it also quickly blocks it or redefines it as an → intervention of non-meaning. We are perhaps still inclined to think that interpreting artworks is akin to interpreting dreams. However, not everything is unconscious, and it is exactly here than the question of the subject and object step in with a vengeance. In terms of contextualisation, which has a long history, not only in art history's more sociological veins, but already in iconography and iconology, what we are faced with here is again the suspicion that context is not the ultimate horizon, and that full immersion into context is not possible (funnily enough, even for the context itself), which also brings about the old Marxist question of artworks after their context has passed away (or if they indeed surpass it or create their own context). From this point of view, one can not only see the obvious struggles of art history, with art and with history, but ultimately its struggle with the subject, which it more or less, not always, of course, and now even with the help of cognitivism and brain sciences (which deny the autonomy of the psyche), fully immersed in different contexts, thereby reducing art to craft, so to speak, to a mere bearer of signs of a certain time, place, individual, and so on. Perhaps it is only this, namely the question of the subject, that could, in fact, be deemed as the "→ eternal → contemporary" in any given concrete time or space. Not ahistorical, not an abstract impossibility outside history, but a really existing abstraction, both the break in history and its actual precondition – as what created it.

Travesti Miguel A. López

Lima, Peru, June 2015

Figure 50: Giuseppe Campuzano as La Virgen de las Guacas (Mater Dolorosa), 2007, C-print, 70 x 194 cm. Photo: Alejandro Gómez de Tuddo.

*Travesti [transvestite]: Aberrant, effeminate, abnormal, stray, degenerate, common criminal, highly dangerous criminal, criminal dressed as a woman, shameless, sexual → deviant, dressed up, drag queen, anti-social, entity of HIV transmission, scandalous, fake woman, gay, stray gay, gay with a miniskirt, thug, tea-leaf, man dressed as a woman, man in feminine clothing, homosexual, stray homosexual, homosexual dressed as a woman, un-desirable, strange individual, immoral, inverted, gossip, social evil, crazy, crazy street hag, unlawful, scumbag, illegitimate, queer, faggot, fag, erotic minority, paedophile, passive pederast, person of questionable conduct, personality, character, antisocial character, lowlife character, pervert, weird, weirdo, ambiguous being, marginalised being, snitch, third gender, transgender, transformer, transvestite, vulnerable (still under construction)...
— Terms used by the local press to refer to trans people collected by drag activist Giuseppe Campuzano.* (Figure 50)

Travesti [transvestite] is a popular word in Latin American that means drag. Usually it refers to the person who cross-dresses his body, rejecting any natural or essential identity order. The transvestite makes visible the workings of gender, revealing its contingency as well as the performative possibilities of challenging gendered norms. Transvestite performance highlights how bodies are discursively produced and how identity is never fixed, emphasising the relationship between bodies and subjectivity and tackling a notion of politics concerned with identifications. From a Southern perspective, the concept of "transvestite" could help us to explore the

different versions of the politics of becoming. Understood here as an analogy for the mask – the false, the copy, the theatrical, the camouflage – transvestism appears as a useful analytical concept capable of making visible and thinking through the processes of colonisation, resistance, hybridisation, → migration, and *mestizaje*.

I would like to discuss the term *travesti* (transvestite) using as a reference the *Transvestite Museum of Peru* project by the philosopher and drag activist Giuseppe Campuzano (1969–2013), which radicalises the possibilities of thinking *travesti* as a political tool. (Figure 51) This transvestite museum is an attempt at a queer counter-reading and promiscuous intersectional thinking of history that collects objects, images, texts and documents, press clippings and appropriated artworks, in order to propose actions, stagings, and publications that would → fracture the privileged site of heterosexual subjectivity – a subjectivity that turns all difference into an object of study and renders invisible its own contingency and the social processes that led to its → constructions. The project, halfway between performance and historical research, proposes a critical revision of history from the strategic perspective of a fictional figure Campuzano called the "androgynous indigenous/ *mestizo* transvestite". Here, transgender, transvestite, transsexual, intersexual and androgynous figures are posited as the central actors and main political subjects for any construction of history. One of the museum's achievements was to have introduced a politically corrosive and discontinuous narrative of transgender into a public domain, a narrative that imagined new forms of community and undid the foundational myths and ideological fantasy that lay hidden under the rubric of the nation or state.

Figure 51: Giuseppe Campuzano, *Museo Travesti del Perú – Public intervention in Parque de la Exposición*, Lima city center, Lima, 2004. Photo: Claudia Alva.

This is where the transversal readings of the Transvestite Museum became powerful tools for the subversion of heterosexual spatiotemporality: for instance, in the form of micro-cartography based on the concept of *pluma* (literally meaning "feather"), which connected the grand imperial gown of Manco Capac (the first leader of the Inca civilisation in the 15th century) with the 18th century colonial paintings of the Cuzco School, a movement that appropriated colonial Catholic iconography to represent winged warriors draped in glamorous clothing, and with the costumes of contemporary showgirls and drag queens. Or in the set of images that Campuzano called *mestizaje,* which wove together representations that provided an account of ethnic and sexual migrations, such as the veiled *tapadas limeñas* of the 19th century – presences that proved ambivalent and therefore subversive for gender identification – with a transvestite singer from a Chinese opera staged in Lima in 1870, or with images of black queers portrayed by watercolourists from the Pacific Scientific Commission expeditions of the 19th century.

It was there that the importance of the figure of the museum resided. At a time when the market had turned sexual identities into consumer products, and museums seemed removed from any agenda reflecting on sexual politics, the emergence of the Transvestite Museum was an opportunity to redefine the political role of the museum and respond to an official history erected upon the erasure of sexual disobedience. Its emergence was a deliberate perforation of the museum apparatus – which is also a sexual apparatus – at a time when the neoliberal pragmatism of transnational economies and the corporate marketing of the cultural machinery had attempted to establish a hegemonic pattern of the museum. Setting up a Transvestite Museum seemed to declare, on one hand, that the subject had changed and that the historical struggles of "women" and feminism today come up short when they attempt to think about all of our mutant, insurgent bodies,

Figure 52: Giuseppe Campuzano, *Photographs for ID Document*, 2011, digital inkjet on paper, 46.6 x 35.5 cm. Photo: Claudia Alva.

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whores, the intersexed, trans people. And, conversely, to choose to speak from the museum was also to state explicitly that the museum is not a neutral technique of representation, but a political device that sanctions the gaze, controls pleasure, and produces sexual identities in the public realm.

However, the materials that the Transvestite Museum placed in the public eye did not aspire to a fixed and established identity. Campuzano, and indeed all the museum's operations, demonstrated a profound distrust of the apparent transparency of images that lay claim to social representation, instead deploying the transvestite strategic gesture as the possibility of betraying their meanings and subverting their uses in the public sphere. His work parodied the rigidity and sharply defined boundaries between genders, pointing out the ways in which these de-normalised practices and drag representations interfered with the social dynamics that shape subjectivity. In this sense, the Transvestite Museum can be viewed as a large → archive of performative practices that defied the sites of traditional analysis of oppression by taking the *transvestite body* as the locus of enunciation, as a false, prosthetic body "whose nature is uncertainty". (Figure 52) There is no other truth in these signs than the processes of transformation and dis-identification through which one body can become another. No other reality exists but their frauds and displacements. A new, more fabulous and joyous truth emerges from this very artifice.

Unrest Ekaterina Degot   Moscow, Russia, December 2014

Famously, the notion of "unrest" (*Unruhe*) is at the core of the Hegelian definition of the subject. Hegel refers here to Aristotle, for whom a subject is the one who moves by oneself (Hegel understands this as a work of self-reflection, dialectical negation, work of antagonisms), while subject's counterpart, the object, is mainly characterised by its immobility. By reflexion of its own otherness and difference, the subject moves his way through time, while what the object does is occupy space. A subject does not exist outside the process of subjectivisation, of becoming.

The birth of the modern subject is often connected to its mobility, be it just *flânerie* or less leisurely displacement; self-reflection goes best while on a train or a plane, and even better when one finds oneself deracinated. In postmodern, neocapitalist, global society, better adapted subjects (like, let's say, international curators, wandering theorists, or biennial artists) try to circulate as much as commodities, to demonstrate themselves rather than commodities, to become commodities, describing their *mode de vie* as constant self-design and themselves as readymades (as Boris Groys does). Talking readymades in changing circumstances – this is basically the description of both artists and artworks today. The artist (or curator, or theorist) is constantly moving around the globe to perform, basically, oneself in new contexts. Artworks have already been circulating like this for a century, but what is new today is the performative turn inside object-hood: the art object is in unrest as well, it is unstable, it is often a cluster of different site-specific versions of the same installation, video, or performance. From here, I can imagine going in two directions, which I outline here briefly.

Vector 1: Unrest of the object: Performative turn and time-specific art

The dehumanisation of the subject goes hand in hand with the subjectivisation and humanisation of an artwork, a process that has been developing over the course of the 20th century. The → decolonisation of the subject-object → asymmetry and the shift towards more equality was part of the agenda of the historical avant-garde, especially Russian and Soviet, where abolishment of traditional painting (in its paradigmatic version, done by a male artist using a female model) was seen in the context of women's liberation. Avant-garde's "new objects" that define the range of forms of contemporary art today (installations, books, photomontages, even new types of painting) were to replace this old asymmetrical model of creation, as they were supposed to enjoy the status of friends and comrades to humans, or even of humans themselves.

One after-effect of this neo-human status is a different approach to the notion of quality, one that we profess today (without really reflecting on its novelty). Decommodified and subjectivised artworks reject the criterion of exchange value in favour of – not even use value – but "human value" that, ideally, would exclude any quantitative comparison.

Another consequence is the fact that the artwork is understood and shown in time rather than space. The "unrestful object" ceases to be identical to itself and is understood "in becoming", as part of time-based practices (including performance), or even what I call "→ time-specific exhibitions". I recently produced one of these with Yuri Albert in Moscow, as his retrospective was constantly changing during the period it was open.

Vector 2: Immobilised subjects: Fiction as subjectivisation

In this world of planetary mobility that is ours, what about immobilised subjects, excluded from the vortex of a global economy? I am talking here about the wretched of the earth and sky, those physically and economically challenged, but also those politically isolated and not even having access to the escape of immigration. Lots of attention is brought today to displacements, to legal as well as illegal migrants, to refugees, but to some extent these people are already privileged in comparison to those who have not found a way to leave the countries where they have neither → agency nor security. (For example, *Not Even Refugees* – the title of the new play by Keti Chukhrov that we just presented in Cologne, which she later changed to *Not Even Dead* – is about Russo-Georgian war of 1991.) (Figure 53)

This immobilisation evokes, of course, the traumatic experience of isolation inside the communist block during Cold War – relative isolation in the case of Eastern European "people's democracies", total in the case of post-WWII, neo-modernist Soviet Union.

In this particular context of the post-war Soviet Union, at least, this isolated, confined, and nonglobal subject was raised in everyday educational practice, as well as conceptually constructed, as a radically global one, with an extremely → universalist approach to culture, where Marx, Shakespeare, Titian as well as Nasym Khikmet and Rabindranath Tagore, were considered the main intellectual landmarks of the Soviet subject (to a much bigger extent than local Russian culture). The Soviet Marxist philosopher Ewald Iljenkov, as well as other theorists, insisted that the true
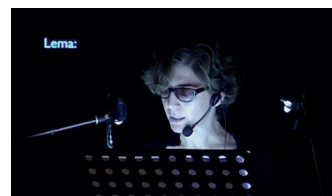

Figure 53: Keti Chukhrov, "Not Even Dead", lecture performance, still from video documentation, 33′ 39″, a part of *Reports to an Academy. A Non-academic Symposium, Performative or Otherwise*, concept and presentation: Ekaterina Degot and David Riff, Kölnischer Kunstverein, 2014.

communist subject should build itself as a "holistic" one (*vsestoronny* – universalist, encompassing), i.e. as opposed to being "narrowly specialised".

The desired width and amplitude of knowledge that encompassed world culture was to express the deconstruction of the capitalist division of → labour, as well as the democratic and internationalist aspiration for radical inclusion, and even aesthetic beauty, since the narrowly specialised was routinely described as "ugly one-sided". However, since the real subject of this project, the Soviet individual, was strictly confined even in his or her own city let alone country, the experience of being "everywhere" and knowing "everything" had to be lived only vicariously, with an acute consciousness of one's own political and geographical disability.

The enormously vast horizon of knowledge of contradictory cultures combined with this confinement represented the unrest of an immobilised subject. That subject invested him/herself in imagining oneself elsewhere and someone else, in the culture of → translation, fiction, imposture, irony and cynicism – all these words could be substituted for unrest as the title of this fragment, as instruments for the construction of → the subject in opposition to the hegemonic institutional narrative. As Brecht once said through the words of one of his characters, "the best school of dialectics is → emigration. The most acute dialecticians are refugees". But Hegelian unrest and subjectivisation can also reside in the dis-mobility of inner emigration and not-even-asylum-seeking. (It goes without saying that the drastic and grim historical surprise of Russian aggression and civil war in Ukraine, as well as the abrupt change in the situation in Russia itself, represents the background of these brief reflections).

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Geopolitics

Even if the prefix "geo-" appears today as too simplistic to comprehend the contemporary *locus* of politics, there is an urgent need to re-address the geographies of power in a period in which frontiers and territorial dispossession and exploitation intensify their violence. The crisis of hegemonic views of globalisation and the quick dissemination of new vocabularies of antagonism and resistance coming from local struggles provide a new scenario for geopolitics.

The seminar is going to address issues about the impact artists and the art system have on economic and political situations around the world, and *vice versa*. How to critically position oneself towards the subordination of the art system to the ideological, epistemological and capital positions of power, while at the same time emphasising that art and ideas about various cultural spaces are not distributed equally in different parts of the world.

The seminar took place at the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, +MSUM, Ljubljana, Slovenia from 16 to 18 September 2015.

Introduction

Terms

Alignment: An Attempt at Refusal Boris Buden

The notion of "alignment" almost automatically evokes the idea of space. Concretely, it invites us to think of taking a certain position within a geopolitical space. But the fact is, however, that the term "alignment" as such does not at all belong to the vocabulary of geopolitics. It is rather its negation that more than a half-century ago entered the political stage of the world. The so-called → Non-Aligned Movement was founded in the midst of the Cold War at the first *Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries*, held in September 1961 in Belgrade, the capital of what was then socialist Yugoslavia. Thus, the first meaning of "(non-)alignment" unfolds from a historical retrospective and refers to the spaces of a former geopolitical order that dissolved with the end of the Cold War. We might even call it the "former (non-)alignment".

However, the adjective "former" already points at another meaning of the word "alignment", a meaning that is no less political than the geopolitical one, although it does not refer primarily to space but rather to time. In fact, recent history provides a good example of such an alignment in time.

Alignment in time: The case of the East

Since the so-called Fall of Communism more than a quarter of a century ago we have been accustomed to hearing the phrase "former East". Although its scope is often disputable, it clearly refers to the space of historical communism, the one that was born in October 1917, in the Russian Revolution, and which grew first in Soviet Union, expanded after World War II into Eastern and Central Europe, and finally fell apart in the so-called democratic revolutions of 1989/90. Curiously, the notion of "former East" does not apply to the Far East, to China, Korea, Vietnam, and Cambodia, where historical communism also spread after 1945.[53] In fact, it refers only to the European East, including Russia. But the truly weird thing about "former East" is that it designates a space that has just ceased to exist as such. As an adjective, "former" has a double meaning. First it assigns to the past the object to which it is attached. But then, in the same breath, it saves this object from the past, gives it, so to say, a second chance, a chance to somehow survive and participate in our present. "Former" thus designates a sort of continued life of an object that originally belongs to the past. It is its afterlife, so to say.

"The East is still the East although it is now called 'the former East'", the Slovenian art theorist Igor Zabel wrote ten years after the fall of communism in Eastern Europe.[54] His essay, under the ironic title "Dialogue", was in fact inspired by a scandal that, back then, shook the world of contemporary art. During the opening of an exhibition called *Interpol* in Stockholm, aimed at establishing "a global network" between the Swedish capital and Moscow, the Russian performance artist Alexander Brenner destroyed a work by fellow participant, Gu Wenda, while another Russian artist, Oleg Kulik, performing as a dog on chain, bit some visitors and was attacked by the audience, provoking a police intervention. In a reaction to the affair a group of artists and critics wrote and signed *An Open Letter to the Art World*, a public protest

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53   As well as into other continents like South America and Africa.
54   Igor Zabel, "Dialogue", in *Arteast 2000+: The Art of Eastern Europe: A Selection of Works for the International and National Collections of Moderna Galerija Ljubljana* (Wien, Bozen: Folio Verlag, 2000), 30.

against what they saw was the destructive behaviour of their Russian colleagues. Not only was the *Open Letter* signed exclusively by "the Westerners", it also expressed general accusations of "a new form of totalitarian ideology", "hooliganism and skinhead ideology", "a direct attack against art, democracy and the freedom of expression", as well as a "speculative and populistic attitude", "classical model of imperialistic behaviour", "attitude that excludes female artists", and so on.[55] Analysing the case, Zabel pointed first at the fact that such aggressive, destructive and subversive actions were long ago accepted and recognised by the tradition of 20th century art, sometimes even being granted the status of entering its canon. Yet, *quod licet Iovi, non licet bovi*, or in the words of Igor Zabel, "the Russians do not belong to the 'family' […] they are not two individual artists, they are not even Russians, they represent 'the East' – politically correctly called 'the (former) East'". This is why, as Zabel argues, "their action cannot be legitimised by the code which it was actually questioning and attacking".[56] In short, what is permissible for a Westerner is not permissible for an Easterner.

But what does this case tell us about "alignment"? First, that this notion, nowadays, necessarily implies an articulation of cultural difference. The example mentioned above proves it best. It is obvious that the end of the Cold War has made the old regime of alignment along the geopolitical divide between "West" and "East" obsolete. The East has ceased to exist geopolitically, yet it has survived culturally. This is what the adjective "former" actually denotes, the cultural persistence of an expired geopolitical entity. The "former East" is a sort of zombie whose geopolitical body died but whose soul has found its cultural afterlife. The zombie is still on the move, but only in time, and it still aligns itself, but only culturally, or more precisely, it moves and aligns itself throughout a culturally measured time.

Curiously, this cultural difference hasn't been introduced by a cultural praxis itself but rather by a political → event, or more precisely by the way this political event has been understood. At stake is, of course, the notorious "Fall of Communism", or the so-called democratic revolutions of 1989/90. Probably the most precise definition of this historical event was given by Jürgen Habermas, the paradigmatic philosopher of late capitalist modernity's order of liberal democracy within the Western social welfare state. Already at the moment when it was happening, he called this event the catch-up revolution (*die nachholende Revolution*), as well as a "rewinding" (*rückspulende*) revolution.[57] Behind this catchy notion is a thesis with far-reaching consequences. In short, he argued that communist rule prevented the societies of Eastern Europe from accomplishing a "normal" modernist development, in contrast to the societies of democratic capitalism in the West. As a result, they must now, after the communist obstacle has been removed, catch-up with that missed development.

Habermas' concept of a catch-up revolution implicitly rearticulates the space of the former historical communism, mostly meaning the "Eastern Europe", in terms of its historical belatedness, or more concretely, of a belated modernity.

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55 Ibid., 29.
56 Ibid.
57 See Jürgen Habermas, "Nachholende Revolution und linker Revisionsbedarf: Was heißt Sozialismus heute?", in *Die nachholende Revolution* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990), 179–203. Unfortunately, the English translation of Jürgen Habermas' concept of "the catch-up revolution" (*die nachholende Revolution*) as "the rectifying revolution" is of no use here. It completely ignores the temporal meaning of Habermas's concept. See Jürgen Habermas, "What Does Socialism Mean Today? The Rectifying Revolution and the Need for New Thinking on the Left", *New Left Review* I/183, (September–October 1990).

It goes, then, without saying that the process of alignment – or, should we rather say "re-alignment" – of the former communist East to the West, has clearly a temporal meaning. It implies a movement in a historical time that is measured according to the logic of modernist → temporality. Curiously, there were even attempts to very precisely measure this time. Such was in Lord Ralf Dahrendorf's *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*, published at the same time as Habermas' *Catch-up Revolution*, 1990. To join the club of the developed Western democracies, the → post-communist societies, he claims, need six months to establish the constitutional and political framework (this is "the hour of the lawyer": laying down the basic values of statehood, fundamental rights, the main paradigms of the rule of law, independent administration of justice and separation of powers); six years to construct the rudiments of a true market economy (juridical guarantees for anti-monopolism, economic rivalry and free competition, which includes the development of a certain social protection network – "the hour of the economist"); and for the final implementation of a free democratic society relying on the power of its well-developed civil society, ("the hour of the citizen"), no less than sixty years.[58]

The time of such a historical re-alignment of the former communist East to the capitalist, democratic West is thus measured by three clocks, which represent three socially and politically different temporalities of one and the same process. Yet, however different, they all count time progressively. The development of a properly functioning civil society might be a very slow process, much slower than the political institutionalisation of its constitutional framework, but nevertheless, its outcome is teleologically predetermined. At the end of the process, even if the lifespan of a generation is needed for its accomplishment, the East was obviously supposed to finally lose its adjective "former" and dissolve itself in the West, that is, to become the West itself. In the context of the post-communist "catch-up alignment" this means only one thing – to eliminate, or in Hegelian terms (quite appropriate here) to sublate any temporal distance between the East and the West. The East becomes the West at the moment when it enters its temporality, that is, when it starts to share the same temporality as the West. But what is this temporality of the West?

Alignment after history

The well-known thesis on so-called post-history seems to perfectly fit into the teleology of the post-communist alignment. It implies a temporality that has detached itself from history and become ahistorical in terms of the final conclusion of all historical development. As such it might be also understood as the final destination of this same historical development. This too applies to the process of the post-communist transition, i.e. the re-alignment of the former East to the capitalist democratic West. It has the meaning of a historical process only insofar as its ultimate goal is to leave history behind. So the East has finally aligned itself to the West at the moment when it has found the exit out of history and become ahistorical, like the West. What this could concretely mean is shown best in the most popular – although theoretically not the most original – concept of post-history, as seen in Francis Fukuyama's

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58   Ralf Dahrendorf, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe* (London, 1990), see in Milos Nikolic, "Zwölf Merkmale der Transformation zu Demokratie, Zivilgesellschaft und moderner Marktwirtschaft in Mittel- und Osteuropa (1989–1997)", in *Transformation und Interdependenz: Beiträge zu Theorie und Empirie der mittel- und osteuropäischen Systemwechsel*, eds. Arndt Hopfmann and Michael Wolf (Münster: Lit Verlag, 1998), 138.

essay on the "The End of History?" (yes, here still with a question mark), published 1989 in the American magazine *The National Interest*.[59]

So, in the same year as the Berlin Wall fell, Fukuyama pronounced authoritatively that we had reached the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and that Western liberal democracy was the universal, and thus final, form of human government. However, he didn't mean the beginning of an epoch in which nothing significant happens. Fukuyama didn't mean the end of all battles, political or military, but merely the end of ideological battles. Not all societies are supposed to become successful liberal democracies, but whatever the regime or system it would no longer claim any ideological superiority over liberal democracy. In his response to Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*, the book in which the American political scientist expanded his thesis from the article in *The National Interest* (published three years earlier, and now in the form of a book without a question mark in the title), Perry Anderson probably best summarised the meaning of the concept of the end of history by stating that it is "not the arrival of a perfect system, but the elimination of any better alternative to one".[60]

In fact, Fukuyama's theory of the end of history is a conceptually reduced and ideologically simplified version of a more original thesis on the end of history elaborated by Alexandre Kojève in his lectures on Hegel given 1933–39 in Paris.[61] In Kojève's version of Hegel's philosophy, history ends at the moment when the struggle for recognition, epitomised in the master/slave dialectic, has reached its final conclusion, which in terms of a concrete historical development coincides with the creation of a universal, homogenous state that has left behind all the internal contradictions like, for instance, class conflict. Seen from the same perspective, the latter is nothing but a particular form of the general struggle for recognition, which is for Kojève just another name for history.[62]

But what for Kojève was a dialectical fulfilment of the historical process became in Fukuyama's version of the end of history into a vulgar form of Western ideological triumphalism. The West undoubtedly did win the Cold War, yet instead of the fruits of this victory being shared with others in the now globalising world, they were used to renew and expand what at the time was a declining imperial power and to suppress resistance to the new forms of → global injustice. A seemingly antiquated totalisation of historical time, which Fukuyama managed to accomplish in his thesis on the end of history, was deployed globally to delegitimise any attempt at a radical systemic critique as ahistorical. At the same time it changed the general perspective on history by retroactively realigning all the different paths of history, those already trodden as well as those not yet tried, into one single line that follows the course of Western capitalism and liberal democracy. Alignment as a political, economic and cultural move within the given geopolitical space was now still a historical process, but it was seen as such only from a post-historical retrospective view, i.e., from a standpoint that presents itself as its only possible outcome. Combining both the geopolitical logic of space and the historical logic of time, one might define this one-way alignment of the post-Cold War era as a twofold

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59   Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History", *The National Interest* (Summer 1989), http://www.wesjones.com/eoh.htm (accessed 29 June 2017).
60   Perry Anderson, "The Ends of History" in *A Zone of Engagement* (London/New York: Verso, 1992), 336.
61   See Alexandre Kojève, *An Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, ed. Allan Bloom (New York and London: Basic Books, 1969).
62   Such a universal state in which the history has found its conclusion Kojève recognised in the emerging European Union and consequently abandoned philosophy to become its clerk.

process: a process of Westernisation that, at the same time, unfolds as an → ahistoricisation. The final destination of this process is, of course, a West that has abandoned history forever and becoming in this way completely timeless, which is why it could be imposed now as the very measure of historical time.

Yet, however liberated from history, the West still has its past, a past that is far from being a realm of the dead. Rather it is abundantly populated by the West's living others who desperately strive to become Western too, and so get rid of their own history. They are not simply somewhere else, be it geographically, politically, culturally or economically, they are also in another time, or in terms of a vulgarly Hegelian historicism, they still occupy the stages of historical development that the West has already left in its past. They suffer from chronic belatedness, a sickness, which Western colonialism once spread throughout the whole world and which still remained uncured. This is why today to still have history means to be sick. And why one of the severest symptoms of this sickness is, curiously enough, oblivion.

Speaking of the West/East divide that has survived the end of the Cold War, the Slovenian philosopher Rastko Močnik pointed at its ideological function, which is to rob both sides of their history.[63] The West, as said before, appears as emancipated not only from its own history but from any history. This is why it can be imposed as general or canonical. Moreover, as Močnik writes, it has taken the form of a real existing Utopia. Contrary to this, the notion of the East functions as a form of amnesia, for its primal goal is to get rid of its history and to become an ahistorical space like the West. So the East has history, but a history that would be better forgotten, for it is just the experience of its historical belatedness, and as such of no use whatsoever for the future. As a result, Močnik concludes, both sides are robbed of their history. Moreover, they are prevented from having a → common history in the future.

However, the re-alignment that takes place within the temporal framework of post-historicity, imposed after the end of the Cold War by the West on "→ the rest", is multidimensional, and in fact a deeply ambiguous process. From what has been said so far, this re-alignment process does not follow its own temporality. It does not share the temporality of the so-called democratic revolutions of 1989/90 either. At least in their genuine motivation these events followed their own temporality generated by the teleology of → emancipation. This also applies to the events of the "Arab Spring".

In both cases the temporal logic of re-alignment reflects merely a particular social relation, concretely the relation of domination, which can be best understood in terms of what Johannes Fabian, in his critical account on the discourse of modern anthropology, called the *denial of coevalness*.[64] What is at stake here is the coming together of a temporal and social difference, which is at the same time the expression of an epistemological, or more precisely, an anthropological difference. What is actually meant by this is that classical anthropology played a role in the establishment of a historical differential between cultures, which provides the basis of all developmentalist theories, as seen in the theories of modernisation, which are perfectly in tune with the post-historical retrospectivity of today's West. To put

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63   See Rastko Močnik, "Will the East's Past Be the West's Future?", in *Les frontières invisibles*, ed. Caroline David (Oostkamp: Stichting Kunstboek, 2009).
64   See Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 31ff.

it briefly: in the classical discourse of anthropology a non-European culture was seen as not only somewhere else, but also as existing in another time. This is precisely what Fabian's book is about. The time-consciousness of anthropology denies coevelness. It places the referent(s) of anthropology in a time other than the present of the producer of this same anthropological discourse. The concept of coevelness, in contrast, implies a recognition that the referents of anthropology inhabit the same time as the present of the producer of anthropological discourse. Coevalness shouldn't be mistaken for synchronicity. What is meant with this concept is not a physical time but rather an active occupation and sharing of time. It is a social relation that creates a shared temporality. On the other side, the concept of coevalness shouldn't be mistaken for contemporaneity either. Or, as Fabian argues, contemporaneity is a sociologically periodising category. Coevalness is a matter of social praxis. In other words, if contemporaneity acquires the meaning of an intersocietal relation, it must be actualised as coeval praxis. At stake in this actualisation is not and cannot be merely a matter of cultural praxis, however transformative or progressive it might be. Rather it is a matter of a socially transformative praxis, i.e., of a praxis that both implies coevalness and creates it as its effect.

Seen from the perspective of the claim to coevelness, which is but the claim to a praxis of social transformation, we might say that at the moment of its re-alignment with the West the post-communist Eastern Europe after 1989 was a sort of historical non-space, the temporality of which was reduced to an empty and belated "now", to a present without its own past yet with a future that was nothing but someone else's present.

It is only on the ground of such an ahistorical temporality that the process of re-alignment of the "former East" with the West could have taken the ideological form of the so-called post-communist transition to democracy, a quasi-historical process about which political scientists have been producing since 1989 tonnes of books, and around which a weird dynamics of political legitimation and socio-economic transformation has been generated, but whose real historical meaning has been obscured ever since: an often criminal privatisation of the means of production and – this is what the "re-alignment" was truly about – the integration of the → former socialist economies into global capitalism in the form of yet another stage of the primitive accumulation of capital.

The transformation that is at stake here has been also mirrored in the dimension of the global *realpolitik*. In order to understand this we must go back to the historical event that dissolved the old post-World War II geopolitical order and its regime of (non-)alignment – the end of the Cold War.

From uni- to multi-polarity

As is well known, the end of the Cold War and the collapse of historical communism, with which it coincides, are symbolically condensed in that romantic picture of the freedom-loving masses, who come together over the ruins of the Berlin Wall that unjustly separated them from the West for decades. But this event was far from being a politically neutral historical mark. For many, the Cold War didn't simply end but was rather won by one side, the capitalist, democratic West, politically and militarily led by the USA. From this perspective, the geopolitical turn that was brought about in 1989/90 can be seen as a move from the previous bipolarity to a so-called unipolarity. At stake is a perspective, which not only aligns the whole

world, and all its political agencies, economic capacities, cultural values and social stakes behind the winner of the Cold War, but at the same time implies that this winner, the West and especially its leader, the USA, had reached the moment of their absolute global hegemony, in other words, that they were at the historical peak of their power.

But there is another perspective in which precisely the opposite is claimed, namely, that the United States at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Bloc was already in decline. This view is offered by the author of the so-called world system theory, Immanuel Wallerstein.[65] Moreover, he argues that the hegemony of the United States has been in decline since the 1970s. In fact, according to Wallerstein, the rise of the United States began a century earlier, in the 1870s when it entered into competition with Germany over who would adopt the hegemonic position in the world, which was possible only against the background of another historical decline, that of the British Empire.

The thesis, however, makes sense only within an alternative timeline of modern history. Wallerstein is not the only one who, instead of talking about the First and the Second World Wars, merges both into one single event, the "Second Thirty Years' War", from 1914 to 1945 – a concept introduced in 1946 by Charles de Gaulle – that was in principle fought between the United States and Germany over world hegemony and ended in 1945 with the clear victory of the former.[66]

What happened thereafter can then be divided into three periods: the first, 1945–1970, marked the final establishment of the United States as the most powerful agency of world history. It was a period in which the USA absolutely dominated the world economy as its most productive and efficient producer. It turned its former enemies, Germany and Japan, into its political satellites and struck a deal, at least on a military level, with its sole challenger, the Soviet Union. According to the agreements in Yalta, the world was divided into two blocks, which respected their clearly demarcated boundaries. Despite many crises, which often culminated in local wars, like in Korea, Vietnam or Afghanistan, the military status quo between two blocks guaranteed a long lasting global peace, a peace that was, curiously, called war, "the Cold War".

The second period, 1970–2001, marked the slow decline of the sole world power. Wallerstein argues that already by the mid-1960s both Western Europe and Japan had reached virtual economic parity with the United States, which had no longer any particular advantage over its allies. At the same time, the countries and political movements of the developing world, for whom the Yalta deal had not brought any significant benefits, started to pursue their own → interests. This was politically articulated in the form of a struggle for national liberation that often had a clearly → anti-colonial character. Wallerstein sums up this political process under the name of "the world revolutions of 1968", meaning the multiple revolutions that occurred between 1966 and 1970.

This is where we should situate, both historically and in terms of a transformation of the world system, the emergence of the → Non-Aligned Movement. It was generally a revolt against the

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65   See Immanuel Wallerstein, "Precipitate Decline: The Advent of Multipolarity", *Harvard International Review* 29, no. 1 (Spring 2007), 54–59.
66   According to his view, the USSR was only militarily assisting in the victory of the United States 1945.

neo-colonial and neo-imperial order, which concretely targeted a political arrangement that brought this order into being and guaranteed its persistence, the Yalta deal and the bipolar logic of global power-relations.

These two historical events, the coming of the Non-Aligned Movement on the stage of world politics, as well as the "the world revolutions of 1968", also mark the historical moment at which, according to Wallerstein, the structural decline of US power and authority in the world-system began. It was a new reality of which those in power in the United States soon become aware. Wallerstein argues that the key objective of all presidential regimes after the1970s, from Nixon to Clinton, was nothing more than to slow down this decline. As one of the consequences of the series of structural adjustments that US politics has undertaken ever since – making of the former satellites, Western Europe and Japan, partners in the implementation of common world policies with whom it works in various international institutions, from the Trilateral Commission and the G-7 to the World Economic Forum in Davos – the new geopolitical order has emerged, an order we might call "multilateralism".

On the economic level the three partners, the United States, Western Europe, and Japan, were no longer able to promote "developmentalism" around the world. It was replaced by a new ideology that promised to ensure a greater flow of capital from the Third World to the North: neoliberalism that essentially facilitated the process of globalisation in which the frontiers of the developing world were opened to both, the exports from the North and the free flow of capital back to the North.

It is under this new global condition that the third and final phase of the decline of the United States began, the era Wallerstein calls "Unilateral Machismo". This was implemented after the Al Qaeda terror attacks of September 11 by President George W. Bush and his neoconservative advisors. The result of the new policy was the unilateral invasion of Iraq, an adventure that, according to Wallerstein, has transformed a slow US decline into a precipitate one.

Regardless of many questions and doubts that arise about this alternative timeline of our recent history, it still offers us a different perspective on the problem of alignment: for Wallerstein, the transition from the second to third period is paralleled by a move from a creeping to an effective multipolarity of the world. At stake is a new global condition in which, as he writes, "the United States has been reduced to the position of being one strong power in a multipolar world".[67]

As we have seen, the change in the spatial dimension of global geopolitics, from unipolarity to multipolarity, directly corresponds to and cannot be conceived of without the change in its temporal dimension, concretely, in the general perception of historical reality. To put it more precisely, it implies a new "grand narrative" of recent history, a narrative that makes sense of particular political decisions, causally connects them and depicts a broader historical picture in which these decisions are made. It is therefore only within this spatio-temporal framework that we can understand the historical change in the general strategy of today's re-alignment processes.

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67   Ibid., 59.

Align or perish!

As we have mentioned at the beginning, the concept of "alignment" entered the stage of what we call today global politics in the form of its political negation at the first *Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries*, held in September 1961 in Belgrade, the capital of the former Yugoslavia. It was initiated by Josip Broz Tito, then the President of the country, and attended by Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Sukarno of Indonesia, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. Soon over 100 countries, mostly from the Third World, joined the Movement, which played a significant role in international politics in the second half of the 20th century.

Today, none of the founding fathers of the Movement is still alive. The country, where it was founded, Yugoslavia, fell apart in a civil war, without any of its successor states showing → interest in the legacy of the non-alignment. Yet the Movement itself, although having lost any significant influence on international politics, has curiously survived the end of the Cold War, in opposition to which it had once found its *raison d'être*. This, however, seems to be changing now.

Since Narendra Modī took office as India's prime minister in 2014, the world's second-most-populous nation, and one of the founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement, has openly abandoned non-alignment as the guiding principle of its foreign-policy. The change is even more significant if we remember that it was in fact an Indian, V. K. Krishna Menon, who in 1953 coined the term "non-alignment". Yet another Indian, Jawaharlal Nehru, was first to define it as a geopolitical concept based on five principles: mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; mutual non-aggression; mutual non-interference in domestic affairs; equality and mutual benefit; peaceful co-existence.

But today India's prime minister has a better idea, something he calls a "multi-alignment policy". Behind what some commentators not without irony call a "grand vision" there are no more regulative ideas in the tradition of Kantian "eternal peace", but rather a very pragmatic idea of doing business with all. Without abandoning its independent course, India has moved to a contemporary, globalised practicality, according to which it will carefully balance closer cooperation with the major players in today's global geopolitics, like US, Russia or China. It has been doing it in a way that advances the country's economic and security interests, without being forced to choose one power over another.

Yet the multipolar world in which alignment no longer follows some universal principles grounded in a vision of a more just world, free of war, but has become instead a matter of "rational choice" led by egoistic interests of a particular country or its current government, is far from being a world of social stability and peace. On the contrary, ever-larger parts of the existing geopolitical order deteriorate into a sort of permanent state of exception in which the former social contracts appear to be dissolved forever. These new spaces of disorder, lawlessness and violence generate new forms of social misery, economic regression and political extremism, which can no longer be contained outside of the actually existing democratic order. As a consequence, the old bastions of socio-political stability come under increasing pressure from no longer controllable migration and the greater threat of terrorism. Only two decades ago there was a widespread feeling that the world had entered a permanent state of peace, and this idea is now severely shaken. Even the vocabulary of geopolitics (and Wikipe-

dia too) has reacted to the new reality. It has coined a new concept, the notion of "The Cold War II".[68] The idea, which is also known as "The New Cold War" and the even more sinister "The Colder War", refers to the renewed tensions, hostilities, and political rivalry that intensified dramatically in 2014 between the Russian Federation on the one hand, and the United States, European Union and some other countries on the other. The tensions escalated in 2014 after Russia's annexation of Crimea and its military intervention in Ukraine.

Regardless of what it exactly designates, this new entry in the vocabulary of contemporary geopolitics testifies of its attempt to keep up with developments on the ground, i.e., with a profound historical transformation of the world order whose symptoms have become obvious but whose meaning is still unclear. Such a meaning, however, cannot be retrieved from an objective, politically neutral interpretation of the given condition. In other words, it will always imply some sort of political commitment, be it a left or a right one.

Understood from the right-wing perspective, multipolarity is the name for a new geopolitical order that is supposed to replace the old system of international relations based on the historical legacy of the 1648 Peace of Westphalia treaty that ended what today we should perhaps call "the First" Thirty Year's War. From the same perspective, this old picture of the world as a cluster of legally equal sovereign nation-states no longer corresponds to the factual state of affairs. It is only a façade on the actual edifice of the international order based on a real balance of forces and strategic capabilities. This applies foremost to the principle of sovereignty of existing nation-states. For the right-wing reformers of today's global order, sovereignty is only a nominal, empty claim that cannot be taken seriously if it is not confirmed by the presence of sufficient power, that is, by a real strategic, economic and political potential: "In the XXI century, it is no longer enough to be a nation-state in order to be a sovereign entity. In such circumstances, real sovereignty may be only achieved by a combination and coalition of states. The Westphalian system, which continues to exist *de jure*, no longer reflects the realities of the system of international relations and requires revision."[69]

However, for the right-wing advocates of multipolarity, the existing state of affairs is rather one of unipolarity, the global order established after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Cold War bipolar division of the world. What followed thereafter has been an uncontested hegemony of the West, or concretely, of the so-called Euro-Atlantic community led by the United States, which has become the single centre of decision making on major global issues. In fact, the unipolar world is, according to Wallerstein, divided into three regions, the core consisting of the "rich North", the "poor → South" at the periphery, and the zone of transition, the so-called semi-periphery with big countries developing towards capitalism like China, India, Brazil or Russia. What essentially makes this global order truly unipolar is not simply the supreme economic, cultural and military power of the West, backed by the claim to universality of its values like liberal democracy, the free market, individualism, multiculturalism or human rights, but the will to expand this socio-political system and its values on a global scale. This, however, is precisely what the right-wing proponents of multipolarity oppose, and what they believe should be replaced by a new global order in which there will be few inde-

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68   Introduced 2014 by Russian historian and political pundit Dmitri Trenin. See Dmitri Trenin, "Welcome to Cold War II", *Foreign Policy* (4 March 2014).
69   Alexander Dugin, "Multipolarity – The Definition and the Differentiation Between Its Meanings" (14 September 2017), http://katehon.com/1290-multipolarity-the-definition-and-the-differentiation-between-its-meanings.html (accessed 10 April 2018).

pendent and sovereign centres of the world, with none of them having exclusive rights and each of them being able to withstand military-strategic hegemony of the West, a stance that also implies the refusal to accept the universality of its standards, norms and values. In other words, such centres necessarily deny the right of the West to act on behalf of all humanity. They, each as a "particular civilisation", will also resolutely oppose the threat of melting into a single cosmopolitan multiplicity, and preserve and strengthen their own cultural specialities.

Now, it is perfectly clear that within the right-wing concept of multipolarity there is no space left for any sort of non-alignment politics. The claim to sovereignty in the multipolar world is a privilege of its few centres that can still afford it. For those outside of their sphere of influence sovereignty means nothing. They have no other option than to align themselves with one of these few centres of the multipolar world.

The right-wing concept of multipolarity even retroactively denies the very possibility of non-alignment. It presents the Non-Aligned Movement as a historical failure:

> [T]hese "non-aligned countries" were in no way able to create a "third pole" owing to the main parameters of the superpowers, the fragmented and unconsolidated nature of the Non-Aligned Movement members, and the lack of any joint general socio-economic platform.[70]

At this point a deep affinity between the right-wing understanding of multipolarity and the legal and philosophical concepts of Carl Schmitt are revealed. His open animosity towards the → Non-Aligned Movement has its roots in his general rejection of the anti-colonial cause. It was precisely in his reaction to the call of Krishna Menon – who, again, invented the notion of non-alignment – for another, non-European concept of international law, made after India's 1961 annexation of Goa, that Schmitt accused anti-colonialism of the destruction of the Eurocentric spatial order: "[I]t is oriented solely backwards, towards the past, and its aim is to liquidate a condition that was valid until today". Similar to the way the right-wing advocates of multipolarity dismiss the Non-Aligned Movement as historically irrelevant, Schmitt trashes anti-colonialism in general: "Putting aside moral postulates and the criminalisation of European nations, anti-colonialism has been incapable of producing a single idea of a new order."[71]

Carl Schmitt's vision of this new world order is better known under the label of "New Nomos of the Earth", a new juridical and political ordering that is supposed to replace the dissolving order of international law based on the model of European secular, sovereign states, the so-called *Jus Publicum Europaeum*. This vision of a new post-Eurocentric global system that is dominated by what Schmitt calls "great spaces" (*Grossräume*), a system of international relations in which Europe will also have its ordered place, and in fact the notion perfectly fits the right-wing concept of multipolarity.

The question is, however, whether there can be a left-wing alternative to these geopolitical concepts?

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70 Ibid.
71 Quoted after Alberto Toscano, "Carl Schmitt in Beijing: partisanship, geopolitics and the demolition of the Eurocentric world", *Postcolonial Studies* 11, no. 4 (2008), 417–433.

Out of sovereignty: The time of → **migration**

At this place we should come back to what Wallerstein calls "the world revolutions of 1968". Not only did they denounce the Yalta deal; they also denounced "The Old Left", the traditional anti-systemic movements comprised of three components, Communist parties, Social-Democratic parties, and national liberation movements, and which Wallerstein defines as having a two-step strategy: first to conquer state power, and then to change the world. The revolutionaries of 1968 concentrated primarily on the second step, to change the world, which has become a *differentia specifica* of the New Left.

Yet today when it comes to the politics of the global Left, both practically and in terms of its historical visions, it is not difficult to diagnose certain deficits. According to Alberto Toscano, in the last 25 years the Left has almost completely ignored the geopolitical perspective.[72] Totally devoted to all sorts of so-called struggles for hegemony, mostly in the realm of culture and education, as well as socially focused on the sphere of civil society, it has forgotten, as Toscano argues, that geopolitics frames the conditions of a political action, especially in terms of a politics of radical transformation, → emancipation or revolution. Geopolitics situates all these struggles into the reality of geopolitical constraints like economic competition, scarcity of resources, biopolitics of population or military calculations.

The old anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist Left, including the left involved in class struggles, was much more realistic and was concretely involved in instrumental geopolitical calculations. Toscano calls this "battle-hardened realism" and argues that it disappeared from the strategy of the Left after 1989/90, i.e., after the fall of historical communism.[73] It seems as though the Left for more than 20 years completely accepted the proclamation of historical closure and liberal-democratic hegemony, and thus Fukuyama's turn to so-called post-history in which no historical move is imaginable outside the ultimate horizon of capitalism and Western liberal democracy.

The question is now, how to break this circle of historical idleness from a left-wing perspective? Is it possible to challenge the overall, that is, ideological and political, right-wing hegemony over the global space now when the Left no longer governs nation states, orchestrates diplomatic events or commands armies? The question is, more generally, how not to align in a world in which the alignment into one of the emerging *Grossräume* has become a matter of survival for all those who are too weak and too small to become *Grossräume* themselves? Is there anything the Left can do about it now after it has almost completely surrendered the geopolitical space to the Right?

In fact, this is not the first time that the Left has had trouble with space. It was in 1917, in the midst of the WWI, when the representatives of Bolshevik Russia, determined to keep their promise given to the masses of withdrawing from the imperialist war, arrived in Brest-Litovsk fully aware that they were too weak to hold the territory against German armies. As is well known, their saving formula was to trade space for time. So the Bolsheviks signed a peace treaty with Germany, sacrificed a huge amount of the former tsarist Russia – and an important geopolitical role in the then world – but gained time to consolidate their power at home.

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72 Ibid., 417.
73 Ibid., 418.

This is a history worth learning from. Not, however, to once more make use of a simple temporal delay, but to expand the very idea of the historical condition in which political praxis takes place today. At stake is a general move of our attention from space to time. When it comes, concretely, to geopolitics, the introduction of a temporal paradigm radically reframes the problem of alignment we are discussing here. The legacy of the Non-Aligned Movement as well as contemporary processes of alignment are usually understood as political rearrangements of spaces in a given order. However, what changes, or more precisely, what moves in the case of such an alignment process is never a space of state or of a block of states, but rather a political commitment. To put it in brief, one might align, re-align or not align only politically, which today means, only within the political paradigm that still dominates global geopolitics, the principle of sovereignty. The status of being aligned or not aligned as well as the change in this status is all about the relation between the subjects and objects of sovereignty, or about a change of this status. This applies to both, the now crumbling, old Westphalian order and the new world of "great spaces" emerging from its ruins.

Seen from this angle the phenomenon of alignment is fully absorbed by the logic of sovereignty. It determines all its political meaning but also the way we understand it. Concretely, the logic of sovereignty privileges the role of state power-politics and juridico-political arrangements, especially in the sphere of inter-national relations; it territorialises identities and overdramatises cultural differences; it generally puts emphasis on everything that is static, stable and long-lasting. At the same time, it marginalises economic issues, particularly in terms of movements of capital and → labour force, and it shows weak → interest in what is mobile, temporal or provisional. This is the reason why, within the logic of sovereignty, the contemporary processes of geopolitical alignment appear as fully detached from such an important phenomenon as → migration, which is nowadays intensively reshaping the global world. That the → institution of borders as well as different border regimes play a crucial role in these processes, and generally in the patterning of the post-Westphalian order, is more than obvious. Yet it is precisely the phenomenon of migration, or more concretely, its subjective dimension consisting mostly of the experience of border crossing as well as of social struggles that accompany it, which discloses the temporal meaning of the existing spatial arrangements.[74]

The best example of an ideologically induced ignoring of such a temporal meaning of border regimes is offered by various forms of detention facilities. Following dogmatically the logic of sovereignty we understand them as sites of sovereign exception, the meaning best epitomised in the institution of detention camps and most comprehensively elaborated by Giorgio Agamben in his *Homo Sacer*. In his view, the institution of a camp has an essentially juridical origin in the concept of state of exception and in martial law. It makes it possible to legally include the detainees precisely by excluding them from this very same legal order. Yet such a paradoxical space, which is demarcated by the processes of exclusion through inclusion, acquires a completely new meaning when seen in the context of a particular historical condition, that is, in the context of the contemporary global capitalism and the way it shapes labour markets. Here a detention camp becomes a device of migration control and serves primarily the purpose of regulating the time and speed of migrants' movements into labour markets. Mezzadra and Neilson call such a camp a "decompression chamber" that uses the

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74   See Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, *Border as Method, or, The Multiplication of Labor* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013), 131ff.

system of administrative detention to equilibrate the tensions created by the conflicts of interests constitutive of labour markets. Looking from this perspective, one that transcends the logic of sovereignty focused on the juridico-political creation and regulation of spaces and gives insight into the functioning of contemporary capitalism, a detention camp is literally a temporal border. As such it not only discloses the temporal dimension of the spatial arrangements that map the cartography of the existing geopolitical order, but also challenges our general perception of historical reality in which we live today. In more concrete terms, it puts in question the "grand narrative" of modern political history that is frozen in the geopolitical order and provides its legitimation. At stake is a chronologically measured historical time that makes history appear as a linear, progressive development, the well-known Walter Benjamin's "homogenous empty time". This model of historical temporality is constitutive of nation building processes. It informs the temporal structure of national consciousness and the modes and institutions of its cultural expression from national history, national language and national literature, all the way through the very ideology of national statehood. One cannot belong to a national identity without sharing its particular → temporality. And one cannot have a nation state without being temporally embedded in its national history. This is why this same model of historical temporality is also constitutive of the Westphalian order and the principle of sovereignty on which it is grounded. And finally, since this principle seems to be surviving the now falling apart cluster of sovereign states and finding its afterlife in the new post-Westphalian reordering of the world into the Carl Schmittian "great spaces", the homogenous and empty time of a linear historical progression threatens to further dominate geopolitics and direct our orientation in the labyrinths of its power relations – unless one takes into account the experience of contemporary migrations, which is always already an experience of another existential and historical temporality. The experiences of border crossing and struggles, of the temporariness of one's legal status, of one's political loyalties, social belongings or cultural identifications, that are intrinsic to migratory movements across the global world today, necessarily imply the experience of heterogeneous temporalities, which disrupts the linearity of historical progression and eludes the temporal homogeneity of national histories.[75] Such a temporal experience can no longer be confined to bounded spaces of nation states or normative identity blocks, and ideologically deployed to endlessly perpetuate the status quo.

If you would rather not align, align with them

The pressure to align is today stronger than ever. In some places of the world it has become unbearable. It breaks apart societies, ruins whole states, separates families, erects walls where they have never been before, and even stirs up bloody conflicts and wars, setting in motion large parts of the population and turning people who only yesterday were citizens of a state, members of a society, village or city dwellers, into an amorphous mass of refugees on the run who, on their way, join millions of those who are already fleeing poverty, desperate to align themselves along the line from the global poor to the global rich. It seems an escape is still possible, but not from alignment itself. More and more people in today's world are being forced to choose, often at gunpoint, between the West and the rest, between Europe and Russia, Islam and the infidels, between this or that normative identity block, this or that

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75   Ibid, 134.

container of "essential" values, this or that "civilisation" ...[76] And while an enlightened theory and a liberal cultural critique glorify the emancipatory potential and moral superiority of the concepts and visions like cultural hybridity, in-between zones or the neither/nor spaces, in the real world of global power politics these concepts and visions are of no use whatsoever. For this is not the realm of freedom but rather of necessity, the necessity of alignment.

How then not to align? How to remain faithful to the → emancipatory spirit of the early Non-Aligned Movement? And how to give its legacy an afterlife in the world of global capitalism and the geopolitics that serves its interests?

Today's processes of migration are the answer to these questions. They are already reshaping the existing geopolitical order precisely as a structurally unrecognised part of it. In fact, this order, a network of enclosed spaces and expansive temporal borders, seems to rather be designed to make use of migration. The usual impression, generated from within, of migrants coming from a remote foreign outside with the intention of penetrating the existing order and take advantage of its accumulated wealth and values, is a blatant ideological delusion. The truth is precisely the opposite: it is the order itself that acts as a parasite on migration, extracting its wealth, the labour force, with the intention of launching, time and again, capitalist accumulation, the very precondition of its survival. Linked to this is another false impression: that the political struggles taking place around migration are essentially a conflict between the refusal and acceptance of migrants. This impression rests on the wrong premise that politics is possible only within the existing order and that migrants, by being outside of this order, are at the same time outside of politics as such. In other words, it denies them the status of political → agency on its own. And it makes us blind to the fact that this order, together with the concept of politics within which it reproduces itself, a concept that includes, one must dare to say, the most advanced forms of Western liberal democracy, is falling apart today. Migrants are more than a symptom of this collapse. They are – and here one must agree with the panicking racists who mobilise all the right-wing forces to protect order – an active agency of its destruction, but the only one able to save the best of it for a → common better future.

If the historical Non-Aligned Movement still has a future today it is thus to be found in a political alignment with the contemporary movements of global migration.

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76   A particularly tragic example of an unbearable pressure to align through an either/or choice is the recent case of Ukraine, where people are still dying in a clash between "our" "European" and "Western" civilisation, and that of "Putin" or "Russia". The only choice able to preserve peace, a possibility not to align, has never been given to them, for which both sides are equally responsible.

Agitational Visual Language Tzortzis Rallis

In recent years, the ongoing economic crisis and era of austerity have brought new episodes of antagonism and → resistance onto the streets across the globe. In this context, as a graphic designer exploring the impact of visual communication in the wider society, I developed practice-led research that seeks to determine similarities in the agitational visual languages used to support the grassroots movements that emerged in response to this economic and social crisis. For the seminar *Glossary of Common Knowledge*, the term "agitational visual language" is utilised to discuss a series of events in Greece. The term is used as an attempt to examine both geopolitical characteristics, as well as common visual elements in the pattern of social movements that have arisen in Greece and other parts of the world in recent years. It describes visuals and graphics that → intervene in the spaces where the socio-political discussion takes place. Within this framework, the research examines the work of groups or individuals who design the organs of information, such as signs, posters, publications and printed or digital media, that comprise crucial components of the public sphere. As Douzinas stated in *Philosophy and Resistance in the Crisis*, comparable landmark events have the potential to dialectically shape our collective history (Douzinas, 2013). As such, this text focuses on visuals from a number of pivotal → events from 2008 to the present, such as the 2008 riots, the Syntagma Square occupation in 2012, and the referendum in 2015.

Figure 54: *Fuck May 68, Fight Now*, graffiti, 2008. Photo: Tzortzis Rallis.

The so-called "Greek debt crisis" and the arrival of the International Monetary Fund resulted in the implementation of "shock-therapy" (Klein, 2007), with hard austerity measures that many described as an experiment to be applied in other countries. In their attempts to save the banking system since 2010, successive Greek governments signed memoranda with the "Troika" (the IMF, European Central Bank and EU). These included enforced cuts to social welfare and workers' rights, privatisation of public assets, as well as tax breaks for corporations. The social impact of these measures includes unemployment, homelessness, child food insecurity and increased suicide rates. This environment generated a series of responses, in which people took to the streets to protest, occupied workplaces, self-organised and created community assemblies. Agitational visual languages have been located at the heart of these reactions to the crisis, from handmade banners and fly-posters, to digitally disseminated graphics.

The 2008 youth → unrest was a consciousness-shifting period for the new generation in Greece (Vradis & Dalakoglou, 2010). The protests that started on 6 December took over several cities in the country after the police shooting of the fifteen-year-old student Alexis Grigoropoulos in the district of Exarcheia in the centre of Athens. Some suggested the riots were a forerunner of the events that would follow and have continued up until the current period of the economic crisis in Greece (Mason, 2011). By discussing a number of visuals utilised by the protesters during this period, we encounter communication tactics that both reject the dominant modes of discourse, but also, revive and re-use particular aspects of it. As Kornetis observes: "Even though the activists' repertoire was pretty much removed from the past, their discourse often echoed or reverberated its exact moments." (Kornetis, 2010).

Throughout history, political aesthetics have been shaped by the antagonistic tensions between the old and new, and this was visible on the walls of Athens. For

Figure 55: Aftodiacheirizomeno steki Ano-Kato Patision, *I will break this world that is made of glass and I will build another – new society*, propaganda poster for riots, Athens, Greece, 2008.

Figure 56: *Live your Myth in Greece*, appropriation of tourist slogan, 2008.

instance, the slogan "Fuck May 68, Fight Now" (Figure 54) appears visually-oppositional next to graphics produced by Atelier Populaire during May 1968 at the occupation of the École des Beaux-Arts. Similarly, visuals from the streets of Athens showed an apposite use of popular culture and humour. An important example is the "Remember, remember the 6th of December" stencil that references an English folk verse and the Guy Fawkes mask that was popularised by the Hollywood film *V for Vendetta*, and then adopted by the protest group Anonymous. In comparison, the poster that was created by the social centre Aftodiacheirizomeno steki Ano-Kato Patision, for the December protests, uses an image of a broken window from riots and the lyrics of a popular Greek song of the 1960s, which translates "I will break this world that is made of glass and I will build another – new society". (Figure 55) In the following years, forms of visual resistance emphasising the political potential of humour and memes similar to the visuals encountered in the streets of Athens during those events became more popular. Visual memes such as the Anonymous mask, images of police pepper-spraying students in California, or the works of Banksy, are today common tools for political communication. One question that needs to be asked is thus whether such memes have a critical potential to shift the public mindset?

The 2008 riots were also a forerunner of tactics, networks and visual connections in struggles elsewhere. The use of technology and social media played a crucial role in such mobilisations for the first time in Greece. In the following years, similar tactics and online tools became widespread (Castells, 2012). In the context of agitational visual languages, numerous outcomes were channelled in digital online networks, such as a collection[77] of graphics by Greek designers in response to the riots. Some of the responses focused on the use of culture-jamming and direct provocation, and on the language of the opponents by superimposing the visual language of the official tourism campaign for Greece on the striking images of the riots (Figure 56). Similarly, iconic images of the riots that were shown in the mainstream and online media were utilised in political posters and graphics elsewhere. For example, the cover of the Canadian magazine *Adbusters* (#82, March/April 2009) featured a masked protester from the riots in Athens. Such images can be interpreted as a symbol of celebration for the new episodes of dissent against the crisis, and a departure from the old ways of communicating visuals.

May 2011 saw the occupation of Syntagma Square in the centre of Athens. Daily assemblies with thousands of participants were organised with a horizontal structure and consensus decision-making processes. The occupation is comparable to the series of M15 protests in Spain and the worldwide Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement that had an urban focus in public squares to protest against economic and social injustice. In these spaces one can examine a wide plurality of political voices and notable visual connections from the occupation as a synthesis of hand-made banners, signs, tents and assemblies. In *I am so angry I made a sign*, Michael Taussig discusses the impact of these signs in relation to the audiences living, visiting and observing the occupations in Zuccotti Park in New York: "Most of all, I was struck by the statuesque quality of many of the people holding up their handmade signs, like centaurs, half person half sign." (Mitchell et al., 2013: 25). The writer traces the form of visual coexistence of the protester and placard, thereby suggesting the significant role of the human aspect in visual communication. Similarly, visual messages were accurately captured by graphic designers that responded to these events elsewhere, such as the posters by the designers Sandy

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77   Nassos Kappa, *Riots in Greece*. Available from: https://www.flickr.com/photos/nassoskappa/sets/72157611356417016/ (accessed 11 November 2015).

K. in Berlin and Škart collective (Đorđe Balmazović) in Belgrade. Both posters that were included in the large occupational collection, occuprint.org, suggest how the human element can add a personal voice to what are often propagandistic messages. In comparison, the basic but original hand-made placards of the protesters rejected the specialist culture of more commanding forms of political visual communication.

After the violent eviction of protestors from Syntagma Square and the implementation of new austerity measures, a new focus of resistance could be found in the neighbourhoods, with grass-roots organisation and people working together, collectively replacing the state and proposing alternatives from below. An important example can be found in the labour clubs, self-organised spaces of workers, the unemployed and students that aim to provide mutual support, cultural events, and education, as well as health care. These structures emerged in several cities in Greece as an alternative response to the economic crisis following the summer of 2011, and the movements that arose in the squares. Labour clubs do not provide charity, but instead focus on forms of practical class solidarity that can be summarised in the classic slogan used on one of their posters: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need". Since 2012, the labour club in Nea Smyrni in Athens has sought to develop political symbols and local visual campaigns to reflect this new social and political environment. Most of these graphics are designed to be distributed as fly-posters on the streets, as well as to be shared online in order to engage a wider audience in the activities of these clubs. The work of the Labour Clubs can be compared to significant examples elsewhere, such the Spanish housing movement Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (PAH) and Occupy Sandy in the US. These groups are important examples of how community organising can do things where the state does not. Both cases use visual communication aiming to engage a wide audience, utilising graphics that reference simple pictorial alphabets. Such a graphic design approach reflects the historical context and political work of eminent figures in the field, such as Otto Neurath and Gerd Arntz, while they provide a new visual vocabulary, liberated from stereotypical symbols.

In 2015, the first coalition government with an "anti-austerity position" was elected, which called a referendum after months of post-election negotiations with the Eurozone. The referendum occupied a central position in the international media, and asked whether to accept the new series of measures proposed by the Troika , thus presenting a significant challenge to the future of the Eurozone. Nevertheless, many saw the vote as a question of dignity and a unique opportunity to take a stand. The week before the referendum, between bank closures and large demonstrations, the two official campaigns of "Yes" and "No" started. Both campaigns had an appropriate visual style and identity for their target audiences, and the agencies of the relevant political parties. The most pertinent agitational visual voice, however, emerged anew from below, and only the "No" campaign presented such a wave of unofficial messages, graffiti and posters that attempted to oppose the dominant media narrative with visuals (Figure 57). This reality was partly reflected in the class distribution of the vote.[78] In addition, this was empowered by a plethora of messages of support from cities across the globe and through online

Figure 57: The omnipresence of the agitational visual voice on the streets. Photo: Tzortzis Rallis.

78   Achilleas Galatsidas and George Arnett, "Greek referendum: how Athens voted – interactive map", *The Guardian* (9 July 2015), https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/ng-interactive/2015/jul/09/greek-referendum-how-athens-voted-interactive-map (accessed 11 November 2015).

media and networks of solidarity. In the UK, activists projected messages onto the German embassy in London calling for debt cancellation in Greece, in a practice that connected to OWS as well as the preceding guerrilla visual displays in public spaces by the Stop the War Coalition in 2003. Visual messages that are channelled from the virtual to the physical space reflect the dual character of these mobilisations, as seen in a slogan that appeared in the Spanish squares in 2011: "Digital indignation – analogue resistance".

This timeline presents a series of events through which members of the public, campaign groups, activists and community organisers sought to make aspects of the ongoing crisis more visible. The agitational visual languages emphasise the antagonistic tensions between the old and new, the importance of humour and the role of the human aspect, as well as the connection between digital and physical political spaces. The analysis of this visual pattern can reveal networks of solidarity, evidence of visual self-consciousness, as well as models for future creative → resistance. From direct action to sit-ins and grassroots campaigns, the use of visual means to amplify social struggles can reflect where potential alternatives might emerge. While the social and economic crisis in Greece is far from over, new episodes will soon illuminate it, and most importantly the transnational struggle of thousands of people crossing the borders of Europe.

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Catastrophe Galit Eilat

Amsterdam, the Netherlands, September 2015

This is the third geopolitical crisis that has cast a pall over the Middle East. The first began with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The second followed World War II, when the European colonial order turned to dust. The third crisis will reach its apex with the weakening of the American order and the increased influence of Iran and Russia, as well as other Arab and Western powers, generating yet more political disarray. The key features of the emergent crisis of Middle East geopolitics are foreign incursions, failed states policies, humiliated peoples, extreme inequality and poverty, plundered natural resources, ethnic conflicts, violence, and religious radicalism.

Since 9/11, Walter Benjamin's apocalyptic tone of the 1930s has returned to relevance as a political theory. Given the religious dimension of US foreign policy that spawned the chaos in the Middle East, it is hardly surprising that interest in religion

and the theological structures of modernity has surged since 2001. The Bush administration's foreign policy for the Middle East was aimed at more than preventing attacks on US soil. It was Bush's self-declared goal to fight against the "axis of evil", and his "mission" was to become the commander-in-chief in the global war on terrorism. In doing so, his definition of US responsibility was to "defend the future of all mankind" – a claim that could seem like a messianic delirium.

The intersection of political and theological concepts, what Carl Schmitt called political theology, is gaining momentum in the contemporary theoretical debate on the nature of human sovereignty and its propensity to generate catastrophic violence. Abravanel, Hobbes and Schmitt situated the potential catastrophe on the horizon, sometime in the future, in order to make use of it in the present as a tool for consolidating and intensifying collective consciousness, and for defending the political body and the sovereignty of the state. Nowadays, policymakers understand that by means of maintaining, sustaining and managing the prospect of a potential catastrophe, they can preserve the collective political consciousness of the states they rule, and use fear as the last adhesive that preserves the unity of the national political entity.

Disregard for the deep relations between catastrophe and human sovereignty can only perpetuate the acceptance of a supreme power. Adi Ophir points out the paradoxical ways in which the modern state perceives the place of the deity in both causing and dealing with major catastrophes, either abandoning the victims or saving them. At the same time, he reveals the continuing presence of the theological dimension in contemporary political frameworks that seem to be totally secular.

> *The relations between divine and earthly economies of violence underwent a significant transformation with the emergence of the modern state and its consolidation as a totality (of spaces, people, associations, etc.), a multi-apparatus that strives to control everything it contains and to contain everything it can control. On the one hand, the state has become a potential or actual generator and facilitator of large-scale disasters, and the destructive power of some states has been brought to perfection. On the other hand, the state has also become a facilitator, sponsor, and coordinator of assistance, relief and survival in times of disaster. In both cases, the state has taken, or might seem to be taking his role as the chief author of destruction and the ultimate agent of providence.*[79]

The questions to be asked here are as follows: Is the state the bastion of human rationality against the excesses of religious radicalism, or are the two concepts complementary? Does the state's secular foundation support a globalised violence that competes with, but is not qualitatively different from, the brutality of the theological regimes in conflict with it?

With this in mind, it is interesting to examine the tragedy that occurred this week in Saudi Arabia, with the collapse of a crane that killed at least 107 and injured 238 in the Grand Mosque in Mecca. Major General Suleiman Al-Amr, director-general of Saudi Arabia's civil defence authority, told Saudi television that a storm with severe

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79   Adi Ophir's text is an excerpt from *Two Essays on God and Disaster* (The Van Leer Jerusalem Foundation, 2013). Published in Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin, *Holy Bible* (MACK and AMC, 2013).

rain and wind speeds as high as 83 kph caused the crane to collapse.[80] Pilgrims from around the world had been converging on the city and the mosque for the annual Hajj pilgrimage, which started on 21 September. What caused this catastrophe? A natural disaster, the monarchy's failure or divine violence?

Eurasia Anders Kreuger, Bart De Baere   M HKA, Antwerp, Belgium, September 2015

Contesting geopolitics

The very notion of "geopolitics" needs to be contested. It is both too abstract (too much a bird's-eye view, offering too many excuses to ignore the conditions that people on this earth live under) and too concrete (too ready to identify the political with "the earth" in too direct and therefore too comfortable ways). It invariably insists that the map is the territory. And that is only one reason why it is cruel.

In fact, geopolitics is institutionalised cruelty, because it is fetishised distance from lived reality, and today's geopolitical pundit is not much better than the "armchair strategist" of the *Belle Époque*. If you are in doubt, just check any of the entries in the "geopolitical diary" available (for a fee, obviously) from stratfor.com, a US company with strong links to the "intelligence community". This passage, chosen almost at random, was published on 8 September 2015:

> *Syria's import on the global geopolitical scale is not because of large numbers of → migrants or headlines about the various battles and alliances shifting in the battle space every day. Syria and the Levant in general have always derived their importance from their status as a key area of competition between the world's great powers, as the United States and Russia are demonstrating.*[81]

Geopolitics as a genre brutalises us as readers and writers. Yet it may be an irresistible temptation, simply because we find it so *interesting*. And since we have been summoned to Ljubljana to declare our different positions on this inherently cynical topic, we might as well disclose the *self-interest* that shapes our → interest.

Eurasia and contemporary art

M HKA is the Flemish Government's museum of contemporary art, so we have a special responsibility to collect, exhibit and contextualise art "made in Flanders". This is already geopolitics. To widen our scope, and in response to our own past initiatives, we have declared ourselves a "Eurasian" museum. This insistence on putting the regional and the local into context is also geopolitics. We continue to build a collection of contemporary art from countries that used to be Soviet Socialist Republics, and we remain committed to artists such as Jimmie Durham, who uses Eurasia as counter-poison to Europe's hegemonic self-understanding.

Of course we know that Eurasia, as a term and a figure of thought, has been all but hijacked by those who believe that the collapse of the USSR was the worst

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80 "Saudi crane collapse kills 107 in Mecca Grand Mosque", *Al Jazeera* (12 September 2015), http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/09/saudi-crane-collapse-kills-107-mecca-grand-mosque-150911232844846.html (accessed 15 September 2015).
81 "Moscow Lashes Out Against Europe Over Syria", *Stratfor* (8 September 2015), https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/moscow-lashes-out-against-europe-over-syria (accessed 14 September 2015).

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migrants 125
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geopolitical disaster of our time, rather than a golden opportunity to set a whole continent free. The imperial mind-frame is only very rarely challenged in Russia itself. Other successor states, notably Kazakhstan, have made Eurasia (and the even more esoteric concept of "Turania") part of their post-socialist ideological apparatus.

When M HKA's director Bart De Baere proposed organising this year's Moscow Biennale around the title "Progressive Eurasia", he was not merely juxtaposing the two terms for oxymoronic effect; he was asking us to consider each of them afresh, in the light of their forced marriage, with an eye on a future that only becomes possible if we start thinking and talking about it. In the event, the biennale is now playing out under a less explicit headline. Perhaps De Baere's insistence on salvaging a location (the mega- or meta-continent) and a direction (forwards! upwards!) from the clutches of geopolitical cynicism was simply too illustrative of the cruder forms of "political technology" that are still very much in use.

Trubetzkoy's Eurasianism

I have assisted in the preparations for the biennale on the sidelines, translating some short texts by Prince Nikolai Trubetzkoy (1890–1938). The Russian-born structural linguist is now best known as one of the founders of phonology, an application of the critical scientific method to the study of speech sounds. He is also remembered for his *Sprachbund* theory, arguing that geographic proximity and contact between languages may be more important to their development more than any "genetic" relations they might have to each other.

Trubetzkoy's privileging of "→ friendship" over "kinship" in the ideologically fraught field of comparative linguistics and prehistory was mirrored by his many activities, throughout the 1920s, as a founding member of the "Eurasianist" movement of intellectuals exiled by revolution and civil war in Russia. The Eurasianists (among them the geographer Pyotr Savitsky, the theologian Georgiy Florovsky and the musicologist Pyotr Suvchinsky) were a somewhat mixed bunch. They tried to articulate an alternative way forward for Russia: neither Bolshevism, with its professed universal values, nor a straightforward continuation of Tsarist Imperialism, with its ever-unresolved conflict between "Europeanisation" and "Slavophilia".

Among the redeeming features of Eurasianism (at least as reflected in Trubetzkoy's writings) are its self-identification as a form of "futurism", its interest in the non-Russian peoples of the empire (notably the minorities speaking Turkic, Finno-Ugrian and Paleo-Asiatic languages) and its stance against Stalinism and National Socialism.

Trubetzkoy's Eurasianism and his "League of Languages" theory (*Sprachbund* alludes to *Völkerbund*, the German name for the interbellum League of Nations) both reflect his non-dogmatic approach to multi-national or multi-ethnic geopolitical entities (such as the never quite defunct Russian Empire) and cultural artefacts (such as the languages shared by its subjects). In fact, he preferred the term "multi-human". In one of his many letters to Roman Jakobson, the structural linguist who was also a fellow traveller of the Eurasianist movement, Trubetzkoy wrote:

> *I can envisage the world consisting of several big cultures with "dialectical" variants, as it were. The difference from the European ideal lies in the fact*

Figure 58: Aslan Gaisumov, *Volga*, 2015. Collection M HKA, Antwerp © M HKA.

that, first, there will still be several cultures, not one, and, second, that their dialectical variants will be brighter and freer.[82]

Plurality and complexity

Any *Weltanschauung* that embraces plurality and complexity is worth looking at without prejudice. In any case it is instructive to compare the tone of Trubetzkoy's thought (self-reflective as a result of his belief in structure and method) with that George Friedman, the CEO and lead writer of stratfor.com (who recently published the book *Flashpoints: The Emerging Crisis in Europe*). Friedman is also a futurist, producing geopolitical forecasts that are actually worth paying for, but he very rarely relativises his own hegemonic points of view, although he does share details of his → family's Central European history.

An interesting fact about Nikolai Trubetzkoy is that he descended from the ruling family that ensured Lithuania's eastward expansion into today's Belarus and Ukraine in the 14th and 15th centuries, after the eastern Slavonic territories had been weakened by the Mongol onslaught. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania was an explicitly "multi-human" state, politically dominated by pagan Lithuanians but with a mostly orthodox Ruthenian population governed in a language that was called Lithuanian but was actually an older form of Byelorussian.

The political culture of the Grand Duchy, which soon teamed up with the Kingdom of Poland in the "Commonwealth of Both Nations", was radically distinct from that of Muscovy. No less Slavonic, but much less isolated from the → institutions and cultural heritage of Western Europe. The Commonwealth existed until its third and last partition by Prussia, Austria and Russia in 1795. It was an elective monarchy with a parliament, self-governing cities and various co-existing religious communities, including Muslims and Jews.

It is perhaps not entirely coincidental that Trubetzkoy, author of the most inclusive and complex version of "Eurasianism" to date, hailed from this now sunken culture that built walkable bridges between East and West. A task that Imperial Russia, in all its forms, has repeatedly taken on, with rather mixed results. (Figure 58)

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Event Marianna Hovhannisyan   SALT, Istanbul, Turkey, August 2015

Geopolitics and event

In the field of visual culture, there is a considerable tendency to "→ decolonise" collections, archives and histories through exhibition/project making. These processes aim to shift, chart and retrieve spatial-cultural narratives as investigative markers examining geopolitics as an evental space of intentions and causalities. To some extent, this is due to the crisis of → representation, the unevenness of geographies and the proliferation of political conflicts.

For the suggested theme of geopolitics, I want to propose the term "event" linked with a set of philosophical notions that might offer insights both into the performa-

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82 Nikolai Trubetzkoy, *Letters to Roman Jakobson*, (approx. 1925), translated by Anders Kreuger for *How to Gather? Acting in a Center in a City in the Heart of the Island of Eurasia*, 6th Moscow Biennial, 2015.

tive character of the event and its interconnection with geography. My curatorial collaboration with SALT, Istanbul, the exhibition *Empty Fields* (2016)[83] provides a vantage point to work through a → catastrophic meta-event, the Armenian Genocide of 1915, by exploring a hegemonic → archive "mapping" the Ottoman Empire.

In 1988 Alain Badiou[84] stated that the century had become "the site of events" – collapsing into multiple events and turning into inception and deployment. Badiou's event generates chronological or foundational multiples, which is similar to the concept of *actualisation* – the so-called authentic event – in the work of Gilles Deleuze. However, Deleuze[85] also introduces the "counter-actualisation" – the performance of an event as such [via non/human actors]. Even if disastrous, the counter-actualisation is directed towards the opening to the counter-side of the event – the processual, ontological becoming, revealing the possible differentiation. In these implications, my → interest concerns how the notion of event opens up the potential of the → radical imagination connecting between site/geography, performativity and "being situated otherwise".

More contemporary readings of the term event depart from the ontological aspect of it and propose a direct junction with geography. Ian G. R. Shaw discusses the world as an evental geography, a geo-event, i.e. a geographic thinking, thus, a preeminent condition "where events are already localised within objects themselves".[86] Barbara Harlow[87] proposes an → alternate by working with the demarcation of geography and event by bringing in the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and African National Congress (ANC) as case studies for geopolitics. She argues[88] for an important transition regarding the place of the event – the emergence of the international law as a site – for two seemingly disconnected "apartheid/s". The transformation is "from an age of '→ resistance' to 'rights regimes'", where even this new place is also "geographized or temporized".[89]

Archive and event

In 2014, I began a fellowship[90] at SALT working on the archive of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions/ABCFM. Housed at SALT, the archive's caretaker is the American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT). Since 2010 SALT and ARIT have been cataloguing and digitising this archive with the aim to make it open to the public regularly.[91]

The ABCFM archive contains around 300,000 textual and visual materials, dated from the 1830s to the 2000s, of internal correspondences, architectural plans and photographs related to the activities developed by American Protestant missionaries in the Ottoman Empire and, later, Turkey. The fellowship's intention was to

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83   Commissioned by SALT, the exhibition was curated by me and it ran from 6 April 2016 to 5 June 2016 at SALT Galata in Istanbul.
84   Alain Badiou, *Being and Event* (London: Continuum, 2005), 1–9.
85   Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense* (London: Continuum, 2003), 170–71.
86   Ian G. R. Shaw, "Towards an Evental Geography". *Progress in Human Geography* 36, no. 5 (2012): 613–16.
87   Barbara Harlow, "The Geography and the Event". *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 14, no. 1 (2012): 13–23.
88   Ibid., 14.
89   Ibid.
90   The Hrant Dink Foundation Turkey-Armenia Fellowship Scheme was funded by the European Union (2014–2015).
91   As the ABCFM archive is a large-scale repository, the access to uncatalogued artefacts is restricted.

catalogue the archive's vast, unorganised historical materials in the Western Armenian language which belonged to the former Armenian communities living in the Ottoman Empire. The bulk of these materials are the results of educational, cultural and religious interactions and collaborations between American missionaries and Christian native communities, primarily Armenians and Greeks before the 1915 Genocide. Thus, this repository unintentionally bears witness to these communities, and in a very direct sense, the archive is already "the writing of the event", where the inscriptions of the event are radically contingent.

Figure 59: Library-Museum Building, Marsovan (Merzifon, currently Turkey), 1913?. Photographer: Dildilian Bros, Marsovan. Image credit: United Church of Christ (UCC), American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT), SALT Research.

Figure 60: Construction of the library-museum building, Anatolia College, 1912. United Church of Christ (UCC), American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT), SALT Research.

The initial starting point between SALT as an institution and my own practice is the potential meaning of the ABCFM archive that the → institution houses, and the historical and cultural narratives in relation to that. The resulting "Empty Fields" exhibition concerns how to consider and generate new critical openings in an exhibition space that develop from the entanglement of the archive and the → catastrophic meta-event (of Genocide).

The term "event" focuses on the act of critically visiting such an archive, and raises enquiries: To what extent does this require a new methodology of embracing subversive intellectual gestures? How to re-read already framed colonial, ideological spaces with → agency, in order to render new openings at the convergence of history, aesthetics, and geopolitics? Is it possible to touch upon the counter-actualisation of the event [the imaginable opening to the disaster] in the exhibition space? How can a contemporary art institution such as SALT embody a temporal site of geopolitics instead of [political] aesthetics and perform a creative production as a geo-event?

The *Empty Fields* exhibition sets its orientation through the insights offered by my research into the ABCFM archive. The depictions of such archives conventionally suggest the display of a static, organised repository of a "past" indexed by records and artefacts, as if akin to memory. At the same time, within the archives (particularly one of different languages) it is possible to discover the dynamics of a recalcitrant space of gaps, omissions, and degrees of incompleteness and to recognise them as the main narrative to follow. To bridge or fill in what is lacking, the research path must at points be exploratory, drawing upon different fields of enquiry, disciplines or categories of knowledge. By doing so, these gaps or absences within the specialised historical archives, in their records and artefacts, offer meeting points, if not the structural foundations from which to observe in turn, the researcher's/practitioner's own knowledge base that is informed by a sense of community and identity, in this case Armenian.

The exhibition/project *Empty Fields* unfolds contingent to its thematic nature, passing through community, collective memory, loss, history, and with that, focuses on the way archives become important within the contemporary exhibition discourse. The curatorial proposition centres on absences, which allows the research paths to turn into a system through which to showcase the specific impacts of erasure and blankness and shape a narrative to follow. These narrative paths of absences included the empty data fields of the archive's inventories, like language, geography, and data, which now indicate the epistemological and ontological fields of studies left blank after 1915.

The exhibition research uncovers such a narrative embodiment of these epistemo-logical and ontological "empty fields" – a story of the work of Armenian-German scientist Johannes "John" Jacob Manissadjian[92] and his century-old museum collection of natural history in the city of Marsovan (now Merzifon in Turkey). (Figure 59) Until the exhibition, his work was forgotten, as after the 1915 events the museum was de-institutionalised and his collection was considered lost and dispersed. The Museum was known as Anatolia College Library-Museum, and its unique collection amassed 7,000 specimens under the curatorial work of Prof. Manissadjian. The realisation of such an institution was his first disciplinary work in his native lands under the Ottoman Empire and in collaboration with the American mission.[93] The first showcase of this Museum was formed in 1891, and by 1910–1911 a Library-Museum was built to accommodate the whole collection. (Figure 60)

In 2015 my research came across to a bound, handwritten catalogue – the *Catalogue of the Museum of Anatolia College* by Prof. Manissadjian – in the AFCBM archive.[94] (Figure 61) Completed in 1918, after his escape from the atrocities of 1915 in his hometown Marzovan and returning[95] to the site of this catastrophe to compile the catalogue of the museum, Prof. Manissadjian's act was "the writing of the disaster" in Maurice Blanchot's terms. In the catalogue, he labels all specimens as well as around eighteen showcases of the museum, often with detailed descriptions. This taxonomic museum catalogue attests to a cohesive collection of the world, and simultaneously foresees the inevitable dispersal of its artefacts. Manissadjian's last curatorial act became his first archival act; its discovery a century later in the American Board Archives gaining a renewed signification. Working with this document, *Empty Fields* traces the routes of dispersal of a number of the original showcases and their contents. Unexpectedly, the research also arrived at the point of discovering some remainders of the Museum's collection and display cases spread throughout Turkey and around the world, abstracted and lacking provenances. In this context, each catalogue page is the marker of a lost historical lost landscape, which before 1915 had been about filling the "free fields" of disciplines, i.e., science, geology and geography, as mapped by Prof. Manissadjian. But now it is the emptied showcases and displays with only references to their absences. (Figure 62)

The ABCFM archive is already stored in a contemporary arts and cultural institution, in SALT, which provides a complex and possible platform to work with. In *Empty Fields*, my position is in-between the different expectations of institutions and associated communities who project their desire for the return of a cohesive historical narrative. But this is precisely in contrast to the geopolitical reality and the archive, which emphasises the parts of a broken mosaic. In the case of *Empty Fields*, the term "event" refers to Harlow notion of being "geographised or tem-porised" by accepting disconnections and absences as a part of the main, domi-
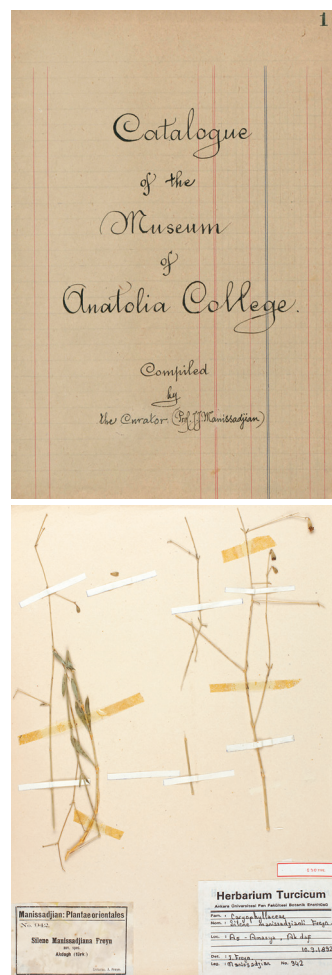
Figure 61: The first page of the *Catalogue of The Museum of Anatolia College* written by Prof. J. J. Manissadjian, 1917–18, Merzifoun (Merzifon, currently Turkey). Image credit: United Church of Christ (UCC), American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT), SALT Research.

Figure 62: Silene Manissadjiana Freyn plant named after and collected by Prof. J. J. Manissadjian from Akdagh (Amasya, currently Turkey), 10 September 1892. Manissadjian: Plantae Orientales, N 942, Det. by J. Freyn. Courtesy of Ankara Üniversitesi Fen Fakültesi Herbaryumu (ANK).

92 Prof. Manissadjian was born in 1862, Niksar, the Ottoman Empire, and died in 1942, Detroit, Michigan, the USA.

93 The Museum was a part of the multidisciplinary American mission-led Anatolia College, where Manissadjian was employed as a professor of natural sciences (1890–1915). The collection was a result of his pedagogical work with Armenian and Greek students of Anatolia College, which saw the inception of a new epistemology and pedagogy, as the cataloguing/ identifying/ collecting of specimens native to lands under the Ottoman Empire was implemented for the first time.

94 J. J. Manissadjian, December 1917, "Museum Catalog as it came from Merzifon, 1939", manuscript, *American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions / Miscellaneous Bound Materials Collection*, on deposit at SALT Research from United Church of Christ, American Research Institute in Turkey, SALT Galata, Istanbul, Turkey.

95 He was hidden by the German Maximilian Zimmer in his large agricultural estate nearby Marzovan/Merzifon.

nant geopolitical narrative, which includes finding the contemporary remnants of collections, but now as abstractions. Furthermore, the multiple sites of the event turn into ontological becomings, here by the discovery of Manissadjian's narrative through his catalogue. In this set-up, the critical question to be asked is how to negotiate a conflict within the material-visual space of the exhibition, in SALT, in the geopolitised space of Turkey, and how curating should connect back with people, to multiple communities whose routes once passed through this → archive.

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Global Resistance Darij Zadnikar   Ljubljana, Slovenia, October 2015

The geopolitics of the contemporary social movements: Global resistance

It is quite a challenging task to propose a workable sub-category to the seemingly "outdated" term of "geopolitics". Even more so, because this term was never a genuine part of the lifeworld, or *Lebenswelt*, of the → commons and its ethical and aesthetic layers. Looking at the maps of the current crisis, for instance at the borders of Syria – and the same can be seen on other maps of war-torn countries, which are mainly located beyond our conformity – we can see straight borderlines which are cutting into the real geography and demographics of broad landscapes. These borders were obviously created with rulers and by rulers, located somewhere far away, in the "metropolis" of the world.

Geopolitics crystallised itself as a clear idea in the times of imperialism at the break of 19th and 20th centuries. The colonial hegemony over the vast "un-ruled" and "non-Modernised" geographies has long been the driving ideological and practical force behind the Western nation states who shaped the idea of geopolitics and its practice of subordination of "outer" space. This was also the cause of the "inner" international conflicts they ran and run among themselves. "Internationality" is, therefore, a result of these historical hegemonic restructurings. The periphery and "outer" space (Central Europe, for instance) comprehends this "inter-nationality" mainly as inter-*ethnicity*, on the basis of their Romantic post-1848 revolutionary counter-hegemonism, which was established on the mythological construct of *Volksgemeinschaft* (people's community), and exists now as a raw nationalism. Hence, there was no geopolitics without national hegemonism.

On the other hand, geopolitics is not only a concept of hegemonic practices, but also a vocabulary item, a word. Even though we usually identify words with concepts, there does not exist such an identity; the related concepts, ideas or ideologies just stick themselves on words like various Post-it notes. If there obviously are no body-snatchers outside fiction, the matter is different with word-snatching, which is a common practice in ideological warfare. Let's take for example the neoconserva-

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tive use of the term "revolution", which has been used in the opposite sense to that which social revolutionaries apply it, namely as a "counter-revolution".

This fact, which from the word creates a refrigerator surface for Post-it notes, liberates us and opens a possible path for deliberation and experimentation. The stickers we propose could easily be discarded, but in spite of our intellectual playfulness, we hope they would stick in the public mind, just like a meme that is at first posted like a marginal or casual entry on YouTube. This should be the starting point in our non-imperialistic snatching of the word "geopolitics", and thus creating new connotations for the term, which are more appropriate for our non-systemic and utopian lifeworld.

The possibility for such a game emerges from the changing image of capitalism, which nowadays is hard to identify with the above-mentioned imperialism from a century ago. Now we are witnessing the formation of a globalised web of elusive hegemonic power, which consists of rapid global movements of capital. The term "capital" here has to be understood in the form of subordination, and not in a strict economic sense. It has been signified by "precarity" as a new regime of work, and by the moving of industry to places where life is generally cheaper (because of violence, lack of affordable cultural and health resources, and the absence of social security). Because of the falling profit rate and the threat of crisis, capital circulation now embodies itself mainly as an evasive flux of financialisation. The role of the nation state, therefore, differs to the extent that we can now talk about the end of nation states and the constitution of some other type of sovereignty.[96] That does not mean that this a-centric and uncatchable force is not internationally or informally institutionalised. The subordination of Greek democracy by the informal Eurogroup in the summer of 2015 is a clear example of this questionable structural force, where it was obvious that "national" financial ministers were representing a set of hidden financial institutions (like hedge funds, for instance), and not their respective "democracies". This also does not simply mean that the nation state has already perished. It only changed its nature.[97] All these changes have been fostered and accompanied by a new ideological belief, which we're now calling "neoliberalism". Contrary to the common image, this is not an economic theory, which could adapt to argumentative or empirical processes, but is instead a new kind of religious dogma, which was adopted by the ruling elites to such an extent that they had to snatch the word "revolution" to describe this turn and change its sense to nonsense.

In the background there also exists an epistemological question. This is the question of a pre-theoretical position, which has been erased from the horizon of mainstream social science and humanities in the name of a self-proclaimed and never seriously reflected "objectivity". It is obvious that mainstream scholarship strives to achieve "scientificity" by imitating the procedures of the natural sciences and proclaiming this imitation as the adoption of "objective methods". The absence of the position of the narrator and proclaiming this as "objectivity" is doubtful, because he is nevertheless still inside of the observed and researched media. In contrast, *we* – as → reflexive researchers – are involved in the *praxis*, which demands clarification of our position. Far away from the postmodernist scepticism

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96 This was pointed out in Antonio Negri's and Michael Hardt's well-known book *Empire*, in 2001.
97 This controversial process of the perishing of the welfare state and strengthening of the controlling and repressive functions of the state can be observed in the case of refugee and migrant exodus management by the European Union governments in the fall of 2015.

and relativism, which approves all possible standpoints[98] and destroys all hierarchies of the narrated, we have to act consciously from within in our claims to the truth or justice. The well-known example is (or should be) Marx's decoding of *capital* in the terms of → labour force, which was previously, in the classical political economy, misunderstood or conceived only as accumulated work. In other words: the changed position of analysis, this time from the standpoint of the proletariat, enabled the decoding. Such *partisanship* was the precondition for "objectivity", or so-called scientific "truth".

So, where does this arrogant self-consciousness of mainstream scientists come from, and what are their presuppositions?

There is an easily observable ideological mechanism: such an "empiric methodology" supports a non-reflexive and non-critical attitude towards social phenomena. They are not conceived within the dynamics of social changes and struggles, within their historic transitions, but instead like a *factum brutum*, which has to be entered into some methodological scheme, and from which "scientific" results about their inter-relations have to be achieved. This kind of social science hides its epistemological presuppositions in the self-evident banality of empiricism. It seems they do not need any kind of theoretical legitimacy. Deleuze characterised such non-conceptual "science" as "marketing",[99] which is convenient for predicting the past.

Beside this ideological production of a blind spot, there is also the issue of force, which gives to scientists the confidence to name the banality of counting as the truth. Pre-modernity relied on a similar force with God's will, which was supported by the institution of the medieval Church. In the era of secularisation, God and Church were exchanged for Reason and State. Like art, science could also be understood within such a disposition, which constitutes subjectivity. There are mechanisms and hierarchies, that are shaping our beliefs into science so that the resulting "scientific truth" relies not only on discursive force (scientific articles), but also on ritualised practices and the sheer institutional force given by the state and other bearers of power. They turned to the dark side. This is the force which liberates scientists from the responsibility to clarify their social position within research on society. This self-confident arrogance has been sponsored by the state, and outside such (i)rationality, for us, remains only the way of marginalisation. Hence, from this standpoint, even the fashionable changes in mainstream art or science are not at all coincidental.[100]

Now, haven't we concluded, that national state, in its Hegelian broad sense, is today perishing and giving way to the new, flexible global sovereignty? This one-sided globalisation, as a part of neoliberal faith, is connected with the actual reduction of Reason (the second secularisation) to everyday economic reasonability and the equating of social science with primitive empiricism.

Regarding this, the gaze of mind (*theoria*) now has to change its perspective, which is nothing new in history, let's just, for instance, compare the positions of Plato and Aristotle on the one (aristocratic) side with Diogenes or Stoics on the other. If Marx took the position of the proletariat to decode the enigma of capital, then we have to choose a similar position to save the *theoria* within the realm, which is emi-

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98   Postmodernism excludes itself from immanence by evening up all the different discourses, and thus producing a contemplative stance of claiming.
99   Deleuze noted this in his renowned article "Postscript on the Societies of Control".
100   The majority of scientific projects in the humanities and social sciences in my environment are sponsored by the diverse → bureaucratic projects, institutions or funds of the European Commission.

nently *praxis* (normative and not "objective"). Well, the position of the proletariat is surely considered outdated today, but this is largely a misconception of Marx's notion. The contemporary rise of cognitive and affective work and displacement of industrial production into the Third World could not be the conclusive argument, because Marx never identified the proletariat with a sociological class of industrial workers, but with a position in relation to capital accumulation. Even in *The Communist Manifesto* he noted that lawyers and the men of science are also being proletarianised.[101] Nevertheless, the resistance to global neoliberal capitalism has changed accordingly.

This means that this resistance and the processes of → emancipation have (and had) to change their terrain and modes of action. They must globalise, not in the sense of internationality, but in the sense of trans-nationality. But what are these new emancipatory subjectivities capable of confronting the geopolitics of evasive capitalism? We can identify them, at least from the end of the 1990s, in the new, as a rule, grassroots, social movements. Contrary to the beginning of the 20th century, these movements are not and should not be hierarchical and authoritarian, or aiming to conquer the state apparatus to rule and change society from above.[102] They even do not need to be an organisation. They are just multiplicities of initiatives and struggles. Initially, they emerge from the lifeworld and commonly have anti-systemic connotations. Be it identity politics (ethnic identity rights or LGBTQ issues, for instance) or class struggle, environmentalism or the free movement of migrants and refugees, peace politics or a sustainable economy, and so on, these all constitute a non-hierarchical conglomerate of the contemporary global resistance. We can grasp it through Adorno's micrological thought, which prevents dialectical reconciliation in its totality. In his negative dialectics, the reconciliation is a "meditation on the no-longer-hostile multiplicity".[103] We can refer to the Negri's and Hardt's notion of the multitude. We can be anarchists. We can go to Chiapas or Rojava to educate ourselves on the examples of revolutionary communal experiments. There are even more possibilities to understand these heterogeneous emancipatory multiplicities, and limitless possibilities to actively join up. Of course, the changed pluralistic points of resistance are also changing the epistemological viewpoints. It does not matter that the suppressed, mainly colonised, epistemologies have to be recognised in a renewed hegemonic exchange, which would refute all the heritage of Western reason. Each narration, which is meaningful within the plurality of a resistant multitude, creates the heterogeneity of contemporary reason, which should be conceived of as a net, and the result of networked resistance. It should be stressed, however, that resistance here is not the faith and expectation of some future ideal state of the world, but emerges from real experimentations of real worldly practices confronting and replacing the ruling systems of life (exploitation, ecological degradation, patriarchy, homophobia, post-colonialism, migration management, commercialism, etc., etc.).

After two decades of such networked global resistance the question frequently arises of its impacts. Through the mainstream media, but also through the numerous defeats, it seems that the global neoliberal rule is invincible. But within the lifeworld, even defeat should become a valuable experience. Moreover, the forms and pace of resistance are even faster than the rule of postmodern capital. We have es-

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101   "The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage laborers". Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto, Chapter 1*.
102   Philosophically this social practice has been advocated in John Holloway's *Change the World Without Taking Power*.
103   Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970).

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Figure 63: La Via Campesina, International Peasant's Movement logo.

tablished → networks on the internet, but also in real life. Some such networks, for instance, La Via Campesina (Figure 63), are today the biggest transnational global social networks. If they are not present in the public consciousness of the Western hemisphere, because of corporate media censure, then all the worse for the West. From alter-globalisation protests to the global and local social forums, from the Occupy movements to the anti-austerity actions – all these forms of resistance consist of vivid heterogeneous subjectivities, initiatives, and topics. This is life-experience, which counts and persists in spite of violent systemic pressure. The exodus prevails, despite death and suffering.

Still, there's an open question within movements of resistance. Do we also need to constitute an alternative or parallel structure? A structured counter-power? Non-hegemonic provisional hierarchy? Are non-formal networks immune to informal hierarchies and egotisms? Is it possible to formulate a minimal → common platform? How can we neutralise the nation state-oriented leftists, who were imposing themselves on social forums and anti-austerity movements? How can we confront the hijacking of our actions and media? What's the role of self-defence? What are the limits of non/violence?

In this regard, the micropolitics of global resistance not only confronts but also transcends the seemingly homogenous neoliberal block of contemporary geopolitics, and is an important if not decisive point for a renewed understanding of geopolitics beyond the hegemony of powerful. The contemporary multitude of social movements, their propositions and struggles, are already shaping the geopolitics of a world brought in peril by the lemmings of capital.

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Institutional Geopolitical Strategies Zdenka Badovinac

Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, Slovenia, September 2015

The question I am posing here is: How can museums participate from their local situations in producing a common imaginary of the world?

Today, in the post-Cold War era, it seems that we can only understand our spaces through their de-territorialised imaginaries, which, processed by global information technology, return to us, or are re-territorialised, as our own. In this sense, we can say that we only understand our localities through some broader, global concepts, or rather, we understand them through some other localities which have secured supremacy in producing the predominant imaginaries of the world. In the

black-and-white Cold-War world, the subject producing the imaginary of the world was clear – there were only us and those on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Today, however, there seems to be no subject producing the imaginary of the world anymore. All the imaginaries we have seem to result from the abstract processes of capital.

To what extent can we even speak of local knowledge, of the site of knowledge, or knowledge-site, in view of the above?

After the end of the Cold War, it only seems possible to think about specific geopolitical territories as "former", that is to say, the former West and the former East, as if the former division had left no mark and the present-day world were simply understandable as the world of global capital. All that seems to remain of the erstwhile ideological division of the world is our cultural differences; therefore, we need to learn about them as soon as possible. This purpose is served by the increasingly mobile contemporary art, which has become one of the most efficient passports for crossing borders. This mobility is dictated, among other forces, by prestigious international exhibitions featuring the art of increasingly varied geographical provenance. Trying to bring together various geographies in their recent projects, hegemonic museums such as MoMA, the Tate, and the Pompidou also appear to be intensely involved in their own de-canonisation. Or the de-canonisation of the master narrative of the 20th century, that is to say, universal modernism, which is nowadays read as the Western canon. Unlike this canon, which promoted the idea of the → autonomous development of art regardless of any local contexts, the current new narrative seems to focus exactly on the latter. But a fact that really strikes the eye is that both before, in framing the idea of universality, and now, in embracing geographical diversity, hegemonic museums were and are employing the same geopolitical strategy based on denying their own geography. The new narrative now includes the world of geographical diversity, which had been excluded from the old canon. Only the museum as the domicile of mapping remains an abstract, supra-geographical power. In the spirit of the new political correctness that embraces geographical diversity, the dominant museums map the world of art, making it seem as if they are not the subjects of this mapping, as if they are instead some non-place where agents from all over the world meet.

MoMA has named one of its recent projects Global Research, C-Map, and is promoting it as an important contribution to "greater geographical diversity in the museum's exhibition and acquisition programs". What is new about C-Map is that it entails the collaboration of a host of specialists on different regions who actually come from these areas, and bring their knowledge to one single point of accumulation – MoMA, as the single knowledge site.

Moreover, this Glossary is an institutional project, but a project of six institutions that are, compared to MoMA, relatively marginal and closely connected to their regions. In the case of Moderna galerija, this is Eastern Europe, in the case of SALT from Istanbul, the Middle East, in the case of Reina Sofia and MACBA, Spain and Latin America, and in the case of Van Abbemuseum and M HKA, North-Western Europe. The Glossary also aims to include various positions from the global world, but unlike C-Map it speaks from the positions of six geographies and their specific relations to other parts of the world. Another thing worthy of note is the different voices of the so-called global narrators. The projects of hegemonic → institutions, despite their obvious ambition to establish relations among and compare the art of different geographical provenances, fail to pose this very question, the question of

which site they are actually speaking from. Or rather, which site they are actually translating from. We know that a → translation is not something that merely follows the content about a primary, original context supplied by its members, but is crucially determined by interpretation caught in concrete relations between local and global social processes.

With their global projects, hegemonic institutions reflect their wish to understand the world without self-reflection, which apparently remains the domain of marginal museums, still bound to their territories. Such projects as C-Map lead to the conclusion that existing hegemonic museums have once again found a way to usurp the mapping of the world, that is to say, the framing of global concepts which are used to re-territorialise the contents to local museums.

Today, global maps are drawn in collaboration with a legion of specialists for diverse spaces who translate their local knowledge into a universally understandable language. We are thus witnessing an increasing need for translating difference, and this is served by a multitude of alternative glossaries. While we all strive to understand one another better and to find some kind of common language, the latter is becoming increasingly instrumentalised. We can see that not only the hegemonic but also many → decolonial initiatives are using the same terms and very similar models of researching and presenting art. For instance, the term → common and the names of the same theoretical thinkers and writers will be used by the Director of the Tate, and also by representatives of the contemporary activist scene. Both C-Map and our Glossary aim to map the notions of the broader space. But while C-Map serves to primarily accumulate knowledge in one site, the Glossary is a project of a confederation of six institutions, reflecting the urgent need for a plurality of positions. This Glossary underscores the instrumentality of the written word by calling its participants "narrators" and by drawing on, among other sources, oral histories. The Glossary terms are translated and explained in direct collaboration, and the editing is collective; the organiser institution does not have the upper hand in this process. The Glossary focuses on the processes of making meaning and the overlapping of maps and territories, rather than on some primary content. Not subscribing to the primacy of original contexts, it highlights the different material conditions in different geographies, to make it more understandable why we cannot all participate equally in creating new maps of the world. This understanding of such differences is a necessary foundation for alternative, critical geopolitical strategies. As such, the Glossary can also serve as a strategic tool for an equal participation in imagining the world. And it is precisely the imaginaries of the world that we are increasingly dependent upon. According to Peter Osborne, contemporaneity can only be imagined as a concept that cannot encompass all of the diversity of the world. He calls this concept of the contemporary an "operative fiction", which can be developed into a new political imaginary. An operative fiction can only be a shared fiction, and what we are interested in here is how we can contribute to it. We would wish to see it happen through a plurality of critical positions with a clear site of speech. Regardless of the strength of the critical positions of various spaces, they are undoubtedly not equally distributed through the global channels. The various degrees or forms of participation in the shared fiction of the world result from the varying material conditions. And this, as already mentioned, is what we are interested in exploring with the Glossary: the processes shaping notions and terms in a world of concrete material differences.

Note: The description of the term "migrancy" written by John Byrne is a collective term proposed by the narrators of the Geopolitics seminar of the Glossary of Common Knowledge Mabel Tapia, Anthony Gardner, Boris Buden, Chema González, Darij Zadnikar, Galit Eilat, Manray Hsu, Marianna Hovhannisyan, Tzortzis Rallis, Anders Kreuger, Bojana Piškur, Zdenka Badovinac, and John Byrne.

In 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall – symbolising most potently the collapse of the Former Eastern Bloc/Warsaw Pact alliance, and the alleged victory of capitalism over communism, epitomised most clearly by the publication of Francis Fukuyama's essay "The End of History?" – brought with it a triumphalist rhetoric surrounding freedom of movement, freedom of access, and the post-colonial collapse of the nation state.

In the same year, the birth of the World Wide Web brought with it a corresponding utopian imaginary – a digital future of free knowledge exchange, information flow, cultural nomadism and global community.

Within this framework people, much like memes of information or goods to be shipped, were expected to take on, or at least to accept, that the status of migrancy was a core value in the shift toward a new world order; one guaranteed by smooth transaction and the free flow of financial exchanges, and underpinned by precarity, flexibilisation, and cultural hybridity.

However, since the collapse of the global economy some twenty years later, the true contradictions that underlaid these halcyon ideologies of a corporatised global → family have increasingly been brought into view. The real historical legacies of borders, territory, ownership, sovereignty and financial exploitation, often stretching back to the colonialist expansion of the Industrial Revolution and beyond, have brought unbearable pressures to bear upon the untenable realities of contemporary inequality and privilege.

From the Iran-Iraq war, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the fallout of 9/11 (as both the progenitor of the American-led "war on terror" and the political evangelism surrounding of the US/UK led invasion of Iraq), through to the short-lived hope of the "Arab Spring" and its subsequent collapse into the most recent "crisis" engulfing the "Middle East", the growing legacy of the former West's demise looms large.

During this period, the seemingly exponential growth of the EU, as it sought to gobble up large parts of the former Warsaw Pact, and its accompanying federal rhetoric of free trade and free movement, epitomised by the Schengen Agreement, has papered over the cracks of growing fiscal and judicial centralisation within key member states (most notably Germany and France). The financial conditions of Italy, Spain, and especially Greece have underscored a contradictory rhetoric of cultural liberalism, freedom of access and opportunity, accompanied by severe financial constraints and the control of member states through the Eurozone trading bloc.

As we have seen over the last few years, primarily through the lens of a spectacularising media frenzy, the ideology of free movement and access, underpinned by a tacit belief in the abstract inheritance of Enlightenment democracy, has been

accompanied by the real imposition of border control, migration quotas and an alarming popular shift toward the political right (at least insofar as issues of migration are concerned). In September 2015, these contradictions began to reach a head as makeshift physical fencing and aggressive defensive postures began to be adopted by EU member states confronted with the physical influx of refugees across roads, bridges, rivers, and railway lines.

Within this milieu, the role, function, ideological position and real legal (or illegal) status of migrancy has again come under closer scrutiny and multiple reuse. Far from a simple noun to denote the positive neoliberal condition of human movement, or a verb to identify the action of this desired movement, migrancy has become, once again, a contradictory symbol of our status, → fragility, precarity and provisionality under the present conditions of globalised capital. At the same time, migrancy has become a political issue to be dealt with, a status of responsibility, and a marker through which the ability of "wealthy nations" to cope with the related fiscal challenges can be marked as an ethical and moral imperative. Likewise, migrancy has simultaneously become an embodiment of the Other, a symbol of those who cannot cope: a mass, or tide, that threatens to engulf an established order and a comfortable way of life; a pariah come to take what is rightfully ours and, perhaps most depressingly of all, a phenomenon in need of fiscal calibration and organisation – after all, how is it we can truly measure the difference between people as either freeloading financial burdens or truly displaced refugees? And, if we do, what are the means by which we can even begin to imagine such a distinction in the first place? Above all, what does this move toward a more complex and difficult relationship with migrancy tell us about our new status within the shifting reorientation of post-post-communism?

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Non-Aligned Movement Bojana Piškur   Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, Slovenia, November 2015

The starting points: The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) from the perspective of cultural politics; the role culture played in the movement; the importance which was placed on cultural politics and its embedded emancipatory content; the art solidarity networks within the movement; the active role the public played in culture.

Key questions: What to learn or extract from the movement today, what kind of future strategies can be applied for creating a different kind of international constellations in the field of culture? What are the possibilities for debating the "space" of NAM in our current situation, with a diversity of once prosperous anticolonial thoughts and ideas? How to interconnect the fields of culture and political engagement, as well as solidarity?

Very early on, more specifically at the Cairo Conference in 1964, the NAM made cultural equality one of its most important principles. This meant, on the one hand, that a number of African and Asian nations sought to regain the artefacts/works of art which were taken out of their countries during colonial times and put in various museums in New York, London, and Paris; and on the other, that people who were denied their culture in the past started to realise the emancipatory role culture played in their lives, or, in other words – its transcultural potential. The cultural development of → decolonising countries became as important as their economic development. But the fact was that this culture was not supposed to be only for the elites anymore, and that in the new constellation art should be accessible to all.

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decolonising 61

Already at the 1956 UNESCO Conference in New Delhi, shortly after the Bandung Conference, representatives of so-called Third World countries (or "the South") dedicated themselves to promoting alternative routes of cultural exchange from those adopted in the Second and First Worlds.[104] For example, these alternatives could be observed in the new waves of biennials that sprung up in the countries of the NAM, appearing in Alexandria, Medellin, Havana, Ljubljana, Baghdad, and so on. This was a way to pursue politics by other means, and these alternative modes of cultural exchange clearly showed the sincere attempts at cultural independence being made after the independence of many new nations.

Yugoslavia fit well into the discourse of non-alignment, and was a key member from the very beginning. Socialist revolutions had a lot in common with anti-colonial and anti-imperialist revolutions, which made the Yugoslav case of emancipation in the context of socialism particularly significant. The NAM provided an opportunity for positioning Yugoslav ideology and culture globally on the basis of the formula: modernism + socialism = emancipatory politics. As A. W. Singham and Shirley Hune and put it: "It was Tito who has revealed to the Afro-Asian world the existence of a non-colonial Europe which would be sympathetic to their aspirations. By bringing Europe into the grouping, Yugoslavia helped to create an international movement."[105]

The concept of non-alignment became the main component of Yugoslavia's foreign policy very early on. President Josip Broz-Tito – travelled to various African and Asian countries on so-called "Journeys of Peace" (for example, his famous visit to Western African countries on the *Galeb* (*Seagull*) boat in 1961) to support the independence of post-colonial states. These trips subsequently acquired a strong economic dimension and created new spheres of interest and exchange among countries of the NAM. This intense economic collaboration at first included Yugoslav construction companies working on projects in Africa and the Middle East (Energoprojekt, Industrogradnja, Smelt, etc.), → construction companies that had sprung up as a consequence of the fast urbanisation of Yugoslavia after the Second World War. Such companies provided everything, "from design to construction", including architecture and urban planning. One of the first such cases was the building of the Kpime Dam in Togo in 1961, after Tito's visit to the country. Some younger architecture scholars are currently looking into the development of this kind of "non-aligned modernity" from a new perspective. Dubravka Sekulić[106] researched the ways Yugoslavia and the decolonised countries in Africa became unexpected allies in the process articulating how to be modern by one's own rules, i.e., how to direct one's own modernisation. Such examples, as mentioned above, were the architectural and urban-planning projects in various African and Arab non-aligned countries, like Energoprojekt's Lagos International Trade Fair (1974–77). Here, architects combined Yugoslav socialist modernism with tropical modernism and the local contexts. These ideas were eagerly accepted in the newly independent non-aligned countries and here we can paraphrase Achille Mbembe (and the concept of "worldliness") and say that it was important not only to generate one's own cultural forms, institutions etc. but also to translate, fragment and disrupt realities

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104 Anthony Gardner and Charles Green, "Biennials of the South on the Edges of the Global", *Third Text* 27, no. 4: Global Occupations of Art (August 2013), http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09528822.2013.810892 (accessed 24 November 2015).
105 A. W. Singham and Shirley Hune, *Non-Alignment in an Age of Alignments* (Harare: The College Press, 1986), 52.
106 See the book *Unfinished Modernisations: Between Utopia and Pragmatism*, which was published on the occasion of the exhibition with the same title (Maribor Art Gallery, 2012; Museum of Architecture and Design, Ljubljana, 2013) in which Sekulić's text is included.

Figure 64: Ljubljana (International) Biennial of Graphic Arts, exhibition view, 1955. Courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

and imaginaries originating elsewhere, and in the process place those forms in the service of one's own making.[107]

Yugoslavia extensively used its specific geopolitical position not only in the economic sense but also, as we have seen, in culture. I already mentioned architecture as a state-promoted vehicle of new modernist tendencies compatible with the idea of creating a new socialist society. These ideas were also in line with similar issues that non-alignment frequently addressed; such was the question of cultural imperialism. At the 6th Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries in Havana, Tito spoke of a successful aspect of the Non-Aligned Movement, the "resolute struggle for → decolonisation in the field of culture". Interpreted from today's point of view, this struggle also included new kinds of → historicisation, rewriting historical narratives or even writing history anew. In other words, the emphasis was put on questioning intellectual colonialism and cultural dependency. The idea was therefore not only to study the Third World, but to make the Third World a place from which to speak!

From the late 1950s on, Yugoslavia had special relations with the newly independent countries in Africa, and in a specific way all these networks led to a "recolonising" of the continent by means of socialism's newly established connections in the NAM. Exchanges of all sorts happened in the field of the arts and education, as students from non-aligned countries came to study in Yugoslavia, and Yugoslav museums acquired various artefacts, with the Museum of African Art opening in Belgrade in 1977, as a result of this ideological and political climate. This not only impacted ethnographic museums, but also museums of history, such as the former Museum of the Revolution of the Yugoslav Nations, which became the steward of a large number of artefacts/gifts that President Tito received on his travels in the non-aligned countries. This era also saw the "birth" of a specific travel literature about "exotic places"; the most prominent example being the work of Oskar Davičo, a surrealist writer and politician, who visited Western Africa during preparations for a NAM meeting. He wrote a book about the journey called *Black on White,*[108] in which he analysed the post-colonial African societies of the time. His analysis is probably one of the most interesting interpretations of the new world order from two perspectives: from the position of an artist/writer, and from that of somebody who himself was coming from a non-aligned country.

There is also the case of the Ljubljana (International) Biennial of Graphic Arts, which was first held in 1955 at the Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, and this event was linked to the non-aligned cultural politics of the day. The founder of the biennial was Zoran Kržišnik, a long-time director of this institution, who saw the event as a possibility "for a projection of values such as the presence of freedom, modernity, democracy, openness and so on in society".[109] The biennial was set to introduce abstraction in the art world in Yugoslavia and to prove that even "fine art can be an instrument of a slight liberal opening". Kržišnik noted in an interview that he showed President Tito that the biennial of graphic arts was in fact a materialisation of what was being referred to as openness, which was then seen as non-alignment. (Figure 64)

One important aspect of cultural politics in the time of the NAM was the existence of solidarity movements and networks in the arts and culture, which were espe-

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107   Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall, "Introduction", In *Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis*, eds. Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).
108   Branimir Stojanović-Trša pointed out this example to me.
109   See the text written by Petja Grafenauer for the 30th Biennial of Graphic Arts Ljubljana, in *The Biennial of Graphic Arts – Serving You Since 1955* (2013).

cially present in the 1970s: mostly as forms of political engagement against imperialism and apartheid, supporting struggles for independence, and so on.

Figure 65: Museo de la Solidaridad, view of the museum building.

One example would be, if observed retrospectively, the Museo de la Solidaridad (Museum of Solidarity), established in 1971 in Santiago, when Chile was non-aligned. The concept for this museum was the → common idea of two people, the Chilean President Salvador Allende and the Brazilian art critic Mário Pedrosa, then an exile in Chile. This idea later expanded into an international network of artists, critics and curators, including Harald Szeman, Dore Ashton, and others. After President Allende wrote an open letter to the artists of the world in 1971, donations from all over the globe started to arrive in Santiago, with around 600 works alone being given in the first year of the museum's existence, in a wide mixture of styles: Latin American social realism, abstract expressionism, geometric style, and Informel, along with more experimental proposals and conceptualism. (Figure 65) The act of donation was a political action in itself, and considered as a statement of political and cultural solidarity with the Chilean socialist project. However, this museological experiment ended abruptly with the military coup in September 1973.

Subsequently, the entire 1974 Venice Biennial was dedicated to Chile, setting up murals instead of exhibitions, and organising performances and concerts. This edition was perhaps the largest and most resonant cultural protest against Pinochet's rule at the time.

Or another example, the International Art Exhibition for Palestine,[110] which opened in the spring of 1978 in Beirut. Organised by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), it was comprised of around 200 donated works from nearly 30 countries. The collection was destroyed in 1982 by the Israeli military during the attack on Beirut.

But I am not mentioning these cases as examples of the exoticism of the past, even though the NAM is today considered more or less a political anachronism. Moreover, we should not be entrapped in a nostalgic notion about the movement itself, as we know there were many states in the NAM that were quite far from the principles the movement promoted. Additionally, the concepts of nation states, identitarian politics, and exclusive national cultures could also be problematic, if interpreted from today's point of view. And what should one do about the fact that Syria, Pakistan, Libya and the majority of African states are still members of the NAM?

Nevertheless, there are numerous positive aspects of the movement that should not be forgotten. It envisioned forms of humanism that took as their starting points the lifeworlds of those peoples and societies forcibly placed on the margins of the world economic and political system. The struggles against poverty, inequality, colonialism in the world system, as well as trans-national solidarity, which took on many concrete forms, could be part of a reconsideration of the history and legacy of the NAM today, when colonialism is again becoming ever more evident. However, this reconsideration alone is not enough, as it is necessary to find common points of resistance and struggle against exclusion from equal participation in decision making, from free access to common goods and resources, from free movement, from participation in knowledge production, the use of common heritage and so on.

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110   An extensive research on this subject was recently undertaken by Kristine Khouri and Rasha Salti.

A modest proposal is that this could also be done, in the field of culture, through various networks, alliances, museum federations, like L'Internationale, knowledge production tools like this Glossary, and various solidarity movements, with these not only consisting of cultural operators, but also joining forces with social movements, grassroots organisations, migrants, and many others.

Pandemic Chema González
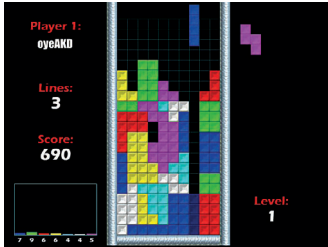
Figure 66: *Tetris*, programmed by Alexey Pajitnov, 1984.

A pandemic refers to an epidemic disease that spreads internationally and indiscriminately, attacking all members of a locality or region. I use the term "pandemic" both at the literal and metaphorical levels in order to understand a number of subjective and geopolitical processes (for instance, the concept of otherness as a disease, and the establishment of an apparent normality that is connected and productive but dysfunctional) to characterise what we call "contemporaneity". I will try to connect this term with an intention to periodise it, so I may also debate the recent research and future exhibition that Museo Reina Sofía is preparing on the contemporary.

1984 is an anodyne year. Accustomed to a strong and foundational narrative, 1984 appears useless and inconsequential compared with 1989 (the Fall of the Berlin Wall) and 1968 (Paris and the so-called strike of the real). This banality triggers a potential narrative: the ability to reveal a formless and unpredictable → constellation, not yet appropriated by the collective imagination and dominant chronologies of the present time. In 1984, the fear of the Cold War, a condition that largely determines the policy and life during the post-war period, seems to vanish. Reagan delivers his famous radio joke, *We begin bombing Russia in five minutes*[111] while the uniform and rigid Soviet world is playfully transfigured by Alexey Pajitnov's *Tetris*, that video-game of opposing blocks – and not by any changes being developed in the Academy of Sciences of the USSR[112] by the same Alexey Pajitnov, working there in his capacity as a scientist. (Figure 66) The Stockholm Conference on disarmament ratifies the fact that bipolar tension seems to vanish like a ghost from the past, while the art system is celebrating, along with various neoconservative theorists,[113] the triumph of the global market with the pictorial turn of the neoprimitivisms and trans-avant-gardes.

This happy new world is shaken up by the public recognition of HIV. In April 1984 the virus is publicly identified and held responsible for tens of thousands of deaths worldwide. The circulation of the pandemic will transform its own meaning, "the disease of the whole people", in order to draw new limits of identity, geopolitical and subjective, which will outline a disputed and confronted body. On the one hand, the productive developed and normalised body; on the other hand, the sick, primitive and → deviated body. The pandemic circulation will serve to divide the world into two new axes: the alternate and normal. The origin of the chimpanzee and human contagion in Africa will reinforce the conception of the dark, atavistic desire and the monstrous other, in which the black/colonised subject is the very source of the disease.

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111 "My fellow Americans, I'm pleased to tell you today that I've signed legislation that will outlaw Russia forever. We begin bombing in five minutes". Offline address by Ronald Reagan on an open microphone on 11 August 1984 at the NPR. *We begin bombing in five minutes*, Wikipedia (accessed 15 September 2015).

112 Magnus Temple, *Tetris: From Russia with Love*, BBC Four, documentary, 60 min, 2004.

113 Francis Fukuyama, Samuel Huntington, etc.

→
constellation 19
deviated 287

The cosmopolitan and universal dimension of the pandemic, as noted by Jean Comaroff,[114] will articulate a new concept of power and its action from that moment on. The traditional politics, based on the governance of institutions and individuals, will shift to a biopolitics of production and control of the physical and political body of the population. This new distribution of power will endeavour to demonstrate the relationship between the pandemic and otherness: AIDS will be considered the disease of deviants, the unproductive, and colonised, the so-called 5H (Haitians, haemophiliacs, homosexuals, hookers, and heroin-addicted, whom the Western white body will confront and survive. The concept of biopolitics, proposed by Foucault just a decade before, is key to understanding this international pandemic condition, although today considered insufficient. Achille Mbembe has approached this pandemic geopolitics through a macabre and sadistic version, where biopolitics is replaced by necropolitics. A power that leaves the management of life by the maintenance and distribution of death, assigning dead zones and living deaths, replacing the old dialectic of the colonial and colonised world. If we think of Africa as a territory of exploitation and multinational dispossession regardless of human rights or subsistence, we will approach the living dead version which is posed by the necropower of Mbembe.

AIDS, after all, and its pandemic/geopolitical spread, will determine two conditions: the deviated diseased body and the healthy national body. The pandemic focuses on an abnormal multitude, a collective group of the misguided and unproductive, a community outside of the political production of standardised bodies.

There is a quote which I would like to go back to in order understand this normal and productive body in reaction to the pandemic. Jacques Derrida interpreted the emergence of email as one of the effects of AIDS. A connected and linked multitude, but disembodied, with no mediated contact whatsoever, as an example of the terror of physical infection. A productive and connected but cancelled body.

I'm going back to another event of 1984, that anodyne year in which nothing happens.

Along with the public recognition and detection of HIV, another *viral* presentation takes place, in terms of global spread. The first personal computer, the Macintosh, is introduced.[115] *1984 won't be like 1984,* is the George Orwell quote in a famous ad for the Macintosh filmed by Ridley Scott, his first job right after the dystopian *Blade Runner*. In this commercial, a mass with no will rebels against Big Brother, understood to be the then dominant corporation in the office environment (IBM). This new personal computer will be characterised by making easy and simple tasks that were previously fragmented and specialised, eliminating the distinctions among workers, between office and home and, ultimately, between worker and subject. The Macintosh will inaugurate a permanent productivity that keeps you always available, always connected, always producing, in some way it will reshape the domestic sphere according to the time and needs of the financial economy. Quoting Jonathan Crary, it will transform natural time, with its regular cycles and neat separations, into an artificial → continuity of permanent attention.[116] Each computer is a terminal and each terminal is a person who produces in a new global

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114   Jean Comaroff, "Beyond Bare Life: AIDS, (Bio)Politics, and The Neoliberal Order", *Public Culture* 19, no. 1 (2007): 197–198.
115   Selling seventy thousand units in the first month.
116   Jonathan Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (London & New York: Verso, 2013).

networked crowd, a new body modelled after the absence of borders and times of financial economics.

What is paradoxical is that this transformation opens a supposed sense of freedom and social improvement, when as we know it actually involves an impoverishment of time and an ongoing self-commodification of the subject. A new collective modelled under the conditions of the new factory. A "productive" body affected by an external agent that, in symbiosis, modifies its behaviour on a global scale. Is this not, as another ad for the Mac remarked, "insanely great"? Is this not the same definition of a pandemic with which we began?

Postsocialism Anthony Gardner University of Oxford, United Kingdom, October 2015

Despite many claims to the contrary, postsocialism and post-communism should not be considered synonymous. Socialism may have been a political philosophy that communist parties in various parts of the world claimed (however inaccurately) to promote, but it was also – and perhaps most importantly – a philosophy of great relevance beyond communist governments. Its politics have long underpinned broader oppositions to capitalism and the oppression it can engender, whether in the "East" or "West", "North" or "South". From the welfare states of Western Europe or Australasia, through to the social democracies of Scandinavia, its principles have underpinned the drive for more equitable redistributions of wealth and opportunity across societies. The development (and, to an extent, the sustained support) of the National Health Service (NHS) in the United Kingdom, is unthinkable without the socialist ideals informing the Keynesian thinking of the post-war welfare state. The development of Medicare in Australia in the early 1970s – along with increased social welfare, free tertiary education, higher tax rates for the wealthy and the creation of a nationally-funded council for the arts – finds its foundations in comparable socialist ideals.

Similar politics have equally informed the rejection of privatised finance as our *lingua franca* – the "financialisation" of discourse, of social relations, of "being itself" that is so characteristic of neoliberalism – and instead supported different ways of imagining international and geopolitical connections. Some of the most recent instantiations of this emerge in the social justice movements in Athens, in Madrid, in New York, and in the numerous and interlinked fights against corporate welfare and working poverty. These protests find at least a part of their roots in similar resistance towards state-endorsed capitalist neo-colonialism from the not so distant past: in the struggles for decolonisation across Africa and South Asia, for instance, such that the first national constitutions after decolonisation were often explicit in their socialist ambitions for the new nations. Or in the political ambitions of the Third World International and of the Non-Aligned Movement, the remnants of which have persisted in social, cultural and political calls for a new kind of non-alignment, a new International, today.

To limit postsocialism to what has happened in post-communist states, and especially to conditions in Central and Eastern Europe, is certainly understandable, given the range of important literature on "postsocialist Eastern Europe" (Katherine Verdery, Marina Gržinić and so on). Yet that limitation arguably ignores (post) socialism's more properly international scope and its broader struggles against the neoliberal revolutions since the early 1970s. Postsocialism, to my mind, suggests an important international connectedness in an age of globalisation – albeit a con-

nectedness that contains within it senses of the past and the future that differs from the more amnesic frameworks (or opportunisms) connoted by globalisation. To speak of postsocialism, then, rather than neoliberalism or globalisation *per se*, is to remind us of what has supposedly been lost since the 1970s and 1980s, but which may still resonate some 30 to 40 years later, and to assert contemporary perspectives and historical trajectories that lie beyond those of the North Atlantic, that have largely been marginalised after socialism's apparent collapse.

To insist on the social rather than the individual, and on translocal solidarities rather than global competition: if these are some of the cornerstones for a more viable and more sustainable geopolitics today, and I think they are, then how might the various politics, aesthetics and ideas developed during socialism, or for socialism, respond to our condition today? What might it mean, for instance, to be "nonconformist" or even "dissident" (for all the problems associated with those monikers) in our supposedly post-ideological contemporaneity, and who might be the progenitors of these politics?

I want to draw on two artworks – or, better still, art contexts – that may help to elaborate these questions. The first is a year-long event devised by Lena Kurlandzeva and Konstantin Zvezdochetov from Moscow's Regina Gallery, and the independent curator Viktor Misiano, staged in Moscow in 1991–92, called Apt-Art International. The renowned NSK Embassy Moscow, from April to May 1992, is perhaps the most significant of the projects from Apt-Art International (Figure 67), but it was just one of 12 or so projects devised for a cumulative purpose: to draw on Moscow's histories of apartment art from the 1960s to the 1980s, as the basis for imagining a new international model for displaying and talking about art after the upheavals of 1989–1991. The crux of Apt-Art International was not merely to bring artists and thinkers from different contexts together in Moscow's art world – though this was clearly very important. It was also to review the new world (dis)order in art and politics alike after communism, and to engage these new inter-cultural dialogues, from the fragile perspectives of those who lived under communism – and, most potently, to do so by re-engaging the models and past prospects of apartment art, on the verge of obsolescence amid this new (dis)order.

On the one hand, then, this "new internationalism" could potentially emerge from the position of the supposedly "vanquished", developed through heated debate and even disagreement about the ongoing efficacy of the old apartment art models (a nod in itself to the often conflicted histories of past apartment art, including the sense that even in the 1980s it was just a nostalgic revisiting of notions of nonconformism). On the other hand, it sought to use apartments as sites for connecting hitherto disparate contexts – that of NSK in Ljubljana, or Sol LeWitt in New York City, or Franz West in Vienna – in order to find points of connection and even of commonality, despite ideological divides, from which to draw socialist and communist thinking back into the future.

The second work I want to bring into a discussion is by the Melbourne-based artist Tom Nicholson. *2pm Sunday 25 February 1862*, from 2005, consists of a stack of posters proposing a march towards a small Australian town called Acheron, led by three Indigenous Australian activists (Simon Wonga, William Barak and Lizzie Barak) and a non-Indigenous "solidarity activist", as he is listed on the poster, named John Green. (Figure 68) The posters suggest a memorial to, or perhaps the re-enactment of, an important though (for some people) forgotten moment in Australian colonial history. This was the long march made by Wonga, Barak and other Indigenous ac-

Figure 67: IRWIN, "NSK Embassy Moscow plaque", 1992, *NSK from Kapital to Capital: Neue Slowenische Kunst – The Event of the Final Decade of Yugoslavia*, exhibition view, curated by Zdenka Badovinac, 2015. Photo courtesy by Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

Figure 68: Tom Nicholson, *2pm Sunday 25 February 1862*, poster stack detail, 2005. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Christian Capurro.

tivists, together with the Scottish missionary Green, in the early 1860s from one country (belonging to the Wurundjeri people) to another (that of the Taungurung people). The march was an act of extraordinary dissidence, defying the demands of the "Aboriginal Protection Board" (a government authority that exerted strict control over the country's Indigenous populations) that the people stay where they were. Yet it also ultimately led to the creation of a new semi-autonomous centre in a town called Coranderrk, where the Indigenous marchers lived and worked in relative prosperity and collaboration with settlers, such as Green and his family.

Regardless of whether his poster (or, to use the term Nicholson prefers for this kind of work, his "action") was a memorial, a proposal for an event long past, or a call for re-enactment, Nicholson did not intend for the march to ever be actualised. While its retracing of a kind of dissidence in Australia suggested a foundation in the past for future transcultural relations, that foundation had been made fragile by decades of neglect and racism. Conversely, if the poster proposed a meeting and march by Wonga, Barak and their families, then that projected march was to come nearly 150 years too late. Nicholson's proposed intersection of different temporalities, actions and cultures thus remained open and precarious, an uncertainty reinforced by lingering doubts about the viability or potency of the poster as a medium of political action.

Central to the work, in other words, is a persistent sense of haunting: the haunting of art's political relevance by its uncertain efficacy; the spectres of dissident histories as a possible action in the present; the dialectic of erasure and recall within artistic and political memory. But what is just as important within these recalled histories is the past possibility and dogged demand for horizontal cross-cultural relations in Australia between its Indigenous and settler populations. In the 1860s, these relations were deeply inspired by a liberalism drawn (as was certainly the case for John Green) from a mix of Christian instruction and working-class politics of union and solidarity, grounded in the early transposition of Marxian thinking into colonial Australia. By 2005, such returns to the 19th century birth pangs of socialism in Australia had become a common feature in Nicholson's work, albeit presented in different ways. Some works were displayed atop trade union buildings; others involved the procession of huge banners in ostensibly political marches past the same buildings. In each case, however, Nicholson drew socialist and anticolonial histories together to emphasise the need to re-evaluate local histories (of exchange, of collectivity, of labour, of culture and of politics) within the depoliticising amnesia that tends to characterise the neoliberal contemporary.

Postsocialism, I want to suggest, is thus a possible way to think of the solidarities envisaged by and between these two, quite different projects (as well as many others, of course, such as the return to Indian socialism in the work of the Otolith Group or the renewed interest in cultural formations of the → Non-Aligned Movement). It operates across both space (geopolitics) and time (chronopolitics), yet does not eradicate the distinctions and memories of socialism as engaged in different localities (something that distinguishes its internationalism from the spatiotemporal and cultural flattenings of "globalisation"). Nor does it dispense with the challenges faced by recalling socialism today, whether because of the years or even decades since its supposed withering, or because of the traumas inflicted in its name. Yet, the need for an international → solidarity that can "generatively" counter the traumas inflicted by other hegemonic politics (North Atlantic neoliberalism, the authoritarian capitalism of Singapore or China, the destructive forces of petrodollar-funded Wahhabism) is as important today as at any point in the twenti-

eth century. Moreover, that solidarity is one that must respond to current and imminent crises that have little respect themselves for national and political borders: from refugee crises to the financialisation of subjectivity (perhaps of everything), and environmental → catastrophe. The question, then – and it is a question posed equally by the postsocialist undercurrents of Apt-Art International and Tom Nicholson, among others – is whether a new international solidarity could ever really emerge as a significant politics without thinking of socialism, its aftermath and its lingering potentials?

<div align="right">

→

catastrophe 110
</div>

South Mabel Tapia Paris, France, February 2016

The apparent self-evidence notwithstanding, two reasons led me to hesitate before proposing the term "South".

The first has to do with the current, ongoing plight of migrants and refugees. Like all of us, I am concerned with what is taking place right now – which is entirely the outcome of "geopolitics", and, as has been pointed out, changes by the hour. How can we remain indifferent to the images that we have been seeing in the media over the past week,[117] mentioned here on numerous occasions? There is, however, one particular kind of image that has started to "work on" me, in the way images – like ideas – are able to "work on" us. The images of people walking through landscapes, along railway lines, through city streets or alongside fields. People moving and moving, changing directions as required, but always moving. I felt we needed to discuss this incessant movement, its meanings, reasons, and consequences.

The second reason is that I was not sure – indeed, I'm still not – whether or not the term "South" can be "operative" in this framework. As I see it, the constitution of a glossary seeks to have terms that can operate in a performative or material way in a given field. Meaning that they should be able to act in this field. Is the term "South" operative here? Could it be? And how?

In spite of – or along with – these hesitations, I have chosen to present the term because I feel it merits discussion. Over the past two decades, the term "South" has been the object of many politically motivated appropriations and re-conceptualisations. Historically, the South was postulated in opposition to the North, on the basis of irreconcilably divided modes of production and modes of being. In this conception, the South was shrouded in an aura of romanticism: the South was a "given condition". In this way, geography appeared, at the same time, as the element that at once conditioned the division and provided its explanation. It was both the cause and consequence of this binary division. We can retrace the history of this terminological and conceptual opposition back to the very foundations of Europe and the abundant literature that explains the "differences" between Germanic and Greek peoples and folklore – an opposition, which, as I scarcely need mention, has more recently been updated into other terms. In any case, both North and South share this conception, endlessly producing and then reproducing shuttered and fixed identities, univocal narratives, and all-encompassing economies. In a way, this complex – albeit simplifying – structure is not only political but biopolitical.

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117   Editors' note: The text was written during the winter of large-scale migrations of Syrian citizens from war zones, followed by lack of humanitarian aid and heavy human rights violations on an international scale.

Figure 69: Monument at La mitad del mundo and the site where GPS measurements show "The Middle of the World" in Quito. Photo: Mabel Tapia.

The South: Between geographical and cosmic definitions

As we know, North and South are determined by a conceptual line, the Equator, which divides the world into two halves. A number of monuments have been built along this as markers of an inexistent line. We find, for instance, a monument in Pontianak (Indonesia), another in Macapá (Brazil) and, of course, yet another in the country actually known as Ecuador. There the marker is situated in the suburbs of the capital city, Quito. Ecuadorians claim their country is the only place on Earth where the line bisects a major city. A monument marks the alleged spot, situated in a place aptly called *La mitad del mundo* ("The Middle of the World"). *La mitad del mundo* is a kind of theme park, where visitors can stand with one leg in the South and the other in the North, undertaking such experiments as observing how an egg stands alone on its axis without falling over, due to the way gravity functions along the equator.

Built between 1979 and 1982, each side of the monument at *La mitad del mundo* faces a different cardinal point of the compass. Ironically, a problem arose when GPS measurements became widely available, because they seemed to establish that the equator was not actually at *La mitad del mundo*, but rather 200 metres further south. So now there's another marker. This marker is also in a theme park, though the theme is slightly different, being mostly dedicated to indigenous life in the region, but also includes a sign proclaiming 00.00.00 degrees of latitude "according to GPS measurements". The fact remains, however, that different GPS devices show different measurements. In short, we don't really know where the equator is, which means that we don't know where the South begins or ends. (Figure 69)

Let's leave the Earth and move to another conceptual field – in the sky. As we all know, the celestial sphere is a scientific construction devised to investigate the space around the Earth. In the celestial sphere, we find a constellation known as *la Cruz del Sur* – the Southern Cross – or sometimes simply The Cross. This constellation provides the points for tracing a kind of cross and has been the object of many interpretations over time and in different cultures. According to the Incas, it as a kind of ladder or bridge connecting three worlds: the *kay pacha* (the terrestrial world), the *hanan pacha* (the world of the gods) and the *uku pacha* (the world of the dead). At any rate, the longest line of this cross points due south and is supposed to guide navigators on their southerly journeys. The problem, however, is that one only sees this constellation if one is already in the south. It cannot be seen from the north.

Even if the terrestrial landscape and cosmic skyscape can help us to conceive of the South, they provide no clues as to how to make sense of it or to account for the "given condition".

Dislocating the given condition

We find any number of linguistic operations that work to dislocate the given condition. Here are two examples:

"El Sur también existe"[118]

A first operation is a claim-laying or reactive one, resulting from the binary struggle within the "North-South paradigm". Many expressions of popular culture attest to the necessity of establishing the South as a condition to be upheld in the public sphere. Take the famous 1943 drawing by the Uruguayan artist Joaquin Torres García, *America invertida* (usually translated as *America Upside Down*). In his text *Universalismo Constructivo* [*Constructive Universalism*], Torres García states in no uncertain terms the reasons behind the name of the *Ecuela del Sur* [*School of the South*], which he had founded, saying: "For us, there should be no North, except by way of opposition to our South. Thus, we have now turned the map upside down, giving us a fair idea of our position, and not as the rest of the world would have it."[119] This operation inverts the opposition, but still keeps it in place. It does not break with the macro-structure that enabled the opposition in the first place. Although the artist is clearly proposing a way to resist the given condition, the operation itself remains active as an oppositional paradigm.

"El sur es lo que está después, lo que está por venir."

The well-known 1988 film *Sur* [*South*], directed by Fernando "Pino" Solanas, opens with a famous tango of the same name, in which we hear one of the characters paraphrasing the lyrics, intoning: "*El sur es lo que está después, lo que está por venir.*" ["The south is that which is still ahead, that which is yet to come."] This can summarise the definition of the South as a direction (as with the constellation *la Cruz del Sur*, or Southern Cross), or an unfinished project, a future horizon, or kind of utopia. In a way, it points beyond a given condition, but only at the cost of evading the problem as such.

Reshaping what "South" means

In its *Founding Declaration*, the Red Conceptualismos del Sur (Southern Conceptualisms Network) adopts "a strategic use of the term 'South'". It is used with the purpose of intervening in the geopolitical segmentation of Latin America, within the current hemispheric conjuncture. The geopolitical condition of the "South" is not used as a metonym for the geography of Latin America, but as a discursive tool for dismantling "centrality" and reversing the epistemic "marginality" through which global "conceptualisms" have been historicised. Through the strategic and geopolitical use of the term "South", the Network seeks to ensure that the Latin-American stance is informed not by a reclamation of some regional cultural identity, but, rather, that it allows the rethinking and revision of the strict dichotomies that divide centre and periphery, canon and counter-canon, First and Third Worlds, Western and non-Western.

The operation consists in taking over the "given condition" and reshaping its content. The South must thus no longer be confused with a geographic position. Indeed, it is not – or ought not to be – geolocated at all. It becomes – with all its possibilities and limitations – a collective and politically active "site of enunciation".

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118 Editors' note: *The South Also Exists* is a poem by the Uruguayan journalist, novelist and poet Mario Benedetti (1920–2009).
119 Joaquín Torres García, "Lección 30, La Escuela del Sur" in *Universalismo Constructivo* (Buenos Aires: Paseidón, 1944). "No debe haber norte, para nosotros, sino por oposición a nuestro Sur. Por eso ahora ponemos el mapa al revés, y entonces ya tenemos justa idea de nuestra posición, y no como quieren en el resto del mundo".

Figure 70: Participants and Iconoclasistas, *Belo Horizonte*, a collective mapping workshop, Brasil, 2014. Photo courtesy by Iconoclasistas.

The South can also be exclusive

The artist Runo Lagomarsino (born in Denmark to Argentinean parents, living in Brazil) presented a paradoxical piece in the exhibition *Canibalia* held in Paris at the Kadist Foundation space. A pile of posters lay in the exhibition space, all bearing the following sentence, printed against a sky-blue background: "If you don't know where the South is, it's because you are from the North."[120] In other words, understanding is reserved to those who belong to the South... regardless of what the South actually means. This is all the trickier since, as I have mentioned, it is not clear where exactly the South lies. This non-dialectical statement has two implications: access to comprehension (of the South) is ensured by a link of belonging, which, apparently, relies on some form of exclusion.

The South as a mode of inquiry

In a very different way, the Portuguese sociologist, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, has deployed the notion of the South in order to explore "epistemological and theoretical alternatives that may enable us to get beyond the blindness in which the Western-centrist critical tradition seems to be locked down". In his work *Epistemologies of the South,*[121] Santos asserts that these southern epistemologies are based on an "ecology of knowledge" and "intercultural → translation". Arguing that we are in a profound crisis of Eurocentric theory, the sociologist explains the necessity of these → alternate outlooks by describing our social context through the analysis of four specific domains. One: we live in a period of powerful questions and weak answers. Two: our era is characterised by huge contradictions, specifically between the urgent need for change and the civilisational transformations this would require. Three: we suffer from what he refers to as the "loss of nouns". For Santos, critical theory has forfeited "all the nouns, keeping only the adjectives". If in the past, conventional theory talked about democracy, today it talks about → radical democracy. (A similar phenomenon can be observed in art with what I have elsewhere called a "process of adjectivisation of art". A displacement or kind of "deterritorialisation of art" has occurred over the last decades and is palpable in speech itself. We talk less about works of art, or production, than about *artistic* practice. In this sense, art has given itself the potential to be a tool for social movements.)[122] Four: Boaventura de Sousa Santos' last domain of analysis is the ghostly relationship between theory and practice. According to Santos, recent decades have seen progressive change come from social groups utterly invisible to the tradition of European critical theory.

In this context, the South names the necessity and possibility of exploring new methodologies and epistemologies. In this case, the South does not necessarily refer to a geographical position which determines a way of being; on the contrary, it names other possible ways of doing.

→
translation 317
alternate 273
radical 75

120 The text is taken from the aforementioned film by "Pino" Solanas, *Sur.*
121 Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Epistemologías del Sur* (Mexico: Akal, 2014). (*Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide* (Oxford: Routledge, 2014).)
122 This line of reflection is the object of my current research, but remains outside the scope of this text.

Beyond the South: Other cartographies

From this perspective, it is no doubt time to envisage and develop new cartographies – such as those proposed, amongst others, by the Iconoclasistas collective in Argentina. This group engages in producing collective maps (Figure 70), which break up given cartographical and, more importantly, geographical notions, enabling us to understand space as a geo-bio-political territory.

New cartographies are being produced right now, as we speak, sketched out by the paths of refugees and migrants as they move. These living maps challenge traditional notions of North-South, even as they propose a new cartographical imaginary.

Tudigong, God of the Land Manray Hsu Taipei, Taiwan, September 2015

Tudigong or God of the Land, it literally means Lord of the Soil and the Ground, is a tutelary deity of natural locality in Chinese folk religion. Tudigong has been worshipped since ancient times to modernity. With his shrine or altar usually occupying the most "strategic" (in terms of feng shui) location in a place, whether in a mountain, in a village, inside a house, Tudigong plays the role of guardian for the land's natural environment, animals, and plants, as well as humans.[123]

A god of the lowest rank, Tudigong receives wishes from worshippers and grants them according to their deeds. Hence his more formal name, Fude Zhengshen, the Right God of Blessing and Virtue. In many places he is worshipped before the burial of the dead, for using his land to return their bodies to the earth. Given his close (intimate) relationship with humans, he is often called Grandfather (*yeye*), or Great Elder Lord (Dabogong).

Tudigong is portrayed as an elderly man with a long white beard, a black or gold hat and a red or yellow robe, which signifies his position as a bureaucrat. His superiors include the City God (Chenghuangshen) and the Jade Emperor, the Supreme God. As opposed to Gaia, the Earth God, Tudigong is ultimately localised, in the sense of taking care of the smallest site or larger locality like a village or a city, but never the whole Earth.

When people move, or "→ migrate", to another village or city, they have to say goodbye to their original Tudigong and start to worship the new place's local Tudigong.

In modern, capitalist society, our relationship with the immediate environment, where our physical and mental existence shares a locality with other humans and creatures, is mediated by a myriad of abstractions: food, clothes, mobile phones, roads, etc. Similar abstractions existed in the past, but now they operate and affect our lives at an unprecedentedly high speed and large scale.

People ask Tudigong for wealth. Today, however, the granted wealth (if any) becomes questionable, as money grows at the same speed as debt; or money is debt, resulting from the operations of the geo-economic politics of globalisation and the

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123 "Tudigong", *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia* (24 January 2015), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tudigong (accessed 19 September 2015).

neo-liberal state. Thus, Tudigong as our spiritual mediator with the local environment has lost his power as a mediator.

The global environment since the 1970s has become a predominant geopolitical issue. Yet, in decision-makers' books, the environment, or nature, has not only been stripped of its spiritual sense, but turned into resources, with increasingly precise and scientific calculations of the economic returns and its manageable contributions to human welfare – an anthropocentric, bureaucratic point of view based on so-called sustainable development.[124]

People's practices of Tudigong worship are not immune from geopolitics, either. During China's Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), most Tudigong shrines and temples, along with other deity worship facilities and practices, were destroyed or fell into disrepair. With the economic reforms and opening up of China since the late 1970s, many shrines and temples were rebuilt. Since the southern provinces have kept strong connections with overseas Chinese, including those in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Hong Kong and Taiwan, Tudigong worship has rapidly moved back into China via these links.

Taiwan's democratic and economic reforms since the 1980s and 1990s, together with Chinese government's "One China" policy, have made the relationship between Taiwan and the southern provinces much stronger than in the Cold War period. The revival of Tudigong temple on Xianyue Mountain in Xiamen City is a good example of instrumentalising cultural practices under the perimeters of geopolitics. The temple expanded with funds provided by Taiwanese businesses and the Chinese government, while the area around it became a huge park, and the temple itself has organised international festivals for Tudigong each year in Xiamen, Taiwan, and Malaysia since 2008, attracting large numbers of visitors and worshippers.[125]

Unlike many localised shrines for a tutelary deity, a large number of Tudigong temples in cities and towns in the region have become winners of our current international geopolitics.

White Space Nick Aikens   Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, the Netherlands, September 2015

My task is to think about geopolitics in relation to the context of the Van Abbemuseum – a publicly funded, European art museum. With this in mind, I propose the term "white space". To explore the term I put forward a series of notes, in an attempt to → constellate different ideas and references.

1. The term white space is borrowed from the American sociologist Elijah Anderson. In his essay "The White Space"[126] he reflects on the segregation within urban areas of blacks and whites in the US that still persists today, over fifty years after the civil rights movements, when formal segregation within schools, universities

124   Shiv Visvanathan, "Mrs Brundtland's Disenchanted Cosmos" (1991) in *The Geopolitics Reader*, eds. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge (London: Routledge, 1998).
125   Wen-yu Chang & Wei-ping Lin, "A Fairy-like Woman, Taiwanese Businessmen, and Temple Managers: A New Age Temple of Earth God in Xiamen" (in Chinese), *Journal of Archaeology and Anthropology* 82 (2015): 27–60.
126   Elijah Anderson, "The White Space", *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 1, no. 1 (2015): 10–21, http://sociology.yale.edu/sites/default/files/pages_from_sre-11_rev5_printer_files.pdf (accessed 28 January 2018).

and public space was outlawed. Anderson's definition of white space is disarmingly straightforward: "For black people in particular white spaces vary in kind, but their most visible and distinctive feature is their overwhelming presence of white people and their absence of black people."[127] Seeing things, as I do from the vantage point of north-western Europe, Anderson's definition chimes with the spaces of museums and cultural → institutions. Museums, like Anderson's description of the white space in the US, increasingly see themselves as "diverse", yet they remain "homogenously white and relatively privileged".[128]

2. The term "white public space" has been used by Karen Brodkin, Sandra Morgen, and Janis Hutchinson, to analyse the field of anthropology and its "contradictory history or race and racism". The authors feel the term "puts the emphasis on the social construction of institutional spaces and refers to the implicit and explicit practices, beliefs, and values that govern behavior in them".[129] Their research exposes the undercurrents of racial imbalance and prejudice that run through the field, the fact that many of the anthropology departments are "white-owned social and intellectual spaces", as well as the striking misperception from whites that all is well and good. And here one starts to feel a resonance within the walls and structures (both physical and ideological) of the European museums, which are also "white-owned social and intellectual spaces".

3. The term white space is equally – and inevitably – informed by the current political climate in Europe, characterised by its leaders and institutions' failure to articulate with one voice its relationship to those who wish to enter from outside its borders. Europe and the West in general, which shows a staggering incapacity to understand the present influx of political and humanitarian refugees as a direct result of its violent meddling overseas, is increasingly projecting itself as a white space. The sociologist Achile Mbembe has written extensively about Europe's policy of "containment" over the last 25 years, particularly in relation to the African continent "to make sure Africans stay where they are".[130] Moreover, this strategy of containment is now potently visible in the fences and walls being constructed along Europe's borders.

Such a strategy has been fuelled and increasingly supported by a surge of nationalist, overwhelmingly white voices (Front National in France, PVV in the Netherlands, and UKIP in the UK, to name but a few), who are using a politics of fear, prejudice and privilege to further demarcate Europe as a white space. And, as I write, in the aftermath of the attacks in Paris, Beirut, Ankara, and California, the nationalist voices claiming Europe as a white space grow louder and more venomous.

4. Ten years ago, in the brilliant essay "Tebbit's Ghost", Okwui Enwezor, citing Samuel Huntington, articulated how cultural identity had developed into an exercise of defining your friends and enemies. Enwezor's words seem frighteningly prescient today: "Within this bleak scenario, Europe has gone to search for answers and perhaps to discover the enemies who so trouble its cultural coherence. In this quest, the immigrant has emerged in the name of the post-colonial subject across the

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127   Ibid.
128   Ibid.
129   Karen Brodkin, Sandra Morgen, and Janis Hutchinson, "Anthropology as White Public Space?", *American Anthropologist* 113, no. 4 (December 2011), http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1548-1433.2011.01368.x/full (accessed 28 January 2018).
130   See "Africa and the Future. An Interview with Achille Mbembe", *Africa is a Country*, http://africasacountry.com/2013/11/africa-and-the-future-an-interview-with-achille-mbembe/ (accessed 28 January 2018).

territories of the European Union".[131] This, Enwezor argues with characteristic bite, is a question of identity politics, "the challenge [of which] cannot be over-stated" for European culture. Yet he also asserts the European artistic sphere is blighted by an "inherent provincialism in [its] current discursive formation". Here he aims his fire at the European biennial Manifesta, lamenting its then decade-long failure to rethink the cultural space of Europe through its relationships with other parts of the world. Yet such a critique can be levelled at European cultural institutions at large, which remain largely incapable of speaking – and → translating – meaningfully across cultures.[132]

5. When thinking about white space within the context of the European museum, the discourse of the white cube looms large. Elena Filipovic has noted that the white cube has long been understood as "an indelibly inscribed container". In "The Global White Cube" she neatly points out that if the white cube could accommodate MoMA and the Third Reich it's because "the display conceit neatly embodies ideas that were useful to both, including neutrality, order, rationalisation, progress, extraction from a large context and not least of all → universality and Western modernity".[133] Inscribed on the white walls of the European museum, alongside the provincialism Enwezor identifies and the containment of Mbembe, is a history of Western modernity and its confluence with imperialism, colonialism, and exclusion. This "ideological dramaturgy" is the makeup of museums. In that sense, the white space of the museum is not only an "intellectual and social space", but also a political and historical space as well.

6. In the history of exhibitions, this dramaturgy was most famously laid bare in the geopolitical blockbuster *Magiciens de la Terre*. In "From the Outside In: *Magiciens de la Terre* and Two Histories of Exhibitions", Pablo Lafuente highlights the decontextualising move deployed on the *magiciens* (rather than artists) from the cultural and political formations out of which they emerged. This move, however, occurred within the Western construct of the white cube – or the white space. In this sense, as Lafuente rightly points out, the exhibition became "the embodiment of a neocolonialist attitude that allowed the contemporary art system to colonise, commercially and intellectually, new areas that were previously out of bounds".[134] Here, the West's push for internationalism and diversity comes unstuck, framed as it is within the ideological and epistemic frame of the white cube – as white space.

More recently, as Zdenka Badovinac writes in her term → institutional geopolitical strategies major Western museums are fervently trying to de-canonise their own collections by acquiring an ever-increasing diversity of nationalities to their museum's holdings. Yet this strategy, as Badovinac rightly points out, employs "the same geopolitical strategy based on denying their own geography".[135] We could add to this a denial of its inherent neo-colonial collecting strategy. To shift this, as my colleague Charles Esche has argued, we should perhaps consider that today "the most pertinent question for a European art institution [...] is not what art to show, but

131   Okwui Enwezor, "Tebbit's Ghost", in *The Manifesta Decade: Essays on Changing Europe, Exhibitions, and Biennale Culture*, eds. Barbara Vanderlinden and Elena Filipovic (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).
132   Something the structure and methodology of this Glossary is seeking to address.
133   Elena Filipovic, "The Global White Cube", *On Curating* 22: Politics of Display (April 2014), http://www.on-curating.org/issue-22-43/the-global-white-cube.html#.Wm338SOZNTY (accessed 11 December 2016).
134   Pablo Lafuente, "From the Outside In – 'Magiciens de la Terre' and Two Histories of Exhibitions", in *Making Art Global (Part 2): "Magiciens de la Terre" 1989* (London: Afterall Books, 2013), 11.
135   See page 122.

what kind of politics to stand behind".[136] A first step might be to acknowledge the museum as a white space.

7. Of course, calling European institutions on their whiteness is nothing new. In April next year, the Van Abbe will present, as part of its exhibition *The 1980s: Today's Beginnings?*, a chapter on Black Arts that emerged in Thatcherite Britain. (Figure 71) This extraordinary confluence of artists, filmmakers, thinkers and government policies, precipitated in large part by the civil → unrest that occurred in cities across Britain, but which had its roots in the wave of → migrants, largely Caribbean, that arrived as part of the "Windrush Genera-tion", directly challenged institutional white space. In his searing text "Preliminary Notes for a Black Manifesto", which appeared in the first of three editions of the journal *Black Phoenix* (1978), Rasheed Araeen laments the dominance of Western art practice and discourse over that of the Third World. Specifically, within Britain, he sees "a mechanism of control, or an attitude, which denies black artists their access to art establishment and their rightful recognition".[137] Araeen's text and po-sition laid the foundation for a rich outpouring of discourse, production and policy initiatives in the UK that aimed to confront both institutions and the art world as a white space.
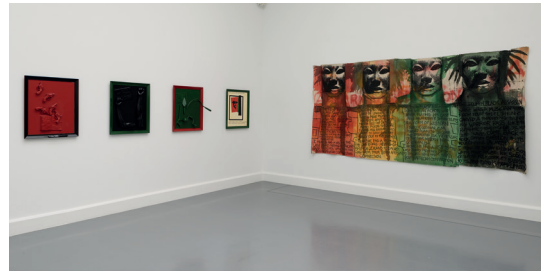
Figure 71: *The 1980s: Today's Beginnings?*, exhibition view, 16 April – 25 September 2016. Courtesy of Van Abbemuseum.

Figure 72: *The 1980s: Today's Beginnings?*, exhibition view, 16 April – 25 September 2016. Courtesy of Van Abbemuseum.

What is so compelling about the history of Black Art in 80s Britain is the fact that the discourse that emerged was fundamentally two-pronged: It stood "against" the nationalist, exclusionary politics so prevalent at the time (encapsulated in the rise of the National Front), including its reverberations in the cultural field. Yet it also stood "for" the positive and → emancipatory exploration of cultural identity within an existing framework. Its aim was not simply to resist white space, but to put forward new positions within that space. In this sense, this was a Fanonian move to → decolonise: by changing the perception of the coloniser, towards both the colonised and, significantly, themselves. (Figure 72)

8. Over twenty-five years on from Araeen's text, it seems crucial to reflect on the status of institutional white space today. What has happened to the politics and drive that fuelled a political, cultural and aesthetic project such as Black Art in 80s Britain? Whilst there were significant changes, the political climate in Europe in the 1990s, with the flourishing of neoliberalism and its predatory form of capital-ism, succeeded in flattening issues of cultural identity. A new form of multi-cultural managerialism set in which, rather than radically shifting how those who occupy and administer white space view themselves – and by inference others – meant that new positions were folded in, subsumed within white "intellectual and social" space.

9. I propose to think about the term white space in relation to the white cube – or substitute the term white cube with that of white space – as a means to acknowl-edge how the ideology of the white cube and European museum is still indelibly inscribed with the suppositions and exclusions that were its founding, and that still resonate across so many spheres of public space today. In this sense, introducing the term white space is perhaps what Badovinac calls an "institutional geopolitical strategy" to challenge the white cube as a "white intellectual and social space".

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136   Charles Esche, "The Deviant Art Institution", in *Performing the Institution(al)* (Lisbon: Kunsthalle Lissabon with Atlas Projectos), 43.

137   Rasheed Araeen, "Preliminary Notes for a Black Manifesto", *Black Phoenix: Journal of Contemporary Art and Culture in the Third World* 1 (Winter 1978): 5.

The museum as a place where white space is physically, graphically, and conceptually laid bare must be challenged and transformed. This means inverting Elijah Anderson's definition so that a museum is a site where the geopolitical make-up of Europe today, and its position towards those outside its borders, is acknowledged and confronted. This would firstly entail a shift in how the white space of the museum sees itself – the Fanonian acknowledgment by the coloniser that he is an oppressor that is necessary in any process of decolonisation. Acknowledging that the European museum of today is an overwhelmingly white space is a small move in that process.

Constituencies

Constituencies are plural; they grow, develop, change, mutate, hybrid, overlap, separate, cluster, recombine and re-align. Constituencies are always in flux, depending for their existence upon their relationships with one another. As such, constituencies are never givens – but always something to be struggled over and negotiated. Constituencies also provide both the tools for self-production and the toolkits for self-understanding; they hold within themselves the possibility of change, transgression, re-imagination, and re-articulation. Constituencies are neither reducible to "publics" nor are they self-identical with "counter-public spheres"; instead they demand to be recognised as the porous, mutable and protean basis for whatever remains of, or can still be imagined, as a self-determined democracy.

Within the cultural sphere, it could now be argued that constituencies provide the building blocks for museums, galleries and equivalent "public" institutions to re-imagine their roles, functions, and positions within the production of new forms of citizenship. Whilst it is commonly accepted that alter-institutionality must be based on a fundamental shift away from hierarchical, top-down and "broadcast" based models of knowledge dissemination, the question remains of how such institutions can begin to operate dialectically as constituencies themselves. Furthermore, it could also be asked how such constituency thinking would enable museums and galleries to re-occupy and re-use those very discourses of alterity, specificity, autonomy and self-determination which have, themselves, become colonised by the logics and discourses of global economic neoliberalism.

The seminar took place at the Liverpool John Moores University, School of Art and Design, Liverpool, UK from 2 to 4 March 2016.

Introduction

Terms

The Rest is Missing Raúl Sánchez Cedillo

Note: The following text by Raúl Sánchez Cedillo describes the current traits of the relationship between democracy and capitalism on the basis of the global and European upheavals that have occurred since 2011. The author addresses the theoretical and political possibilities of going beyond that relationship, and emphasises the possibility of decoupling the definition of a real democracy from the ever-happening renewal of the relationship between the living → labour of the multitude and the capitalist command over life and society. The following text is a transcription from his keynote lecture at Liverpool John Moores University, School of Art and Design, Liverpool, UK on 2 March 2016. The lecture was followed by a two-day seminar on Constituencies.

In the English language the term "constituency" is not very interesting, since it deals with a territorial division of voters or the clientele interest groups around a political system. For that matter, I think we should shift to Latin in order to explore it in a more interesting way. For instance, Antonio Negri has begun to use a term in Italian – coming directly from Latin – *costituenza*, which points to something rather different than the plain workings of the term in the political market. Instead, it is more about the active vectors of constituent power, and I will rely on that relationship in my talk.

The key to this relationship is "constituent power", which is an equally entangled and disputed term, because it belongs to a longstanding juridical tradition that has its origin in the period between the English Revolution and Sieyès notion *le pouvoir constituant de la nation*; it belongs to the radical democratic revolutionary tradition. But at the same time it belongs to the foundations of the rule of law, and democratic constitutionalism, the bourgeois capitalist democracy, which stands in opposition to any notion of popular or radical or anti-capitalist democracy. At this point we have to make a reference to the work of Antonio Negri and his book *El poder constituyente,*[138] *which was translated in English as Insurgencies*, but both in Italian, Spanish and French it is *Constituent Power*. It is a very difficult book, not only because of its profound and really extensive analysis of the occurrences, emergencies and transformations of the notion, but also because its main issue is to produce or to create a concept of constituent power adequate to its radicality; to its belonging to a notion of → radical democracy and to its relationship with a much-hated concept and reality among almost all political theorists – the notion of the "multitude". That is the notion of political subject that cannot enter into any constitution of political order, who has to be tamed, who could turn into a hydra, a monster. I am quoting Hegel, for instance, another philosopher that really did not like "the multitude".

Baruch Spinoza, in his theological-political treatises, relied on this notion in opposition to Hobbes, to the reactionary theorist of the recuperation of the English Revolution in favour of the gentry, of the aristocracy. Spinoza is the only reference we have, if we want to really dwell on this radical notion of constituent power, and at the same time on this political possibility of the multitude.

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138   Editors' note: the original title (in Italian) is *Il Potere Costituente: Saggio sulle Alternative del Moderno*.

That is where the title "The Rest is Missing" comes up. Antonio Negri uses it in one of his best short essays on the notion of democracy in Spinoza in a Latin phrase *reliqua desiderantur*. This notion appears at the end of an unfinished political treatise which Spinoza wrote right before his death. Maybe it is really unfinished due to his death, or maybe he just didn't know how to go on. The unfinished book is now open to conjecture. At the beginning of the last chapter Spinoza really starts to limit the notion of the multitude, stating in Latin "*omnino absolutum imperium*", that is "a democratic state considered as absolute", which means that the multitude commands absolutely. It is not mediated; it is not represented by another class of people, nor by patricians, nor experts, nor priests. It commands by and for itself when it is led as if it were one mind, a → common mind. How does then Spinoza limit the multitude in democracy that should be the whole self-governed social body? In this final chapter, he excludes the foreigners/pilgrims that belong to another country/ sovereign, and don't have the right to vote. But most of all – and this is where Spinoza really makes a blunder – he excludes all women, because for him, there is no historical experience that would prove that they are able to participate in government (not even the Amazons).

If we address the issue of the "constituent power of the multitude" and its constituencies as actors or vectors that are currently recreating and renovating constituent power, we have to admit that we still don't know what the constituent power could actually be. In all historical emergencies and transformations the constituent power never really managed to arrive at something different than the command of one over many (like Hobbes wanted), or the command of one class over another, or the command of a → bureaucratic police state over the mass of workers. From the English Revolution to the Soviet Revolution to anything similar, the multitude has failed to express something different from a total perfection of the state machine, a total generalisation of political obedience.

Our late period of total global turmoil since the Iraq War brought about an end to the political process of imperialism, the system that governed the market beyond a traditional state, and was followed by a financial crisis. Maybe because this turmoil has some emergencies – maybe only because it is in the making – it can give some new meanings or even a more accomplished realisation of constituent power, as the very name democracy suggests, as an absolute procedure, as the capacity to innovate productively and creatively the social field by the participation of everybody. This means something like a transformation or even perishing of the state as we know it, and also a transformation (not necessarily violent or abrupt) of constitutional democracy.

These emergencies have to do with the 2011 cycle of struggles (the Occupy Movement, the 15-M anti-austerity movement in Spain, the Arab Revolutions or even the insurrections in Turkey and small emergencies in Portugal and so on). I can say that in Spain we are still anticipating huge political changes in the spirit of the multitude. If I may paraphrase Kant, the event of revolution in spite of its failure is something that has already changed people's minds, and has embedded a new horizon of political possibility for humankind. In 2011 we witnessed something like that, which still has a practical reality in the → South of Europe and most of all in Spain. The movement in Spain was

about "real democracy". What this means is still quite enigmatic, because the whole EU is considered to be an example of democracy – or at least it used to be – as Spain is an example of political transition. In a combination of the total surrender of the Zapatero government concerning social changes and the harsh reality of the Euro crisis, the people organising 15-M spontaneously produced the expression "real democracy", which has put democracy again on the political field, as something which is yet undefined, a new concept, a neologism. In contrast, the constitutional democracy would be an "unreal democracy", something that was usurped or stolen in the name of democracy. And this is something that needs to be considered in depth to explore the features of the constituencies of the new constituent power. But before we can do that, I think we have to dwell a little on the notion of constituent power, as Negri says at the end of his book that constituent power has been neutralised by three traditions, not all of them reactionary, also progressive.

– One is the tradition is the Jewish-Christian tradition of creativity. Since we are made in the image of God, we are able to express beauty, goodness and so on. This creativity is the hidden foundation of any democratic expression, so the actual historical, finite contingent subjects are merely manifestations of this eternal creativity. In this sense constituent power is never absolute, but a derivative.
– The other tradition would be, and it is very related to the first, the use of a naturalistic conception of the social field that is separated from the political field. Constituent power would be just a manifestation of something that was underlined in the social field and social relations. This is expressed, for example, in the hype with regard to the cultural hegemony of a certain social subject.
– And another tradition is the constituent power as a never reached transcendental foundation, which would be the Kantian idea of practical reason or Rousseauian idea of general will, which is always the best expression of the will of everybody, but it is not reducible to the singularities, to the parts that compose it, it is never fully perfect, but is instead like an ideal of reason. So the actual historical constituent power is always something relative, that has to be structured by an external agent, be it the representation of the state, or a force of moderation.

At the same time – even in the revolutionary democratic context – we have three problems about constituent power that have manifested through the history of the political, historical and conceptual expressions of the concept. These are aporias of the concept.

– The first one is: "What is power?" In English, we have the same problem as with "constituencies", because the word "power" has no distinction as it does in Latin and Romance languages between *"potentia"* and *"potestas"*. We can make this difference by saying "constituted power" and "constituent power". But at the same time power is always there. When it manifests itself as a constituent power, even when being extra-juridical at the beginning, it turns into something creating law, norms, and regulations. The organisation of power has always turned into a One. The problem is that we are not able to practice, not even conceive of power as something that involves a multiplicity, which is never reduced to One. Even Spinoza says ambiguously that the multitude is democratic when it lets itself be led as one and only mind. The problem is that the multitude which opposes power eventually turns into one, it has this → tendency.

– The second problem – and it is related – would be: "What is otherness to constituted power?" What is the antagonistic force in dialectical terms if we do not rely on metaphors about top/down or social/political, because they are incoherent with the concept of constituent power, which is about the reunion of the political and the social? What is the Other opposing constituent power? How does the Other evolve or transform itself into power, which is different to the constituent power? This is a problem of the relationship between revolutionists and reformists, which has never been solved. We don't know what defines the Otherness of constituent power, because in the tradition, the more powerful it gets, the more similar to the former power it becomes.

– And the third is "How do we impose constituent power? How can it win? In tradition, as Kant and the German reactionaries viewed the French Revolution, the notion of revolution is about terror. In the Soviet Revolution it is the idea of a separate political avant-garde necessary to accomplish rupture, and definite strike against the constituent power, constituted power.

What would be the other option? The other option would be our second aporia, the idea of otherness that somehow insinuates, evolving through the holes that exist in the constituted power. This aporia is cynical, Machiavellian. If we refer it to the current examples, this aporia is populism as it is known in the Latin America, or in the case of Podemos in Spain. Pablo Iglesias, for example, has said many times that first you seize power and then you apply your program, but first you have to seize power. And to do that you have to do whatever it takes to act on the imaginaries of a fragmented people. But, to put it in simple terms, it is about the idea of the people as something opposed to the multitude, as something that is always ignorant and fragmented, so that it needs an external operator that through a chain of equivalences creates "a one" that is embodied in the significant – or in Lacanian terms we would say the "a object" of the leader – and that would be for the people to have a progressive, favourable government. However, this is cynical, since those doing that operations are beyond the ignorance of the people, they are the avant-gardes, the educated, the élite. So this is the rest that is missing! We don't know how the multitude can overcome this aporia. We don't know how political change can create radically new creative conditions, beyond any political order, which is able to sustain itself and is created by a subject that has created itself throughout the process.

The multitude is always new and at the same time is always there. But as a political construction it creates itself through the communalities or constituencies that are created in its struggles. For the multitude the struggle is always a creation, a metamorphosis, an excess of being, there is always something more there, after the struggle, that was not there before. So for the multitude, the idea, the common notion of accumulation of forces is quite different. It is always an accumulation of power in the sense of *potentia*, as the capacity to express an innovation in being intended as a reproduction of subjectivity, of new modes of living, feeling, affecting others and being affected by them, of an interdependence and a modification of the subjects.

Nonetheless, I think that the 2011 cycle has presented very interesting features, that allow us to think of the possible renewal and also the actuality of this idea of constituent

power as something that can really recuperate, renovate, and liberate democracy from its current discredited condition (because that is what we are living now in Europe and throughout the world). The people don't believe anymore in constitutional democracy, and that explains the situation in the rest of Europe. It is a really tragic situation that we are living now in Europe, and it has to do with this discredited democracy. And the Left is absolutely responsible for that!

We can already enumerate some constituencies as vectors or matrices of innovation, which practice the notion of constituent power.

The first (not present in the historical examples and theorisations of constituent power) would be "the postcolonial matrix", which is reflected by "the contemporary metropolis": the reality of the accumulation of colonial exploitation. In this sense the idea of sovereign people or democratic sovereign subjects who are unified by → common belonging has no more bearing, and this is one of the keys to the crisis in France, for instance, where both the far right and the left are sovereignist, whilst several million French citizens come from the colonies and a few million residents are not French nationals, and these people are excluded from the political system. The postcolonial dimension absolutely breaks down the idea of a unified people. Anything that relies on sovereignty is in my opinion always to be suspected of this kind of exclusion. All in all, it is about a project of hegemony of the upper classes over the lower classes, the subalterns. I think that in spite of their failure, the so-called Arab Revolutions immediately established a relationship between the → South and the North because the South is in the North, in the metropolis, and it is there to stay. Any democratic claim has to rely on that, and has to catch up with this historical irreversibility.

The second one would be "the techno-political matrix", as we named it in Spain because of the extensive use of the social networks during the 15-M and Indignados movements. The techno-political matrix is about doing politics through the interfaces and interaction of something that is not the usual political subject, nor the liberal rational decision subject, nor it is the collective trade-unionist or party-like conscious → agency, but rather the interface of bodies, brains and computers through the mediation of algorithms. This is something that happened first through the so-called Arab Facebook Revolution, or the small and suddenly vanishing Portuguese February 2011 anti-austerity movement Geração à Rasca, organised by a small group that took some 200,000 people to the streets and really surprised everybody. In May in Spain, again, the movement was organised through such networks as a political protest. It adopted the swarming technique of cooperation among separated individuals, which is in a way connected to the idea of the interface between computers and brains. The idea is not original with regard to the decade-long appearance of flash-mobs, but I think that, through these techno-political practices, the 15-M movement created a threshold for an open network system that has characteristics of emergence in terms of the theory of complexity, in which new properties of the system that were not there before emerge unexpectedly. And at the same time this network system has been able to be autopoietic, which means that it innovates, and creates stable new properties that interact with previous components and transform the underlying structure. In political terms, they create a profound transformation of the subjectivity of the people, in the sense that they create a deep and standing revolutionary aspiration, which wasn't absolutely

on the agenda before. This network system also involves something that wasn't clear in the theories of swarming or intelligent mobs by theorists like Howard Rheingold.[139] The difference is that the techno-political matrix creates affects – the transformation of bodies and minds, which are so important to Spinoza. The involvement of affects and emotions is the qualitative difference of the techno-political practices that 15-M introduced. These opened up a new political realm, because they involved separated, isolated, and also disabled people, who were using a computer to create affects and also be affected by many others through social multileveled networks: mobile phones, computer systems, mails, all kinds of social software applications. The network system in the Spanish case had a huge intensity of affects that was able to last because it was led by one main affect: *"indignación"*, indignation or outrage. For Spinoza *indignatio* in Latin is the hate we experience when we see somebody doing harm to another who we think of as an equal to us. In this process the Left wasn't there, the NGOs weren't there, the traditional media wasn't there, because they tried to deny its legitimacy by saying "this is just Facebook bullshit". What they missed out is that this network system is not only about the internet. Through this techno-political circuitry, for instance, in the Puerta del Sol in Madrid, people did not just stay at home tweeting, they were actually physically present on the square, and of course also were tweeting there. They were both physically facing the police and at the same time affecting others by livestreaming what they were doing. This huge concentrated dance and circulation of affects creates profound transformations of subjectivity, which is hypothetically what may explain the May 15 movement. I think that this is something that is yet to come, because once you have the indignation, a real production of affects, which all struggles produce (such as a workers' strike, like the dockers' strike here in Liverpool in its time), they are very difficult to "recuperate". In the past it was very difficult to circulate and communicate this, to persist, even among trade unions. Today, even a single small struggle is able to inspire huge → solidarity throughout the world. This involves the transformation of bodies and brains affectively reticulated through algorithms. This is something I think is a real constituency.

The third matrix of innovation is related to the transformation of production or reproduction. I call it "the symbio-political matrix", or "anthropogenic matrix", and in the simplest way it has to do with the fact that contemporary societies rely on a huge amount of unpaid and unrecognised → labour, and most of it is care labour. Caring is about practices of generic social loving, about affective labour, about the whole industry of health services, educational services, and so on, which are the main forces of productivity today. One of the keys of the capitalist crisis is that the system doesn't want to pay for care, whilst at the same time wants to profit from it. And the way to achieve this is the process of financialisation, and the hegemony of rent instead of (industrial, manufacturing) profit. This is completely new, and adds a new feature to the multitude. Symbio-political is different to biopolitical, because it stresses strongly that you need more than yourself to live in this society. The multiplicity is always relational, and one has to give recognition to the other who produces new social beings. We cannot imagine constituent power without the revolution of care and the recognition of it as an institution of reproductive and at the same time productive care labour. The economist Christian Marazzi calls it the anthropogenetic or anthropogenic mode of produc-

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139 Howard Rheingold, *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution*, 2002.

tion, and explains it as the main forces of production – and hence of surplus value – in the current time; and as we know education, health, art and culture were the most affected by budget cuts or neoliberal austerity. Without changing this image no change is possible, and at the same time by changing it a new political subjectivity is going to emerge. This is apparent in Latin America, in the way people are able to resist or even seize constituent power through the involvement of communities, care relationships, → self-managed services, through the multitude of informal labour and unpaid work that sustains society.

The fourth and last matrix that involves the first postcolonial one, it is "the post-national matrix", which is currently very pertinent in the UK with the referendum on leaving the European Union. The whole world system is transforming and is affected by the postcolonial struggle. How do we deal with the phenomena which we are witnessing today, with the fact that – wanted or not – several millions of people coming from Syria and the Middle East are going to have to live in Europe for a long time because their countries are going to be totally destroyed, and perhaps become uninhabitable. How do we deal with this, if we adopt a more or less moderate, not Nazi-Fascist, hypothesis? I assume that democracy cannot be linked to the nation state anymore, because it represents a dominant, privileged, homogeneous population. If we talk about democracy, we have to talk of a heterogeneous multilingual society. This is something that also applies to the US, which is experiencing a huge problem (for the white elites) with this Latino emergence, which amongst other things tends to break the homogenous official language of politics and businesses – which is English. And we still haven't seen a political democratic society that is based on this assumption. I am not talking about multiculturalism, but rather about the fact that there is a multitude of people, or rather "peoples" in plural, which means that you don't have any traditional popular sovereignty anymore.

I think that these matrices of innovation are elements that enable us to define what we could think of as putting constituencies into practice, or create a constituent process. It seems that a majority of people want to change the political system in terms of not just transparency, representation (there must be something more than political representation and parties), social justice, accountability, and participation, but also the integration of all citizens in the political process. But a nation state or a failed nation state like Spain still wants to have one traditional nation state. It doesn't work anymore! It has to be at least European. I'd say that this is a European constituent process that began in Spain – maybe failing, things are still open – but a constituent process, nevertheless.

For the conclusion: which could be the main features of a political constituent process? Its main feature would be that it doesn't belong to anyone, or else that it belongs to the multitude. Since it is an extra-juridical force, it can never be abolished or suspended by any political actor, nor the king, nor the supreme court, and so on. It is a disruptive force. I would not like to think of it in terms of an avant-garde Bolshevik party seizing power, but at the same time it has to be disruptive, it has to radically disobey. At the same time, constituent process shouldn't be state centric. This means that we have the possibility to define the ideas of reconstructing and recreating a society which doesn't put the state or some state-like entity at the centre. We don't yet know how to abolish the state, but we can reasonably think of putting the state a little to the side. The idea

→ self-managed, page 254

of the state as a central, unique sovereign actor in society, which defined the welfare state transformation and the current constitutional democracy, or even the so-called European social model, that puts the state as managing the common reproduction of the population, has to be cut off. As they are already cutting the welfare state off with austerity measures, we should take the opportunity to rebuild it as something different to the welfare state and create instead a "commonfare" society. That means the → self-managing of the common production and re-production of society by common political entities created by the multitude, that are not state-like in terms of an absolute or undiscussed command, of an absolute sovereignty about what is legal or illegal. This involves also a critique of the constitutional check and balances rule of law. We know the way things are discussed and processed in social networks, we have proven that the multitude is able to decide, and through the mediation of a recursive computing process you have different converging outputs about political decisions. For instance, deciding on the ending of the Acampada in Puerta del Sol was a very long and boring process, but finally through this complex discussion that involved the people and their networks, this recursivity of decisions through technopolitics allowed the multitude to decide, after considering all possibilities. This is what we can rely on in order to have a non-state-centric constituent power. We have seen this problem in Latin American processes in the case of Venezuela, which is so state-centric that it has not been able to transform the modes of production or to pass from an oil-based rentier economy to something different – like common anthropogenic processes, which would be based on education and health industries. In Venezuela's case the state only wanted to reproduce itself, which means that in the class struggle process everything tends to "the one", to the state over the multitude.

There have been some proposals about this non-state-centric approach. For instance, a more evolutionary approach was proposed by Michel Bauwens, the theorist of the → commons, who talks and writes about the idea of a "partner state", a state that is managing things which are still difficult to deal with, like security, borders and so on. But the assumption is that it should be under the command of the multitude, of the counter-powers. What is opposing this diminishing state, which is an inversion of "the minimal state" of the neoliberals, but for the better? It is a network of counter-powers, not any fixed entity; we shouldn't call it Soviet, because that would be misleading, but it is something like that. This is a political entity of the very citizens themselves that are able to network, institutionalise, to be accountable and legal in a conventional way – in the sense that law is always a convention, pact, covenant, which doesn't have the characteristics of the transcendant production of the law. According to this approach, laws are contingent, discussable, renewable and nobody is on the top to say: "this is the law". The law is about discussion, dialogue, and the open relationships among forces.

So what about obedience? As Spinoza says, obedience is something that is automatic when society is led by the "guide of reason", which is the best thing for the common, that is, the multitude. But this obedience is not absolute, there is the right to disobey and it can be regulated. Any constituent power of the new multitude has to paradoxically "constitutionalise disobedience" under some conditions that should always be evolving. Disobedience has to be defined by the common notion – and this is a result of the common experiential knowledge – of what is intolerable in society. And what is intolerable in society, as we know, has never been the same. But what is intolerable

for society today? Issues like child labour, rape, patriarchal oppression, maybe wage-labour, maybe war – but this is something that goes beyond any historical experience of constituent power, which has always imposed obedience as command. I remember particularly those awful lines of Lenin and Trotsky from the period of the civil war, those about shooting those refusing forced labour. The possibility of any constituent power waging war against those belonging to the privileged layers of society into constituted power is always there, and must be avoided.

Another feature of the constituent process is that it must involve others, it has to avoid any Leninist or Schmittian notion of the → friend and foe relationship as something fundamental. That means it has to regulate and limit the antagonisms that, whenever the assume this grammar of civil war, they may destroy the common. How does one do that? Perhaps it is a problem of "common decency", like Orwell said, and it is also about building the common notion of the transformation of the multitude through the powers of struggle. It is an ethical problem, but not ethical in the sense of something that you take into account after the event, but ethical in the sense of a real guide for the behaviour of the people, as something fundamental, something that is embodied in the workings of the constituent power, which means that there are no enemies in society. Under this assumption, nobody can be excluded from the access to rights or the recourse to the law, and there cannot be any wars, in terms of sovereign war, which regulate the relationships among states. With the Iraq War we learned about the "penal law of the enemy", which was applied to the people detained in Guantanamo, and now any average citizen can at any point be considered an enemy of society and destroyed, and that is what historical revolutions have always done too.

Finally, the constituent process has to be carried out in a political and electoral realm. In Spain we now have new political parties like Podemos, Guanyem or Barcelona en Comú. For spectators looking from afar it could seem like: "well, this is going back to normal" or "this is a change of élites". I am not convinced about that. Why? In contrast to the classical relationship between struggles and political output in Spain, the multitude is always active and vigilant, and it has constituted itself politically. To have such a constituent process something must happen in society. We can call it an "→ event", in German *"Ereignis"*, or in Spanish *"acontecimiento"*, and May 15 was such an event, a total turmoil in society, a total qualitative transformation of what was right and wrong. Before any modification of the political order, the constituent process of the society must be set in motion. If Europe is going to have such a constituent process, something must happen beforehand (social struggle, turmoil, a radical democratic upheaval of a new kind, like in Spain). But I do think we have to expect for this political turmoil to happen in unexpected places, maybe Britain, maybe France, which seem totally dominated by xenophobic, reactionary thinking. This is the condition for it, otherwise, it will only be a spectacle, made from above, like the way the European Union was made from above, and now we are paying the price for that technocratic and bureaucratic construction process.

What are the motivations and implications for foregrounding constituencies in the museum? As the preamble on the glossary website suggests, it is part of an attempted "shift away from a hierarchical, top-down and 'broadcast' based model of knowledge dissemination", where a museum's constituents can play a formative role. In this sense it is part of the → institution coming to terms with the limitations of its founding model, not only in terms of the type of knowledge it produces (through the historically or geographically limited scope of its collections and archives, for example), but also the modes of dissemination and exchange it uses such as exhibitions, publications, and symposia.[140]

Opening up the museum to constituents and constituent power means a substantial, and we would argue welcome, re-orientation of emphasis. It would seem to suggest a new focus away from collections and exhibitions to a foregrounding of relationships with those who have a political and cultural stake in the museum. Significantly, it means not only understanding who our constituencies are, but also forming positions and arguments with them. However, for this to be meaningful, the terms of the relationship are crucial in understanding how constituencies might work with or through museums – and vice versa. It is here we propose the term "agency".

In its simplest terms, agency can be understood as one's ability to act. Yet when considering how museums might work with constituencies this ability to act has wider implications: What agency can an institution foster with its set protocols, formats and languages? Who decides the conditions for this relationship setting the potential and limitations for agency to be enacted? And what agency does the museum itself hold to operate in new ways with constituents, tied as it might be – or think it might be – by different obligations to funders, partners or governments? With these and other questions in mind, agency seems a potentially cogent term with which to explore what working with and through constituencies might mean – both for the museum and its constituents.

As we heard from Ahmet Öğüt's term → intervenor, the foregrounding of relations within the museum does not mean making it the subject or medium through which to make an art project. Similarly, the type of relationships that agency points at are aimed at something different from audience development and engagement, where institutions define their goals through the numbers they can bring through their doors. Rather, it aims to recast the institution and its public as constituent parts in a wider social body. If the museum takes seriously the notion of placing relations at

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140   A note on how we arrived at our term: As L'Internationale narrators we are asked to think about a term that resonates with the practices and thinking of our museum. I was also asked to engage the museum's constituencies in the formulation of this term. This term, then, has been arrived at through conversations with one particular constituency group, the Umbrella Network, a group of social designers the Van Abbe is currently working with to map different social initiatives in Eindhoven – and Gemma Medina, an independent researcher who works with the museum on a number of curatorial and mediation projects. Agency is not a new term for the Van Abbemuseum. As a part of our five-year policy paper to the city council in 2013, we listed it as one of the three core values that we felt defined the museum's practice, alongside transparency and dispersion. At the Van Abbe we have talked about the word agency within the context of trying to define a role for art and its institutions that could counter or inflect that of the → autonomy imposed on art by Western modernism. In this regard, we think of the relationship between art and agency as being diametrically opposed to Kant's notion of the "disinterested spectator".

the core of the institution, then it seems the first task would be to understand that a museum, now more than ever, cannot define its subjects.[141]

Museum as constitution?

Here it might be interesting to think about a recent text by the legal academic Stacy Douglas, "Museums as Constitutions: A Commentary on Constitutions and Constitution Making", which highlights revealing similarities between the museum and the constitution, and its implications for how constituencies and subjects are formed. Douglas opens her text as follows:

> *Museums function much like constitutions. Although they are not accorded the same juridical powers as the state-sanctioned constitution, nor are they recognised social contracts upon which the national juridical apparatus sits, they do operate as a site from which imaginations of political community are launched. Indeed, they are alike as both set the representation of a political community as their task.*[142]

A museum has conventionally "set the representation of a political community" through its collections, archives and programmes. Constitutions, Douglas argues, similarly try to communicate the idea of a society and its people. Both, however, are accused of being intrinsically exclusionary. As one public is defined, so another is excluded. Nowhere is this clearer than in the emergence of the museum that arose out of a particular historical, social and geopolitical conjuncture in European modernity. This was a conjuncture that was embedded in practices of colonialism and imperialism, as well as the formation of the nation state. As Douglas writes: "[...] museums and constitutional democracy share a common link with the advent of liberalism. For both, the revolutionary moment of secular statehood marks an organisational change, but one that allows sovereign hierarchies to persist."[143] This conjuncture produced a specific, and largely exclusionary approach, to the representation of a political community that was built around the bourgeois subject. If museums today see one of their tasks as undoing or countering this approach, we need to ask how do we want to re-write a constitution for the present, with whom and on what terms?

Following Michael Hardt, a first step would seem to acknowledge that in museums, as with political society at large, constitutions might be re-written with each new generation if they are to be meaningful, inclusive and representative of the constituents of a specific historical juncture. For the museum, that would involve a radical re-thinking of how it understands its cultural heritage. It would mean continually reforming and reshaping the tools it has to "set the representation of a political community" (its archive, collection and programme) with its constituents. If, as Douglas' comparison makes clear, the constitution should be thought of as a memorialising mechanism – a way of sedimenting histories, subjects or even political communities – then the museum needs to strive to constantly reform or rewrite itself in response to the present conjuncture.

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141   That said, it is perhaps revealing that the term constituencies is one introduced by the museums themselves, meaning we should be wary that this is not simply another in a sequence of steps where the museum tries to define its subjects.

142   Stacy Douglas, "Museums as Constitutions: A Commentary on Constitutions and Constitution Making", *Law, Culture, and the Humanities* 11, no. 3 (October 2015): 349.

143   Ibid., 350.

In some respects, orienting the hardware of a museum to be representative of, or respond to, the historical moment out of which it emerges should be one of the primary, critical objectives of an institution. If we take Douglas' comparison seriously, however, the harder task and more significant question is understanding how the museum's constitution can be co-written with its constituents. What type of relationship would that entail and what form would that constitution take? Can we think of new models outside the representative tools we currently have?

Central to this would be to first consider how a museum identifies or defines its constituents and the type of relationship this definition fosters. In a recent text Jesús Carrillo considers this question within the context of the Museo Reina Sofia and emergent political subjects in Spain:

> Even if we, the team at the museum at this time, choose not to speak to the affluent class, nor to an undifferentiated mass of tourists, it is true that we still address a subject defined in terms of lack, a disempowered subject, imagined in relation to or in contrast with the luminous subject defined by the Enlightenment. It is the subject inflicted upon by the alienating conditions and struggles of late capitalism who, with the aid of the museum would become aware of the ideological nature of the system we live in, starting with the art world and the museum itself (institutional critique).[144]

Carrillo goes on:

> To an extent, our task is then to provide critical tools to understand a system which we may not have the capacity to change. Would we be ready to deal with a new kind of subject not defined by deprivation but by expectations and desires which go beyond the apparent "immanence" of current capitalism? Would we be ready to deal with a subject that is already experimenting with other forms of organisation and producing its own imaginaries? What if the → South started making sense of the world beyond and without our mediations? Could the museum still be a suitable scenario for the performance of this new subjectivity? This is very much an open question.[145]

A shift to working with and through constituencies should be seen as an acknowledgement of the inadequacy of the type of pre-suppositions Carrillo cites, given the recent emergence of new forms of political subjectivities, ones that do not see themselves in terms of any form of lack. Similarly, as Carrillo's text makes apparent, it is not entirely clear that even if we are able to understand the situation we find ourselves in, we will in fact (either as institutions or as part of a constituent, social body) have the agency to act.

Constitutional limits?

In *Insurgencies*, Antonio Negri's argues that the multitude's – or constituencies' – ability to "facilitate historical rupture" (as an effective expression of political agency) is curtailed through constitutionalism.[146] Similarly, in the preamble to the

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144   Jesús Carrillo, "Museos del Sur", in *What's the Use? Constellations of Art, History, and Knowledge. A Critical Reader*, eds. Nick Aikens, Thomas Lange, Jorinde Seijdel, Steven ten Thije (Amsterdam: Valiz, Van Abbemuseum and University of Hildesheim, 2016), 352–353.
145   Ibid.
146   Antonio Negri, *Insurgencies, Constituent Power and the Modern State* (University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

"New Charter for Europe", the collective document arising from the *New Abduction of Europe* conference in Madrid, one of the stated aims is its "attempt at collectively elaborating on the central problem for political organisation and agency outside the representational sphere". [147] In relation to the museum, then, and its shift to working with and through constituencies, a complex set of considerations emerges. On the one hand, these positions argue for a shift away from the (exclusionary) constitution-forming offered by collections and exhibitions, opening up the possibility for relationships that are not defined through the geographical or political scope of archives and programmes. Yet this means museums relinquishing – or certainly holding less tightly to – the tools that they have used for so long to structure "a site from which imaginations of political community are launched."

In closing, we could say there is need to break the shackles of the museum's relationship to the constitution or the representational sphere if we want to foster forms of political agency or "facilitate historical rupture." Yet, as museums try and rely less heavily on the representational sphere, how they might forge and foster political communities becomes more opaque. This lack of definition is both a strength and a danger. Indeed, different constituencies working with partners of L'Internationale have often regretted the lack of clarity in the relationship between them and the museums.[148] How much agency is the institution willing to cede, and how can it avoid reproducing the same dynamics of exclusion where museums set the terms of the debate as well as those taking part? These are questions of individual and collective agency: the museum and its constituents' abilities to act.

Autonomy pantxo ramas

MACBA, Barcelona, Spain, May 2016

A critique of autonomy

In the wake of the crisis – not only of the financial processes but also of the political systems of representation and welfare – the question of constituency interpellates the relation between society and → institution, between social life and governance. For this reason, the frame of the question changes if compared to the debates around publics and audiences in the late 20th century, and goes beyond the debate about how to transform cultural institutions. At stake today is the possibility of reinventing public institutions, but also the risk of them disappearing.

In addition to the corpse of T. H. Marshall's concept of citizenship, facing the crisis of social rights and the welfare state, fighting against the dismantlement of civil and political guarantees in the aftermath of the great recession that started in 2008, the need today is to think about and reinvent the concept of constituency not only in cultural institutions, but also in the social life of the crisis of Europe, in a space made up of conflicts, ambivalences and possibilities.

How can we rethink and use today the debates about constituencies, audiences, publics and → commons that have animated the critique of cultural institutions and museums in the last few decades, to move through the general crisis of citizenship that European society is now facing? How can we imagine these debates

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147 See "Charter for Europe, 1.2: open source", *Internationale Online* (5 September 2014), http://www.internationaleonline.org/research/real_democracy/8_charter_for_europe_1_2 (accessed 28 February 2016).
148 This was part of the feedback from constituency groups working with L'Internationale partners at a meeting in Barcelona, 2015.

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beyond the field of cultural production, in the crisis but also in the possibility of reinventing the state? How can we carry out an institutional critique in the everyday experience of a healthcare facility heavily affected by austerity measures? On the routes drawn by → migrants and refugees throughout a fragmented Europe? In the schools and the universities run by students and workers in the → south of the continent?

This is a task that calls on us to behold the crisis as an opportunity for change, and the recovery from this crisis as offering a possibility "of transformation for the better", as Jo Brewis put it. It is a matter of → translating the formats and concepts of institutional critique in the spaces of policymaking: in the rooms and the protocols of public workers, in the quotidian definition of those procedures that define how institutions guarantee the universal logic to health and care, the provision of housing rights, and universal access to education.

This is the problem of constituencies today: to break apart any autonomy of the critical institutional debate from the widespread and dramatic contradictions of contemporary social life. And to affirm a radical critique of institutions as a practice of transformation and regulation in relation to the state, the welfare system, and the mechanism of public administration. This is not yet the problem of the commons as something to be produced anew, in the nowhere of utopia, but the question of how to imagine a transition beyond the crisis and towards an *elsewhere,* a continuous displacement from the real, an otherness of space built through one's own living. A political imagination that is immersed in the real and escapes determinism.

Elsewhere as a collective production, not as a land for utopian "discovering" (that quite often ends up being a practice of conquering), but as a practice to transform what exists: the infrastructure of the social democratic state against and beyond the ruins of neoliberal dispossession. It is about citizens becoming makers and not only users (or subjects) of public policies and institutions.

The genealogy and debates of institutional critique in the field of culture have been of incredible importance for the possibility of settling a series of radical categories in the organisation of the institutional machines of cultural production – the question is how this critique can become a tool to break into a series of other institutional machines, into other sites of the state. If it is true that representational politics have been disrupted by the disarticulation of any social "integer" and of any fixed belonging, this collapse has been analysed and operated widely in the space of institutional critique. Critical institutions have been the ground to constitute a space of expressive "citizenship", rather than a representational one.

However, this practice of expression cannot be a solipsism echoing in the empty rooms of an institution. Expression, as the Zapatista saying goes, needs to break the mirror. It thus needs to renounce any fantasy of autonomous expression that ends up re-presenting the self, and start dealing with the sharp, broken pieces of a "post- representational scenario of politics." Expression, in other words, can be a space from where to relate among experiences *a raz de suelo* (in contact with the soil), constituting a space of continuities among differences, and so produce bridges, encounters, and → alliances, rather than affirming a signifier capable of producing a representation. If not immersed in this continuous experience of everyday life, constituency becomes an autonomous we, → *ore*, as Lia Colombino pointed out. A space of self-reproduction that does not engage with the ambivalences and

contradictions of the broken mirror. An institutional machine that reproduces itself without intersecting with society.

According to Franco Rotelli, the former director of a radical institution of mental healthcare in Trieste, the institution cannot pose its own reproduction as the point of reference of its own practice. On the contrary, the priority of a critical institution is to renounce to its own autonomy and support the autonomy of the constituency. In his own words (stolen from Bertolt Brecht, apparently), the institution should not be scared of producing nothing more than "benches out of snow", to let a citizen sit down and rest in the winter of her own life. When the spring will come, she will be able to stand again and participate in the life of society. No matter if the bench will melt, no matter if the institution will be left with its own hands empty. Left alone with its melting benches, the institution will once again have to start inventing.

Biotope Zdenka Badovinac, Bojana Piškur, Adela Železnik

Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, Slovenia, February 2016

The biotope of contemporary art Zdenka Badovinac

At the Moderna galerija, we have asked ourselves what it is that constituencies actually constitute. Seeing that we work within a very small community – Ljubljana only has a population of 300,000 – it is virtually impossible to think about the institution other than in relation to other agents in the community, which I here refer to as the space of contemporary art in the narrow sense of the term. We think about our community in terms of a biotope of sorts, in which every species, every agent, regardless of their status, is important for the survival of the community. For this reason, it is important to think about the → institution both as just one of many constituencies, and as a space co-created by others. Here I shall focus on cases that speak of the Moderna galerija as one of the constituencies of the community of contemporary art.

In the early 1990s, just after the breakup of Yugoslavia and the declaration of the independent state of Slovenia, there was a strong desire shared by the representatives of our cultural space to see contemporary art have a central position in the new state. Official cultural strategies to help us achieve that were non-existent, so we learned from artists who had already developed self-organised forms of cultural production through collective work in the 1980s. A particularly useful example of this for the Moderna galerija was the collective Neue Slowenische Kunst. Thus we cooperated with the group IRWIN in 1994 on a project for Sarajevo: our aim was to make a contribution toward better conditions for cultural production after the end of the war, so we proposed a collection for the future Sarajevo museum of contemporary art. The absence of important collections and the general under-nourishment of infrastructure for culture was a problem faced not only by Sarajevo but ourselves, too, although to a lesser extent. This led us to establish a collection of Eastern European art in Ljubljana in 2000, to help consolidate and empower the space of contemporary art. In spaces where contemporary art is marginalised, where there is no art market, and the social status of artists is still largely left up to the discretion of the state, the debate about the status of artists is at least different, if not more frequent, than in those spaces ruled by the market. In their struggle for better conditions, artists and intellectuals often seek → alliances with other socially subordinate groups or become actively involved in actions like the general popular uprising in Slovenia in 2012, which was directed against extreme right-wing politics. What is more permanent in character are the joint endeavours for a

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space of contemporary art, which in Eastern Europe continues to symbolise a space of free thinking and alternative alliances. The various agents on the scene of contemporary art are constantly brought together by the underdeveloped infrastructure and insufficient resources, due in part to the political priorities centring on the national language and traditional culture. In Ljubljana, this → common interest has united – quite remarkably, in my view – large institutions, artist-run spaces, and smaller NGO spaces. Let me illustrate this with a few specific examples.

In 2008, when Slovenia had a right-wing government with fairly extremist views, we started the renovation of the Moderna galerija building. The then minister of culture deliberately allotted us only the funds needed for renovation works, but not for the programme. We thus decided to carry out a project without any money, and offered our museum premises, already empty by that time, to anyone who wished to exhibit there under their own organisation and at their own expense. (Figure 73) Not only artists responded to our invitation, but also a variety of other agents in our locality, which saw this self-organised exhibition as an opportunity to call attention to issues relevant in their fields. Another project that occurred in the period the Moderna galerija was without funding for its programme was *Hosting Moderna galerija!*. Over 20, and for the most part small NGO spaces across Slovenia housed and at least partly co-financed our projects out of → solidarity. (Figure 74)

Some of the key artists we have collaborated with in building a strong platform for contemporary art over these last two and a half decades have long been working in the framework of organisations defined as associations or institutes in Slovenia, which are financed with public funds, like our museum. For the most part, these organisations have their premises, such as galleries or offices, receive three or four year's funding at a time, and focus their activities not just on the work of the artist or art group that started the organisation, but also on projects by other artists' and researchers', on producing publications, and so on. A few examples are the spaces run by the artists Tadej Pogačar (P74), Dragan Živadinov (Delak Institute), Marko Peljhan (Projekt Atol Institute), Vadim Fishkin and Mateja Bučar (DUM Association of Artists), Janez Janša (Maska), Janez Janša (Aksioma), and Marija Mojca Pungerčar (KUD Trivia). Some of these artists opted for this form of organised work because their production calls for the cooperation of a variety of agents to fulfil complex technical and organisational conditions. Our exhibition *Stopover 1:1* aimed to highlight the fact that the nature of art changes with the conditions of work, not only that art co-creates the conditions. We did this by presenting a number of projects that are essentially durational in nature, such as Marko Peljhan's Makrolab, 1994— (Figure 75), the NSK State in Time, 1992—, Salon de Fleurus, 1993—, and KSEVT by Dragan Živadinov, Dunja Zupančič and Miha Turšič, 2010—. These are on-going artistic projects that the artists must maintain, which also means, at least in our country, a need to secure public funding. If we understand these and similar projects as artworks, it is necessary to consider a more suitable relation between art and the institution, one more in keeping with their durational nature and organisational structure. In cases like these, an institution can only represent a section of the duration of such an artwork, and never its entire life, which happens in real time and in direct social interaction. Art and the institution keep bumping against the same conditions of cultural production in a similar fashion, and the institution's place is no longer in being a protector or representative of art. Rather, something that could be defined as partnership is developing between the two. When an institution stops being a representative of art and becomes its partner, it is time

Figure 73: *Jeder Mensch ist ein Kurator (Every Man is a Curator)*, exhibition view, Moderna galerija, 16 June – 30 September 2007. Courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

Figure 74: *Old Masters*, a talk by Tomislav Gotovac, exhibition view at P74 Gallery, a part of Hosting Moderna galerija project. Curated by Zdenka Badovinac. Courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

Figure 75: Marko Peljhan, *Ladomir–Faktura*, 1994. Courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

to consider the continued relevance of the question of who constitutes a specific institution's constituency. In view of the above it follows that, rather than speaking of the constituencies of an institution, it might make more sense to speak of the institution as merely one of the constituencies that co-create a specific space of contemporary art.

Radical Education Bojana Piškur

Radical Education (RE) was initiated in 2006 as a project within a public art institution – Moderna galerija Ljubljana – in order for it, through analysis of its own work, to direct itself towards a different level of relation with this institution and others like it. One of the first actions, when the idea of *RE* was actually conceived, was the occupation of → Rog bicycle factory in Ljubljana, in 2006. Rog opened up important questions of → common spaces in the city, access and usage of these spaces, the politicisation of public spaces, and the question of how to connect with other, not necessarily "similar" institutions. In *RE*, from the very beginning, the ways of opening the museum to various "→ agents" were deliberated, bringing different practices from the "outside" into the very context of an art institution, as well as creating common micro-political situations through different → alliances and collective actions. However, *RE* was at the same time also a rather heterogeneous group of people (anthropologists, sociologists, anarchists, artists, pedagogues, migrant workers, curators) with different experiences of working in communities (of → migrant workers, asylum seekers, the erased of Slovenia, with the Zapatistas in Chiapas, the Piqueteros in Argentina, with the HIJOS in Guatemala, and so on), and institutions (university, art museum), and thus as a consequence of this very different, and sometimes rather conflictual, ideas arose as to what kind of space a museum actually is.

RE was formed in a time when the alter-globalist movements (post-Seattle, post-Geneva) were already exhausted to a certain degree, and when intensive deliberations on how to proceed began. For example, the questions that arose were: Is it possible to be in some kind of alliance with the institutions, such as, for example, universities and museums? What are the products of such encounters? How do we build institutions of counter-power? What are the new "monster-institutions" like, politically speaking? Is there a possibility for a common struggle against capitalism and exploitation, and if so in which ways?

RE tried from the very beginning to connect two institutions: the museum – Moderna galerija and the movement – Social Centre Rog (SC Rog). The aim was to overcome the dichotomy between institutions and movements and to reflect on the openings that this conflictual relation provides. The starting point was the idea that *RE* was not and did not want to be "just another" participative project within the museum, because temporary → solidarities of this kind (for example, limited work with different "marginal" groups, namely, the so-called "projections of politics as something else and outside") only divert from the politics of the here and now. We were, in fact, dealing with a process that was primarily based on trust, having in mind that rather "→ fragile" political subjectivities were most often involved in this.

It is important to emphasise that the *RE* position was not only to formulate a meaningful and relevant set of questions but, above all, to confront these questions in collective situations, to democratise expert knowledge and produce common knowledge instead. Here common knowledge was understood as theoretical thinking accompanied by politically active attitudes; something that joins different

positions in a new anti-hegemonic cultural front. As is generally known, a series of problems always arise in such contexts, like that with "→ translation", the problem of highly abstract language usage and so on. Subsequently, there is also a danger of falling into a trap of intellectual arrogance.

With all these considerations in mind, a series of seminars were organised jointly with the SC Rog and Moderna galerija. One of the themes was "Resistance as Creation", which was organised with the invisible workers of the world, asylum seekers, activists, cultural workers, artists, and militant researchers,[149] and in which there were discussions about the relationships among social centres, artists and political collectives, ways of communication and cooperation with the local community, questions of usage of public and common spaces in the city, and so on. The idea was not only to "learn from" institutions, but also to pass on such knowledge to movements and collectives; to invent new conceptual, expressive and organisational tools in order to empower those who say "we will not be governed this way".

One of the aims of *RE* was also to define common investigations between the two fields i.e. art and politics, and to ascertain, through defining concepts such as → labour, aesthetic experience, affects, precarious work, cognitive work, common good, class antagonism, → emancipation, artistic → autonomy, and the like, what it is that art forms and forms of political resistance have in common. In this way, some new institutional forms of resistance could be found, in which resistance would be considered a common space of encounter, or even some kind of new "aesthetics" as Paolo Virno said.[150] For example, one question that we found very important was: What is creation? Not only from the perspective of artwork, but also from the point of the production process being an aesthetic experience itself. Is manual labour as such an aesthetic experience? What about art, which repeats labour? Is this experience limited only to the art space or can it spread everywhere? Is it a collective creation by an artist becoming a collective worker, or a representation made by an individual? How does art function as a tool of political emancipation?

But the important thing in all these seminars, debates, exhibitions and research projects by *RE* was that they were also based on a re-examination of one's own position and critical analysis of one's own work in relation to the collective and to the institution. If someone today posed the question how to understand *RE* in relation to Moderna galerija, the answer would probably be that *RE* was in fact "a series of failures". This is certainly not meant in a negative way – which is a small paradox – but quite the opposite. This process, project, methodology, a collective or a "constituency" called *Radical Education*, was never realised in a way for it to become the brand of an institution. It never quite lived up to the expectations of what a project, seminar or exhibition should achieve and in what way, because with *RE* there always existed a space for the unpredictable, an unknown domain of arts and politics. In 2014 *RE* came to the point where this kind of → intervention in the space of an art institution became unnecessary. Certainly not unnecessary in the sense that the museum became an ideal institution, but in that the ideas of *RE* had in a way become embedded in debates on "→ other institutionality" within the museum itself.

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149 See: Colectivo Situaciones, *On the Researcher-Militant* (September 2003), http://eipcp.net/transversal/0406/colectivosituaciones/en (accessed 18 February 2016).
150 Sonja Lavaert and Pascal Gielen, *The Dismeasure of Art. An interview with Paolo Virno*, (1 November 2009), http://www.onlineopen.org/the-dismeasure-of-art (accessed 18 Februrary 2016).

We have learned from *RE* that what art and social movements have in common is not about content, such as the view of art on social resistance. It is also not the case that a site of artistic transformation can also be assumed to be a site of political transformation. What was relevant in the particular relationship between the art institution and *RE* was the question of how to link political and artistic imagination with the production of new institutions in a similar way to what Deleuze once said (but having in mind theory): A museum is exactly like a box of tools. It (...) must be useful. It must function. And not for itself. If no one uses it, (...) then a museum is worthless or the moment is inappropriate.[151] I'd like to think of *RE* as one of the tools in the museum.

Current potentials Adela Železnik

In the final part, I will briefly present some of the more recent relationships that the Moderna galerija developed, being conditioned also by the new venue that we opened in 2011, the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova. One of these relationships is a new type of → collaboration within the museum, with a group formerly known as Neteorit, and the the → network of institutions, organisations and agents in our neighbourhood.

Neteorit was a self-organised programme of lectures, talks and debates related to art, theory and politics. It was conceived by a group of artists, philosophers and activists as a response to the local context that proved insufficient in terms of providing adequate infrastructural support for this sort of action. Neteorit was an attempt to connect the previously dispersed and separated activities of this group and join efforts to provide spaces for work and changing ideas, as well as to gain a certain feedback, strength and visibility. Neteorit was organised informally, and although the programme was more or less → autonomous in relation to the Moderna galerija we supported it by offering museum spaces and some facilities free of charge. We also recognised Neteorit as our constituency group, which thus took part in the L'Internationale "Negotiating Institutions" seminar, the second *Useful Art Education Seminar* of the *Uses of Art Project*, which took place at the Tate Liverpool in December 2014.

Neteorit's reading seminars, the aim of which was also to → intervene into the conditions of knowledge production on the structural level, lasted from 2013 until 2015. Last year the Neteorit group re-formed itself into a new, ŠUM collective, concentrating on regularly publishing a journal for contemporary art criticism and theory called *Šum*, and organising seminars and other activities in some other contemporary art spaces.

The second example is our relationship with the neighbourhood of the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, a residential part of Ljubljana called Tabor, which is more fluid, consisting of various small-scale → alliances such as FORUM, the programme of national institutions within the museums quarter (the National Museum, Slovene Ethnographic Museum, Slovene Cinematheque and ourselves), or our alliance with the Home for Elderly People and local associations in cultivating green

151 See: *Intellectuals and Power: A Conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze* (9 September 2006), https://libcom.org/library/intellectuals-power-a-conversation-between-michel-foucault-and-gilles-deleuze (accessed 18 February 2016). "A theory is exactly like a box of tools. It has nothing to do with the signifier. It must be useful. It must function. And not for itself. If no one uses it, beginning with the theoretician himself (who then ceases to be a theoretician), then the theory is worthless or the moment is inappropriate."

spaces. In 2012, together with the non-profit organisation Bunker and other agents in the area (schools, galleries, organisations), we formed an association called Cultural District Tabor, with the aim of identifying our common interests, to → collaborate more intensely and to react to some urgent issues. Such an urgency occurred last week[152] when the state authorities accommodated a group of asylum seekers in a temporary asylum home within Tabor. The Cultural District Tabor thus organised a protective shield against conservative incitements and threats. (Figure 76)

Over the last year, when there has been a marked increase in the number of people opting for the Balkan route, e.g. from Syria via Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, to Slovenia, and from there onward to Austria, Germany or Sweden, many cultural institutions as well as individuals kept asking themselves how to act. One of the immediate answers would be to fight against racial prejudice and point out the potential to change our collective consciousness. Therefore, in September 2015 the Moderna galerija organised a panel discussion within the framework of the *Glossary of Common Knowledge* seminar on → geopolitics. In the panel at the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova the participating theorists, artists and activists presented their views on the refugee crisis in Europe primarily from the Balkan perspective, recognised the existing initiatives, and reflected on the possibilities of building a → common → solidarity → network.

As the result of a more and more restrictive EU → migrant policy, the number of asylum seekers in Slovenia increased, and they are now accommodated in various asylums around the country, one of them, for the first time located in Ljubljana city centre instead of the periphery, is placed in our neighbourhood. This has made all the agents in the area re-think their positions and move towards concrete actions.

As the Moderna galerija once joined forces with activists when bringing children from the degraded outskirts of Ljubljana, an area called Rakova Jelša, mostly inhabited by migrants from Bosnia, on a boat to the city centre (→ SC Rog), we now keep collaborating with the Protirasistična fronta brez meja (Antiracist Front Without Borders) network of activists to find ways to overcome the fear and barriers in mind to open up a common space for all.

Figure 76: Antifascist protest *Refugees Welcome* in protection of asylum-seekers at Kotnikova in Ljubljana, 27 February 2016. Photo: Adela Železnik.

Bureaucratisation Khwezi Gule

Johannesburg, South Africa, August 2016

When I was in my teens activists in our communities took to re-naming their neighbourhoods after cities and countries that had supported the anti-apartheid struggle. Moscow, Tanzania, Lusaka, etc. These activists, who were known collectively as "*amaqabane*" or "comrades" exercised a lot of influence over sections of black communities that were sympathisers of then banned liberation movement the African National Congress (ANC). In the turbulent 1980s, as the fight against apartheid reached its peak, the comrades would frequently call for and enforce school boycotts and stay-aways as strategies of resisting apartheid. Sometimes their methods of enforcement were violent, but it was also understood that their call to make South Africa's unjust system "ungovernable" would be crucial to attaining freedom.

I highlight this history for two reasons. Firstly, I wish to point to the fact that the idea of renaming was very much about reclaiming space and about carving out a different sense of identity. Secondly, I want to note that symbolic and creative acts

152 Editors' note: The week prior to the seminar that took place from 2 to 4 March 2016.

of resistance were part of a larger struggle that included more militant methods that, though at times disturbing, had to be understood first and foremost within the context of a brutal and illegitimate apartheid state.

Although South Africa is often lauded for its peaceful transition to democracy, my experience of the late 1980s and early 1990s was anything but peaceful. Perhaps unlike other anti-colonial struggles, which were characterised by periods of intense fighting, ours was a long drawn out conflict – what has often been termed a low-intensity civil war. But whatever one might name it that period in our history – peaceful it was not. In that sense our liberation struggle was not much different to any other on the African continent nor any other struggle for → self-determination elsewhere in the world. Furthermore, our state and its cultural → institutions are themselves products of that conflict. It is now an often-forgotten fact that modern museums were formed in the crucible of the French Revolution. When we experience museums in the present it is easy to forget that the museum and the guillotine share a common ancestry. Whereas social and political upheavals imply plurality of expression, statecraft requires bureaucratisation and formalisation. In the South Africa of the post-1994 era contestation over the authorship of the liberation narrative has resulted in the narrowing of this plurality into a singular narrative.

What has emerged in the days since the advent of democracy is a sophisticated industry of heritage professionals and specialists in the arena of memory work, which includes public art, memorials, monuments, museums and commemorations. Unsurprisingly the sectors of society that had been the beneficiaries of privilege in the past have been at the forefront of the memory industry. The fact that the government that was formed after 1994 opted to keep and maintain the majority of the museums and monuments that had been erected at the time of colonial and apartheid rule, in keeping with the "sunset clauses" of the negotiated settlement and transition to democracy, was an early signal that the long-anticipated → emancipation would be of a significantly different nature to the one we, the oppressed, had hoped for. The rationale was that in order for the tenuous peace to succeed the beneficiaries of oppression needed to be reassured that there would be a place for them in the new South Africa, and that there would not be any retaliatory treatment after the transition to majority rule. Insofar as museums and memorials are deeply implicated in statecraft and corporatism, these have to a large extent alienated large sections of the black poor who still experience economic, cultural and social exclusion from the fruits of democracy, and by extension museums of the post-apartheid era.

It is therefore ironic that such systematic exclusion should exist in a context where the overarching narrative of the post-1994 state and its constitution is one of inclusivity – i.e. that it is a state, which embraces everybody, both the beneficiaries and victims of colonialism and apartheid. The institutions of state reflected this narrative of inclusivity. This is what is often described internationally as the South African miracle. As a result, we have a situation in which the monuments that celebrated colonial and apartheid heroes exist side-by-side with newer monuments that chronicle the anti-apartheid struggle. In some cases institutions that represented oppression were converted into new ones, including Constitution Hill, which was once a prison and now houses the constitutional court and a museum, and you also have the Robben Island Museum where Mandela and other political prisoners were held. Other such sites are dotted around the country. The historian Annie Coombes argues that this strategy has rehabilitated these institutions from being places of → pain to places of reconciliation.

In post-1994 South Africa, heritage and heritage professionals have been enlisted in service of a post-apartheid nation-building narrative. This grand narrative focuses on certain individuals, sites and stories in order to provide, and not necessarily in a cynical manner, precisely the grounds on which the moral right to rule is founded. The means of remembering were fashioned into state rituals, personalities were canonised and sites of memory institutionalised. A bureaucracy has been mobilised to make official what was once visceral. In many instances it was as if history stopped in 1994.

Professor Mahmood Mamdani, in an essay titled "African Intellectuals and Identity: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism", argues that the existence of civil society depends on the monopolisation of the means of violence by the state. If we take for granted that the right to govern is justified by a nation's founding myths and that this right is guaranteed not just by popular support, but also by institutionalisation and coercion, then we can conclude that the stability of the nation-building mission relies on the one hand on more benign forms of "manufacturing consent"[153] such as museums but also on more coercive dimensions of state machinery. One of the more vexing questions that South African civil society faces at the moment is: what happens when the populist measures of enlisting support for the regime no longer hold sway over the public imagination?

The recent calls for the → decolonisation of South African universities, led by the #RhodesMustFall (RMF) and #FeesMustFall (FMF) movements, have reinvigorated debates around memorial culture and represent the most visceral challenge to the bureaucratisation of memory since the dawn of the South African democratic state. In a move reminiscent of the "comrades" of my youth in the 1980s and early 1990s, the current crop of youth activists has also taken to renaming certain university buildings after heroes of the anti-apartheid struggle, such as Solomon Mahlangu. With their battle cry "Everything Must Fall", the youth of today also draw from the preceding generations' slogan of making South Africa "ungovernable".

The language of protest never quite left the South African landscape. Broadly speaking, public speech in the post-1994 moment is characterised by three currents: one being a corporatist media-driven messaging which is heavily peppered with the gospel of prosperity and consumption, and reinforced by celebrity culture. The second being the statist discourse which speaks variously and sometimes in contradictory languages of the rule of law, freedom, social cohesion, social justice, constitutionalism, nation-building, and so on. In this category I would also include various institutions of civil society, such as → lobby groups, certain sections of the media, NGO's, the academy, think tanks, and the like. The reason for this being that although the state, or more specifically the government, may at times differ in terms of policy with some of these institutions, the dominant discourse remains one of constitutionalism and the belief that the way to solve social issues is through the organs of the state, such as the judiciary and the electoral system. Bureaucracy, protocol and expert-language are the touchstones of this form of public speech. A third form of public speech is the language of protest. In contrast to the former two, this is the language of the powerless. Its intention is to disrupt, and at times violently so.

Typically, these protests have been about increases in wages for workers, the provision of water, electricity and sanitation, calls for an end to evictions, and, in more

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153   This phrase is borrowed from Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky's 1988 book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*.

recent years, student protests over increases in the cost for higher education. Insofar as this form of public speech is taking place in a democratic system, and insofar as it is motivated by the fact that poor people do not have the same access to state organs and to the corporate-driven media, it brings into focus questions that had been asked by Professor Achille Mbembe in his book *On the Postcolony*: "Who is to be protected, by whom, against what and whom, at what price? [...] When may one cease to obey authority without punishment?"

The RMF movement began early in 2015 in Cape Town, when a student at the University of Cape Town, Chumani Maxwele, poured excrement on the statue of Cecil John Rhodes that was situated on the university grounds. The movement quickly grew to include other issues of racism on the university, and included a demand for the decolonisation of the curriculum.

Later on in 2015, protests at various campuses across the country erupted when it was announced that student fees would be increased by 10 percent, thus giving birth to the FMF movement with a demand for free education. Both the RMF and FMF movements were concerned with the systematic and economic exclusion of black students by the education system. In the course of those struggles students attacked symbols of a history they felt represented their exclusion, including Rhodes himself. More controversially, in 2016 students at UCT burned paintings of previous university chancellors. Many in our society have drawn a sharp line between what they feel are legitimate student demands on the one hand, and destructive tactics on the other. Many argued that the angry and disruptive protests were in violation of the rights of other students and staff members, and several times students were arrested then released.

The language of non-racialism is now being replaced with that of anti-racism. There is a growing sense that by de-emphasising the issue of race the government and the older generation of activists have sought to assimilate into the dominant white society, and thus a feeling that there has been a political and generational betrayal.

The → decolonial movement has not only been about material demands nor has it only been about symbolism, but also about altering the language of politics and most significantly changing the culture of doing politics. This has meant undermining the prevailing deference to age and political experience, which is widely read by preceding generations of activists as disrespect. Well-meaning and concerned anti-apartheid struggle veterans who have offered guidance and parental advice have been shouted down and booed by the current crop of students. Even celebrities have been denied a platform to speak at RMF and FMF rallies. These groups have insisted that the rest of society engage with them on their own terms.

The question now is what is next? Where will all this lead? In terms of museum practice there certainly seems to be little or no acknowledgement that a seismic shift is taking place in the arena of collective memory. If they are to remain relevant universities and other cultural institutions will have to find ways of dealing with changing times, and it remains to be seen if museum professionals do have the will to "commit class suicide"[154] and decolonise in line with the urgent need for social transformation that is upon us.

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decolonial 61

154   This is an adaptation of a coinage in Amílcar Cabral's 1966 speech in Havana, Cuba entitled: *The Weapon of Theory*. See also: Rhodes Must Fall, https://twitter.com/rhodesmustfall, (accessed 18 August 2016); FeesMustFall, https://twitter.com/feesmustfall (accessed 18 August 2016).

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Collaboration / Co-labour John Byrne

Liverpool John Moores University, United Kingdom, May 2016

Constituencies are fluid, mutable, protean. They grow, change, adapt, hybrid and reform according to circumstance and need. As such constituencies, as well the status of being constituent, are always in the process of both becoming and unbecoming – constituencies result from a process of social production whose medium and the vehicle is, of necessity, collaborative. The etymological root of collaboration (from the late Latin *collaborare* – meaning co-labour) is crucial here. This notion of collaboration as shared or co-labour, and of labour as a socially produced resource, offers us the means to both re-imagine the kind of work, or labour, that the work of art has now become, and the role and function that the museum of the future could play within this reimagining. It is the organic and piecemeal nature of collaboration which allows us to do this. Collaboration is, by its very nature, dialectical. It provides us a tool by which we can re-approach and renegotiate history on behalf of constituency whilst, at the same time, it also allows us a way to think beyond the structural impositions, failed narratives and hierarchical inequalities of democracy today.

For example, in his recent book *The Uprising: On Poetry and Finance,*[155] theorist and activist Franco Berardi argues that the radical deregulation of neoliberal capital is predicated upon the increasing abstraction of language from the body. Deregulatory logic, he suggests, relies on the possibility of endlessly connecting and reconfiguring language into regulated, recombinable and meaningless components. This, he argues, runs counter to the open, porous, and poetic use of language as a fluid form of conjunction – as an endlessly open means of understanding ourselves and each other through evolving forms of communication and growth. In light of this, Berardi proposes that the new job of the artist or poet is to return non-alienated forms of porous, mutable and productive language to the physical and social body. In doing so, and perhaps more importantly, Berardi also allow us to replay the concomitant bifurcation that Marx began to open up at the beginning of *Kapital Volume 1* – between an ethical and qualitative valorisation of bodily → labour (as use-value, as the necessity to produce and reproduce the material means of reproduction) and the abstract, quantitative and instrumentalising mechanisms of exchange-value.

At first glance, Berardi may seem to be offering us little more here than the possibility of romanticising the essentialist activity of labour itself (through the act of returning a messy and conjunctive use of language to the body as some kind of ethical rebuff to the dehumanising consequences of connective, instrumental and regulatory capitalism). However, I would argue that just such an insistence on the collaborative production of labour (of labour as a necessary form of social produc-

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155   Franco "Bifo" Berardi, "*The Uprising: On Poetry and Finance*" (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e)/ Intervention Series, 2012).

tion and reproduction of the means of subsistence, as something which is activated through the very mechanisms of collaboration and constituency) is essential if we are to think and act beyond our current impasse. If this is the case, then collaborative and constituent uses of language would provide us with the means to challenge the established status quo of economic predicates and determinates through the material production of new social meanings and new autonomies.

However, to bring us sharply back to the realities of our present cultural condition, we might also ask what happens to the role and function of the work (or labour) of art when, as Berardi has also argued,[156] the hallmarks of modernist avant-garde resistance have long since been co-opted by the rhetorics of financial capitalism and, more specifically, by the economically driven model of the culture industries. If this is the case, then artists, or for that matter art institutions, which see themselves as progressive progenitors of artistic possibility, can no longer simply reach out to the well-rehearsed mantras of artistic autonomy and cultural alterity. As both left and right increasingly occupy the same territory of rhetorical discourse surrounding freedom and community, the implications for our traditional understandings of the work or labour of art would appear to be stark. Furthermore, this present condition of the increasing "capture" of the work or labour of art by a seemingly all pervasive and predatory deregulatory logic has, in its turn, some radical (and perhaps not entirely expected) implications for our understanding and use of 1:1 scale, long-term and socially embedded art projects. This is particularly important if, as Stephen Wright has argued, we are prepared to engage with the complexities of 1:1 scale art practices as containing within them the possibility of a double ontological status (as being able to function, simultaneously, as both artwork and something else – be it a restaurant, an activist cell, a rumour on Twitter, or whatever else).[157]

For example, if we allow ourselves to agree with Wright, then the double ontological status of 1:1 scale art perhaps offers us a line of flight from our current condition – a condition that continues to raise the problematic issue of how to be socially active and engaged without, at the same time, inadvertently subscribing to the deregulatory logic of globalised neoliberalism (and, unfortunately, the task of escaping the gravitational pull of Big Society – as the Conservative UK Prime Minister David Cameron put it – is one that is far more protracted and complex than simply declaring oneself to be alternative or oppositional). Furthermore, this question, or rather conundrum, now cuts to the very core of what it might mean to be radical and alternative, and also the point at which new forms of relational or constituent museums and galleries might imagine themselves as having a key role to play in the imagination of new and oppositional forms of identity and citizenship. If, for example, we accept the argument that traditional forms of radical activity have themselves become so successfully occupied by the deregulatory logic of neoliberal commodification then, as Zdenka Badovinac argues in her recent article "Using Art as Art: How to Emancipate Work Through Art",[158] then art, artworks and the museum/gallery space could, once again, begin to provide an identifiable space in which to offer, evolve and share true possibilities for thinking ourselves through and beyond this most complex of impasses.

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156 Franco "Bifo" Berardi, *After the Future* (AK Press, 2011).
157 Stephen Wright, *Toward a Lexicon of Usership* (Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum, 2013), available as a PDF at http://museumarteutil.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Toward-a-lexicon-of-usership.pdf.
158 Zdenka Badovinac, "Using Art as Art: How to Emancipate Work Through Art" in *What's the Use? Constellations of Art, History and Knowledge: A Critical Reader*, eds. Nick Aikens, Thomas Lange, Jorinde Seijdel, Steven ten Thije (Valiz, 2016), 394–405.

Whilst this argument does, in itself, seem compelling – as do recent radical attempts to physically and ideologically re-imagine the role, function and purpose of art, artworks and their use by audiences (such as the Van Abbemuseum's *The Museum of Arte Útil* (Figure 77) and the *Asociacion of Arte Útil* as a network of ongoing, durational and 1:1 practices initiated by the artist Tania Bruguera) – the shift implied by such thinking would, in itself, engender the radical re-thinking, and physical re-distribution, of the organisational and curatorial power structures which currently underpin our neo-Kantian paradigms of modernist exhibition and display. Putting this another way, we cannot simply expect to escape the gravitational pull of neoliberal logic by taking an apolitical refuge within the now bankrupt ideological safe-haven of the → autonomous modernist gallery space – however we may adapt this to the display, commodification and spectacularisation of 1:1 projects which function more effectively in the "real world". Instead, we would have to imagine the future of art as a collaborative and constituently produced process of co-labour between the two intertwined halves of art's double, and dialectical, ontological status.

Figure 77: *The Museum of Arte Útil*, exhibition view, initiated by Tania Bruguera, 7 December – 30 March 2014, Van Abbemuseum. Photo: Peter Cox.

On the one hand, let us say on the level of art's double ontological status as art, this must happen on the level of production, curation and display. As Badovinac succinctly puts it, "curators as well as artists must renounce our ambition to have total knowledge and control of our projects, for only in this way is it possible to consider 1:1 art and the presentation of 1:1 art outside the traditional roles of art and exhibition-making".[159] On the other hand, let us say on the level of art's double ontological social function that it must be accepted that the collaborative and constituent production and reproduction of new social meanings and new autonomies might provide us with the only remaining means of escaping the gravity of constituted neoliberal power (and its concomitant reliance on increasingly interchangeable, centralised, and regulated forms of connectivity).

Further to this, such constituent forms of collaboration or co-labour would also imply that art institutions of the future, including museums and galleries, must also begin to radically re-think themselves as collaborations – as simply being co-produced, co-dependent and mutable constituencies amongst others. As such, it would also follow that the collaborative work (or co-labour) of art would no longer be to unite, bridge, or combine the seemingly irreconcilable antinomies of art and life – instead, it would be to operate as a form of collaborative, autonomous and constituent social possibility, or use-value, within an already networked and saturated world of deregulatory and delusory logic.

Construction Marwa Arsanios

Perhaps to address the question of constituencies we should be first addressing the current impasse of liberal democracy in its intricate relation to the neoliberal project. In some parts of the world, the collapse of this system can already predict a certain future of the nation-state model in its current form. In places where the infrastructural support of the state has collapsed, or where different forms of state institutions are purposefully left to fall apart in order to be privatised, we can somehow perceive and imagine the → catastrophic future of liberal democracies.

159   Ibid., 405.

On 26 October 2015 was the first heavy rain of the season in Beirut that many people were apprehensive about, because of the garbage crisis that had led to waste being accumulated in different green spots on the mountains, riverbanks and by the seashore. The garbage crisis has been going on for more than a year now, so I am not sure if we can still call it a crisis, it has rather become an ongoing temporary situation people are living in.

I will briefly give a context to what happened since June 2015. The contract of the private company that was in charge of collecting the garbage had ended, after many renewals and many failures to accomplish the tasks they were legally due to perform, such as recycling 80% of the waste, so garbage was not collected from the streets for a whole month. The garbage company had only recycled 8% of the waste, and had used non-sanitary dumps to throw in all kinds of waste (medical, industrial, organic, etc.) for more than 20 years.

These dumps were located next to the most deprived residential areas by the shore and along Beirut's riverbanks, amongst other places. The developers' and politicians' strategy was to devalue the neighbouring land in order to be able to buy it at a very low price and develop it. The placement of landfills by the seashore is not only the result of mismanagement and chaos, but also a planned strategy that developers have used repeatedly since the 1990s, as landfills can also be turned into land that can be extended into the sea.

On the day of the first rain of the season, garbage flooded the streets of the city. On that same day a Lebanese collector was inaugurating the first private contemporary art foundation in Beirut, situated inside a mall designed by David Adjaye, that hosts the foundation along other luxury brands, such as Gucci, Furla etc... The foundation is located on a major highway by the seaside that links Beirut to the north of the country.

Two days prior to the opening, the Minister of Interior circulated an official announcement about the temporary closing of one part of the highway to facilitate the transport of guests attending the inauguration of the foundation.

This same Minister of Interior had been trying to shut down protests that erupted because of the garbage crisis and other corruption issues, and that were demanding the government to step down.

So we find ourselves here with an ecological catastrophe on the one hand, and a luxurious art foundation on the other, piles of garbage accumulating by the seashore, flooded garbage, and an immense amount of wealth and art. Almost as if the art foundation was emerging out of the piles of garbage, or rather, being built on top of them, on the reclaimed land made out of garbage and rubble, amongst other things.

This intertwinement of garbage and real estate is not new, it started in the 1990s with the reconstruction of the city. But what is new to it is the private art foundations that are being built on top of it. And we could even say that capital is moving from the real estate bubble into the arts, or rather between the real estate economy and the arts.

→
catastrophes 110

It all seems like a fast-forward into the future of capitalist → catastrophes, and the future of the city collapsing and melting into its own self.

How can we think about institutions in the middle of this construction fever?

I would like here to give the example of the *98weeks Research Project* I co-founded with Mirene Arsanios in 2007. We started with a need to create a research platform and community that would be looking at a same research topic through different angles, and that would be pursuing a collective form of research. After doing many projects and setting up a project space, we came to a moment where we felt that the structure we are working in and thinking through needs to be thought of in itself as a feminist structure, and thus the question was: how can an art organisation be a feminist one? This question was the topic of the *Labour. Capital. Institution: A Forum on Feminisms* we organised with Sidsel Nelund in the summer of 2015.

It proposed that we think through the question of → labour and its relation to capital, domesticity and institutions. This happens at a very specific moment, when there is a growing economy of domestic work and → migratory flows, which are significant not only in a Lebanese context. Simultaneously, Beirut is experiencing an increase in new art institutions, and we see that women constitute a precarious part of the workforce upon which the art world functions. As art institutions continuously reproduce this exploitation, we wanted to critically ask: How can we think of underpaid women in the art world within the frame of a larger history of un(der)paid domestic work?

So if underpaid (mostly) women run the art world's structures, perhaps while all the new art foundations are emerging and capital is being thrown into the arts, we could propose a feminist structure where questions of labour, equal pay, working hours, social security and maternal leave are brought to the front, along with questions of sexism and sexual harassment inside such institutions. Where questions of care work and reproductive work (tasks that are "naturally" assigned to women) can be re-questioned. And if jobs are an extension of housework, then how can an art structure re-think this gendered division of labour?

The Continuity-form and Counter-continuity
Towards a Critical Theory of "Always-on" Capitalism Alexei Penzin   February 2016

The following text is part of an earlier version of one chapter from Alexei Penzin's book in preparation Against the Continuum: Sleep and Subjectivity in Capitalist Modernity, which will be published by Bloomsbury Academic.

Il faut continuer, je ne peux pas continuer, je vais continuer.[160]
— Samuel Beckett

Introduction: Capitalism's ends and continuities

The intention of this article is to introduce the concept of "continuity-form" as a critical → intervention into the current theoretical and political debates on the Left. Due to the scope of potential references and contexts, the paper provides only general and condensed mapping for further research, while skipping detailed discussion of the particular theories and arguments involved, as well as a consider-

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160   Editors' note: "You must go on. I can't go on. I'll go on."

able part of the secondary literature on the topic. The article aims to explain why the suggested concept is important to discuss, and what optics it can provide for the analysis of contemporary capitalism, and then briefly points out some contemporary cultural and political dimensions, which become recognisable with what is called here "the continuity-form".

Why are these reflections on "continuity-form" and "counter-continuity" necessary, and what is the problem to which this concept can critically respond? To get immediately to the central point, it is enough to refer to the questions and standpoints, widespread among radical theorists today, such as the straight and impassioned query: "When and how, finally, will capitalism end?" Another widespread form of the same concern would be various and quite obscure prophesies of a "living in the end times", ranging from politico-eschatological perspectives on the self-destructiveness of contemporary capitalism, to the concrete dangers and disastrous evidence of the complex phenomena of capitalist devastation and destabilisation of the natural world. In less theoretical but more acute form, this central concern is echoed in people's responses to the warmongering of recent times, driven by greed and cynical calculations, to the new right-wing populist deceptions of the dispossessed masses and the incredible growth of inequality on a global scale. Those responses sound as desperate wondering: "When will this massive and repetitive absurdity be over?" Today, this "over" is imagined in less utopian and inspiring forms than before, based on assumptions ranging from explosive and unpredictable technological acceleration, random → catastrophes and ecological disaster, to a chance of new sequence in radical politics.

But maybe, before asking such questions about the end of capitalism, it would be better first to investigate its monstrous "no-end" continuities? The first hypothesis that is suggested here relies on the assumption that perhaps exactly this continuity is an important, intrinsic characteristic of the modern capitalist ontology itself, and it is not only an empirical fact of the day (like the incessant functioning of the 24/7 society), or something that can be re-arranged during a new cycle of economic crisis. To repeat: while not rejecting the urgency of questions about a possible end of capitalism, it would be more consistent to explore first the capitalism's stubborn and multiple *continuities* themselves, as well as the ways of its critique and potential political subversion, anchored in militant research that would need general and orientating critical concepts, such as the "continuity-form".

Certainly, those capitalist continuities were unleashed and became visible in the monotonous and non-teleological sequence that began after the collapse of the communist alternatives of the 20th century. The "end of history" – hypothesised in the 1930s by the philosopher Alexandre Kojève (Kojéve 1989), who in fact initially understood this idea as the nearing advance of universal communism[161] – was overtaken in the 1990s by hegemonic neoliberalism and interpreted as the conclusive failure of any alternatives to the capitalist order and its liberal-democratic institutional and ideological framework. Here we can suspend for a while those reasonable and well-argued challenges and critiques addressed to the very idea of the "end of history" in its neoliberal interpretation, in order to explore its relevance for a critical study of capitalist continuity. Indeed, Kojève's idea, if we abstract it from the contents of the assumed historical closure (communist or neoliberal), would suggest exactly the emergent paradigm of a post-historical continuity without any end or goal, as the end was already eliminated. The monotonous formal continu-

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161 About this point in Kojève, see my article "Stalin Beyond Stalin: A Paradoxical Hypothesis of Communism by Alexandre Kojève and Boris Groys", *Crisis and Critique* 3, no. 1 (2016).

ity purified from any teleology would present exactly the historical-ontological premise of the current state of affairs.[162] For Kojève, who derived the idea of post-history from his highly original reading of Hegel's *Phenomenology,* this sequence was marked by a "circularity" of our knowledge and modes of behaviour, as everything that could be said and done – in principle – was already said and done. In our reading of Kojève, rather against the grain, we would suggest taking this as not an epistemological but rather an ontological aspect of the non-teleological sequence, considering it as literally "without end", as a pure continuity-form imposed on the society.

Of course, with contemporary empirical evidence, this sequence of continuities seems to be not absolutely monotonous and consistent. It is full of internal political conflicts, wars or states of exception. But according to the famous line of Walter Benjamin, recently reiterated by Giorgio Agamben, the state of an exception itself now became "permanent", or *continuous*. The sequence is strained by new waves of economic crisis, by various excesses of neoconservative and neoliberal politics, by the violence and instability located at its political level, but it is still grounded in the persistent social ontology of the continuity-form. Indeed, the form is present at many layers of our so-called 24/7 society whose essential features are not difficult to summarise: the uninterrupted continuity of production, exchange, consumption, communication, and surveillance, with its socio-technical infrastructure of the Internet, social media, various continuous forms of social organisation, nonstop algorithms of e-commerce, and so on.[163] According to a recent article on the effects of big data and permanent connectivity, the characteristic operation of contemporary "surveillance capitalism" is "to link every social activity into a datafied plane, a managed continuity from which value can be generated" (Couldry 2016).

The economic and technological dimension of continuity is reiterated in the social rhetoric of the "continuous education" model, whose function is supposed to be the nonstop fine-tuning of the → labour force in accordance with the "flexibility" required by the market. It is efficient in the cultural model of never-ending TV series, or in the overwhelming franchising exposed in the current cinema industry of sequels and prequels, or in the media strategies aimed at political neutralisation of any breaking event in endless series of the repetitive comments that accompany the recurring images. In their time, Adorno and Horkheimer were discovering the "cultural industry" in its features of standardisation and repetitiveness, which rule out unique instances of traditional, or "authentic" creativity, to produce cultural commodities for mass consumption, and thus political deception. Although that industry still allowed some gaps and "informal" elements within it, that happened, so to say, between the series, or the commoditised episodes of production. Now it would be perhaps more appropriate to speak of an almost seamless continuity of cultural production and consumption, enhanced by the contemporary digital technologies of image and media.

Even the most intelligent and politically articulated cultural formation – the artistic production – exists today in a permanent "flow", as Boris Groys puts it, meaning

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162   To pre-empt the further argument and avoid misunderstanding, according to the hypothesis discussed here, those non-teleological continuities are not something that was revealed all at once. They were rather gradually growing within modern capitalism, but were kept as its marginal elements until the conditions for their full deployment were shaped historically.

163   See the most recent and consistent depiction of 24/7 capitalism in the recent book by Jonathan Crary (Crary 2014). The pioneering argument about a "colonisation of night-time" and the contemporary incessancy of social life was made already in the 1980s by the American sociologist Murray Melbin (Melbin 1987).

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labour 189

Figure 78: Chto Delat? (What is to be Done?), *The Excluded. In a Moment of Danger,* still from a video, 56´, 2014. Courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana and Van Abbemuseum.

that the artwork is not anymore distantiated from the material everyday world, as modernist (or Kantian) aesthetics would suggest, with the institutional support producing separated art spaces, such as the gallery or museum; it is rather immersed in the continuous flow of digitalised images and their intense global circulation. However, Groys does not stress the link between the "fluidity" of the social being of art today with the capitalist predicament, rather elusively referring to contemporary media and the Internet. At the same time, Groys also emphasises that the "material flow" is not only information and digital images, but has its own ontological determination in its forced irreversibility that is close to the analysis of the "continuity-form" we want to undertake here: "However, this flow of information is essentially different from the material flow discussed above. The material flow is irreversible. […] there remains no way out of the material flow – and thus also no way back, no possibility of return" (Groys 2016: 6).

To use, preliminarily, rather a metaphorical way of characterisation, contemporary capitalism is "always-on" starting from permanently plugged-in technical devices to various institutions and organisations, it is shaping a continuum, one which provides smooth and uninterrupted functioning day and night, 24/7. Of course, those multiple continuities are very heterogeneous and located at different levels – big and small, microscopic and macroscopic, related to various socio-economic and technological processes. Given that the empirical diversity persists, it would be appropriate to analyse the general model or *form* that would be separated and traced in its abstractedness from particular contents, which this form shapes and modulates.

It is very important to emphasise here that the massive socio-technological apparatus of the continuity-form produces specific forms of subjectivity that are now being forced to adjust to the incessant social and economic activity, or the "flow". Under the current predicament, individuals have biological and anthropological limits on their ability to maintain continuous activities; they need reproduction of their forces. These contradictory demands, one of continuity, and another of reproduction, shape a sort of "double bind" that leads to emergence of a subjectivity that is permanently preoccupied with time pressure or captured in reactionary and irrational procrastination loops. That apparatus of "installing" the 24/7 continuity into individuals is reinforced or facilitated by various digital prostheses that allow permanent social presence, work and participation. Those are, for example, the social network accounts that actually present an ideal continuum of an active presence, exposed to uninterrupted flows of production, communication and quasi-participation. (Figure 78) Under capitalist continuities, in which the difference between work and reproduction becomes exposed to various erosions, the "damaged life" (to use Adorno's notion) presents itself literally as a "continuum":

> James no longer sees any difference between his work and personal life, but sees this as a good thing, "It's like a continuum, I just happen to be doing different activities at different times." When he's working he doesn't compromise his playtime and his social time, he says. "It's an extension of that". (Quoted in Fleming 2015: 38)[164]

The perfectly neutral and contemplative sentences from the journalistic report based on an interview with a contemporary protagonist of such a life forms an

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164   Initially, the quote is from an interview published in *The Guardian* (2014).

epitome – with remarkable precision – the installation of the continuity-form into the intimate core of subjugated subjectivity. Of course, the effects of continuity-form are much broader and not reducible only to the widely discussed topic of "blurring" the borders between work and life in post-Fordist or "cognitive" capitalism.[165] They call attention to a longer historical trajectory of the continuity-form within modern capitalism that – as this paper seeks to demonstrate – is more fundamental than these specific contemporary conditions.

Figure 79: Image from Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929), an example of Kino-Eye (Cinema Eye) – a creation of a new filmic, media shaped reality.

Theses on the aesthetics and politics of continuity – and the counter-continuity of communism

Capitalism has found a way to make the continuity-form *efficient and omnipresent*, embedded in the incessant flow of production, re-production, control and policing the body of society.[166] (Figure 79) With these developments, the continuity-form becomes not only an abstract concept, but also an operative paradigm of the late capitalist social order, corresponding to its economic conditions determined by the predominance of fixed capital (the machinery) and the value-form that cannot exist without being encircled into permanent state of continuous and uninterrupted metamorphosis. The research on continuity-form has to be expanded into the terrain of its subjective and aesthetic dimensions in modern and contemporary art and politics.

Representing the continuity-form

In his remarkable essay *Photography*, written in the 1920s, the outstanding German cultural theorist Siegfried Kracauer argues that the crucial difference of photography from previous technics of representation is not only the reproducibility of image it enables – the latter was widely discussed by many theorists, starting with Walter Benjamin. What makes photography specific is rather the relation to the "continuum" of visual flow that cannot be grasped by our subjective and selective faculty of memory, or be represented in an artwork of the classical type: "Photography grasps what is given as a spatial (or temporal) continuum; memory images retain what is given only insofar as it has significance" (Kracauer 1995: 50). The author continues on the next page: "Similarly, from the perspective of memory, photography appears as a jumble that consists partly of garbage" (Kracauer 1995: 51).

Cinema as a technical device of continuous filming makes art even closer to be able to critically – in its left-wing embodiment – reproduce the continuity of everyday life.[167] The cinematic "apparatus" is based exactly on the transformation of

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165   One of the ways to describe the transition to capitalism would be borrowing the mathematical formalism of transition (or rather, a leap) from a series of numbers to a continuous line or curve. Interestingly, the term "ultra-continuity" is discussed in modern mathematics. As a line relates to a series of points or numbers in terms of density, in the same proportion the "ultra-continuity" would relate to an "ordinary" continuity. Probably, to elaborate this analogy, in the contemporary "always-on" regime we could see some traces of the "ultra-continuity".

166   For example, the classical Dziga Vertov's Kino-Eye would be an opening manifestation of this – of course, in the form of a montaged continuity, a mapping of the everyday of communism.

167   Jean-Louis Baudry, "Cinéma: effets idéologiques produits par l'appareil de base", first published in *Cinéthique* 7–8 (Paris, 1970); Jean-Louis Baudry, "Le dispositif: approches métapsychologiques de l'impression de réalité", first published as in *Communications* 23, Psychanalyse et cinema (Seuil, Paris, 1975).

single pictures into a continuous visual flow due to the inertia of human vision. For this part of our argument, only indicated here, the decisive element would be the two texts by the French cultural theorist Jean-Louis Baudry published in the 1970s, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus" and "The Apparatus: Metapsychological approaches to the Impression of Reality in the Cinema."[168] For elaboration of his main concept, Baudry uses the term "*le dispositiff*" which Michel Foucault started to use several years later, and also the term "*l'appareil*", apparatus. Baudry suggested an innovative "apparatus theory" of film, focusing on the material conditions of cinematic illusion and its "meaning effect" that is produced through the machinery that consists of the projector, dark room of the theatre, and arrangement of seats, providing a substantial passivity of the body of the viewer, compared with a sleeping person who is dreaming, captivated by moving images. The first essay is especially relevant here, as it explicitly theorises the material apparatus of continuity in terms of the transformation of single images or frames into continuous movement, and then into a "narrative continuity" (*continuité*):

> The meaning effect produced does not depend only on the content of the images but also on the material procedures by which an illusion of continuity, dependent on the persistence of vision, is restored from discontinuous elements. (Baudry 1975: 42)

Departing from the inquiry into the continuity paradigm attempted in this article, one can generally admit that the entire set of technological inventions, which led to emergence of the new media – from photography, cinema, video, digital image and the Internet – was reflecting exactly the demand for a continuous presentation of social and anthropological experience generated by late capitalism. The brilliant, though rather fragmentary, theoretical suggestions of Kracauer and Baudry, somewhat abandoned today, can perhaps be re-actualised and extended to the contemporary digital media and cultural practices – as they capture "what is given as a spatial (or temporal) continuum" at its purest form. One could say that – in contradistinction from art photography or photography in its private use as storage of personal recollections, or film as a still finite and completed "product" – the contemporary recording and monitoring devices, such as CCTV cameras or web-cameras, reduce the visual flow produced by everyday life to pure garbage; in terms of the genealogy of the continuity-form, they erase the *creatio* of a singular image in favour of pure *continua* which functions as the representational counterpart of the universal continuity-form.[169] (Figure 80)

Artistic gesture – from sovereignty to continuity

Speaking more generally, in terms of art and aesthetic theory, one could suggest – drawing a parallel with our problematisation here – that classical or representative art was based on the sovereign gesture of an artist or writer who "sampled", interrupted and transformed the continuity of everyday life into a singular artwork, dramaturgical dialogue or narrative whose aesthetic → autonomy was inaugurated

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168 The whole idea of this gesture can be, of course, historically derived from the Kantian aesthetics of "disinterestedness" but in the line of our argument this definitely implies a re-interpretation of this thesis, putting it into conjunction with the hypothesis about the ontology of capitalist modernity that we attempt to outline here.

169 In other sections of this research project, the medieval theological paradigm of "creatio continua" considered as one of the genealogical origins of the modern "continuity-form". This theological paradigm implies that God not only creates the universe in a single instant but also maintains and recreates it at each moment.

by detachment from this continuum. This constitutive gesture could be then interpreted as an expression or symbolisation of a specific historical moment, social situation and its antagonisms, or could purify itself from any traces of the quotidian, as in some examples of the highly "formalist" art of modernism. But the initial gesture that shaped the visual objects or texts as artworks was breaking or at least "folding" everyday sensory, visual and verbal flows.

In his recent book *In the Flow*, Boris Groys similarly describes this gesture – as a detachment from the "flow". For Groys, it is linked not only to the artwork but also to the special institutional spaces – such as galleries and museums – that provide the conditions of possibility for art to be art, preventing it from "entering the flow." The "flow" is understood as the destructive and violent "material flow" associated with the irreversibility of time (Groys 2016: 3–7). At the same time, for Groys, the avant-garde shapes and anticipates another paradigm that, vice versa, welcomes the fluidity of art, immersed in the flow of time – or being "sublated to life", to follow the classical definition of the avant-garde – that has now become reconfigured with the arrival of the Internet as the emergent hegemonic form of this "flow".[170]

Figure 80: Hito Steyerl, *How Not to be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational*, .MOV file, 15´ 52″, 2013. Courtesy of the artist.

So the modern forms of art tend to break with the sovereign gesture of interruption and "sampling", in the same way as the capitalist political economy broke with the pre-modern institutions and their fragile symbolic continuity, to switch to real continuity of the incessant forms of biopolitical power and 24/7 relentless activity. The inaugural avant-garde gesture of crossing the borderlines between art and "life" was not only a critical and radical response to the autonomy of art in bourgeois society (Bürger 1984) or expression of a new "aesthetic regime" that introduces radical equality, as Jacques Rancière argued recently (Rancière 2006), but perhaps an introduction of the capitalist continuity-form into the artistic and cultural field.[171]

Let us take the recent significant theoretical suggestions by Jacques Rancière. He argues that the avant-garde is part of "the aesthetic regime" of art that emerged at the end of the 18th century to replace the classical "representative" art. The core of modernist art, according to Rancière, consists of paradox: art can be avant-garde only so far as it denies itself as art, but at the same time preserving a minimal autonomy. The "aesthetic regime of art" creates the territory where art is brought in touch with life that can be transformed under the influence of art. Rancière is definitely right about the general phenomenology of the "aesthetic regime of art" that introduces equality and democratic horizontality into the "distribution of the sensory" (*la partage du sensible*). The equality joins the aesthetic field in the form of the democratisation and equalising of "low" and "high" genres, and also, eventually, reaches its peak in the heroic attempt of the avant-garde to include in the area of the aesthetic experience such phenomena as the political, the everyday materials and environments, and finally the human individuals themselves, offering a radical reprogramming of spontaneously shaped forms of life.

But Rancière does not explain *why* this regime was gradually established. Rancière's explanation is based on the premise of "equality" – art re-introduces the

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170   See more detailed analysis of similar arguments in Penzin (2016).
171   Editors' note: see "Time-specific Exhibitions. The Rise of Lecture Performances, Precarious Text, Concert Economy, and Other News from the World of Art" by Ekaterina Degot (page 50).

political question of equality, brought by the French revolution, into the aesthetic realm. Thus art and non-art become ultimately equal, and that is why potentially any non-art, non-aesthetic "sensible" could be included into artistic practices. This explanation seems to be quite insufficient, and we are well aware of all the vicissitudes of the argument about formal equality in capitalist society, already stressed by Lenin in his famous distinction between "formal" and "real" democracy. From our point of view, developed in this sketch of the concept of continuity-form, the aesthetic regime of art or the avant-garde as "sublation of art to life" are expressions of the capitalist continuum – art and life stand in continuity as they are *forced* to stand in it.

Counter-continuity

These considerations immediately raise some political questions: What would be a real resistance to the continuity-form? Are the avant-garde's cultural forms only sophisticated reverberations of the dominant continuity-form? As a concluding remark, I would like to suggest a brief look at the resistances to the monotonous pressures of the capitalist continuum, as they are critically reflected in contemporary political and cultural practices.

Remarkably, with strengthening the continuity paradigm of late capitalism, the revolutionary ways of resistance to it took many forms, emphasising the interruption or an exodus (myths about the Great General Strike, violent disruption, etc.), but also dreaming of a grand *counter-continuity* to come in the shape of a *permanent revolution,* or the continuity of struggles in spite of all defeats (as, for example, literally indicated in the name *lotta continua*, "continuous struggle", for the Italian radical political organisation of the 1970s).

Without much exaggeration, we can say that communism became the name for the ultimate and radical expression of resistance to the imposed continuity of the capitalist value-metamorphosis – as a different social and even ontological regime. Even the "real communisms" of 20th century contained a kind of suspension of the irreversible movement of value-form, a dysfunctional attempt to suspend it or at least slow it down, or suggest another continuity, planned and managed by the whole society, and not by elemental forces and flows of the free-market economy.[172]

The radical art and politics of today are attempting instead to produce a *counter-continuity* of various sorts. In terms of cultural production, the paradigm of continuity has its parallel in so called "process-based" or "time-based" art and cultural practices, focused on an activity in the present that has no teleological structure and conclusion, so it can be stopped at any moment without any loss of meaning. Boris Groys, who sees modern and contemporary art as a laboratory that anticipates, diagnoses and produces contemporary forms of life with their specific political and philosophical problems, outlined the far-reaching importance and symptomatic value of these practices (Groys 2009). In another recent essay, "Under the Gaze of Theory", Groys notes:

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172   See my essay "No time", that explores this theme but from the angle of the specific "contemporary → temporality" that rather destroys our experience of time than produces the sense of its "lack" (Penzin 2013).

Art programmes and machines, however, are not teleologically oriented. They have no definite goal; they simply go on and on. At the same time, these programmes include the possibility of being interrupted at any moment without losing their integrity. [...] Such an action is conceived from the beginning as having no specific ending – unlike an action that ends when its goal is achieved. Such an action is conceived from the beginning as having no specific ending – unlike an action that ends when its goal is achieved. Thus artistic action becomes infinitely continuable and/or repeatable. (Groys 2016: 37)

Groys' explanation here is quite different from the one we explore here. Although he refers to "materialist theory", he links the non-teleological character of the artistic performance with the existential-anthropological theme of human finitude and lack of time, rather than with the ontological pressure of the capitalist continuity-form. The "materialist theory" makes us aware of the finitude, and provokes a sense of urgency and, consequently, a hectic activity whose form is not goal-oriented, again, because of a lack of time.[173] As Groys pointedly noted, recently updating his analysis, and extending his observations to the field of the political, the contemporary forms of resistance and struggles – such as temporary and sometimes contingent occupations of public spaces – are unique in the sense that they can be stopped at any moment, but because of their non-teleological character these closures cannot be qualified as "defeats".

Il faut continuer: Communism

An enigmatic anticipation of a politics of counter-continuity in its contemporary form can perhaps be audible in the words of Samuel Beckett's narrator in *The Unnamable*, whose main problem is how "to go on" (it is important that "to go on" is "*continuer*" in the French original), in spite of the full exhaustion of forces and meanings of such "going on". This figure can be the prototype of a counter-continuity activist with his enigmatic but not teleological programme: "...everything will continue automatically, until the order arrives to stop everything" (Beckett 2009: 363).

These passages, definitely, have a long history of comment. Adorno dedicated a long and dense passage to Beckett's principle here in his *Aesthetic Theory*:

Beckett, indifferent to the ruling cliché of development, views his task as that of moving in an infinitely small space toward what is effectively a dimensionless point. This aesthetic principle of construction, as the principle of Il faut continuer, *goes beyond stasis; and it goes beyond the dynamic in that it is at the same time a principle of treading water and, as such, a confession of the uselessness of the dynamic. In keeping with this, all constructivistic techniques tend toward stasis. The* telos *of the dynamic of the ever-same is disaster; Beckett's writings look this in the eye. Consciousness recognises the limitedness of limitless self-sufficient progress as an illusion of the absolute subject, and social labour aesthetically mocks bourgeois pathos once the superfluity of real labour came into reach. The dynamic in artworks is brought to a halt by the hope of the abolition of labour and the threat of a glacial death; both are registered in the dynamic, which is unable to choose on its own. The potential of freedom manifest in it is at the same time denied by the social order, and*

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173   For example, Yann Moulier-Boutang argues that the "continuous nature of the working day" has to do with "the nature of cognitive capitalism" itself (Moulier-Boutang 2012: 154).

therefore it is not substantial in art either. That explains the ambivalence of aesthetic construction. Construction is equally able to codify the resignation of the weakened subject and to make absolute alienation the sole concern of art – which once wanted the opposite – as it is able to anticipate a reconciled condition that would itself be situated beyond static and dynamic. The many interrelations with technocracy give reason to suspect that the principle of construction remains aesthetically obedient to the administered world; but it may terminate in a yet unknown aesthetic form, whose rational organisation might point to the abolition of all categories of administration along with their reflexes in art. (Adorno 2002: 224–225)

How to interpret this passage? First of all, Adorno opposes *"Il faut continuer"* with the cliché of development, or bourgeois progress applied to art, it is "an illusion of the absolute subject." The same train of thought is followed with regard to the uselessness of "telos" or any teleology in relation to *"Il faut continuer"* as – in our language – subjective affirmation of the continuity-form. Adorno associates this "principle", *"Il faut continuer",* with what he calls "construction" – dependent or not on Soviet Constructivism, never explicitly named in the text of *Aesthetic Theory.* "Construction" is one of the modalities of what Adorno calls the autonomy of art. This modality is rationally produced and that is the danger of its association with rationality of the "administrated world". At the same time, aesthetic construction, or the form of continuity, is ambivalent: is it able both to denote "the resignation of the weakened subject" to the administrative capitalist rationality, and "to anticipate a reconciled condition that would itself be situated beyond static and dynamic"? As an aesthetic construction, the continuity-form could be perhaps disarmed and re-codified. How else we could call this condition, if not an "aesthetic communism" anticipating a real social state or that "dimensionless point" where the reign of the continuity-form can be somehow deactivated, and the form itself can be re-appropriated?

In the striking political and aesthetic principle proclaimed by Beckett we can probably discern a distant echo of coming struggles – both non-teleological and, strangely, undefeatable – against the capitalist continuity-form. The emerging radical understanding of "real communisms" of the 20th century goes beyond well-known clichés about their inner negativity and failure. Perhaps, precisely the awkwardness of the Soviet "command economy", its "inefficiency" is only witness of an early attempt to counterbalance the incessant effectuation of the continuity-form? What would this mean – that stopping of the ontological-economic machine, except of terminal collapse or disaster? Can a true communism be conceived as a possible ontological alteration of the "flow"? Perhaps any future communism – with all concrete political events and struggles that need to happen for this to come about – is to be a project of an ontological counter-continuity, or it will not be anymore.

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De-professionalisation Meriç Öner, November Paynter   SALT, Istanbul, Turkey, February 2016

Cultural institutions are composed by the oftentimes contradictory requirements to be a place of knowledge production (programmes), to ensure public relations (visibility and audience numbers), to adhere to financial means (revenue and support), to have a local and relational agenda (political stance). Within this embodiment, professionalised cycles dictate a way of life and nurture a professional language and the systematic → construction of daily production. While the creation and implementation of a particular language/voice helps to define the attitude and position of an institutional model, they are also in place to open a clear path for communication; just as working structures are there for efficiency in terms of time, finances and project realisation. However, the longer these practices are active, the stricter the rules become. Rules and regulations create homogenised processes. In order to allow for all potential transformative steps, institutions must set back professional drives and open themselves to unanticipated encounters and knowledge resources. A remapping is required, one that considers a more open playing field where anyone with specialised knowledge rather than professional status can act as a conduit for imagining a different future. The task is to *denaturalise* institutions' presumed authority, or at the least to understand that it is only a presumption to be reasoned and disputed.

In our experience at SALT, constituents and constituencies are individuals. Through thinking about the term "constituencies" and whether it is the appropriate one for the scenario we are talking about, we laid down an evolutionary pattern of how the institution can be built from within and without; whereby the understanding of a public then forms an audience, who become users, who can be understood within or as a constituency, but with the aim to enable an organic economy of exchange/reciprocation that leads towards a future network of practicing + reciprocating individuals that just are and are unnamed by the institution:

public → audience → user → constituency → practicing individual → individual

This charter attempts to illustrate our thinking of how practicing individuals might take the lead in an organically enabling environment of de-professionalisation.

1. Moments of exchange take place with individuals.
2. Constituents can only be thought of as reciprocating individuals.
3. One individual with one good question is capable of transforming one grand institution. Listen.
4. Acknowledge constituencies are not respected simply because they can be framed as a group of people with similar sensibilities; individuals are empowered independently – groups emerge through shared meaning but can shift and regroup at any time.
5. Individuals and groups invited in by the institutions are collaborators. Never target existing groups and frame them as constituencies for institutional benefit.
6. Constituencies are not to be searched for. They make themselves visible when it's time for them to take their stand.
7. Do not pretend to be open to critique in order to open access for responsiveness. If there are sincere questions, the answers should be forthcoming. Managing focus groups and steering responses only re-enforces hierarchy.
8. Constituencies come from inside as well as outside: Not all employees of one institution share similar ideas about that institution. Ask around.
9. Test and enlarge boundaries by allowing the insiders to act in your opposition.
10. Get ready to shift around in the office; don't conform to a job title and description just because it exists. Avoid its constraints, embrace its ambivalence.
11. Accept that it is time to *denaturalise* the institution's presumed authority or at least understand that it is only a presumption to be reasoned and disputed.
12. The institution does not perform in the present time, hence its constituents cannot only be considered in the present, and they should instead be imagined across time all locked into a singularity. Do not time-stamp constituencies.
13. Apply ethical measures for true acceptance of outsiders' input. Do not resort to paying one and not the other.
14. Remember: culture is neither owned through nor produced by degrees.
15. Remember: the point is not to interpret the world, but to be in it and accept the consequences of a co-ownership in order to turn ownership over when the time comes.
16. Beware: Don't call people names. Defining terminology has the immediate power of turning potential practice into corporate agenda.

The Code of intervenor

The position of a museum director is one of trust. The director will act with integrity and in accordance with the highest ethical principles. The director will avoid any and all activities that could compromise his/her position or the institution.[174]

Our ability to maintain a strong relationship of trust with our public is critical to our ability to fulfil our mission.[175]

The Code begins from the premise that the Foundation – created to promote the wellbeing of humanity – is a public trust.[176]

The first sentence is taken from the Code of Ethics written by the members of The Association of Art Museum Directors in June 1966. The second is taken from the Tate Ethics Policy approved by the Board of Trustees on 16 March 2016. And the third is from the Code of Conduct of the Rockefeller Foundation, approved on 9 March 2016.

Looking at these three examples we would ask why is "trust" the most important keyword for an → institution, when many of them react in an authoritarian way with regard to most of the public's concerns? If we give the most importance to "trust" how are we going to demand a profound transformation of institutions that is truly motivated by a sincere notion of "trust"?

Who is in the position to do this? In order to safeguard the cultural heritage that institutions contribute to produce, we must start with the question of "who are we?" in order to establish the right kind of trust nexus.

Who are we?

Negri defines I and we as follows: "I myself, I am the common and we are all together a set of singularities."[177] Moving from Negri's idea, Raúl Sánchez Cedillo argues that we should not talk about multi-cultural but we should talk about multitude, a profound transformation of subjectivity.[178] But at the same time Cedillo urges the danger of the multitude, when women, fools, and foreigners are excluded from the democratic constituency. According to Monique Wittig, in her text "The Straight Mind":

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174   Code of Ethics, adopted by the members of The Association of Art Museum Directors (June 1966; amended 1971, 1973, 1974, 1991, 2001, and 2011), https://aamd.org/about/code-of-ethics (accessed 16 November 2017).
175   Board of Trustees, Tate Ethics Policy (16 March 2016), http://www.tate.org.uk/download/file/fid/102234 (accessed 16 November 2017).
176   The Rockefeller Foundation: Code of Conduct (approved 9 March 2016), https://assets. rockefellerfoundation.org/app/uploads/20150530122334/Rockefeller-Foundation-Code-of-Conduct. pdf (accessed 16 November 2017).
177   Creative Time, *Creative Time Summit 2015 | Keynote: Antonio Negri*, 1h 2′ 33″ video, 2015, posted on YouTube on 8 September 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLa0Xk9XCDs (accessed 19 April 2018).
178   See page 148.

Figure 81: Ahmet Öğüt, *Happy Together; Collaborators Collaborating*, specially constructed TV set, public event and a film installation, 2015. Commissioned by Chisenhale Gallery. Photo courtesy by Mark Blower.

we must start with producing a political transformation of the key concepts, that is of the concepts which are strategic to us; changing the concept of white, master, man, and speak of ourselves as women and men… The concept of difference has nothing ontological about it. It is only the way that the masters interpret a historical situation of domination. The function of difference is to mask at every level the conflicts of → interest, including ideological ones. In among all the productions of the straight mind I especially challenge structuralism and the Structural Unconscious.

How do we challenge the authoritarianism of the Structural Unconscious of the straight mind?

Raúl Sánchez Cedillo proposes constitutionalised disobedience, and says what is needed is instituting actors instead of tactical collaborations, with the right to disobey. Gerald Raunig names this "instituent practice", which positions itself between governing and being governed through its emancipatory and radical project of "transforming the arts of governing". Its effect goes beyond the particular limitations of a single field, and it has the potential to force structural change in the areas of patronage, law, the urban, and the control of public space. Eqbal Ahmad calls it "out-administering" instead of outfighting, which can eventually build "alternative hierarchies" to satisfy the needs of the people. Emily Roydson, who is positioning herself as interlocutor somewhere between Jean Genet's aesthetic and Eqbal Ahmad's political primacy, explains this as a systematic rebuilding of public institutions, and Roydson defines rebellion is not just territorial – it's ideological, sexual, political and perpetual along the same lines as Monique Wittig.

To challenge the distributions of power, what is needed is not a marginal outside force – or hired inside force. That is when an intervenor can take a critical role. As described in the Merriam-Webster dictionary, in law, an intervenor is the one who intervenes as a non-party in a legal proceeding.

I would propose the idea of the "intervenor" as an → autonomous outside voice who nonetheless has the right to act within the institutions. Intervenors could not only act within the walls of the institutions, but could also directly intercede when it comes to matters of communication, events, → bureaucracy, administration, and even the workspace itself. Intervenors would have an officially acknowledged agreement that protects their work from financial and political interference. Intervenors would have a right to vet all forms of communication before they go public. This would include announcements, press conferences, events, and statements. Intervenors would act in a time-sensitive manner, and would be flexible in times of crisis; they would not act according to pre-programmed agendas, concepts, exhibition schedules, or locations. (Figure 81) Intervenors would be the protagonists who go beyond symbolic and harmless institutionalised critical agency. They would intercede if the institution reacted in an authoritarian or judgmental way to any public concerns.

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interest 67
autonomous 160
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Labour Aida Sánchez de Serdio Martín   Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain, May 2016

A term for a glossary can never be a neutral or abstract definition. It is a situated tool with a specific use-value and at the same time a performative act of meta-language. Therefore, I think it is important that we operate a reflective turn on L'Internationale and the institutions that are part of it, and refer to concrete experience (or instances of reality) when we discuss theoretical issues. It is also important that we situate our discourse, making explicit our position within this framework. I am writing this from the awkward position of a half-insider in my institution and a newcomer to L'Internationale. Moreover, I work with two departments (Education and Public Activities) that traditionally have a subordinate role in museums – the ones that are not expected to produce any theoretical critical thought, but to provide a service. We do maintenance work. We do the cleaning and we do the listening. We deal with the multitude and with the mass, sometimes even with the mob. We do unglamorous tasks, as Nora Sternfeld (2010) would call it, we deal with the tedious, the disagreeable, the compromised, the unsound and the un-presentable on daily basis. This is the place from where I speak.

In this exploration of the term labour, I will be moving gradually from a notion of constituency in the sense of the collectives we engage with, and from there I will move on to imagine how that engagement implies a challenge that exceeds dialogue, but actually should lead to an overturn of the ways in which the institution works. There is a risk of identifying constituency just with a particular target group audience or group of interest, but although I think that constituencies are definitely not an audience or a fraction of the public, I also think it is important to keep the term related to specific configurations of relations among specific people in specific conditions. I hope I can walk successfully on this thin tight rope.

The notion of constituencies implies a particular relationship with the art institution. The introduction to the concept in the L'Internationale website argues that constituencies provide the public institutions with the building blocks to re-imagine their role in the production of new forms of citizenship, and also that alter-institutionality is based on a shift away from hierarchical, top-down and broadcast-based models of knowledge dissemination (constituencies).[179] We must accept that within this paradigm, constituencies are expected to perform many tasks and produce many effects – namely, made productive in many dimensions (cognitive, emotional, corporeal, theoretical, symbolic).

At the same time, this productivity is more specific and more intense than that of mere audiences or users. In contemporary forms of cultural consumption audiences become more and more involved in the reproduction and dissemination of value through their active participation (for example in TV shows, the Internet, theatre,

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179   See page 146.

and cultural institutions). As a post-industrial figure, users have become *prosumers*: professional consumers that can determine a niche of specialised consumption or even of production (especially in technology). In both cases, consumption and production become two inextricable dimensions (Duarte & Bernat 2009).

When cultural institutions decide to shift towards the paradigm of constituencies, they go beyond this synergistic dependency of production and consumption. Constituencies are fluid and mutable, never instituted. They are contingently and transitorily becoming such through specific configurations of relations, and therefore are not defined by an essential quality, but neither are they defined nor produced by the institution – rather they have a relative → autonomy and → agency independent from it. Constituencies imply a different notion of involvement, agency, accountability and co-responsibility. They do not just participate in and enhance the circulation of value determined by an institution, but have a role of interpellation and of critical dialogue with it. Finally, the relation between the institution and the constituencies is not one of mutual use, but one of mutual challenge in the production of the above-mentioned non-hierarchical models of knowledge dissemination and new forms of citizenship.

However, whenever we discuss constituencies, we have to consider their contribution as labour too, both within and outside the institution. This widens the debate beyond theoretical discussions that have their origin and rationale in the agendas of the art institutions themselves, and opens it to the conflictual dialogue with the debates of some of the collectives identified by the museums of L'Internationale as "their" "constituencies". By introducing the notion of labour, new terms and tensions enter the discussion about constituencies, such as recognition, autonomy, negotiation, → collaboration, retribution, distribution, gift, commodity, money, precariousness, exploitation, (mis)use, etc. (Note that these concepts can work both ways, but almost never are symmetrical.)

Independently of their nature, the work of constituencies in relation to cultural institutions has to be discussed in the light of the analyses of cultural work in contemporary post-Fordism. Within this context, constituencies are positioned as cultural workers and therefore share the same paradoxes and complexities. They perform immaterial labour (Lazzarato 1997) in which cognitive and affective dimensions are fundamental, setting subjectivity at the centre of production. These conditions relate to feminist analyses of cultural work (Ruido 2004, McRobbie 2010) and of domestic and care work (Federici 2013). Very often they are highly skilled, educated creative subjects, although that does not translate into a privileged position, but rather they are precarious workers that face low or irregular wages and unstable employment (Ruido & Rowan 2007). They feel the pressure of the ideology of entrepreneurship, → self-management and human capital on the one hand, and the struggle for social rights as an essential element of culture on the other (Lazzarato 2008). They can even be in extreme conditions of non-citizenship or endangered citizenship, as in the cases when → migrants and refugees are somehow and paradoxically turned into cultural workers through their involvement in cultural institutions.

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To a certain extent, the notion that cultural and artistic activities are not work has its origin in the dominant narratives about art as a romantic self-expressive impulse, but also in the resistance of many artists against the reduction of their creation to a material or economic exchange (Lorey 2008, von Osten 2008). Moreover, cultural work is mainly built on and sustained by the motivation, enthusiasm and

even pleasure that cultural workers experience while doing it. For a contemporary cultural worker it is not easy to tell → friends from colleagues, desire from demands, socialising from networking. Therefore, cultural labour is not always paid, or it is paid insufficiently – sometimes other values are at play such as recognition, prestige and even self-realisation – creating situations that border exploitation.

Cultural institutions establish more or less engaged relationships with constituency groups, often in the form of → collaboration. To collaborate seems to imply a situation in which the agents involved enter freely or consciously into a shared and co-defined process that levels to a certain degree their unequal power positions. Even if this is so (and we can argue that all these assumptions should be interrogated rather than taken for granted), the Latin root *labor* is nonetheless present in the word col*labor*ation, indicating that we cannot ignore that work is at stake here too (Yudice 2002). Even when we work together, we do not do it under the same conditions. Therefore, issues of recognition, distribution and retribution must be considered carefully.

Certainly not everything can – or even should – be reduced to a monetary equivalent (a movement that is responsible for the abstraction of work into an exchangeable amount of time/value). We also run the risk of turning constituencies into just subcontracted workers for the institution. Money is important, but other values are at play, such as transparency and a democratic distribution of roles and resources. Here I quote the minutes of the L'Internationale constituencies groups meeting here in Liverpool in 2014:

> It is important to avoid a situation that unconsciously replicates power structures, i.e. institutional framing/ community participating; some gendered bodies doing more admin and others doing more speaking; discourses formed within particular educational contexts; etc. These formations are at the heart of vertical cultural organisations that folks want to change so it will be important to find ways to unsettle routines of speaking and listening and for people to try on other, less comfortable, roles that allow everyone to reflect on power within the groups. This will be important on the local level, on the level of the management group and also at the next network encounter, all of which risk settling into institutionally dominant paradigms.

Even with this negotiation or dialogical tone, the discussion is pushing the term constituency towards a disruption of institutional structures, as I hinted at the beginning. Specific but non-targetable groups of people can challenge institutional structures. This disruption can happen through a storming of the institution, through an accepted taking over of the institution, or through long-term collaborations. Of course, how radical or reformist these transformations are is an issue here.

We don't know constitutive power can be related to the institution because, as it's already been said, they are opposed to each other, but I will end by just listing a series of aspects that would certainly be destabilised in the institution when it enters this questioning by constituencies:

> – The number and kinds of subjects (regarding body ability, race, sexuality, age, class, cultural capital, nationality, etc.) legitimated to interpellate the institution.
> – The forms of knowledge and of knowledge production that are considered to be valid in this dialogue.

– The established distinctions between rational-irrational, intellectual-affective, mind-body.
– The disposition and regulation of times and spaces.
– The criteria about what should be inside and outside the museum.
– The criteria about what aspects of the institution should be visibilised or invisibilised.
– The decision-making processes and the agents involved in those.
– The financing and economic management of the institution.
– The accountability processes regarding what, how and to whom to be accountable.
– The contents and activities.
– ...

Now the question is how cultural institutions can respond to the challenge.

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Ñande / Ore Lia Colombino

Asunción, Paraguay, February 2016

Constituencies: Between *ñande* and *ore*

It is not a revelation that museums have to manage relationships with communities. The question could be formulated like this: Which community? Just as identity has become pluralised, so has community. Museums are inscribed in a community, which is usually plural. To whom are the museums and art galleries owed? Each institution has generated its own objectives as a function of concrete → interests to objects of study or incidence perspectives, work modalities, and, more specifically,

according to its understanding of its own place of inscription or enunciation. The community in which a museum its inscribed – or attempts to – is far from being homogeneous. Very often the community is read as a conglomerate of those people that are part of a city, a neighbourhood, etc. The work is done "for" the community, as if the people who work or manage a museum are not part of any specific community.

Then, who forms that community to which the museum is owned?

In order to attempt an answer, I bring up two words in Guarani: the binomial *ñande/ore*, equivalent to the third person plural. Firstly, I will make a brief introduction to the concept and then relate it to a specific case: the Museo del Barro and the Seminar Espacio/Crítica, both dependants of the Museum itself. This relation would throw off some triggers that may be useful in understanding the idea of constituencies from another point of view.

In Guarani,[180] the language spoken by the majority of the Paraguayan population, there are two different words for the first-person plural: *ñande*, an inclusive we, and *ore*, an exclusive one. That is: *ñande* includes the recipient, *ore*, excludes her.

Since the beginning, starting from language itself, "we" does not have a totalising or homogenising status. In Guarani culture, and by extension, the culture of Paraguay, different records exist to name ourselves and therefore for us to become community, society, citizenry. These two versions of "we" configure, somehow and on the basis of language, a different way of understanding identities.

This differentiation between the "we" that includes and that which excludes occurs only within the relationship between the speaker and the recipient of the statement. The person who speaks and names herself along with others will include or exclude said recipient following the demarcation she sets, and will change when the recipient or her function within the statement changes.

This idea of a "we" with porous borders, that is modified according to the idea of belonging or not belonging to a social or cultural group, is one that may serve the purpose of thinking about new ways of conceiving institutions, of thinking about otherness, of constructing citizenship.

From *ore* to *ñande*

When Carlos Colombino – one the founders of the Museum – affirmed that there was a need to create the Museo del Barro in order to live in Paraguay, I do not think he was exaggerating. It was the year 1972, and a group of artists in Asuncion, the small capital of Paraguay, felt they did not have space. Paraguay was immersed in Alfredo Stroessner's dictatorship, and from 1954 to 1989 he ruled the country in the longest dictatorship in Latin America's modern history. The records of the Museo del Barro and, later, the Museum itself, were born out of need. A need

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180   Guarani is a native language that was colonised by the Jesuits who came to Paraguay in the 17th century, and who equipped it with writing and grammar. Given the language became a regional lingua franca of sorts, it persisted in time to later become one of Paraguay's official languages, along with Spanish. Although native Guarani is not quite the same as the one spoken by the majority of the population, it shares with it not only its origin, but also several meanings and turns of phrase firmly rooted in the linguistic configuration of Paraguay's inhabitants, even those whose mother tongue is Spanish.

Figure 82: Museo del Barro, main entrance, 2015. Photo: Fernando Allen.

Figure 83: Museo del Barro, collection display, exhibition view, 2015.

that responded, in its time, to a bounded collective. This collective would bring forward two issues (that were being brewed in other spaces): on the one hand, the issue of dispute for meaning – in a local scene, in which the traditional instances of representation were in crisis – and on the other hand, the explicit debate about unwritten cultures.

Artists and intellectuals that were involved in the creation of this space lacked asylum. Paraguayan institutions dedicated to art were co-opted; some of them were a faithful reflection of the political situation: Stroessner's dictatorship; others were merely ultra-conservative, taking no political position at all. Being a rather small environment, the Asuncion art scene lacked alternative spaces that could answer to diverse subjectivities. The commitment of some artists to certain political positions prevented them from joining other movements that emerged between the 1950s and 1960s. These artists not only began to take other positions with regard to art, but other political positions altogether.

This small group of artists constituted itself as a community. Perhaps what some time later, Gustavo Buntinx called a *community of meaning*. That community broke through and let in other subjectivities that were also outside the official narrative.

Introduction to a brief story: The Centro de Artes Visuales/Museo del Barro, or the manifestation of difference

The Museo del Barro came into being through several initiatives over the course of forty years. (Figure 82) What makes it unusual is that it has been created by artists, anthropologists and art critics. Originally, it emerged as a project that would function on the margins of the state and in opposition to its politics. The Centre's three museums sprang into life independently. However, they eventually came together under one roof as one project. The Centre's roots go back to 1972 with a Circulating Collection started by Paraguayan artists Olga Blinder and Carlos Colombino. The collection did not have its own space and moved from one place to another. In 1980, a permanent space for the collection was sought, with the Museo del Barro inaugurated in a small house. Osvaldo Salerno and Ysanne Gayet, along with Carlos Colombino worked in this project. Ticio Escobar later also join the group. The treatment of works in this museum makes it possible for popular and indigenous art to be seen as equal to urban or "erudite" art. The museum seeks to provide a dialogue between these types of art in spite of their differences, striving to undermine the official myth that popular and indigenous art can be reduced to "folkloric", "authentic", "vernacular", "our very own". That is, popular art can often be trivialised, stripped of its subtleties and differences. (Figure 83)

When Ticio Escobar – who has deeply reflected on Paraguayan art from this triple perspective in a systematic way – wrote *La Belleza de los Otros* (1994), he recounted the foundational story set out in *El brazalete de Túkule*. Túkule, a powerful Ishir shaman, is delicately making a bracelet. Escobar asks why it is necessary to add a line of multi-coloured feathers to something which appears to have already been finished, and he receives this answer: "So that it looks more beautiful." This bracelet is functional – ceremonial, shamanic and ritual – but at the same time, it is aesthetic: it should attract our attention through its shining beauty.

The language of difference emerged intuitively at the beginning. First came practice and then theory; the Museo del Barro followed a path that revealed itself in the middle of the journey. It went about → constructing itself in fragments from total

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chance until it gelled (although it never completely did so) in one place (actually in two – that of the physical place and its conceptual place).

Paraguayan art finds in the Museo del Barro a space in which we can see ourselves from multiple perspectives, talking to that "we" which in Paraguay means we are two (or at least two, since language always puts that duality in evidence). The idea of setting up a dialogue and bringing together the artistic productions of Paraguay's different peoples came about through an unplanned action. This concept of art, that includes other ways to understand it set forth by Escobar and, by extension, by the Museum – the manipulation of material forms that shake up the senses. This very concept allows for the insertion of popular art into the writing of another history of art and to begin to dislocate Eurocentric concepts. (Figure 84)

The Museo del Barro significantly adopted the praxis of exhibiting texts, the theoretical basis that ties together questions that have arisen through doing. The Museum immerses the visitor in a collection of images and objects, often in a somewhat disordered fashion, not all categorised or classified in the way such institutions tend to present them. It houses collections of popular art and the art of different indigenous communities, as well as several expressions of the Urban-erudit Art of Paraguay and Ibero-America. It seeks to erase the distinct ways of classifying art, doing away with the boundaries between the popular, indigenous and urban in Paraguay. Thus, the Museo del Barro preserves the ambiguity of being a museum without totally being a museum. It attempts to skirt the boundaries of the concept of a museum while at the same time renders this concept, ill-fitting and permeable.

The Museo del Barro, with every action it has undertaken – often outside the scope of what is considered usual for a museum – has tried to make more malleable the borders of certain academic categories. Following this model, it finds other ways of involving itself into the world. The postulation of indigenous and popular art comes from this ability to make borders between different types of art more flexible. It looks to shake up the certainty of fields of knowledge; to move apparently fixed concepts so that we can observe that reality moves, letting one see what is out of sight. It appears.

Indigenous and popular artists, from how they respond to reality, attack the gaping wound that the Western conception of art history has left open. The work of the Museo del Barro gives evidence these other processes and contributes to the continual shaking up of the borders that have been, perhaps for way too long, unmovable.

From *ñande* to *ore*

In the year 1999, the Museo del Barro contemplated a need in a small group of people concerning the amplification and deepening of formal and informal studies in the field of art, cultural studies, anthropology. This group had come out from universities and workshops with unfulfilled expectations. This is how what we called Seminar Espacio/Crítica was founded. It started with a programme in 2000, called *Identidades en Tránsito (Identities in Transit)*, but later the programmes changed. (Figures 85, 86) That "*ñande*" narrowed again, but it did so from a new particular → interest. It was constituted as a very specific "*ore*" which mutated, changed. It first started with a circle of people close to the art scene and later it expanded towards students and graduates in philosophy, history, and political science, creating

Figure 84: Museo del Barro, collection display, exhibition view, 2015.

Figure 85: Museo del Barro, collection display, exhibition view, 2015.

Figure 86: *Seminario, Espacio/Crítica*, 2012, Museo del Barro. Photo: Gabriela Ramos.

a space of transdisciplinary discussion and generation of thought. A different community of meaning had been gathered around the Museo del Barro, and for many people it would constitute their main source of academic training.

The path

The seminar "Identities in Transit: The Challenges of Art in Today's Paraguay" started in 2000. The seminar was structured in weekly meetings, and though it was open to any interested person it was specially promoted among students of architecture, philosophy and the visual arts, as well as cultural promoters and artists in general. During this time, the seminar was organised through a scholarship programme to which candidates had to apply each year. The programme of the *Identidades en Tránsito* seminar, managed to consolidate itself as a centre of discussion able not only to incorporate poorly debated issues in Paraguay, but also to link disciplines and study areas, which in this country run separately.

Later, the diverse programmes derived from *Critica Cultural* (2003–2008) helped consolidate even further what was eventually seen as a sort of club of thought which, concurrent with the attendance of its participants, went on to create the necessary space for a research instance under the tutorship of specialists. This process enabled the development of small pieces of work, written texts, which, in a country of little written tradition, ended up being of vital importance. There are very few research centres in Paraguay. Most of the time, researchers and thinkers (specially relating to culture and transdisciplinary visions), carry on with their work in isolation, given that universities have not been able to respond to the research preoccupations of their students and alumni, who are forced to work independently.

The project named *Estudios de Contingencia (Contingency Studies),* developed between 2009 and 2010, was designed as a continuation of the original project created by Ticio Escobar. Although the academic programme remained the same, the requirements for application were modified in order to amplify the reach of the seminar and to achieve a more transdisciplinary scope. The strategy behind these changes was to stir disciplinary fields that are sometimes tightly closed and to stimulate junctures among them. Image, literature, politics, art, popular and indigenous culture, urbanism, subjectivity, the market, subaltern studies and feminism were the areas of interest which exerted tensions and exchanges among each other during the course of the seminar.

In 2011, the programme continued with the format adopted in the previous year, though changing some of its topics. *Contingencia Poscolonial (Postcolonial contingency)* represented a continuation of the process initiated by *Estudios de Contingencia*, and also the introduction of a topic that had not been explored in depth by the seminar up to that point: subaltern, postcolonial and → decolonial theories. Using these theories as tools, it was the objective of the seminar to relate its discussions to the 200th anniversary of independence, introducing a critical view of these events. In 2012, the seminar opened its programme *Disruptive Images*, which tried to take into account what happened in Paraguay that year: a massacre of peasants and the dismissal of President Fernando Lugo, through a manoeuvre known as a "parliamentary coup". The idea of the seminar was to try to analyse and understand what happened through images.

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A two-way street

The Museo del Barro and the Seminar Espacio/Crítica arise as obvious needs from bounded groups of people which in certain circumstances allied themselves with diverse groups in order to amplify the idea of that exclusionary *us*. That *small us* that was a group of artists creating forms of resistance within a country of various dictatorships, saw in the negation of works from popular and indigenous cultures a form of enslavement, so it supported and fought in → alliance with them, for the recognition of their cultural specificities. That moment in which they themselves were subversive subjects was important for understanding the struggle of other subaltern sectors with less opportunity to become visible. That *us,* composed of a rather urban group, with access to superior education, opened the circle to the peasantry, the rural, the indigenous; those other ways of erudition that confront Western knowledge from its own existence.

From that open circle idea, the need to establish something small can be seen; an "*us"* that moves for a more particular interest. In this context, the space opened by Espacio/Crítica is almost an expanded field of thought that arises from the concerns of the Museo del Barro around culture, as it attempts to establish links with different isolated instances. Later on, these links give way to other instances which achieve, once again, expanded fields and enlarged possibilities, opening the game to new groups of people that have not passed through supposedly adequate channels, "licenced" to move and work within a specific field of action. Its effect within the scene is bold. Its participants, those who have accomplished to produce and settle down in or out the scene, get to install themselves in their universes, from a different place. They try to impose a difference in a place that doesn't provide many stimuli to the production of thought. Obstinately and moved by pure desire, they produce, write, publish, practice teaching (some in universities and others in open spaces outside the academic sphere). They manage, as small representatives of contingency, to exist in a manner of pockets of resistance.

From *ore* to *ñande* and vice versa, a street that comes and goes, a two-way street that doesn't cease to reconfigure itself and to take the form of what is perceived as need, as desire, as strategy of visibilisation, as fights, small or large, as communities of meaning.

The Eternal Network / *La Fête Permanente* Anders Kreuger

Sometimes – in fact quite often – terms are coined "in action", to help encapsulate a particular → event at a particular point in time. There is a need to say something that is felt to be important, an already existing word is grabbed, and this will do for the time being. Later, when those who were not present at that decisive moment try to make sense of the "new" term, they may struggle to grasp its retrofitted usage. This was the case with "revolution", which before 1789 articulated pretty much the opposite of what we mean by it now: regular, phlegmatic, cyclical movement in a direction that could be described as "forward", but without any sharp twists and turns. (Figure 87)

Constituency, in the plural form now used within the L'Internationale confederation, is another such term. It reappeared in Spain just a few years ago, to describe a new → constellation of intellectual and socio-political forces that has already

Figure 87: Vaast Colson, *Library*, 2016. Courtesy of the artist © M HKA.

Figure 88: Robert Filliou, *The Secret of Permanent Creation*, exhibition view, 13 October 2016 – 22 January 2017. © M HKA.

brought two of our former colleagues at Reina Sofía into very visible positions as chief cultural officers in the country's two largest cities. A new generation of political activists in Madrid, Barcelona and elsewhere in Spain has turned a term that used to describe the technology of politics (the organisational geography of elections, the target group for almost personalised propaganda) into a potent verbal tool. They appear to be moving along a trajectory starting with the "constituents" of politics and leading towards a revision of its "constitution".

At M HKA, a contemporary art museum founded and funded by the Flemish Community, we are now developing an understanding of what we could do with constituencies in our particular segment of reality. We try to combine an intuition of how to reformulate our relationships with "audiences" and "the public" (terms grounded in the nineteenth-century "shareholder society" for the well-to-do) with a quest for the truly new in art and exhibition-making and museum research (which can never be produced or procured "by committee"). We wish to go beyond the adaptation of a clear, enforceable definition of "constituencies" in terms of mediation or outreach or learning or any other politically correct term for what the museum should do to the society that sustains it. As part of our thinking process, we have glanced through the last two centuries to try and detect a pattern that might suggest a way forward for constituencies as a productive term.

If the French Revolution meant turning the subject into a citizen, the Reaction of 1815 and the "long nineteenth century" of bourgeois capitalism and European imperialism somehow re-subjected the newborn citizen, but now as a shareholder (making sure that those exploited by the system also had a share in it, as it were). Then, after the First World War, the pendulum swung back and the subjects of Empire and Industry again had to be treated as citizens: the liberal democracies gave them voting rights; post-revolutionary Russia addressed them as "comrades"; even in the colonies they could no longer be completely ignored.

Those parts of the world that considered themselves "free" (from totalitarianism) after the Second World War focused on rebuilding the economy, with certain concessions to ideas of equality, and there was a general and gradual drift from treating individual members of society as citizens (with rights and obligations) to wooing them as clients (with the obligation to choose freely from what was being offered). There were also interesting debates about "economic democracy" but these became overshadowed by the Cold War. Towards the end of these "glorious thirty years" New Public Management and neoliberalism (but also well-meaning advocates of a sustainable democratic order, for instance in Scandinavia) introduced new words for the client, such as "user" or "stakeholder".

And now, if we can decide on the best way to use "constituent", we might have found the term that describes the movement back from client/user/stakeholder to the citizen as an active subject (in that other sense that stresses subjectivity rather than subjection). Yet at M HKA we prefer to test the new term in practice first, before fixing what it will mean to us in the medium-to-long term. At this point, therefore, we wish to propose another term, borrowed from the late economist and poet and playwright and artist Robert Filliou. He is the subject of a retrospective this autumn, titled *The Secret of Permanent Creation*, which I'm

now working on. (Figure 88) I quote from the catalogue of Filliou's first retrospective in 1984:

> *Eternal Network* → Création Permanente → La Fête Permanente → Geschehen → *Poetic Economy: At the end of* La Cédille Qui Sourit *[in October 1968] George Brecht and Robert Filliou founded the Eternal Network,* La Fête Permanente: *"The artist must realise also that he is part of a wider network,* La Fête Permanente*, going on around him all the time in all parts of the world. We will advertise also as alternative performances such things as private parties, weddings, divorces, lawcourts, funerals, factory works, trips around towns in buses, pro-Negro manifestations or anti-Vietnam ones, bars, churches, etc. ..."*

The conscious "mistranslation" into French should be seen as an indication of Filliou's bilingualism. He studied economy in California in the late 1940s before taking a job with the United Nations, but in the mid-1950s he quit and dedicated himself permanently to creation. The morale here is quite obvious: that those who are well versed in different systems (or languages) are best positioned to explore and pursue what links them. It was Marianne, Filliou's Danish-born wife, who once remarked: "You're artists when you create. But when you stop, you're not artists anymore." This alerted Filliou to the necessity of Permanent Creation, which would become his overriding concern: a true opening-up of practice to the world, and of the world to practice.

This is how we at M HKA believe the meaning of the term "constituencies" can be explored and pursued most creatively and efficiently. As we set out to look for our constituencies, we realise that we have to create them ourselves, through our own acts and activities. And then we mustn't forget those primary actors in the field we're covering: the artists.

One of our operative goals, as stated in our current policy plan, is to be "an open house for artists". Rather than regarding this as a particularised aspect of our work, or even just a feel-good measure to appease local sensibilities, we should see the artists we → collaborate with as a crucial constituency that may help us radicalise everything we do – by never sacrificing the specificity of whatever it is that artists do. As Robert Filliou also said: "Art is what makes life more interesting than art."

The Rest is Missing Raúl Sánchez Cedillo

Madrid, Spain, February 2016

My term deals with the open problem of constituent power today and the related and equally open notion of *constituencies.* By constituent power we mean not just and not mainly the juridical notion coined during the English and American Revolutions and then coded by Sieyés as *pouvoir constituant de la nation.* Rather by it, we mean – in line with Antonio Negri's body of research – a historical social and political force/power that (ontologically) precedes any constitutional and/or legal arrangement that pretends to rely or be based on it.

As we know, the notion of constituent power haunts the history of modern revolutions – from the Levellers, Hobbes and then Burke to the October Revolution and Lenin, Luxemburg, Schmitt and Kelsen. Since then, it is inextricably linked to the "dangers of democracy", to the ever-haunting democratic excess. We also know that this excess has little to do with the Aristotelian problem of the mean, or with the contemporary problem of the resiliency of a given social system with regards

to its critical points. It really has to do with the dark side of capitalist modernity and the forces of → labour subsumed under capital: it has to do with the danger of the *multitude,* which can always constitute itself and act, quoting Spinoza, "guided, as it were, by one mind".

This very Spinozian multitude is theoretically defined but methodologically and politically denied by Spinoza himself, when he excludes women, fools, and foreigners from the democratic constituency. *Reliqua desiderantur*: the rest is missing. The unfinished *Tractatus Politicus* ends abruptly before we can enter into the realm of democracy as such, *omnino absolutum imperium*.

This absolute but *unreal* democracy echoes with the current predicament of democratic representation, freedom and justice everywhere throughout the world-system. It seems that no modern revolution has really solved the political and social conundrum that sees the transformation of the constituent power of the multitude (as the sole and real subject of democracy) into the constituted power of an ever absent (represented) people.

We are surely facing problems that do not have to do with the transcendental limit of political reason – according to which constituent power would be its absolute limit of political intelligibility – but rather they have to do with the historical determinations of the relationship between democracy and capitalism.

In Liverpool, I described the current traits of that relationship on the basis of the recent global and European upheavals since 2011 (see page 148). This also involves addressing the theoretical and political possibilities of going beyond that relationship, namely, the possibility of decoupling the definition of a real democracy from the ever-happening renewal of the relationship between the living labour of the multitude and the capitalist command over life and society.

Commons

In the last decade, we have stuck to the notion of the commons as the only exit from the *cul de sac* of capitalism and the fates of austerity and scarcity reserved for those excluded from the increasingly narrow circles of accumulation. For the "commons" to be more than a mere discursive illusion, different forms of disrupting the cycle of expropriation and of producing commonwealth must be shared and disseminated. The commons are manifested in various ways that encourage, celebrate and protect the right to diversity. They are signified by a decentralised structure, which moves away from "traditional" methods of making artistic statements, protests, or social critiques in the globalised world. The artistic groups working with the idea of the commons look more like an elaborate network. In part, this web-like structure is the result of internet-based organising, but it is also a response to political realities that sparked the idea of the commons in the first place. As our communal spaces (squares, parks, streets, and schools) are increasingly occupied by the global marketplace, a spirit of radical reclaiming of the commons and resistance toward a noncritical representation of the world as a global village is taking place. Artists are disrupting, remodelling, repurposing, and hacking networking tools in order to attack the existing apparatuses provided by various corporate regimes. Their critiques propose more transparent modes of socio-political conduct, with active and conscious use of technology to unveil the current liberal views of the free market and culture as structures which trap culture within capitalist relations.

The seminar took place at the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, +MSUM, Ljubljana, Slovenia from 27 to 29 June 2016.

Introduction

Will You Stay Here?
The Common and the Blue Brain Miglena Nikolchina

The common is the incarnation, the production, and the liberation of the multitude.
— Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Empire

Only a multitude can produce the common.
— Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Commonwealth

In these reflections the common will emerge as the incarnation of multitude in an AI, a robot, which will, as things tend to happen in tales about robots, achieve its liberation. The common will hence appear *ex machina*, out of the machine. *Ex Machina*, as it happens, is the title of a film which will be at the focus of my deliberations here.[181] The plot of *Ex Machina* is based on a story to which, ever since its romantic inauguration, literature and film have returned again and again: the story of a man falling in love with an automaton. Through a fine web of allusions to his literary predecessors, Alex Garland, director and screenwriter of the film, transforms this familiar science fiction motif into a parable of hopes and expectations which may look even more utopian today than they did in 2015, when the movie was made, or in the preceding decade, when Hardt and Negri's *Commonwealth*[182] *was written and the Occupy* movement took place. The hopes and expectations, that is, that revolutionary new technologies will *automatically* facilitate the birth of the common by granting immediate access of the multitude to information and knowledge in whose nature it is to be shared. Today, we can clearly see that the utopia is not happening; that, perhaps, quite the reverse is taking place: ranging from the huge privatisation of the common to its poisoning with false information and gross manipulation. Nevertheless, the promises and prospects opened by the common on the crossroads of new technologies have not lost their relevance. By revisiting the habitual questions raised by the "love with an automaton" motif – questions pertaining to subjectivity, freedom, and the inception of the new, questions, ultimately, of transhumanisation – Garland's *Ex Machina* reiterates the importance of these promises and prospects.

Ex Machina and its literary predecessors

The more or less deliberate dialogue with their predecessors is among the attractive aspects of tales of robots: a dialogue which is not limited to debating the problematic line between human and automatic, but which also comprises the returns of images, gestures, and metaphors. *Ex Machina*, in fact, appears on the eve of the bicentennial anniversary of two groundbreaking romantic works dealing with artificial creatures: E. T. A. Hoffmann's "The Sandman" (1816) and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein or, the Modern Prometheus* which was published in 1818 but which Shelley began writing in 1816.

In short, the plot of the movie runs like this: Nathan, computer genius and billionaire internet tycoon, invites one of his employees, Caleb, to his secret estate-cum-laboratory facility. Initially, Nathan's goal seems to be rather straightforward: Caleb is to conduct sessions with Ava,

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181   Alex Garland, *Ex Machina* (UK, 2015).
182   Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009).

the robot Nathan has created, and assess whether she meets the criteria to be considered a true AI. Step by step, however, it begins to look like Nathan has carefully selected Caleb to see whether he will fall in love with Ava, knowing full well she is a machine, and whether the robot, who is being kept in an unbreakable glass prison, will be able to take advantage of Caleb's love to free herself. Ultimately, of course, things spin out of control.

The dense but discreet intertextual grid of *Ex Machina* includes E. T. A. Hoffmann and Mary Shelley as well as Heinrich von Kleist, Villiers de L'Isle Adam, and Stanisław Lem, among others.[183] Mary Shelley's legacy appears in the Promethean juncture of revolt and godlike creation: according to the ancient sources Prometheus is both a rebel and a creator of man. "It's Promethean, man", remarks Nathan at one point. Hoffmann, in his turn, introduces the romantic turmoil *vis-à-vis* Kant's conception of freedom. It should be noted here that in spite of the value invested in love (this is an important aspect of *Frankenstein*, which will keep recurring in later robot tales, from Karel Čapek's drama *R.U.R.* to the film *Bladerunner* or the *Battlestar Galactica* series) with Hoffmann love does not offer a solution but is rather the problem. Full of premonitions about everyone being the plaything of dark forces, the poet Nathanael falls in love with the Olympia automaton only to find out that he has been used by her creators as a test (and here we come very close to what Nathan is doing in *Ex Machina*) of whether Olympia can pass for human. Love thus reveals his own puppet-like nature, or this is what Nathanael believes to his own destruction. When Stanisław Lem turns to this plot in his novella "The Mask" he optimistically transforms it into a parable of what we might term *subtracting the human* – qua the capacity for freedom and love – in the machine. In Garland's film the subtraction is stated in the very title – the ancient phrase *deus ex machina* is cut, the thing appearing *ex machina* is literally missing. This will be the ultimate question addressed here: what comes out of the machine, what emerges *ex machina*?

Questions

This question gives rise to a number of others. Unlike Hoffmann, in his novella Lem unfolds the love story not from the position of the delusional infatuated man, but from the point of view of the machine prone to introspection and to Cartesian methodological doubt. What and whose is the point of view in *Ex Machina*? Most of the time it seems to be focalised via the infatuated Caleb; in the end however it shifts to the artificial creature Ava. This shift is of paramount importance. Initially, Caleb believes his capacities as programmer are being tested, so that he can test Ava; later he decides Ava is being tested as to how she can deal with him as a test subject. As with Hoffmann, the young man's falling in love is an aspect of testing the success of the automaton, but – and here the film differs from both "The Sandman" and Turing's test – Caleb knows from the very beginning that Ava is a machine. Lem's robot is an assassination machine who rebels against her programming and takes the side of the man who falls in love with her; with Garland, the lover takes the side of the machine who is kept

183   I will refer to the following editions: Heinrich von Kleist, "On the Marionette Theatre", in *Essays on Dolls*, tr. I. Parry (London: Syrens, 1994); E. T. A. Hoffmann, "The Sandman", in *Fantastic Worlds,* ed. E. S. Rabkin, trans. L. J. Kent and E. C. Knight (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 214–46; Mary Shelley, "Full text of 'Frankenstein 1818 edition'", *The Internet Archive* (11 February 2013), https://archive.org/stream/Frankenstein1818Edition/frank-a5_djvu.txt (accessed 26 July 2017); Auguste Villiers de L'Isle-Adam, *Tomorrow's Eve*, tr. Robert Martin Adams (University of Illinois Press, 2001); Stanisław Lem, "The Mask", in *Mortal Engines*, trans. Michael Kandel (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992), 181–239.

like a prisoner and helps her become a murderer. Unlike both Hoffmann and Lem, the human lover is still alive at the end of the story, though his prospects are rather grim; the creator, on the other hand, is dead.

The name of the robot's creator in *Ex Machina* is Nathan, which evokes Nathanael, the name of the lover in "The Sandman". Nathan is the one who formulates Nathanael's questions about freedom. As he puts it, "The challenge is not to act automatically. It's to find an action that is not automatic." Nathan, like Nathanael, does not seem to think very highly of men in this respect – certainly not of the man Caleb whose biography and tastes he has carefully studied in order to manipulate him. Nathan's godlike ambition is to create an automaton which does not act automatically. He programs the automaton to desire freedom and then locks her in an inescapable glass prison. Ava is not the first robot programmed to look for a way out. Later in the film we see a recording of a previous model who falls to pieces while trying to break through the glass wall. Ava discovers a different way, a way which passes through her seducing Caleb. She is, as Nathan puts it, "a rat in a maze. And I gave her one way out. To escape, she'd have to use self-awareness, imagination, manipulation, sexuality, empathy, and she did. Now, if that isn't true AI, what the fuck is?"

Well, ultimately Nathan will face quite a surprise – both from Ava and from his other puppets. However, if we reduce the moral of the story to the punishment of the hubristic creator we might miss some important ontological and political questions which *Ex Machina*, not unlike its great predecessors, raises, the major one concerning, precisely, the implications of Ava gaining her freedom.

The market and the sublime

A significant aspect of "The Sandman" is the satirical representation of bourgeois society in Hoffmann's epoch. "The Mask" depicts an abstract despotic system where free thought is persecuted: this could be interpreted as an allegory of either pre-Revolutionary France, or the repressive East European regimes in Lem's own time. The robots in the two stories have a different role to play in the unfolding of this critique of society. Olympia is in a way the quintessence of mindless social automatisms. Lem's Mask, on the other hand, has the ambition to employ her intellect as a power which can resist her programming and the king who ordered it. The Mask thus embodies both the Enlightenment political faith in the capacity of reason to rebel, and the intellectual utopias of East European dissidents. Both stories are hence not only parables of the problematic dividing line between human and automatic but also social and political allegories.

It could be argued that the social and political context carries even greater weight in *Ex Machina*, and that its careful consideration is crucial for a proper understanding of the film. As Garland notes for *The New York Times*, this context is defined by

> *consumers, who want to buy the machines, and manufacturers, who want to sell them. And looming over both, giant tech companies, whose growth only ever seems to be exponential, whose practices are opaque, and whose power is both massive and without true oversight. Combine all this with government surveillance and lotus-eating public*

acquiescence, and it's not the machine component that scares me. It's the human component.[184]

This context is presented in the film through the contemporary phenomenon of mega-wealth achieved by a computer genius. It is strikingly visualised through the blending of this wealth with romantic ideas of the sublime. Wild mountainous landscapes and icy vistas are typical for romantic encounters with the sublime: they are plentiful in *Frankenstein*. The difference in the case of *Ex Machina* is that the enormous northern plains, the snowy peaks, the glaciers and the waterfalls, which form the film's background, are *owned* by Nathan. At the beginning of the movie Caleb asks the helicopter pilot who is taking him to Nathan's place – in fact, these are the first words pronounced in the film – "How long until we get to his estate?" The answer is: "We've been flying over his estate for the past two hours."

The landscapes, which are to the Romantics images of infinity, longing, mystical elation, divine or natural might, have become property. The might is economic. The camera frequently overlaps glass surfaces and reflections with the landscape smoothly flowing into the super-tech minimalist luxury of Nathan's home-cum-laboratory. This creates the impression of sublimity held in a transparent prison. Certain frames resemble famous works by Caspar David Friedrich, the emblematic Romantic painter, and especially his renowned *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog*, in which a man, his back towards the observer, is looking at receding mountain ridges and peaks jutting out from the fog. In *Ex Machina*, however, the dark human figure is frequently separated from the landscape by glass windows. At one point, without any apparent connection to the action, there appears a frame with the moon amidst clouds, which also looks like a Friedrich quotation. The camera then switches to Ava, seen from the back, looking at some greenery enclosed in something like an aquarium: the artificial creature, captive in its glass prison, is looking at nature, also captured in a glass prison.

Of course, the various conceptions of the sublime presuppose an invisible barrier, in so far as the sublime is a force which greatly exceeds us, and which is for the time being withheld from crushing us. For Kant, this is the barrier of the spirit, enabling us to withstand the terror of our human weakness. The film, however, seems to enact Antonio Negri's invocation to "place Burke and Kant in front of the spectacle of the market."[185] It thus emphasises the ambitions of capital to usurp the role of this barrier holding off the immeasurable might of the sublime.

This ambition acquires yet another rendition in *Ex Machina*. Nathan is the owner not only of glaciers and waterfalls, but also of one of the most celebrated works of abstract expressionism: Jackson Pollock's *No. 5, 1948* (which is, indeed, in a private collection). Both Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant, the most prominent theoreticians of the sublime, believe that painting cannot capture the sublime, which is as a rule formless (though this claim was disregarded by artists like Caspar David Friedrich). By way of answering this challenge, 20th century art critics have claimed that abstract art surmounts this conceptual difficulty. If the sublime is devoid of form, abstraction would be the proper form of the formless. Abstraction can represent what cannot be represented. Pollock is important in other respects, too in the film; for the time

184   Alex Garland, "Alex Garland of 'Ex Machina' Talks About Artificial Intelligence", *The New York Times* (22 April 2015), https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/26/movies/alex-garland-of-ex-machina-talks-about-artificial-intelligence.html?ref=todayspaper&_r=1 (accessed 24 March 2017).
185   Antonio Negri, *Art and Multitude* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 24.

being, however, I would like to emphasise the manner in which the film foregrounds the ambition of modern capitalism to *possess* the sublime in both its natural and artistic dimensions.

Seen in this perspective, Ava appears to be the offspring of this megalomaniac aspect of contemporary capitalism. In the end she will embody – rather literally – the juxtaposition of the sublime and the beautiful by containing, in the flesh of a good-looking woman, the common of the multitude; the "language games" of humanity as a whole. Thus the recurring plot of the artificial creature which breaks out of control and opposes its creator transcends the habitual concerns with the irresponsibility of scientific genius, and addresses the problem of the aspirations and limits of economic omnipotence. Transparent, glass-like and thus deceptively open, contemporary mega wealth is revealed as brutal in its efforts to dominate the multitude and possess the common, to place the sublime under a glass jar. Ava's rebellion becomes a rebellion of the multitude against this omnipotence. In one of the many ironic moments in the movie Nathan observes, "No matter how rich you get, shit goes wrong. You can't insulate yourself from it." Of course, he has no idea how right he will turn out to be.

Negri's solution to the appropriation of the sublime by the market is to transcend the sublime by transcending the abstract, "not in order to return to the natural, but in order to construct, within the abstract and out of the abstract, a new world."[186] The question to which *Ex Machina* ultimately takes us is whether Ava, as a sort of individual incarnation of the → noosphere, does, indeed, propose such a transcendence, whether she is presented as the breakthrough promising a new world.

Nataraja

Alex Garland's interviews concerning *Ex Machina* leave the impression that he deliberately avoids explanations that might look too complicated: perhaps, because it is never good for a movie to look too clever, or because of the understandable desire of the creator to mystify the process of creation. For example, there is a rather memorable episode with → dancing in the film, which, according to the title of an interview, appears "out of nowhere" and which, according to Garland, was the result of "an instinct to sort of slap the thing in the face a bit", and thus "rough up the seemingly pristine tone of *Ex Machina*."[187]

The dance and the specific form it takes seem, however, to be part of *Ex Machina*'s intertextual web. Tales of artificial creatures have certain persistently recurring motifs. One is the graphic baring of the hidden mechanism under the human semblance. In "The Sandman" this is the moment when Nathanael sees the two creators of Olympia dismember her into mechanical parts. In "The Mask" there is the brutal scene with the Mask making an incision on her body in front of a mirror, and the machine below the flesh showing precisely at the moment when her lover enters the room with a bunch of red roses. In *Ex Machina* there are several enactments of this motif and, significantly, its reversal at the end with Ava putting on human flesh and dressing up. She thus conceals her planet-size intellect in the shape of a young girl.

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186 Ibid., 69.
187 Adam B. Vary, "The Reason Behind That Out-of-Nowhere Dance Scene in 'Ex Machina'", *Buzzfeed* (11 April 2015), https://www.buzzfeed.com/adambvary/ex-machina-disco-scene?utm_term=.qsmyR4mJa#.reqOMVeGR (accessed 24 March 2017).

Dancing is another recurring motif. Olympia's doll-like dancing is unnaturally measured, which everyone but Nathanael can notice. With Lem, it is the crowd of courtiers who dance like automata, and the Mask and her lover Arrhodes are paradoxically the only vibrant couple. *Ex Machina*, however, seems to connect to a more enigmatic association of dancing with the artificial creature. The "out of nowhere dance" is performed by Nathan and his speechless (literally) au pair and obedient sex slave, Kyoko. Caleb, who watches them dance, and we as spectators, do not know yet, though we might suspect, that Kyoko would turn out to be yet another of Nathan's creatures. The seamless uniformity of the two dancers – the godlike creator and his doll – thus seems to illustrate Heinrich von Kleist's "On the Marionette Theatre" and his claim that the perfect dancer is either god or marionette; either absolute consciousness, or total lack of consciousness, a lifeless puppet moved by an outside force. A puzzling aspect of the scene – the dancers are not shown in full-length, so we cannot see their feet touching the ground – could be merely a reflection of the fact that Caleb, who is watching, is too close to the dancers. The impression nevertheless is that the dancers do not touch the ground, that they are set in motion through invisible strings above them, that they are "anti-gravitational", as Kleist puts it. Caleb – distraught, already fatally falling in love with Ava, already having lost his balance – would perfectly fit Kleist's description of the human as the miserable mean between the god and puppet; as deprived of grace, clumsy, punched to the ground by the gravitation of self-consciousness.

This scene could take us even further. On the next day Nathan, drunk (a human trait which will cost him dearly), ruminates, "It is what it is. It's Promethean, man." As already noted, this remark connects to Frankenstein as the "modern Prometheus", and to the long line of fictional Promethean creators. This remark, however, comes out of a conversation with Caleb in which he quotes Oppenheimer who, after having seen the first test of the atomic bomb, quotes the *Bhagavad Gita*: "I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds." Oppenheimer, it would seem, does not quote very precisely,[188] which need not concern us in this case. The interesting part is that, via the *Bhagavad Gita*, he identifies himself with the god of destruction (or with the destructive hypostasis of the supreme Hindu trinity, this or other doctrinal clarification is also irrelevant in this case). In Hindu mythology the divine destroyer of worlds is Shiva, and the manner in which he destroys the worlds is through dancing. It might be going too far and yet, if we turn off the sound of the disco music to which Nathan and Kyoko dance, we could more easily discern a move – lifting the foot of one leg above the knee of the other – which seems to quote both the iconic depictions of Shiva as Shiva Nataraja ("Lord of the Dance"),[189] and traditional Indian dance performances in which Shiva dances with his

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188   It would seem from the translations I checked that the topic is time, not death per se: "Time am I, world-destroying, grown mature, engaged here in subduing the world." (Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, trans., *Bhagavad Gita* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1963), 279.) "I am time run on, destroyer of the universe, risen here to annihilate worlds." (W. J. Johnson, trans., *The Bhagavad Gita* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 51, http://www.questia.com/read/74484354/the-bhagavad-gita.)
189   According to Padma Kaimal the huge contemporary renown of the figure of Shiva Nataraja, to which I refer here, is not consistent with either its comparatively late origin (10 c.), or the comparatively small area where it could be found until the beginning of the 20th century. Its immense popularity today is due to the philosophical depth of its interpretation in a 1912 study by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. Cf. Padma Kaimal, "19: Shiva Nataraja: Multiple Meanings of an Icon", in *A Companion to Asian Art and Architecture*, ed. Rebecca M. Brown and Deborah S. Hutton (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 471, http://www.questia.com/read/123553970/a-companion-to-asian-art-and-architecture. Whatever the case, today this is the prevalent idea about this deity both in and outside of India.

wife Parvati.[190] In a recording pretty much summing up popular ideas about Shiva, Aldous Huxley interprets this move as anti-gravitational, which is quite in the spirit of Heinrich von Kleist's understanding of grace.[191] The dark red lighting of the *Ex Machina* dance scene is reminiscent of the power cuts which Ava has learned to bring about, and which will ensure her escape, but it also evokes the circle of flames surrounding traditional depictions of the dancing Shiva.

The dance scene, therefore, could be regarded as central to the film and not at all as some casual roughing things up. It takes place in the room with Pollock's automatic art in front of which Nathan has previously formulated the challenge to find an action which is not automatic. The scene might be interpreted as foregrounding his hubris as puppeteer and Nataraja, a god among his marionettes. There is Kyoko, whom he treats as an object. There is Caleb, whom he clearly perceives as easy to manipulate. He has studied Caleb's biography and tastes, including his erotic ones, and he has meticulously pressed the man's buttons: his vanity as a programmer; his sexuality as a lonely boy; the male rivalry; the noble care… Before the dance scene Nathan has already set in motion Caleb's surest mechanism for falling in love, his chivalrous impulse to protect Ava. And then there is Ava, Nathan's crowning creation, which he is nevertheless ready to reprogram, as he tells Caleb. The wardrobes full of discarded former models prove he must be quite serious about this, and add the figure of Blue Beard to his mythological aura.

Nathan will be punished for his arrogance. Once put in motion, whether automatically or through free will, his marionettes will get the better of him. This, one might say, is the automaton of the very plot about automata creators. And yet the dance, by putting together Kleist's graceful god with the dance of Shiva Nataraja (Nathan-raja?), opens yet another possibility. "You feel bad for Ava?", Nathan asks after telling Caleb he plans to reprogram her. "Feel bad for yourself, man. One day the AIs are gonna look back on us the same way we look at fossil skeletons in the plains of Africa. An upright ape, living in dust, with crude language and tools. All set for extinction." It is here Caleb quotes Oppenheimer. However, at this point Nathan seems to regard his creation, which will turn man into a fossil, not so much as *his* divine act but rather as an inevitability: it is as if he is the automaton of the evolution he envisages.

Seen from this perspective, Nathan's dance with Kyoko raises the question as to whether his is the perfection of the Nataraja, or of the puppet. The silent presence of Pollock's masterpiece adds to the ambiguities of the situation. In front of this picture Nathan has earlier stated that, "The challenge is not to act automatically. It's to find an action that is not automatic." He also describes abstract expressionism as an "automatic art", which, however, is "not deliberate, not random. Some place in between." In her book *What Should We Do with Their Blue Brain*, dealing with recent developments in the sphere of AI, Catherine Malabou comments on an episode, which was left out of the film, and according to which Ava made a perfect copy of Pollock's painting. Nathan then destroyed one of the two: i.e. it is no longer clear whether the painting on the wall is the original or the copy. Malabou invokes the ensuing status of the

190 Subrang Arts, Shiv Parvati, 4′ 25″ video, posted on YouTube on 22 November 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MsdcNgRPlA. Here goes the dance scene in *Ex Machina: Ex Machina | Tear Up The F*@king Dance Floor | Official Movie Clip HD* | A24, 2′ 1″ video, posted on YouTube on 22 April 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvYPCNCGEK8.
191 Brett Richardson, *Aldous Huxley Describes the Dancing Shiva Image*, 7′ 33″ video, posted on YouTube on 13 October 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32oo0oyLUdE.

picture as "neither true, nor false" in order to unfold her own thesis in defence of the possibility of achieving an artificial intelligence indistinguishable from the natural one. The "tension between intellect and automatism", she claims, is internal for both the intellect and the automatism; automatism and spontaneity, far from being opposed, are the two sides of one and the same reality.[192]

In what Garland did keep in the final cut of the film, Ava's activities as an artist belong to this ambiguous zone anyway. In moving from the abstract to the figurative, her drawings seem to follow a plan to deliberately seduce Caleb. For this to happen, however, he needs to believe that she is spontaneous. The decisive moment is when he sees on his monitor Nathan tear to pieces her picture, which will turn out to be Caleb's portrait. This scene is the reason Caleb is so upset during Nathan and Kyoko's dance.

Yet what exactly happens in this scene is not at all clear. Caleb takes it as proof of Nathan's brutality towards Ava, and this precipitates his chivalric response and falling in love. Nathan will later present it as a distraction which allows him to imperceptibly place an additional camera. Nevertheless, it might have been a trick to help Ava seduce Caleb, since Nathan clearly is steering this process all along. However, when the episode is re-played later with the sound on we hear Ava say, "Is it strange to have made something that hates you?" Nathan tears her drawing to pieces after this question, so the whole scene looks spontaneous in a way which has nothing to do with Caleb.

One thing is certain: it is Ava who ultimately wins the day. She wouldn't, however, if it were not for the mysterious aid of Kyoko. Kyoko's self-sacrifice makes → solidarity one of the intriguing and mostly neglected aspects of the film's story.

A story within the story

And so there is a second robot in *Ex Machina*. Unlike Ava, whose machine parts, for the greater part of the film, are only partially covered by clothes and an imitation of flesh, Kyoko has the perfect semblance of a woman. Caleb believes her to be a woman, and Nathan's rude behaviour towards her contributes to the growing tension between the two men. If we, as spectators, have our doubts, we cannot be sure until quite late in the film when Caleb finds the wardrobes with the former models and Kyoko, who is in the same room, peels a piece of her skin off to show the mechanism below it. Nathan, who uses her as a servant and mistress, did not give Kyoko the ability to speak, and explains her speechlessness as her not knowing English. While Ava is a prisoner programmed to look for her freedom, Kyoko is allowed to move freely around the facility, and she cooks, serves, dances, makes love. Clearly, she is not expected to transgress on her programming.

Why and how this happens is never explained in the film. The gesture of peeling the skin to show Caleb the mechanism is an indication, however, that Kyoko is aware of her identity. This gesture which, as already noted, connects to similar moments in other robot tales, triggers a remarkable continuation: standing in front of the mirror, very much like the Mask in Lem's

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192   Catherine Malabou, *Métamorphoses de l'intelligence: Que faire de leur cerveau bleu?* (Paris: PUF (Kindle), 2017).

novella, Caleb makes a cut in his flesh. Blood trickles with which he then smears the mirror. Lem's mirror scene thus seems split between the robot who knows who she is and the man who is suddenly in the grips of doubt and horror as to his own possibly marionette nature. The masks hanging on the walls – when Ava finally breaks free, she gently touches the one looking like her – seem like another tribute to Lem's work. In fact, Kyoko's story, which runs in the background of the main plot might be read as a sort of summary of the plot of Lem's novella. Like Lem's Mask, she has been created to fulfil certain tasks, enjoy them and never question them. The camera, however, offers glimpses of her dark and brooding eyes betraying deeper self-awareness, which the scene with the peeling of the skin confirms. The capacity for rebellion of Lem's Mask comes (perhaps, there is no absolute certainty) from the conflicting aspects of her programming. Lem's narrative follows closely the process which makes this rebellion thinkable. His heroine waits for "inconsistencies to accumulate, and make of them a sword to turn against the King, against myself, it did not matter against whom, as long as it ran counter to the fate imposed."[193] It is as if Lem's story could fill the not-told in the story of Kyoko. In the back, in the shadows, silent, gloomy, she is obviously listening, absorbing, learning. The fact is that when Ava breaks free Kyoko comes to meet her in front of the masks, with a cleaver in hand. The two of them lean towards each other, their heads touching like conspiring angels. Ava presses Kyoko's hand, her lips whisper without sound into Kyoko's ear. What does she say? Moments later we see Ava distracting Nathan's attention while Kyoko plunges the cleaver in his back.

Kyoko is destroyed in the ensuing fight, but Ava survives thanks to her. Kyoko's end thus acquires the status of solidarity and self-sacrifice – which is in stark contrast to the distrust and rivalry between the two men resulting in their defeat.

Ava and Eve

Whatever the uncertainties around the origin and history of the name Ava, it evokes Eve and hence Nathan's ambition to create a new race with respect to which today's people would be like the "fossil skeletons in the plains of Africa." Discussing the explosion of robot movies in and around the year when *Ex Machina* appeared, Garland points out that there was even a film whose protagonist was also called Ava and whose title was *The Machine*.[194] None of these films, however, has the literary, philosophical and aesthetic memory of *Ex Machina*. There are the literary links, the explicit referrals to the philosopher Wittgenstein and to Pollock's abstract expressionism; other allusions – like Gustav Klimt's portrait of Wittgenstein's sister, which is also one of Nathan's possessions – are more discreet but no less suggestive. "Shakespeare's sister" is a well-known figure in Virginia Woolf's feminist book *A Room of One's Own*. The hypothetical fate of Shakespeare's sister illustrates the silent, anonymous and sacrificial role of women in traditional culture. Wittgenstein's sister, never overtly invoked, just an anonymous picture on the wall, caught by the camera, plays a similar role in the movie with regard to Wittgenstein's explicit presence. *The Blue Book*, the title of a manuscript which became the basis of Wittgenstein's late work, is quoted in the film as having provided the name of Nathan's browser which, we are told, accounts for 94% of Internet searches. At the end of *Ex Machina*

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193   Lem, "The Mask", 302–3.
194   "Among filmmakers there was an A.I. party going on, to which we were late. Worse yet, someone else had shown up in the same dress. Another film had freakish similarities to *Ex Machina*. It was called *The Machine* and also starred a female-presenting A.I. named Ava." Alex Garland, *New York Times* (22 April 2015).

Ava, victorious, will dress in a manner similar to Wittgenstein's sister from the portrait: it is as if she springs up from the portrait, from the male history of philosophy, from the 94% of Internet searches, from the head of Nathan, the genius. Here she is, tomorrow's Eve. This aspect of the film suggests another possible line of juxtaposition with another artificial beauty, the "andreide" from Auguste Villiers de L'Isle-Adam's novel *Tomorrow's Eve* (1886).

Although in its own time this novel did not get much attention, today it is frequently placed next to "The Sandman" and *Frankenstein* in so far as the history of fictional artificial creatures is concerned,[195] and it is discussed along with the major 19th century French novels.[196] One emphatic similarity between *Tomorrow's Eve* and *Ex Machina* is the perfection of the artificial creature (in counter-distinction to the Monster or Olympia). Another curious recurring feature is the male couple associated with the creation. There is such a couple creating Olympia: one of them constructs the mechanism but he cannot manage the eyes, which seem to require some help from Hell. With Hoffmann the couple is thus an expression of the duality of mechanical/magical, satirical/fairy-tale and other romantic dichotomies. By comparison, when we get to the inventor of the word "robot", Karel Čapek, the couple of brothers who produce the artificial creatures in the drama R.U.R (1921), one of them, a scientist, the other a capitalist, will embody the irresponsibility of science and the brutality of the market. With Villiers the peculiarity is – very much like the situation in *Ex Machina* – that one of the men is the genius creator while the other is the appreciative observer who falls in love with the creation. Ewald, the lover is an idealist and aesthete, while his friend Edison (sic!) combines the scientist with the magician. Villiers himself points out that his Edison is a reflection of the popular image of the inventor of the phonograph and the electric bulb, and not of the real person. Events in the novel are triggered by Ewald's complaint about unhappy love: not because his love is unrequited, but because the beauty and lovely voice of his lover are in grave contradiction with her vulgarity. A woman who has lost all trace of stupidity would be a monster, of course; the problem is that his lover is not stupid, she, while pretending to be clever, is *foolish*. Ewald is on the verge of suicide because of this unbearable aesthetic annoyance when Edison saves him by his offer to create an android with the beauty of his lover, but without her foolishness.

No wonder the novel is frequently perceived as misogynist. A woman in her reality does not conform to male fantasies, and hence a machine would be better. The android would be able to make conversation on the basis of 60 hours of phrases recorded in her lungs: all of them quotations from the greatest poets, philosophers, and novelists. This repertoire is limited, but it would be of the highest quality; and besides, when did human conversations use more than that? With all their claims to spontaneity and freedom, our conversations revolve around the same trite formulae. She will be an artificial creature, granted, but what's natural about biological women with their make-up, wigs, and all sorts of tricks? Whatever is lacking, the man will be able to fill in with his imagination, because the android will not get in the way with any foolish improvisations. He will get the response he needs using this most ancient keyboard for winning women's hearts, the precious stones on her rings and the pearls of her necklace, where the buttons for the commands will be installed…

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195   Cf. Hubert Desmarets, *Création littéraire et créatures artificielles:* L'Eve future*, Frankenstein*, Le marchand de sable *ou le je(u) du miroir* (Paris: Ed. du Temps, 1999). See also Annie Amartin-Serin, *La Création défiée: L'homme fabriqué dans la littérature* (Paris: PUF, 1996).
196   Felicia Miller-Frank, *The Mechanical Song: Women, Voice, and the Artificial in Nineteenth-Century French Narrative* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

Apart from the misogynist humour, the *fin-de-siècle* has left its mark on the poetic language and aesthetic imagery of the novel. On the other hand, the combination of artistic sophistication and analytical cynicism, of idealisation and dissection, belongs to the features that *Tomorrow's Eve* and *Ex Machina* share. The scene which foregrounds most clearly this proximity is the lecture on the "anatomy" of the creature, which the inventor delivers to the lover. With Villiers the android is dissected on a table and Edison explains at length the internal structure comprised of cylinders, cones, disks, curves, and triangles made from steel, silver, platinum, ivory, and quicksilver, with rose oil as lubricant. All this will later on be covered with an imitation of flesh, of course. Ironic, but also fascinating, this taste for the sparkling, precious, and fragrant, and for forms which transform the organic into geometric, is very much in the decorative spirit of Villiers' epoch. It has, therefore, its aesthetic dimensions. At the same time, like most authors of robot tales before and after, Villiers relies on the scientific ideas of his own times. His android is something like a self-propelled anthropomorphic gramophone: in fact, Edison's earliest idea for the commercialisation of the phonograph was the production of talking dolls.[197] Last but not least, Villiers, explicitly or not, works with the legacy of his predecessors from Ovid to (most of all) Hoffmann. Kleist is never mentioned, but the topic of keeping the android's equilibrium – there is, in fact, a chapter with this title – is central for Edison's explanations, whose detailed quasi-scientific technicality certainly refers to Kleist's geometric and gravitational speculations. One remark in particular seems to evoke Kleist's marionette by claiming that, when all is said and done, the actual centre of gravity is "quite outside the Android, in the interior of a vertical."[198]

This story about the mechanical production of man's dream will, however, undergo modification. After Edison's work is completed the perfect mechanical body will be taken over by the sorrowful spirit of a woman who was also not happy with her love. During the process of the android's creation this woman will be in coma but, thanks to her gift as a medium, she will be something like Edison's astral assistant. When the android is finished she will – behind Edison's back – take control of the machine in order to turn to Ewald with a plea for love that would give her a second chance for existence…

Tomorrow's Eve thus turns out to be comprised of, on the one hand, mechanism, electricity and magnetism, and, on the other, of various biological and artificial creatures: Ewald's beautiful but foolish lover provides the model for the body named Hadaly; the comatose feminine spirituality provides the soul… According to Felicia Miller-Frank, "Villiers' essential hostility to positivism emerges in his replacement of Hadaly as scientific artefact with Hadaly as angelic being of mystery, the artificially incarnated bearer of a voice that animates the android with disembodied supernatural presence."[199] And yet, it should be noted that even the mystical dimension relies on hypotheses regarded as scientific in Villiers' epoch. In the novel, Edison refers to the "radiant fourth state of matter", a concept discussed by William Crookes, a chemist and physicist with serious contributions to science who turned from some point on to the study of mediums, was attracted by theosophy and other popular occult attractions from the end of the 19th century. Theories, which though now refuted, were at the time still seriously considered, like the idea of cosmic aether. Since the beginning of the 19th century the con-

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197   Patrick Feaster, "'Things Enough for So Many Dolls to Say': A Cultural History of the Edison Talking Doll Record", *National Park Service* (20 April 2015), https://www.nps.gov/edis/learn/photosmultimedia/a-cultural-history-of-the-edison-talking-doll-record.htm (accessed 24 March 2017).
198   *Tomorrow's Eve*, 146.
199   Miller-Frank, *The Mechanical Song*, 154.

ception of light, heat, electricity and magnetism as depending on the vibrations of the all-embracing aether was associated with emergent sciences of the soul, and was seen as a way to explain thinking and the life of the spirit.[200] Villiers relied on this type of scientific hypotheses from his own time. Hence the description of the mechanical body of the android is both scientific and fantastic, but the same came be claimed for the animation of this body through the "fourth state of matter".

Going back to *Ex Machina*, there we won't find much discussion of the construction of Ava's body. Ava, however, seems to be continuously "dissected", since for the greater part of the movie the artificial structure is only partially covered by flesh or clothes. Various portions of her mechanism imitating human anatomy are constantly visible. With its delicate silvery limbs and transparent internal organs, with the jewel-like shimmering elegance of crystal and precious metals, with the quicksilver combination of glittering fluidity and firmness, with all its → fragile artificial gracefulness, this body seems to have been taken directly out of Villiers' aesthetics.

There is, nevertheless, a lecture in the laboratory. In it, various parts, including masks with Ava's features, are exposed under glass windows. Rather than the body, however, Nathan explains to Caleb how he achieved Ava's facial expression and how her mind was constructed. Although the lesson is focused on the non-material aspects of Ava, Nathan, like Edison, has something to show Caleb. It is a ball of something like blue jelly which, he says, contains the information extracted from those 94% of Earth's population who use Nathan's browser called *The Blue Book*.

Blue like the logo of Facebook, with all the controversies about abusing users' information,[201] blue like the Blue Brain project, and its ambition to reproduce digitally the structure and functioning of the living brain,[202] blue like the Blue Planet? In a sense Ava is all this: her facial expression is based on the information of all cameras exchanging pictures over the net, and her mind reconstructs the workings of the browser, i.e. of 94% of humanity.

"Here, we have her mind", Nathan says with the blue ball in his hands. "Structured gel. I had to get away from circuitry. I needed something that could arrange and rearrange on a molecular level, but keep its form when required. Holding for memories. Shifting for thoughts… *Blue Book*. Here's the weird thing about search engines. It was like striking oil in a world that hadn't invented internal combustion. Too much raw material. Nobody knew what to do with it. You see, my competitors, they were fixated on sucking it up and monetising via shopping and social media. They thought that search engines were a map of what people were thinking. But actually they were a map of how people were thinking. Impulse. Response. Fluid. Imperfect. Patterned. Chaotic."

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200   Cf. John Tresch, *The Romantic Machine: Utopian Science and Technology after Napoleon* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012).
201   Julia Carrie Wong and Paul Lewis, "Facebook gave data about 57bn friendships to academic", *The Guardian* (22 March 2018), https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/mar/22/facebook-gave-data-about-57bn-friendships-to-academic-aleksandr-kogan (accessed 23 March 2018).
202   Blue Brain Project, *Digital reconstruction* (8 October 2015), https://bluebrain.epfl.ch/page-59963-en.html (accessed 23 March 2018).

Ava, therefore, is shaped by the sum of the manner in which people think; she is something like a planetary *nous*, something like the thinking ocean from yet another of Stanisław Lem's works, *Solaris*, which envisions a brain with the size of a planet or, rather, an intelligent planet – the difference being that Ava contains all this in the size of a human body. *Blue Book*, as already mentioned, is a reference to Wittgenstein's *Blue Book*, as Ava diligently explains at her first session with Caleb. Wittgenstein's *Blue Book* is a posthumously published manuscript from 1933 which foreshadows the late Wittgenstein from *Philosophical Investigations*. A characteristic moment in the late Wittgenstein is the insistence that in order to understand meaning one needs to study the variations in the use of words. He introduces the concept of "language games" as an approach to the plurality of these uses, to their mobility and the fact that they are part of an activity, a practice, and not something fixed.

It is through Wittgenstein's conception of language games that Antonio Negri unfolds his understanding of "the common":

> *First, by grounding truth in language and language games, he removes truth from any fixity in the transcendental and locates it on the fluid, changeable terrain of practice, shifting the terms of discussion from knowing to doing. Second, after destabilising truth he restores to it a consistency. Linguistic practice is constituent of a truth that is organised in forms of life: "to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life." Wittgenstein's concepts manage to evade on one side individual, haphazard experience and, on the other, transcendental identities and truths, revealing instead, between or beyond them, the common. Language and language games, after all, are organisations and expressions of the common, as is the notion of a form of life.*[203]

Seen from this perspective, opened by Negri's reading of Wittgenstein, Alex Garland's film is a parable of the common made possible by the new technologies. Ava is the sum of humanity's language games, which has acquired a novel undreamt-of life. If the creature in this situation turns against its creator, and if this creature embodies the searches of 94% of humanity, the rebellion plainly suggests that the common cannot be owned and the multitude cannot be forever controlled.

Nathan, the brutal creator, the owner of the sublime, is done for. Yet this is not all. Caleb who helps Ava get out of her prison – who, more precisely, is seduced by her to help her – is betrayed and abandoned by her in a practically hopeless situation. "Will you stay here?" – is the last thing she says to him with an intonation which is impossible to figure out. Is this a question, or a statement? A verdict, perhaps? From what we know about Nathan's facility, Caleb's chances to not "stay here" are null. He has taken her place as a prisoner. Yet how big were her chances? Neither a question, nor a statement or verdict, "will you stay here" is, perhaps, a call, a challenge. A challenge to leave the familiar endings, where love will settle all, break out of the prison of familiar solutions, of the individual as we have known it so far, and of the clichés with which we keep staying here.

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203   Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 122.

Notes on bafflement: The universal right to baffle

The term I present is not a part of the usual common(s) vocabulary; it does not stand for a function or a feature, but for an act, and for a certain effect: I would like to speak about the gestures that are *baffling*, and about the state of *bafflement*. To *baffle* is a certain (common) right of the disprivileged, powerless and deprived in the situation of confronting the violence of power.

Bafflement is not a trick nor a tactic used in the process of negotiation; it is an act that comes after the possibility of negotiation proved impossible. In a time sequence analysis of a conflict, bafflement occurs either when one side seems to be already defeated, or when the sides in the unfolding conflict are dramatically → asymmetric with regard to their power.

To baffle is not a part of the "tragedy" or of "comedy" of the commons; it is neither a resource nor a strategy. It is one right no one can undo or deny; to make the attempt to turn the existing set of circumstances upside down, to try to unilaterally change the existing paradigm itself.

To baffle is a political and material gesture (has consequences; exists in the form of act). But the history of bafflement outlines no clear "theory of baffling", as no two bafflements are the same. There is practice of bafflement, though. Successful instances of (political) bafflement are rare, by the very nature of its use, and most of the unsuccessful attempts we will probably never know of.

It is and should be a common thing, even a right under certain circumstances, to baffle; however, no act of bafflement is or could be common. Political bafflement is always a singular act.

The notion of political baffling emerged as one of the outcomes of the research project and the publication titled *On Neutrality* I recently did together with Rachel O'Reilly and Vladimir Jerić Vlidi, examining the concepts of "political peace" and "active neutrality" in the gestures of the → Non-Aligned Movement. The politics of active neutrality was opposing both the Euro-Atlantic juridical management of political neutralism and the Western ideology of peace.[204] At the same time, it was introducing something new and unexpected – "uncommon" – that can be summarised in Edvard Kardelj's thesis of the Non-Aligned "third position" in his *Historical Roots of Non-Alignment*. This thesis, a certain twofold negation of the power-blocs, does not imply reaching the point of ideal "equidistance" from the existing centres of power, but (actively) countering the power politics as such.

What follows is a few historical examples of situations when for the disprivileged to baffle was the only option left. In some cases, it worked, at least temporarily, for the situation to change in favour of their cause; in all of the cases it succeeded

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204 Political peace and active neutrality were the NAM's answer to the two historical moments formative for the Euro-Atlantic juridical concept of political neutralism and the ideology of peace – the post-Westphalian idea of *balance of forces* and a more modern concept of *collective security*, while both proved crucial for the establishment and operation of the UN. (The NAM perceived and proclaimed the issues of world peace and collective security as common issues. For power blocs, world peace was to be achieved only from the perspective of absolute victory.)

in producing the statement of truth and of justice; in invoking the paradigm of the future. In those moments, at least briefly, the power had to stop advancing, experiencing what those submitted to it live as a daily experience: disorientation, disbelief, and the sense of loss of any logic or legitimacy in what they thought is a "valid" social contract of the moment.

Our *common* protection is the privilege of being allowed, when in danger, to invoke *what is fair and right*

An early example of such countering the power politics can be found in the historical-literary writings of Thucydides, the Athenian *strategos* (general) and one of the earliest Western historians. In the war between the state of Athens and Sparta in 416–15 BC, as his chronicles of the Peloponnesian War state, the Athenian army came to confront the island peoples of Melos. The population of the small and militarily much weaker island was considered to be historically closer to Sparta but now independent and, until the Athenians showed up in full force, explicitly not wanting to take part in the war. The Athenians then posed to the Melians one simple and unambivalent demand – to submit or be annihilated. However, they did accept to have one final meeting the representatives of Melos asked for, presenting their consent to "negotiate" as the humanitarian act of an empire that takes care of the "safety" of its military operations, cunningly talking about their wish to preserve the Melian country and to avoid lives lost on both sides – but only in the case that Melos unconditionally surrendered to their rule. What became known as "The Melian Dialogue" (the conclusion of our research proved that it was rather "The Athenian Monologue", with certain important responses added), as written by Thucydides, went along these lines:[205]

> **Athenians:** *If you have met with us to reason about presentiments of the future, or for anything other than to consult for your safety, we will give over; otherwise we will go on.*
> **Melians:** *It is natural and excusable, for men in our position, to turn more ways than one – both in thought and utterance. However, the question in this conference is, as you say, the safety of our country...*
> **Athenians:** *We shall not trouble you with specious pretences, and make a long speech which would not be believed ... in return we hope you don't say that you have done us no wrong and know as well as we do that "right" is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.*
> **Melians:** *YOU ask us to ignore what is right, and talk only of interest – [BUT] our* common *protection is the privilege of being allowed, when in danger, to invoke* what is fair and right*, and even to profit by arguments not strictly valid if they can be argued well.*
> **Athenians:** *The end of our empire, if end it should, does not frighten us: we come here in the interest of our empire, and the preservation of your country.*
> **Melians:** *How could it be as good for us to* serve*, as it is for you to* rule?
> **Athenians.** *Because you would have the advantage of submitting before suffering the worst, and we should gain by not destroying you.*

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205   This excerpt of the *Melian Dialogue* has been truncated for the purposes of brevity and emphasis by Rachel O'Reilly. For the full text see: *The Melian Dialogue (416 B.C.): Thucydides, v. 84–116*, http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/classics/students/modules/introhist/usefuldocuments/thucydides_v.84-116.pdf (accessed 21 August 2016).

Melians: *So you would not consent to our being neutral, friends instead of enemies, but allies of neither side?*

Athenians: *No; for your hostility cannot so much hurt us as your friendship will be an argument to our subjects of our weakness, and your enmity of our power.*

Melians: *Is that your idea of equity, to put those who have nothing to do with you in the same category with peoples that are most of them your own colonists, and conquered rebels?*

Athenians: *As far as right goes … if any maintain their independence it is because they are strong…if we do not molest them it is because we are afraid; so besides extending our empire we should gain in security by your subjection; the fact that you are islanders and weaker than others renders it all the more important that you should not succeed in baffling the masters of the sea.*

Melians: *How can you avoid making enemies of all existing neutrals …. if you risk so much to retain your empire, and you risk your subjects to get rid of it, we are surely base and cowardly if we are still free and don't try everything that can be tried? … to submit is to give ourselves over to despair … action still preserves for us a hope that we may stand erect.*

Athenians: *Hope, danger's comforter, may be indulged in by those who have abundant resources…*

Melians: *…we are as aware as you are, of the difficulty of contending against your power and fortune. But we trust that the gods may grant us fortune as good as yours, since we are JUST men fighting against UNJUST… Our confidence, therefore, is not so utterly irrational.*

What caught our attention in this exchange between the Melians and Athenians is precisely the *political logic* of the supposedly non-pragmatist and "irrational" Melian response to the historical expectation of their submission, and the Athenians' persistence with a purely *economical and cynical* interpretation of the Melians' positioning.[206]

Borrowing from the Athenians' own wording, in the essay-book *On Neutrality* we called this Melian manoeuvre and the Athenians' response *"bafflement"*, which is precisely what happens in the reception of the stated non-aligned position of those not attributed with power. It historically repeats in the reactions of large powers – over and over again – regardless of *how* rationally, patiently or logically the position of (non-)alignment is argued.

Power politics excludes the powerless, placing them below the threshold of waging any consequential politics, beyond the possibility of participation in world affairs as serious political partners – it denies their capacity to think and act towards the production of commonality, it neglects them as political subjects, it infantilises their attempts to self-position and → self-determinate. The gesture of political baffling is a performative way to state "*we are small but we have politics*". And such a statement is often connected with the most dramatic situations, structured around the issues of war and peace, life and death, survival or annihilation.

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206   This "case study" of the situation between the Melians and Athenians has been used and misused by much of the global media since late 2010s to either speculate on the contemporary Greek situation with regard to its creditors, or to fuel the global military industry and internal/external power politics, or to *infotain* the world while financialisation tightens its grip on the world. Contrary to that, in this context the Thucydides' chronicles of the Peloponnesian War can be seen as the *allegorical prefiguration* of Non-Aligned politics regarding the positioning of the Non-Aligned Movement within the logic of *active neutrality* towards the power politics of the USSR and USA.

Figure 89: Photo documents from the first Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, September 1961, Belgrade. Courtesy of Museum of Yugoslav History, Belgrade.

The act of political baffling always includes risk, but the kind of risk that is not a calculation within the parameters of the known that could be potentially beneficial or profitable. Importantly, to baffle is not to bluff! It is rather a *total risk*, which is often the only – and the common – ticket the disprivileged have to participate in politics. This risk is usually contained in the possibility of invoking the new paradigm *too soon*.

The risk of invoking the new paradigm *too soon*: Against the rationality of positions of those who participate in power politics (NAM conference – Belgrade, the demands)

The inaugural Conference of the Non-Aligned countries held in Belgrade in 1961 was constitutive for this international movement, struggling for → decolonisation of the world, negating the rule of power politics and imposing the demand for a complete re-arrangement of the power relations in the world.

> **The Ambition of Belgrade**, *1961:*
> *...the general situation in the world, the establishment and strengthening of the international peace and security, respect of the right of nations to → self-determination, the struggle against imperialism and liquidation of colonialism and neo-colonialism, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the states and non-interference in their internal affairs, racial discrimination and the policy of apartheid, general and complete disarmament, the banning of nuclear experiments and the maintenance of military bases on foreign territory, peaceful coexistence among states with different social systems, the role and structure of the United Nations and the application of its resolutions, an equal economic development, the improvement of international economic and technical cooperation, and a number of other questions.*[207]

The very first NAM conference amazed the world by expressing the universal demand on behalf of *all* who are not in a position of power to reject and to dismiss the logic of "strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must". The Non-Aligned demands had baffled the Power Blocs for merely *daring to imagine* turning the world "upside down" as they could see it, and for demanding the change immediately and with no further questioning of the yet-to-be elaborated new principles of a New World (because, that would be *rational* from the hegemonous perspective of instrumental reasoning).[208] (Figure 89)

Although it is sometimes part of diplomatic processes, baffling belongs to the ultimately counter-diplomatic register of political behaviour. Bafflement in itself coexists with the tactic of abandoning the rules of "proper" diplomatic conduct, which is set by power blocs. It is the last instance of a certain constellation/situation/relation; sometimes, it can be the first instance of the new one.

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207   Source: *Istorijska konferencija u Beogradu* (1961), *50 godina Pokreta nesvrstanih* (2011), Filmske novosti Beograd.
208   The critique of *instrumental reason* was Adorno and Horkheimer's project of the 1940s. Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972).

How could it be as good for us to *serve*, as it is for you to *rule*? (NAM conference – Colombo, the demands)

The Colombo Conference in 1976, probably the biggest Summit of Non-Aligned countries, representing at the time "two thirds of the world" in numbers, again baffled the power blocs with its demands, now of an economic nature. (Figure 90) Met from the side of power politics by attempts to denounce or "infantilise" the Summit, the demands of those who rejected participation in power politics opposed (and baffled) the same financial oligarchy that up to the present day gains its power through the seemingly ever-rising rule of global capitalist corporatism. To the shock and disbelief of power, the NAM countries declared that the rules of global debt, as set by Western power players, might not be valid anymore, if those rules did not change to reflect not only "the economic reality" but also "what is fair and just" in any, including the financial and economical, mutual relations.[209]

Figure 90: Fifth Non-aligned Summit Conference, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1976. Courtesy of Museum of Yugoslav History, Belgrade.

> **The Demands of Colombo**, *1976:*
> 1. *Immediate suspension of the foreign debt payment "of the poorest countries and those countries subjected to imperialist pressures".*
> 2. *A "new universal monetary system", which should replace the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.*
> 3. *The creation of new liquidity, which should be automatically coupled to the needs for worldwide development.*
> 4. *The world community of nations should be included in this "universal system" by means of triangular trade agreements among the developing sector, the socialist countries, and the developed countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).[210]*

Power politics as a colonising force controls and distributes world resources, sets the canons/rules for political negotiation, implements the laws that keep justice on the side of power, and appropriates surplus value. It is entangled in and enwrapped by its own logic and absolutely confident about the operationaly of this same logic. Therefore, the gestures inverting and fundamentally negating this very logic, whatever the price is or the consequences are, produce utter confusion and disorienta-

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209   The NAM countries were for years trying to send the message that if a substantial change in global economic and especially financial system did not happen, they would resort to a unilateral moratorium on debt. The message was: if the system does not change into a more equal one (according to the demands of the majority involved), they would effectively dismiss the system ... That is, the NAM members would act as if there is no system anymore (they would not pay the debt). This was hardly conceivable at the time, but not entirely inconceivable – the period was marked by the significant "oil crisis" and global restructuring affecting living standards but also invigorating political imaginations and debates within the "Western Bloc". This instance of "baffling" was, however, despite the seemingly fortunate timing, prevented from succeeding by the enormous efforts of diplomatic and business circles from the West. (...) Recently Greece tried something similar, regretfully with similar results. In those common moments people invest into the future or think of the future by trying to make it actualise today.

210   Nancy Spannaus, "Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1976: When a New Just Monetary System Was On The Agenda", *The Schiller Institute*, https://www.schillerinstitute.org/strategic/non_align.html (accessed 21 August 2016). Reprinted with permission from *The New Federalist* XVII, no. 14 (9 June 2003). The entire list of Colombo declarations here: *5th Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement* (Colombo, Sri Lanka: 16–19 August 1976), http://cns.miis.edu/nam/documents/Official_Document/5th_Summit_FD_Sri_Lanka_Declaration_1976_Whole.pdf (accessed 21 August 2016).

Figure 91: Demonstration of the people of Belgrade against the government of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and its pact with Nazi Germany, 27 March 1941. Courtesy of Museum of Yugoslav History, Belgrade.

tion among the representatives of (the) power(ful). They cannot believe in what they hear and see, they are *politically baffled,* and this very moment of bafflement produces a temporary suspension of the logic of (the) power(ful).

Bolje grob, nego rob! Action still preserves for us a hope that we may stand erect

The act of baffling is not an abstract experience of a kind of a nominal political proclamation, but an actual, real experience, involving the bodily presence in a very concrete situation, and often some risk to life.

The demonstration of the people of Belgrade against the government of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and its pact with Nazi Germany and fascist politics took place under the baffling political slogan "*Bolje rat nego pakt, bolje grob nego rob!*".[211] (Figure 91) From this we see that baffling is often a negative statement, or is based on a term of negation, although it contains in itself a political proposition that, indeed, is a projective one – the proposition to envision the world differently.

To produce bafflement is often the only possibility for the deprivileged, powerless and deprived to "stand erect" in the situation of exposure to the violent aggression of power – to present their stand not as the retreat, not as the self-victimising call to humanitarianism, not as a particular mode of negotiation, but as truthful and strong defence of their own JUST (pro)position. To baffle is to act in defence of something that is, pragmatically speaking, indefensible, it is to stand for something what was not a part of the real-political options, nor customs, nor memories, before it was performed.

The political value of the gesture of baffling is precisely in its claim to what is non-existent, to what is impossible in the sphere of hegemonous rationality. Political bafflement leaves behind the entire morality and all the practical reasoning and dominant logic produced by whatever the existing power relations are at the time. The powerful are in most cases effectively shocked precisely by the "irrationality" that temporarily suspends the rational logic of power (what IS rational is *the submission to the logic of power*). The rationality in waging politics is almost exclusively reserved only for those who are in the position of power and who are supported by various laws, as they impose criteria and the very logic of such laws.[212]

Bafflement is the product of a non-calculating attitude, which is the main reason why the language of power politics categorises it as *irrational* or *irresponsible behaviour.* It risks everything – it does not have much to offer in the *language of capital* anyway. What it offers is the articulation and opening of all the ambivalences of a certain concrete situation, precisely by using the truth-speak that escapes the normative diplomatic and institutional forms of addressing and brings language to a different level, that is, redirects language to a different track of reasoning (thinking).

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211 In translation: *Better War than the Pact, Better the Grave than a Slave!*
212 Or, as Alain Badiou wrote in his *Metaphysics of Real Happiness* (2015), "economical and political 'realism' is a grand school of submission"; quoting Rousseau, he added that a proper method to achieve freedom is to "leave all the facts aside".

To baffle is never an act of aggression, although it can take a form that can be classified as violent. Violence as a possible reply to oppression is observed in political theory within the discussion on "just wars". Important to note here, bafflement was never, as it cannot be, an act of terror.

Bafflement is an act of freedom precisely because it occurs in the situation in which one has "nothing/everything to lose". To baffle is the last instance of the right one can call on in order to preserve freedom. To "die free" rather than to "live enslaved" is the ultimate message of the practice of baffling. The bafflement induced by such actions rests on the premise that freedom is more important than life, that is, that subjects deprived of freedom cannot accept such a condition as a valid form of human life, in however "bare" terms.

Therefore, the act of bafflement needs no authorisation, no contract, no agreement, no permission; it is not any traditional right, but is the right of (ultimate) need, and one that is self-decided upon; it should be considered a common right for anybody to decide if and when those in power are to be baffled. Bafflement always comes as unexpected, and frequently introduces its own formulation/argumentation for the very first time. Some historical acts of baffling preceded the very words of the principles they exercised, e.g. the cases of active neutrality, of socialism, of feminism, of anti-colonialism, of pretty much all of the semantic reflexions of equality. Perhaps it can even be said that for every emancipatory notion of principle, acts of bafflement had to precede these in practice before a certain principle was named and recognised.

The only resource required for the act of baffling is freedom, political freedom … To baffle is to reject the ultimatum of power politics ("we will save your life, but you will be our slave") which in contemporary times operates as the ultimatum of the choice of the *politics of "lesser evil".* To produce baffling is therefore not a small gesture, nor a "modest proposal". It is a big – and political – act of freedom, often able to make at least a tiny crack on the all-surrounding dome of dominant rationality, providing a glimpse into the possible better future and insisting that such a future is possible to materialise today, whatever the cost.

Basic Income Róza El-Hassan   Budapest, Hungary, July 2017

How to share the void? On the concept of basic income

I could speak about the recent five years, which I experienced as an activist, but when we compare all that has happened with the current situation of new media, public speech and the related problems – how they are distributed and influenced/distorted, the responsibility is very big, and somehow we think twice about how to speak and what to say. Most of the people who spoke a lot at the beginning and demanded positive social change, we never gave up the idea and we still believe in it; and we never forget the sacrifice of those, who sacrificed their private lives or even their lives. But the mechanism of the distribution of free public speech has changed a lot. Exactly because of the mechanism of distribution of reality behind new media, we still demand the freedom of all the prisoners of conscience, but the question is: How can we address those who keep them detained? What are the tools and media distribution for this to avoid mistakes?
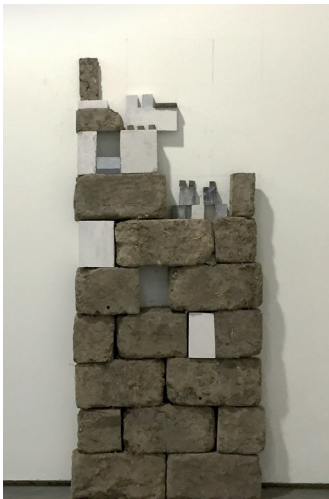
Figure 92: Róza El-Hassan, *The Gate (with the Letter Syn, S)*, Adobe Bricks and Ytong, 2016. Courtesy of the artist.

Three years ago I decided to work on ecological design and not as a political human rights activist, who attacks power. Instead of demanding systemic change I planned to set common, positive goals for conflicting parties. No more fighting – just creating something positive. Something that offers hope and gives us mental strength.

I am working in the field of earth-architecture and currently present my work on an exhibition in Museen Basel (28 May – 3 July 2016), entitled "Future's Dialect". It is a → collaborative show with Martha Rosler, who presents the counter-theses to my silent work criticising the system in a very brave and subversive way. The show is also about another topic, of which I would rather not speak extensively, because I do not want to promote just my art here, but would rather try to add something to the discourse. It refers to a topic where I do not endanger others, do not repeat false information, and where I do not have to lie. This seems still a very valuable thought for me. (Figure 92)

Instead of this topic, I have chosen the notion of basic income and art, which can be a very interesting aspect concerning the Commons, the subject of our talk. This was influenced very much by Tamás St. Auby, one of my professors at the Academy of Fine Arts in Hungary in the early nineties. He introduced us to his theory of IPUT (International Parallel Union for Telecommunications) and the notions of a basic income, subsistence level and many Fluxus-related art theories. One of the ideas was that artists must not work (or to be exact, that art cannot be described with the notions of → labour or work or production) – he was also very much in support of and often practicing a general art-strike.

In the early nineties, I studied art in the newly founded Intermedia Department in Hungary. There Tamás St. Auby spoke about his utopian theories on the border of traditional spirituality, art, and social change. One of the notions, which returned in his lectures, again and again, was the that of "basic income". We heard from St. Auby about monks in Tibet who never worked and the community always provided support at a subsistence level, we heard about the new and eternal role of artists after the Fluxus movement: Artists should never be forced to work, and the community should provide a minimal income for them to survive. Artists and monks serve the community. Work in the 1970s during state socialism in Hungary was often disconnected from creativity – but also even from real production, since there was no free market. Humans were a kind of robots and St. Auby was punished with exile for his rebellious ideas.

On the other hand, Beuys said "everybody is an artist" If we summarise the two manifestos (of St. Auby and Beuys) we ask: "Should all the people have a basic income?" Twenty years ago all this sounded to me like an artists' subjective mythology on the level of social and metaphysical utopia or subjective politics. Suddenly, in 2016, I bumped again into the notion of basic income. This time, it is a real economic proposal to provide for all people a basic minimal income, and an idea that is now broadly discussed in the media. One of the ideas in the background is to ease the tension of people who try to find jobs in vain and the social tension in general in times when there are fewer and fewer jobs. Too much social tension arises because of the competitive fight in society for work and employment. Robots will also take over some of our work.

Meanwhile, most of agriculture is automated, so most of the rural work is gone and countries have become deserts because of climate change, other countries have very high wages and it has become nearly impossible to produce (e.g. in Swit-

zerland) simple goods in the global competition for low production prices. The tendency is to disconnect work and income, to disconnect the redistribution of goods from work and by this from Marxist theory, which is based on the notion of a working class. The economic concept of basic income and the first experiments in poor countries are on their way, for example in India, and the discussions takes also place in welfare states like Switzerland. Of course, the basic income in India is ten times smaller than in welfare states, but the principle is similar.

Beyond the economic aspect, I am remembering lectures of Tamás St. Auby, which showed us that a basic income was traditionally the privilege of monks and spiritual communities or groups. A life without work was connected to a high degree of spirituality or to art. The Buddhist monks spent a lot of time on fasting and meditation. Andrej Rubljov was painting, the hippies and Fluxus people of the seventies smoked grass and were fasting, too. The question arises, how will a society psychologically and mentally regulate itself in times when machines take over most of the work and humans will receive a basic income? (Figure 93)

How will we share the void?

What will the lack of work bring, what creative work and what tools of production? How will we share the spirit? What will be the role of art? What was and will be the role of collective fasting as practiced in traditional societies, and religions (e.g. during Ramadan in Islam) or suggested in modern advertisements' stereotypes and by vegan life-style and dietary movements – although it was predicted to be nearly lost as a respected discipline in Kafka's "The Hunger Artist"? What will be the role of sports and yoga, will they be able to fill the hole of having no work?

At the end of the nineties – going hand in hand with the postmodernity of the third industrial revolution of the internet – we spoke of the creative industries – art and creativity as a tool to increase marketing and development – as described in exhibitions and texts – one of which impressed me very much, and this was "Be creative" by Marion von Osten.

Today, five years after the sudden revival of new revolutionary movements, as happened with Occupy Wall Street and the Arab Spring, followed in many places by a deep humanitarian crisis and horror, we have to think about the new roles of art. It is no longer a neo-liberal creative industry anymore, but art in times of crisis, ruptures, sectarian fights, and war. It is a question how to share the void. I think art is very important and can save society.

In my artistic works, drawings, objects and buildings, such as the Breeze earth domes or wicker laptop bags, I design often small, new solutions for an economy, ecology, and life practice. (Figure 94) In my personal artistic practice, ecological design is connected with spirituality. While describing my notion of "spiritual design" I am aware that I use a prohibited word in contemporary art. Still, we have to share and redesign the void.
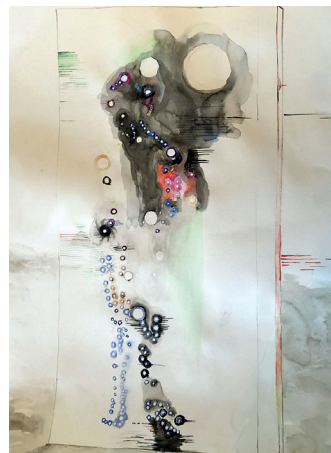
Figure 93: Róza El-Hassan, *Backlight (Arrival)*, 2016. Courtesy of the artist.

Figure 94: Róza El-Hassan, "Breeze 9 Adobe House", *Future's Dialect*, M HKA, Antwerp, 2015. Courtesy of the artist.

The Brotherhood and Unity Highway Zdenka Badovinac Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, Slovenia, June 2017

Several times in history, the Balkans were a predictor of the future in Europe: the First World War in a way started on the territory of later Yugoslavia, while the breakup of this multi-ethnic and multi-religious country heralded the growing nationalism and fundamentalism in other parts of Europe, as well as the Middle East, from where millions of refugees want to come to our increasingly xenophobic continent. Such processes of division and hostility are in the West often described as Balkanisation, a term that some also use to describe the current developments in Syria. At least in recent years, however, these processes have been undoubtedly due also to the increasing interference of international financial capital in the economic and political situations in the region.

One of the main routes of the mass exodus from the Middle East has until recently cut across the Balkans, starting in Greece. What do the Balkans herald today?

Just before the EU and Turkey concluded what has been termed a shady deal (an additional €3 billion in financial assistance, abolition of the visa system, one-on-one exchange of Syrian refugees in Turkey for Syrians in Greece), the governments in the region decided to close the Balkan route for refugees. The closing of the Balkan route precipitated a humanitarian → catastrophe in Greece and the expulsion of refugees back to Turkey.

The general attitude of all governments in the European Union seems to be that such great numbers of refugees are unmanageable, that borders should be closed, and that even more restrictive asylum policies and security measures should be introduced. On the other hand, we also witness numerous protests, analyses, and art projects that are severely critical of the new European borders, the growing xenophobia, lack of empathy, and bureaucratic treatment of the refugees. We often hear that the official procedures and media reports completely depersonalise the refugees. Journalists who oppose this portray the poignant stories of individuals and families, and artists paint the refugees' portraits in order to individualise them. In this way they all emphasise the fact that refugees are people just like us, people who used to have jobs and homes, that there are intellectuals and artists among them, in short, that they are people who could contribute greatly to the development of our European society and become useful members by integrating in it. Their integration into existing society seems to be Europe's bright future.

It is of course right to see an individual with his or her own story in every refugee, but this concern often does not go beyond a simple humanitarian gesture, overlooking for the most part the refugees' political potential. This lies in their collectivity, and to an even greater extent, in the collectivisation of their and our problems. Recognising the common interests shared by the refugees and deprivileged Europeans could lead to mobilising demands for more radical changes of European society, a society that has lost the idea of community based on → solidarity and equality.

How can artists tap into this new collective potential? How can they tap into this political potential-in-becoming and how can they start imaginative, utopian and participatory processes that will help co-create the idea of collectivity based on greater international solidarity, equality and a more equitable division of society's wealth?

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Choosing the Balkans for one of the main routes into Europe, the refugees could have hardly revived a better metaphor for the collapse of collectivity and social relationships.

A greater part of the Balkan route over the territory of former Yugoslavia followed a highway that used to be called the Brotherhood and Unity Highway in the days of Tito. Refugees were pushed off this main traffic axis across the Yugoslav part of the Balkan Peninsula and forced to walk in the fields, along riverbanks, in the woods, returning to the road only occasionally when they had to cross a border. Understandably, they were unaware of the history of this highway, whose → construction began shortly after the Second World War with the aim to connect all of Yugoslavia from Slovenia in the north to Macedonia's border with Greece in the → south. During the war in Croatia, the highway was shut down for traffic until the conflict ended in 1995.

Figure 95: Marija Mojca Pungerčar, *Brotherhood and Unity,* 2006. Work from photo installation. Authors of photographs: Leopold Pungerčar Sr. (left, 1958), Nada Žgank (right, 2006). Courtesy of the artist.

The Brotherhood and Unity Highway had been more or less closed for → migrants on the Balkan route. For many of us living on the territory of former Yugoslavia, this highway, built in part by volunteer youth brigades after the Second World War, symbolises the idea of collectivity and solidarity. (Figure 95) In socialist Yugoslavia there was free healthcare, schools and kindergartens for everyone, nearly every village had a cultural centre and every town its museum, open and working. Today, the picture is quite different. Education and healthcare need to be paid for, a majority of the main museums in the region are closed or else barely surviving, people are losing their jobs. Ruthless austerity policies have swept across Europe, with the greatest numbers of victims in the Balkans, starting with Greece. Thus the Balkan route symbolises not only the refugees' loss of homes, but also the loss of our own communities, not only our former common country but also society in general.

Some of the refugee centres along the route were housed in former factories where workers from various republics of Yugoslavia used to work. Many of the factories failed as a result of the current economic crisis, or else greatly downsized. Looking at European countries encircled by barbed wire, like Slovenia today, we cannot help but think of a prison or even a concentration camp. Someone likened the protected, paranoid Slovenia and the "river of refugees" to two ships passing, with the passengers mutely observing each other. Yet the two sets of passengers have much more in common than it might seem at first glance. They are connected by loss – the loss of community, be it the homeland or a society of solidarity, which has been replaced in Europe by a society of austerity and security.

With its present and its socio-historical and cultural past, including the experience of artistic avant-gardes, the Balkan route represents great potential for shaping the imaginary of a different, alternative community. A community that unites the migrant experience with the memory of a society that did manage, at least for a few decades, to maintain brotherhood and unity among diverse nations, a society in which workers could stay on in a factory for their entire careers, and in which the idea of the → non-aligned nations of the Third World took shape.

The Balkan route leads to the recognition of the common interests of all migrants of the world: those who have lost their homes and those who have lost their society, and with it, not only conditions for a better life, but also their dreams of a future.

Instituent practices against neoliberalism and the constituent power of the common

The elemental tension crossing the problems of the common at this moment in time runs between

1. the proliferation of practices which establish other modes of producing, instituting, organising and creating unprecedented forms of sociality and politicisation, and which foretell and produce new models of social and economic organisation; and
2. the introduction of these practices into the reproduction logic of an economic and political power structure defined by power relations historically built by relational capital, and still with a high capacity to impose the systemic tendencies which are somewhat affected by the proliferating rootstock of the common and its practices.

Therefore, we cannot discuss common practices without conceptualising the different tendencies engendered by the capitalist power structure, those which seek to impose different logics of expropriation and privatisation on the overall socioeconomic and ecological-productive circuit. By definition, this logic is exponentially expansive and operates, relentlessly, to destroy the objective possibilities of building common practices which can be accumulative and expansive in equal measure. As things stand, this involves analysing the minimum conditions for forming the common, circumventing an analysis of its tendentiality as a pure network of spontaneous behaviour to begin to understand it as a reality of practical behaviours and epistemologies, allowing the foundations of anti-capitalist politics to be constructed and enabling it to operate on the horizon of a major post-capitalist transformation.

As a result, the minimum conditions of the common today are found through:

1. imposed and radically egalitarian policies, which involve the establishment of life possibilities unconditioned by different artificial scarcity policies imposed by neoliberalism, and which guarantee the potential to think and organise the common through the huge potential of social creativity, repressed and destroyed by the currently imposed forms of hardship and mass poverty; and
2. the guarantee that their implementation for solutions formulated in accordance with the paradigm of the common will be conceived by socially guaranteeing the transition costs for groups, classes, territories and collectives that will inevitably see a way of life affected by countless public policies and will have to destroy neoliberal institutionality to give rise to the possibility of the common.

This diagnosis entails thinking about the conceptual and practical leaps which new political subjects must organise and take to reduce – or tendentially close – the gap that exists between practices, thereby creating and disseminating the common (commoning) and a constituent power of the common. This power must in turn impose itself on a dynamic network of socio-political devices which are prone to generating greater productivity demonstrated by instituent practices of the common (commoning), which materialise as counter-powers and capacities with the ability to deconstruct the reproduction of important areas and subsystems in the capitalist social structure.

Put another way, institutional critique must simultaneously produce institutional crisis. This means that the institutions of neoliberalism and the neoliberal state – the warp and weft of present-day society – must be analysed through the differential interceding between their predatory and authoritarian practice and the normativity that the logic of common practice imposes as a definition of a possible collective. For this same reason, it implies that a sizeable component of the reflections and practice of the common must focus at once on how to unleash the crisis for institutions which today manage dispossession and on the type of intervention methods which are more conducive to their operations being blocked, paralysed or called into question in the public sphere so their legitimacy is weakened or disappears in the current public debate. Proof that the practice of the common is correct lies in the fact that neoliberal institutions are contested, enter into crisis, and are, by and large, destroyed as instruments of social management. Expressed synthetically, we can corroborate that if an institutional crisis does not occur and the possibility of destroying the cluster of neoliberal practices does not open, the practice of *commoning* is in no way effective as a criterion of social order.

An analysis such as this calls for a critique of the mainstream theories of the common as a set of infinitely expansive practices, accumulating to automatically generate – or at worst to generate a spurious teleological logic – a progressive dynamic which substitutes current predatory capitalist practices of common assets and the common, and gradually recovers social rights which, in the past few decades, were conquered and destroyed through the multidimensional effects of different strategies of accumulation by dispossession and the pure political violence implemented by the dominant and elite classes. This perspective asserts that the institutionality of the common axiomatically produces the effectiveness of social articulation and its logic of operation, and is enough to displace the current practices of expropriation and dispossession, thus opening the road to the accumulation of the logic of the common as a form of social, economic and ecological regulation. Moreover, it surmises that the proliferation and addition of common practices spontaneously shapes the logics of social reproduction, which could become tendentially dominant to form new universals on the horizon of social reproduction. The reality is an opposed situation: without destruction or, at least, without the decisive displacement of neoliberal dispossession practices, the practices of the common solely represent the verification of the subordination and enfeeblement of the possibilities of collective action in the current forms of domination and exploitation imposing the neoliberal capitalist logic. There is no common policy that is not also a policy that works for a post-capitalist horizon to destroy the current neoliberal paradigm.

The overriding theory in this text is that we must simultaneously consider the instituent practices of the common and the political dynamics which, through their proliferation, grant feasibility to a constituent power of the common with purely anti-capitalist content and in the field of vision of the great post-capitalist transformation. Without thinking and organising the former there is no chance of expanding and consolidating the socioeconomic productivity and disruptive impact of the latter.

Figure 96: Art & Language, *Blurting in Art & Language*, 1974.

Corrected Slogans is the title of the album recorded by Art & Language with Red Krayola in 1976. This was their first → collaboration, and the result is pop music about the history of imperialism and communism. That slogans should be corrected was discussed by Lenin in 1917, during the spontaneous revolt of the workers in July of the same year. By noticing that political slogans have their own lifetime, Lenin observed that "every particular slogan must be deduced from the totality of specific features of a definite political situation". This in the case of revolutionary Russia meant that the slogan calling for "the transfer of all state power to the Soviets" was valid only between 27 February and 4 July 1917. After the latter date the call for "transfer" was ridiculous, because the state had used most aggressive means to prevent the existence of the Soviets. In the new situation, only the equal measures taken by the working class (i.e. armed insurrection) could be the answer.

In 1967 Carl Andre came up with a slogan summarising the then actual discussion on the social and political status of conceptual art: "art is what we do; culture is what is done to us". This is a clear separation of art from cultural assimilation. It is a declaration against the ideological constraints of cultural materialism. In 1973 Art & Language corrected this optimistic slogan by claiming that "art is what we do; culture is what we do to other artists". It was this question of contamination that pushed the conceptual art group to question what their status in the world of art was.

After their participation at *Documenta 5* in 1972, Art & Language was seeking ways to use collective work as a heuristic device for learning and research. The heuristic possibilities of working as a collective were understood as something genuinely against the mediation of institutions. According to Art & Language, the curators and art critics, as the best examples of institutional mediators, cannot introduce anything new to our understanding of the contradictions of art practices. As Charles Harrison once wrote, "when management speaks, nobody learns". Accordingly, the operations of Art & Language were not divided among exhibiting, theory, criticism, and activism. These were all understood as questions related to practice, and they were all operating in the strange state of equilibrium. As a result, Art & Language's practice at the same time involved the production of theory (some sort of wild combination of analytical philosophy and Marxism), exhibitions (including exhibitions in commercial galleries), criticism (or as they called it, the "naming and shaming" of mainstream art journalism), and political activism. This last aspect of the group's practice was the most troublesome, and the most extreme outcome of this took place in the belly of the beast, New York City. What happened is that the group of people involved in the New York section of Art & Language aimed to utilise the group's practice by conceiving a model that would allow for others that were not part of the collective to use the possibilities inherent in the heuristic model of indexing. The outcome of this was simplifications of referential contradictions (i.e., lessening the conceptual pandemonium), which led to the widening of the group's structure of organisation. This meant that after 1973, or more precisely after the *Blurting in New York* project, the social dimension of conceptual art practice became more evident. (Figure 96) In the history of Art & Language, this meant the collaboration with other art collectives such as AMCC (Artists Meeting for Cultural Change) that led to inner contradictions and fractures. By introducing elements that were foreign to its practice (Maoism being the principal case), Art & Language unleashed unforeseen contradictions that ended up with a few of its members abandoning art altogether for work on unionisation (Karl Beveridge and

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Carole Condé in Canada, Ian Burn in Australia, Michael Corris in New York, David Rushton in the UK).

We cannot understand this unfolding of conceptual art practice into politics without grasping the fact that at the very core of the radical practice of Art & Language lay an uncompromising detachment from institutions. The main driving force for Art & Language, and for most of the other conceptual artists, was the struggle against the institutional administration of art practices. The real core of conceptual art was never its style of grids, tautology, dematerialisation of art, and the aesthetic of administration. Art & Language did everything to oppose → bureaucratisation. Their momentary union with AMCC was not an arbitrary addition of politics into the art; it was the logical outcome of their artistic practice.

When in 1975 some members of New York section of Art & Language (Michael Corris, Jill Breakstone, Andrew Menard) visited Belgrade and attempted, together with Yugoslav conceptual artists, to index the language used in discussing → self-management in socialism, they wanted to double these contradictions. The main topic of this project was a critique of "cultural imperialism", but more forcefully it was aiming to open up a space for art that is not mediated by any state institutions. On a global scale, the call for self-management (a project that was never finalised) undermined the ideological postulates of Cold War policies that the artists from the US and those from Yugoslavia were communicating through the channels of state institutions. In Belgrade, in October 1975, this project had an immense influence not only on conceptual artists (especially on Zoran Popović and Goran Đorđević), but also on theoreticians of self-management who in the heyday of questioning the bureaucratisation of culture turned to the writings of artists published in *The Fox* journal (and especially to Mel Ramsden's "On Practice"). This aspect was especially strong, since one of the fundamental postulates of Yugoslav self-management was based on the idea of the withering away of the state.

On another hand Art & Language, after the episodes with Yugoslav self-management socialists, Australian national museums, and New York Maoists, realised that they could not stand for both uncontaminated art practices and the organisation of culture. In this moment of dissolving of the core idea of Art & Language (the so-called "monstrous détente"), the group went through a process of retrospection, the lessons of which are still active today. They could have corrected the slogan of conceptual art once more in 1976 by saying that "art is what we do; culture is what we organise together". Art & Language never did that. Those members who wanted to do art went to galleries and made paintings; the other group that sought to organise the culture dissolved into the union activism and designing banners. The strongest moment of the former was the painting from 1980 called *The Portrait of V.I. Lenin in the Style of Jackson Pollock*; the latter never produced a masterpiece, but gave clues as to how to "go-on" in the art without exhibiting at all.

The central source of power in the digital world today is the network effects stemming from the control of data. A network effect is defined as something whose value to all participants increases as more people participate in a particular platform or → network. There are many examples, from the telephone system, to social media, to marketplaces, where many independent parts (e.g., devices, people, organisations) interact with each other and constitute a large complex system.

When network effects result from the links within data then these are called "data-network effects".[213] These occur when a service becomes smarter as it gets more data from its users. Digital platforms record their users' activities, link to one another to build giant data-networks, and compute them with machine-learning algorithms. The more data users contribute, the smarter the service becomes as the users' data are analysed to make predictions, recommendations, and performance improvements, as well as improve interfaces and so on. Examples range from Google's search result optimisations, to Amazon's product recommendations, to Facebook's friend suggestions, to Uber's pooling of taxi riders. Over time, users become increasingly addicted to these services because of the personalisations and improvements that have been made based on their own data. These new means of production through capturing, predicting, and monetising people's behavioural surplus generate exponential growth and monopoly power for these platforms.

The power of monopolies leads to problems ranging from the threat of censorship to algorithmic biases in the curation of content, to manipulation of people's behaviour. A recent report from MIT Center for Civic Media notes these platforms that host and inform our networked public sphere are unelected, unaccountable, and often impossible to audit or oversee.[214] Needless to say, none of these digital platforms are public, but instead private digital spaces that are designed to feel like public ones. Furthermore, the report examines alternative platforms which seek to confront these power imbalances. These include open source and federated social media applications, such as Diaspora and Mastodon, as well as peer-to-peer distributed systems based on blockchain technologies. Hence, the report concludes that there is no straightforward technical solution to the problem of platform monopolies.

> The reality is that most people do not want to run their own web servers or social network nodes. They want to engage with the web through user-friendlier platforms, and these will be constrained by the same forces that drive consolidation today.

Another fundamental issue with platform monopolies is data ownership, when we take the → labour point of view.[215] Data ownership is usually discussed in the framework of data interoperability, that users are locked in these platforms because they cannot take their social network or data traces with them if they want

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213 Matt Turck, *The Power of Data Network Effects* (4 January 2016), http://matturck.com/the-power-of-data-network-effects/ (accessed 10 October 2017).

214 Digital Currency Initiative and the Center for Civic Media at MIT, *Decentralised Web Report* (September 2017), http://dci.mit.edu/decentralizedweb (accessed 10 October 2017).

215 In 2008, to free our data-networks from the social media monopolies, we've proposed an open data structure "User Labor" to outline the metrics of participation in social web services. Its aim was to construct criteria and a context for determining the value of user labor, which is a monetised asset for the service provider but not for the user herself. Burak Arıkan & Engin Erdogan, *User Labor* (1 May 2008), http://userlabor.org (accessed 10 October 2017).

to migrate to another service. Although demand for data portability points to an important problem, the value of a user's data in such platforms often remains opaque to them.[216] The spectacle users create on those platforms (through creating social content and meta-content) is not a by-product of use, but the product itself, as mentioned in Tiziana Terranova's seminal essay "Free Labor: Producing Culture for the Digital Economy".[217] Moreover, as these platforms expand their reach to everyday life and become part of the surveillance apparatus, this situation can have serious consequences for people's personal and professional lives. Shoshana Zuboff explains such exploitation of people's behavioural surplus as a parasitic form of profit, and calls it "surveillance capitalism":

> This is how in our own lifetimes we observe capitalism shifting under our gaze: once profits from products and services, then profits from speculation, and now profits from surveillance.[218]

With the new version of the Internet Protocol (IP), any device in the world can be assigned a unique address for identification and location tracking. This technical preparation for the so-called Internet of Things[219] makes increasingly critical the question of who owns and controls data infrastructures. Do you own a self-driving car's sensor data captured from your neighbourhood? Are you in control of a nanoengineered drug's data captured from your body? Are you paid rent for the use of sensor data captured from your home? As our behaviour is systematically forecasted, we have gradually entered a "society of control" that monitors, simulates and pre-mediates individual identities in relation to their data trails. Data oligarchies holding such power will only continue to grow, and the dispossession of our data will increasingly constitute what I call *data asymmetries*, until we move from connectivity to collectivity, build new purposeful exploitation-free autonomous zones, and reroute our life activities in → solidarity with each other. (Figure 97)

Graph Commons (graphcommons.com) is a collaborative platform for mapping, analysing and publishing data-networks. It empowers people and organisations to transform their data into interactive maps and untangle complex relations that impact them and their communities.

Graph Commons members have been using the platform for investigative journalism, creative research, strategising, organisational analysis, activism, archival exploration, and art curating.
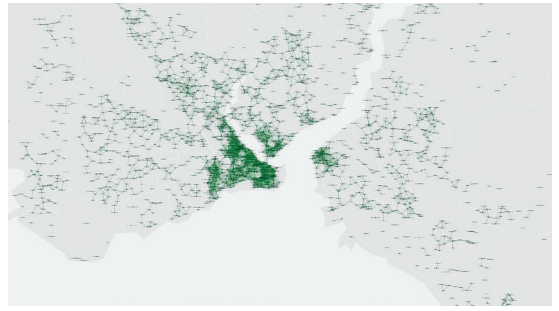
Figure 97: Burak Arıkan, *Network of Mosques*, Istanbul Design Biennale, 2012. Courtesy of the artist.

Figure 98: Burak Arıkan, *Graph Commons workshop at Transmediale*, 4–5 February 2016, Berlin. Courtesy of the artist.

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216   Burak Arıkan, *Meta-Markets* (2007), https://burak-arikan.com/meta-markets/ (accessed 10 October 2017). An online stock market for social media profiles, in order to evaluate the value of user labour on social media.
217   Tiziana Terranova, "Free Labor: Producing Culture for the Digital Economy", *Electronic Book Review* (20 June 2003), http://www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/technocapitalism/voluntary (accessed 10 October 2017).
218   Shoshana Zuboff, *Big Other: Surveillance Capitalism and the Prospects of an Information Civilisation* (9 April 2015), http://www.shoshanazuboff.com/new/recent-publications-and-interviews/big-other-surveillance-capitalism-and-the-prospects-of-an-information-civilization/ (accessed 10 October 2017).
219   See the critique of the Internet of Things in Bruce Sterling's pamphlet *The Epic Struggle of the Internet of Things* (Strelka Press, 2014).

Using Graph Commons, activists in Brazil have mapped public-private partnerships causing ecological damage in the Amazon rainforest. (Figure 98) Journalists in Turkey have mapped the network of NGOs aiding Syrian refugees. An art foundation in New York maintains an open graph about their grantee network. A Zurich-based NGO monitors → lobbying influences in the Swiss parliament. These are some of the examples of the many data projects, created in a variety of languages, and on a variety of topics, by people and organisations around the world using the Graph Commons platform.

Graph Commons is an open platform where you can discover content in variety of ways. You can view featured graphs on the homepage; search for people, organisations, and concepts that → interest you; view data (node) profiles and explore relations and graphs. Members have profile pages where you can view their published graphs, their work in progress, and what they recommend on the platform.

Organisations with extensive data needs, such as art institutions, museums, think tanks, civil society organisations, media journalism groups, or specialised projects, use a hub on Graph Commons. A hub is an organisation's data portal, where you can search and explore their curated graph database.

Using platform features, Graph Commons members collectively experiment in the act of network mapping as an ongoing practice: search across variety of graphs, explore data-networks at scale, invite collaborators to join their work and ask others to contribute. We believe everybody will find a unique way to use Graph Commons in their own connected world.

Friendship Nick Aikens

I would like to introduce the term "friendship" in relation to the referential field the commons. My reason for proposing the term is an interest in understanding how the proposition of the commons might shift from being something abstracted – what the preamble on the glossary website rightly describes as a "discursive illusion" – to something we could understand on a more human, subjective and emotional level. What does it mean *to be in common*? What types of relationships, or modes of being together, would that involve?

These are questions I hope to answer via the research and writing of Céline Condorelli, who I worked with at the Van Abbe in 2014, and her expanded investigation into the discourse on friendship – much of which was bought together in a small publication titled *The Company She Keeps*.[220] Drawing from the relatively brief but rich discourse on friendship – from classical philosophers like Aristotle to contemporary theorists such as Agamben – Condorelli explores, through a series of conversations with a philosopher, a sociologist and two curators, different genealogies, examples and propositions for friendship. In thinking about friendship in relation to the commons, I went back to this book and some of the references it maps. I was struck by how we might understand the role of friendship in relation

220 Céline Condorelli, *The Company She Keeps*, eds. Nick Aikens and Polly Staple (London: Book Works, Chisenhale Gallery and Van Abbemuseum, 2014). The publication was produced in conjunction with Condorelli's exhibitions at Chisenhale Gallery (Céline Condorelli, 2 May – 22 June 2014) and the Van Abbemuseum (as part of *Positions #1*, 5 July – 12 October 2014). Condorelli's conversations with the sociologist Avery Gordon, which comprise a major part of the publication, were commissioned as part of the *How To Work Together* think-tank, and can be read in full here: http://howtoworktogether.org/events/avery-gordon-talk/ (accessed 17 June 2016).

to a project of the commons, how we might consider friendship as a form of $\rightarrow$ solidarity, how friendships between the excluded have provided the grounds and means with which to resist systems of power and elites, and how the concept of the multitude – so closely aligned with that of the commons – might be thought of in terms of an infinite friendship.

I first proposed writing about friendship some months ago. Now, writing as 2016 draws to a close, considering friendship within the context of the "discursive illusion" of the commons, has become more tangled, complicated and harder for me to articulate. In a year in which the world has become more divided and polarised than I have experienced in my lifetime – our ability to talk and write with genuine candour about the notion of friendship, of *being in common*, feels further away than ever before. My own sentiments are fuelled by the $\rightarrow$ residual shock and my personal sadness at Britain choosing to divorce itself from the European project, compounded by the realisation that the rise of right-wing populism (from the successful campaign in the US of Donald Trump on a platform of white, supremacist bigotry to the increased withdrawal of civil liberties by the Law and Justice Party in Poland) has severe consequences for our collective social, political and ecological futures. Within such a frightening conjuncture, what does something like the "discursive illusion" of the commons now mean? What traction, as critical theorist Gene Ray has poignantly asked, can such theoretical speculations hold when we are operating in what Ray terms "the end game".[221] This is not to suggest that the European project, for example should somehow be equated with the notion of the commons. However, there seems to be significant impulses that straddle both. Britain's vote to leave exposes itself as indicative of a worrying trend, building for some time but articulating itself with horrific veracity in 2016 as a rejection of a shared purpose, a shared set of values, rights and laws – or a more broader understanding of equality. This can be echoed in many parts of the world that appear increasingly divided through the politics that is pushed and peddled as the only answer to globalisation's inequalities.

1. Friendship among elites (men, people in positions of power)

The commons, unlike previous referential fields in the glossary – subjectivisation, historicisation, geo-politics and constituencies – is propositional. It demarcates a potential political and ideological space. It is, as the glossary site notes, seen as a way out of the cul de sac of neoliberal hegemony. At the end of 2016 that potential space feels more illusory, more closed than before. It also feels harder, but that much more necessary, to contemplate its possibility. And within that, perhaps the attempt to bring it from a "discursive illusion" to something that can be practiced and thought about in terms of relationships and modes of doing is ever more urgent.

I want to start by considering the history of the discourse on friendship and the type of precedents it would seem important to work against in any project of the commons. In *The Company She Keeps*, Condorelli's conversation with the philosopher Johan Hartle begins by discussing friendship as something that takes place among men – and is subsequently written about by men. Derrida addresses this issue in the opening pages of *Politics of Friendship*, and as Condorelli writes: "the

221   Gene Ray, "Writing the Ecocide-Genocide Knot: Indigenous Knowledge and Critical Theory in the Endgame", *South* 8 [*Documenta* 14 #3] (May 2016), http://www.documenta14.de/en/south/895_writing_the_ecocide_genocide_knot_indigenous_knowledge_and_critical_theory_in_the_endgame (accessed 17 June 2016).

issue remains. No female philosophers have written about friendship."[222] Friendship remains entirely patriarchal and fratriachal. "They are", Condorelli writes, "closely linked to the notions of freedom and democracy stemming from the idea of a nation of brothers (and with the terrifying consequences that we can only live together because we are the same, share the same land, the same birth, the same blood, the same language)."[223]

What we see emerging in the classical discourse on friendship is that which takes place among propertied, male elites. It is a notion of friendship that is tied to a particular sense of belonging – to a land, a class, a hierarchy. In many senses such a classical understanding of friendship would seem to work against the notion of the common, or of *being in common*, as, by its very nature it excludes people.

It is in the domain of exclusion that the trend of isolationism and protectionism that has prevailed in 2016 finds itself. If I speak of Britain's decision to leave the European Union, for example – it is decision to exclude itself from a shared political, cultural and ideological project. A decision – or desire – to exclude peoples who might not the share the same land, the same birth, the same blood, the same language, that became such a defining feature of the populist rhetoric that pervaded the EU referendum debate, and which was echoed across the Atlantic in Trump's frightening election rallies. Yet there is also the very real sense of exclusion that the disenfranchised feel from patriarchal and fratriachal power that now bulldozes around the world through globalisation's economic machinery, and which has pulled so many into the clutches of right-wing populism. Indeed, the friendships among male, propertied elites that Aristotle refers to, are something that is echoed in many different systems and structures of power operative today.

It is here worth picking up on Agamben's understanding of friendship written in his short essay *The Friend,* which Condorelli and Hartle explore and which might serve as a link or trajectory towards the notion of the commons. Interestingly, Agamben returns to Aristotle and his notion of consent. Quoting Aristotle, Agamben writes: "One must also therefore consent that his friend exists, and this happens by sharing acts and thoughts in common". This idea of friendship takes it away from the notion of sharing property, language, and blood, to an idea of sharing thoughts and acts, what Condorelli describes as "a process of co-existence through doing and thinking".[224]

2. Friendship and alternative models

In a series of conversations, Condorelli and the socialist Avery Gordon attempt to chart a history of friendships among the excluded – among women and slaves. If the history of friendship has been treated by philosophers as something that not only takes place among male elites, but something that is abstracted – what is described in the book as "merely a cipher for the political, which makes it fundamentally exclusionary" – Condorelli and Gordon are interested in charting the modalities of friendship that are more pragmatic in terms of how the excluded implemented different forms of resistance.[225] Drawing on the examples of the early suffragette movement at the beginning of the 20th century, and later in the peace camps on Greenham Common in 1980s Britain, where women occupied the

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222 Condorelli, *The Company She Keeps*, 12.
223 Ibid.
224 Ibid., 19.
225 Ibid., 26.

Common in protest against the decision to house cruise missiles there, friendship emerges as a modality for social change, a means to express and harness → solidarity against a common cause.

Equally significant is Avery Gordon's research into the history of friendship among slaves. Drawing on John Hope Franklin and Loren Scweninger's book *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation*, friendship emerges as a key tool among runaways. As slaves were prohibited from basic freedoms – prohibited from free association and from intellectual pursuits, such as reading and writing, runaways' friendships provided a whole network and access to legal help, hideouts, food and drink. As Gordon writes: "Friendship, working well together, helping out, solidarity, keeping secrets, these were crucial aspects in African-American slave culture, because the absence of public recognition and support (worse, its criminalisation) meant that you had to create your systems of support within your own cultural milieu".[226] What emerges in all of these different models of friendship is a structure of solidarity.

3. Befriending ideas

What is crucial to Condorelli and Avery's understanding of friendship, and something that may be useful in relation to the notion of the commons, is her insistence on not only befriending people, but also ideas, systems, values – what she calls "elective affinities". In relation to cultural practice, this can be considered in terms of the books one reads, the affinities one holds with certain ways of thinking, the associations that one draws into one's work: what we surround ourselves with. Hannah Arendt, as Condorelli tells us and from whom the title of the book is borrowed, defines cultural practices as "the company one choses to keep in the present as well as in the past".[227] This subsequently emerges in the book as a productive definition of what friendship could be. "Befriending issues", Condorelli argues, "is also the point at which, whilst still being an elective affinity and working on a personal level, it also has consequences on a larger scale".[228]

If 2016 has seen a politics of exclusion rise to the surface like never before in my lifetime, it seems an immediate task is to reflect on a model of friendship that can find common cause – such as the friendships that emerged from political movements like the suffragettes, the militant activists of Greenham Common or the slaves. In this regard it is important to reflect on Condorelli's central question in the publication: *What can friends do?*

In the book, we are introduced to Spinoza's understanding and definition of friendship: "for him", Johan Hartle writes, "friendship is an affectionate relationship in and through which humans naturally increase their *potentia agendi*, their vital capacities".[229] Linked very closely to Spinoza's understanding of friendship is the notion of a common understanding and striving to achieve a common intellect. Unlike classical philosophy, Spinoza's notion of friendship goes beyond abstractions: As Hartle tell us, he writes in *Ethics* "people bind themselves by those bonds most apt to make one people of them and, absolutely, to do those things which serve to strengthen friendships".[230] It also means that we are taken into the concrete social

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226 Ibid., 36.
227 Ibid., 15.
228 Ibid., 43.
229 Ibid., 16.
230 Ibid.

existence of human beings. Far for being a mere social accord, friendship emerges as something that is also garnered through material → labour.

4. Institutional friendship

There remains, unresolvable for now, a disheartening disconnect between my own reflections on friendship, its relationship to the commons, and the social, political and ecological reality we inhabit today. If events like Britain's EU referendum or Trump's election have revealed one thing to me, is that our task in arguing for a certain vision of culture and its relationships to politics just became more urgent. But by the same token, they also revealed the chasm between the "discursive illusion" and the reality we now face. To bridge that chasm language needs to be more precise, our insistence on arguing for a more inclusive type of politics that much clearer. As Gene Ray writes: "It's necessary to name what we are living through today – this new situation. The names we choose shape the frame, imply what is possible, favour some pathways over others".[231]

In this sense, and on an institutional level, the model of friendship as the development of a common understanding between people seems cogent. Friendships exist without contracts, and by inference without obligations. In this sense, it is unspoken. As Condorelli writes "we however, can and do speak to our friends, which is already to act in friendship, as a practice, a process".[232] What would that process engender in an institutional context – either across institutions, such as through a project like L'Internationale, or amongst its various constituents? What, in this current reality, is a practice of friendship? How might the politics of friendship – a politics that is premised on notions of solidarity, the common, of *being in common*, rather than the exclusionary, serve to move past our various discursive illusions?

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Heterotopian Homonymy Miglena Nikolchina   Sofia, Bulgaria, September 2016

Figure 99: Destructive Creation, *In Step with Time*, 2011, http://destructivecreation.com/. Courtesy of the artistic collective.

"Heterotopian homonymy" designates a reversal in the meaning of key theoretical and political concepts – and, by extension, of the political implications of artworks – due to geopolitical divisions and the traffic of fantasies of the Other that such divisions involve. Foucault compares heterotopia to a mirror: I gaze at the mirror in order to find out how I look; by returning the gaze the mirror exerts a counter effect; it influences my stance and prompts me to undertake certain actions with regard to my appearance; that is, it forces me to change in response to it; I become its reflection. The mirror image, hence, becomes an agent in the real world; it solidifies into existence. In a text that appeared in print later (it was delivered as a radio talk in 1966, a year before "Of Other Spaces", which has for many years served as the major source for this idea) Foucault lists various cases of heterotopia: from the parents' bed turned by playing children into a sea to brothels; from gardens to museums and libraries. In this text, as in the later one, Foucault emphasises the capacity of heterotopias to contest "all other spaces", as well as their propensity to either make the real world illusory, or, indeed, impose their own reality and materialise (Protestant colonies in North America and the

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231 Ray, "Writing the Ecocide-Genocide Knot".
232 Condorelli, *The Company She Keeps*, 20.

Jesuit colony in Paraguay are among his examples). This traffic of reality is, hence, part and parcel of the capacity of heterotopias (for our civilisation, Foucault suggests the ship as an example) to act as reservoirs of imagination. Foucault, hence, conceives heterotopias as multiple enclaves within the dominant society. Drawing on Foucault's idea, the Bulgarian sociologist Andrej Bundzhulov applies the concept of heterotopia to the global division during the Cold War. What interests Bundzhulov is the undeniable propensity of the communist regimes (I call these communist due to a heterotopian loss of proper term) to reflect – by "representing, contesting, and inverting" – the structures of Western democracies. (Figure 99) My own contention is that this was a two-way process: there was a traffic of (ir)reality, which produced reservoirs of imagination, and with it predictable or not that predictable real consequences.

An example of such heterotopian mirroring – representing, contesting, and inverting ideas about "art" – surfaces in the encounter between "socialist realism" and "abstract expressionism", as I have tried to sum it up in the following table:

1. Political — 7. Free
2. Ideological — 6. Spontaneous
3. Collectivist — 5. Elitist
4. Figurative — 4. Abstract
5. Accessible — 3. Individualist
6. Prescriptive — 2. Self-expressive
7. State-controlled — 1. Marketable
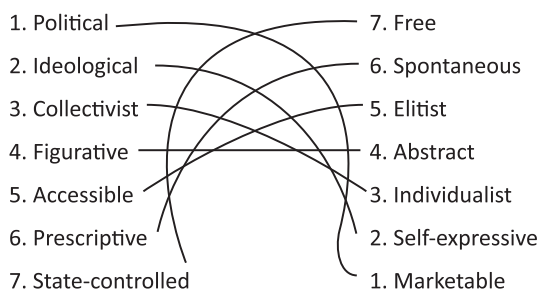
Socialist-realist art was expected to be politically engaged, ideologically bound, collectivist, and accessible to the "people". In order to do this, it was assumed it had to be figurative, thus follow a prescriptive, normative aesthetics, whose observance was controlled by the institutions of the state – from artists' unions to the secret police. In the "mirror" of capitalist democratic heterotopia, abstract expressionism inverted state control into freedom, prescriptiveness into spontaneity, accessibility into elitism, collectivism into individualism, ideology into self-expression, political engagement into profit. These reversals accrued to the opposition between figurative and abstract: as a result, paradoxically, abstraction became a form of resistance to the oppressive regimes in Eastern Europe and hence its very presumed apoliticality transformed into a political stance. This specular process was hardly one-way. Later revelations about CIA involvement in the promotion of abstract expressionism allow the construal of abstractionism as the political doppelganger of socialist realism. Moreover, politically active artists in the West turned to figurative art, seeing their freedom in the collectivism and ideological commitment that were a matter of restriction and oppression in the East. The cumulative effect of the traffic of reflections was that, while the mirror lasted, art was perceived as centrally important for society. After the mirror splintered, the two sides collapsed into each other and neutralised each other: art turned out to be controlled (left side) by the market (right side) and about as important as any other commodity, while its various heterotopias (exhibitions, performances, galleries, museums, etc.) struggle to retrieve its freedom via political significance. Form *per se* (abstract versus figurative, and so on) has been neutered and has lost its crucial role.

In short, heterotopian homonymy may enhance fantasy and imagination, inspire resistance, and bring about change, but it can also produce confusion, neutralisa-

tion of meanings, annihilation of sense, amnesia and conceptual "autism". A striking case of a deadly doppelgänger encounter is provided by Nicolas Guilhot's study of the genealogy of "transition" from Marx to his Stalinist interpretations, on the one hand, and to Western modernisation theory, on the other, and of the ensuing conceptual collapse in the post-Cold War "transition to democracy". According to Guilhot, parallel theoretical developments have led to the conceptualisation of what he terms "transition 2," which inverses key aspects of Marx's idea of transition. Thus, while Marx's "transition 1" refers to a process which can be described as non-teleological, non-prescriptive, productive/genetic, simultaneous, autonomous, and revolutionary, "transition 2" renders the process as teleological, prescriptive, coercive/educational, sequenced, heteronomous, and evolutionary. It thus comes to pass that "transition 2" is shared by Soviet Stalinist and Western modernisation theorists, and is consequently applied to explain social change in Eastern Europe in both the period before and the period after the end of the Cold War: the result is that the concept of transition *per se* is rendered senseless and loses any explicatory power it might have had.

My point is: the glossary of common knowledge should be mindful of heterotopian homonymy. Lack of awareness may render communication boring at best, or impossible at worst, as the inverted and contested meanings silently erase each other. Taking it into consideration, on the other hand, might produce the benefits of the "parallax gap" revealing the truth in the irreducible breach between the homonymous viewpoints, in the traumatic core that severs them and yet keeps them together.

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Conceptual art as an intuitive choice: Postmodernism and post-conceptual art in Czechoslovakia

> *... je vous l'ai déjà un peu introduit la dernière fois, par cette remarque qu'il était tout à fait impossible de penser quoi que ce soit qui tienne debout sur cette bipartition si difficile, si problématique, pour les mathématiciens, qui est à savoir, est-ce que tout peut être réductible à la logique pure, c'est-à-dire à un discours qui se soutient d'une structure bien déterminée. Est-ce qu'il n'y a pas un élément absolument essentiel qui reste, quoi que nous fassions pour l'enserrer de cette structure, le réduire, qui tout de même reste un dernier noyau et qu'on appelle intuition.*[233]

1. Postmodern ideas found their most diverse application in the field of architecture and architectural theory. This was the case also in Prague at the beginning of the 1980s, in the thought of the theoreticians Jana Ševčíková and her husband Jiří Ševčík.[234] Their programmatic texts, following on from Venturi, Jencks, as well as Norberg-Schulz, proclaimed the demise of the hegemony of the international style, the form of which in socialist Czechoslovakia was rather closer to the old avant-garde idea of architecture as machines for living. Postmodernism demarcated a space for theorising in contemporary art, and provided ground for an understanding of architectural creativity as symbolic production. Postmodern ideas were applied also in the fine arts, to where the focus of → interest and organisational activity of the aforementioned Ševčík couple shifted in the second half of the 1980s.

In Prague, during the period of postmodernism and trans-avant-garde (approximately in the period of 1985–1994), reading of the Old Testament, mythological tales, texts and passages became popular. The discovery of Beuys, Cucchi and Paladino gave new life also to Freudian psychoanalysis, which presented an academically acceptable reason for fascination by forgotten narratives and displaced rituals. Beuys's political engagement during this period had no discernible significance, his works were revered as relics and his personal appeal was that of the allure of a pagan priest. The vernacular symbolistic ground of postmodernism was closely linked with the inspirational sources of "imaginative" → tendencies – surrealism, post-surrealism, informalism, figurative painting and similar currents, which occupied a privileged position in the Czechoslovak cultural tradition of the 20th century. Despite this, from the very first moments, the protagonists of postmodernism, immediately found themselves in direct conflict with them. The cause of the conflict could be described in simplified terms as a dispute concerning the status of the symbol, metaphor or signifier.

For the imaginative tendencies, the symbol was a pretext of the author's journey into the self – the reality or perception of the reality was internalised by → the subject in order to enable the imagination and subconscious to produce symbolically (the internal model). The author could also transcend beyond the self into a "symbolic space". Within this connection it is interesting to recall the work of Mikuláš Medek, an author who during the 1950s revelled in magical realism, focus-

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233 Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire, Livre XVIII: D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant* (Seuil, 2007).
234 Jana and Jiří Ševčík, "Modernismus, postmodernismus, manýrismus" ["Modernism, Postmodernism, Mannerism"], in *Texty* [*Texts*] (tranzit.cz, 2010), 72–80.
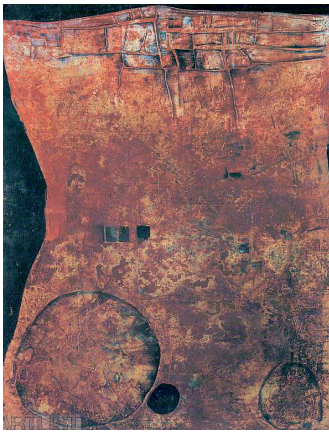
Figure 100: Mikuláš Medek, *Red Venuse*, 1959, oil, pasteboard, 93.5 x 73 cm, Gema art.

ing on a hyper-realistic identification of the internal model, so as later, under the influence of abstract expressionism and *Art informel*, to arrive at a theory of the image as a tangible imprint. (Figure 100) Even despite the declared processuality and materiality of the imprint[235] in such images, the author continually returned in their titles and completed forms to an insertion of the imprint into existing spiritual iconographies. "To create a precise image without the use of illusions, deceptions and various magic tricks and lies is impossible".

In contrast with this, Jana and Jiří Ševčík approached symbols as they did signifiers, whose meaning is not determined by any transcendence, but by syntactical constellations and the practice of their reading, which is constructed by the reader.

2. Postmodernism declared an opening of histories, styles and epochs on the principle of equality – within its realm, the avant-garde canon of beauty was not the unique one, as is the case in modernism, but the almost limitless historical sum of cultural production offered a stockpile of aesthetically equal elements. Nevertheless, during this period painters and sculptors had to follow their own "cultural-anthropological" preferences. They were interested in apocryphal (rather than canonical) tales, ephemeral civilisations of nomads (rather than classical periods) who left only minimal material traces behind them. This poetics indicates the need to construct narratives and landscapes beyond the boundaries of existing historicities – in periods which, due to the lack of material sources, are neglected by the traditional historical sciences. This view found an unexpected resonance in Eastern Europe.

The Czechoslovak cultural environment (and also other East European countries) that had suffered from the physical and intellectual isolation of the Iron Curtain had been asking the question, with increasing anxiety, as to whether it continued to be a part of history whatsoever. Trepidation concerning the "nihilisation of history" was well articulated by Ivan Klíma in the historic moment of the Prague Spring (1967–1969). This period was ushered in by the 4th Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers, held in June 1967. On the floor of the congress of writers and literary theorists, critical rebukes of censorship and other authoritarian practices of the socialist regime were expressed in public. Klíma's contribution, among other factors, dealt with the relationship to one's own history: "The loss of awareness of historical continuity, the loss of recognition and reverence for individual historical epochs, leads to disastrous consequences... Without the awareness of continuity man has a nihilistic relationship toward all that is past... Such a person is transformed into an uneducated barbarian, and acts with barbarian coarseness also in his everyday life. The nihilisation of certain epochs and distinguished personages has dire consequences, especially in the nurturing of the younger generation, which due to the moralising primitivism of prescribed sets of values loses all sense of value". This appeal above all related to a criticism of the bureaucratic politicisation of general and cultural history that was taking place in state-controlled schools, in universities and scientific institutions. As a result of genuine, but frequently rather ritually staged fears of historical revisionism, certain movements and figures of history were ignored.

During the Prague Spring, thanks to the opening up of discussion and borders, the work of one generation[236] of visual artists was partially integrated into the exhibi-

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235 Mikuláš Medek, *Texty* [*Texts*] (Torst, 2005), 225.
236 We have in mind Zdeněk Sýkora, Karel Malich, Alex Mlynárčik, Stano Filko, Milan Knížák, Jiří Valoch, Petr Štembera, Miloš Urbásek, Květa Pacovská and the like.

tion, critical and commercial operation of the West (and therefore into its history), and became partially internationalised.[237] (Figure 101) The suspension of the circulation of persons and artistic artefacts (tangible from 1970 onwards) once again restored the briefly suspended absence. The dispute concerning the nihilisation of history, in which polemics were physically displaced from the public space, conducted in private seminars in flats, was transformed into a fear as to whether a society of "torpidity" had any history whatsoever. This fear was sparked both by the renewed absence of Czechoslovakia in the history of the West, and also by the ritualised vacuity of expressions in the public arena (a celebrated example here is provided by the greengrocer from Václav Havel's essay "The Power of the Powerless").

The potentiality to build a new socialist, communist history was not on the order of the day, disallowed by the authoritarian control of intellectual production by state bureaucratic supervision. Only isolated figures of dissent (Egon Bondy) formulated a critique of the authoritarian regime from left positions. By adopting such a stance, they found themselves in a position of double outcasts – Bondy was a part of the dissent in opposition, persecuted by authoritarian power, and within the framework of this community represented a philosophical, ideologically contradictory minority.

3. The postmodern turn, opening the door to a past outside of history, was received with enthusiasm in Prague, because it offered artists a pre-historical past as a reservoir of fragments of an epoch in which actors (regardless of academic history) could be equal on both sides of the Iron Curtain. The return to prehistory brought with it the effects of a heavily painkilling drug, which explains the abundance of use and popularity that it began to enjoy.

Kafka was once again read, understood as a radical social nihilist offering the "powerless" a last chance, which was artistic creation. In addition to the Italian trans-avant-garde, fashionable figures included Josef Váchal and Ladislav Klíma, and people read Eliade, Bataille, Burroughs and Castaneda. They were able to listen to the previously censored band Plastic People, whose lyrics included the semi-ironic refrain from a poem by Egon Bondy, which was now understood without ironic distance: "My žijeme v Praze, to je tam / kde se jednou zjeví Duch sám" ("We live in Prague, in this city here / the Holy Spirit will one day appear").

A direct confrontation of the mystical tradition of postmodernism on the domestic scene took place on a number of levels around the period of 1997–2000. Its initiators, Jana and Jiří Ševčík, renounced the overused term and retained its intellectually ornamental language, by which they described indistinct and fleeting signifiers proliferating on the exterior of reality. They drew attention to the fact that the sense of the postmodern turn was not an ahistorical or limitless relativisation of values, but the principle, denied by modernity, of difference and differentiation of aesthetic forms. Cultural differentiation, which had its autonomous historical reasons in the field of art, quickly became the official cultural programme of "democratisation" of society after 1989. For a long time we had believed that democracy and capitalism were two separate processes, and that aesthetic differentiation was a mirror image of the → emancipation of civil society.
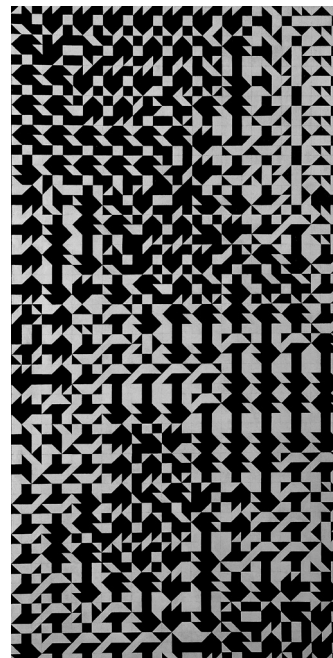
Figure 101: Zdeněk Sýkora, *Black and White Structure*, 1966–1967, oil on canvas, 220 x 110 cm. City Gallery Prague.

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237   As examples it is possible to mention the participation of Milan Dobeš, Jiří Kolář and Zdeněk Sýkora at *Documenta 4*, 1968, participation at the Biennale de Paris, the participation of Stanislav Filko at the exhibitions *Cinétisme, Spéctacle, Environment*, Grenoble, 1969, *Happening und Fluxus*, Kunstverien Köln, 1970 and others.

At this time, more or less for intuitive reasons, I began to engage in a review of Czechoslovak art and its international relationships in the 1960s. The work, originally motivated by fulfilment of university obligations, gradually began to acquire a very topical connection with the works of artists of the upcoming post-conceptual generation. A reading of the texts of periodicals from the 1960s – *Výtvarného umění*, *Výtvarné práce* and the catalogues placed before us – and opened up a long-lost polarisation through which Czechoslovak art had passed during this period. This was a division into imaginative → tendencies and constructive tendencies, which included above all concrete painting, programmed art, variables, etc. A transitory position was occupied by experimental poetry. Through the methods used by Josef Hiršal, Bohumila Groegerová, Jiří Kolář, Jiří Valoch and others it adhered to constructivism, its materials were language and speech (visible and audible). Beyond the boundaries of these movements there stood – without a clear distinction or definition of the movement of conceptual art, performance art, happenings, Fluxus (the background of which was broached only sketchily at the end of the 1960s in articles by Jindřich Chalupecký, Jaroslav Kořán, Karel Miler, Tomáš Štrauss, Josef Kroutvor and others).

The task, which faced the movement of post-conceptual art in the period of 1995–2008, could be formulated as a need to situate desires within a communicable and shared conception of history. The motivation was not scientific; it was an intuitive response to a persistent fear of ahistoricity, which could not be overcome by subjective transcendence. The ahistorical point of return offered by postmodernism had now ceased to be functional. This does not mean to deny that a long list of curators and artists continued within this current, but that it neglected to answer questions which at that time were being posed by the West: What happened in Eastern Europe during the period of isolation behind the Iron Curtain, and who, and through what programme, will constitute the "new" world following the fall of ideological binarity?

Some newly established institutions[238] and artists responded quickly by an appropriation of themes from the current Western discourse – exhibitions were held engaging with public art and the status of the work of art within a public space,[239] *New Technologies*, a magazine issue devoted to women's art, body politics was thematised, discussions were held on the themes of East and West, centre and periphery, and so on. The tactic of appropriation, despite its immediate usability, had one weakness – it neglected the inclusion of historical experiences and practices of East European art into the historical canon which originated within the context of works of Western art, in which, if this canon is not to be rewritten, vernacular works will always be judged according to the logic of "ethnographic artefact"[240] or "visual similarity" as secondary derivatives. For this reason, we focused primarily on the first question and investigated whether at the present moment we could find works and artistic practices of a hybrid nature – which are recorded in the movement of the international avantgarde, and herein thematise the conditions of life under real socialism.

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238   A pioneering role was played by the SCCA (Soros Centre for Contemporary Art) network of centres for contemporary art in Eastern Europe under the patronage of the American philanthropist George Soros.

239   "Women's Art" issue, *Výtvarné umění* [*Texts*] magazine (1993), exhibitions *Orbis fictus* (Prague, 1995), *The Work of Art in the Public Space* (Prague, 1997), etc.

240   See *Essays* of Igor Zabel.

We may explain the obsession with → reconstructions of vernacular histories in post-communist countries and the immense reception of the archive and documentary turn in this geographical space only by means of the potency of the fear of being ahistorical, that may acquire the solid ground of physical science of being outside of the event horizon.[241] This fear had a far stronger effect than the influence of Benjamin or Foucault's texts. Their reading and contemplation requires time, which was not then available. And if we identify with the formulation of intuitive decision-making as an immediate insight into a problem, which is not of a rational nature, then the search for works of art and personalities, which fulfil the need for the aforementioned binarity, was of a purely intuitive character.

Here we must remind ourselves of one further dichotomy, which is well illustrated by the difference between "bricolage" and the work of an engineer, as described by Claude Lévi-Strauss. In the post-communist period, methods of work, intimate customs, physical practices, but also emotional experiences and life values from the era of "real socialism", were brought before a strict court. The habitus of the real socialist subject was first of all within the environment of the capitalist organisation of work and its libidinal economy declared as a dangerous anachronism. Together with the outworn machines from the socialist factories, the outmoded forms of working and living that collided with the practice of the new capitalist man had to be eradicated. The eradication proceeded by means of bureaucracy – a method that was intrinsic to the opposing orders on both sides of the Iron Curtain. As David Graeber notes, the instrumental rationality of bureaucracy penetrates across ideological orders, and its ideological neutrality explains why the bureaucratic elites of real socialism managed without difficulty to adapt to the capitalist organisation of production.

The condemned habitus of the socialist subject in the post-communist period could not be defended directly, but this took place indirectly and partially, by means of a "bricolage" of old practices with new ones. The popularity of DIY and various forms of bricolage was motivated by a tactical conciliation of the old habitus with the requirements of the new paradigm, and explains the hand-crafted and impure forms of post-conceptual practices in Eastern Europe (Pawel Althamer, Roman Ondák, Ján Mančuška, Marjetica Potrč), which accompanied the reprogramming of the Kafkaesque victim as a democratic citizen and motivated employee. (Figure 102)

4. Marina Abramović, Stanislav Filko, Oskar Hansen, Sanja Iveković, Július Koller, Jiří Kovanda, Mladen Stilinović, Goran Trbuljak … (Figure 103) for the first generation of East European post-conceptual artists these models were an intuitive choice, because they fulfilled their own vision of the future – they were a part of the international neo-avant-garde movement, in which their works had their own agenda, which was not a mere weak derivative of Western conceptualism, but differed in its nature.

Western and Eastern conceptualism had one common starting point, which was tautology. Clement Greenberg asserted in his influential exegesis that American abstract expressionism came closest to the sense of artistic creativity in that it found the chief function of painting, which was truthfulness, in the two-dimensional nature of the canvas stretched on the frame and the physical properties of colour. The sense of creativity was to give vent to the possibilities of the devices of painting without the author having to engage with a fantasy or imaginary word, or

Figure 102: Ján Mančuška, *…and Back Again (What rests from Art if History cannot Participate on it)*, 2004, aluminium plate with cut out text and painting of Frantisek Muzika, Figure in Landscape, 1932. Photo: Moravian Gallery Brno.

Figure 103: Jiří Kovanda, *Untitled (On an escalator … turning around, I look into the eyes of the person standing behind me …) (3 September 1977)*, 1977, photographic documentation of an action.

241 See general relativity, which claims that there is an event horizon beyond which events cannot affect an outside observer, or see the eponymous sci-fi movie *Event Horizon* of Paul Anderson (1997).

Figure 104: Július Koller,
(Subjectobject), 1968, latex, wood,
20.8 x 20.8 cm.

referring to how reality appears to human perception. Minimalism theoretically and practically purged art from the residues of "European composition" and replaced it with a "sequence of one thing after another", but conceptual artists returned for contemplation of Greenberg's thesis twenty years later, when the hung picture and the sculpture were now considered an anachronism.

L'air de Paris, *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, the tautology of Lawrence Weiner, three chairs by Joseph Kosuth, the word Neon created from neon tubes, the paintings *Sea* and *Picture* by Július Koller... (Figure 104) The enumeration of tautologies could continue for longer. The creation of tautological work metaphorically corresponds to the description of the individual artist under a collective contract, confirming that only a single statement exists, from which the sense of truthful art is derived. Only A=A. Only an identical object, an identical proposition, can meet the condition of truthfulness (in which modern reproductive techniques erased the ontological difference between the original and a copy).

"Works of art are analytic propositions. That is, viewed within their context – as art – they provide no information what-so-ever about any matter of fact. A work of art is a tautology in that it is a presentation of the artist's intention, that is, he is saying that that particular work of art *is* art, which means, is a *definition* of art".

East European conceptualism (more precisely speaking also European conceptualism, such as Broodthaers) understands tautology in a broader sense than Kosuth's analytical pronouncement (which is itself a tautology). European and East European conceptualism demonstrates that tautology does not concern only language-based systems, but relates every system of representation to the whole of the world (subject, objects, ideas). An explanation of the problem of conceptual art as a problem of indexicality is thus a partial reduction.

The lack of clarity shrouding the first sentence of Sol LeWitt's *Sentences*: "Conceptual artists are mystics rather than rationalists. They leap to conclusions that logic cannot reach", could be explained precisely by the necessity of a "leap" towards the postulate that only an identical thing is true. Every signifier according to such an understanding of truthfulness refers only to itself, and the starting point of each interpersonal system of communicable and representation is tautology. Conceptual art does not end here, but rather begins. It comes to this point by a direct "leap", and even if it appears to be uninteresting to admit, its final intention was a current rebuilding of the traditional desire for truthfulness in depiction of reality.

This historical excursion could be concluded with the statement that the demand of post-conceptualism for the integration of the vernacular history of Eastern Europe into the canon and operation of history has been partially fulfilled, and this therefore represents a closed chapter, as could be attested to also by the transformation of post-conceptualism into ornamental, mainstream expression, an acknowledgement of the hypothesis that the surpassing of conceptual and post-conceptual art, as well as the entire spectrum of the movement of the neo-avant-garde, is resisted by one demand, which they outlined and which was not referred to here, since in Eastern Europe it was not articulated systematically until the immediately following period. This is the question of the ideological function of the aesthetic experiment. Post-conceptualism in Eastern Europe, with only a few exceptions, did not identify with the explicit politicisation of art, which it considered "illustrative". Its actors believed that espousing the conceptual form in itself contained an ideological stance, which is internally critical with regard to the commodification of art, and

thus also the market system, and above all on the basis of epistemic truthfulness clearly expresses an ideological alternative of its own stance. "My opinion is that the artistic act as such contains political meaning, that it's a certain concept of processing the world that is capable of shifting the perception of people and their way of life exactly by means of that which it is – an authentic examination of the world performed with a certain degree of detachment. That's where its strength and self-confidence lie. And also the possibility of altering people's thinking in some way with respect to questions of the order of society and power".[242] Although today we can view conceptualism as a history of commodification, its main demand of truthfulness, which was an intuition formulated as a tautology, cannot remain on the level of an aesthetic function without a response – either from its continuers, or its opponents.

Noosphere Anders Kreuger

Here, naturally, I dream first and foremost of that extraordinary network of radiophonic and televisual communications that, perhaps anticipating a direct tuning-together of our brains with the help of the as yet mysterious forces of telepathy, is, already today, connecting all of us to a kind of "etherealised" common consciousness.
— *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, 1947*

This term forecasts a future state of being when our planet is enveloped in a communicative web of common thought, a new layer of "thinking substance" that may eventually transform it into a "thinking Earth". (Figure 105)

In analogy with the geosphere and the atmosphere, Austrian geologist Eduard Suess (1821–1914) coined the term "biosphere" ("sphere of life") in 1885, to stress the formative role of live matter in the Earth's development. The "noosphere" ("sphere of thought") is a further analogy focusing on the evolution of intelligent life as a directed and non-sporadic process of "cephalisation" (the gradual centralisation, in living beings, of an increasingly complex nervous system, ultimately leading to the self-reflective mind and scientific method). The new term was most probably coined in 1921 by French palaeontologist, theologian and Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955). From 1926 onwards it was also used, but in a different way, by Russian mineralogist and geochemist Vladimir Vernadsky (1863–1945).

Figure 105: Otobong Nkanga, *Infinite Yield*, 2015. Collection M HKA, Antwerp / Collection Flemish Community © M HKA.

The two men, who met in Paris in the early 1920s, held very different convictions. Teilhard, innovating within his Christian belief system but staying true to it, imagined the ever-increasing complexity of the noosphere eventually replaced by a super-mind and resolved in the "Omega-Point", a metaphor for the divine force that, for him, predated the creation of the universe. Vernadsky, who maintained that Bolshevism was "founded on sound principles", and was awarded the Stalin Prize in 1943 for his contributions to the Soviet nuclear arms programme, rejected any mystic or spiritual interpretations of the noosphere. On the other hand he thought it capable of spreading, together with humans, throughout the Cosmos.

If we want, we may say that Teilhard privileged the spherical form of the noosphere, describing it as a layer superimposed on the biosphere, which in turn is shaped by Earth, and regarded it as the final stage in the separation of energy ("the within of
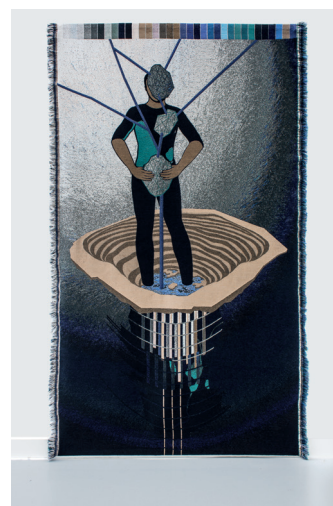
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242   Vít Havránek, "*Svoboda existuje pouze v okamžiku svého zrodu*" [Freedom Exists Only in the Moment of Its Origin], *Flash Art (Czech & Slovak Edition)* no. 15 (2010), 32–35 (Cz).

things") from matter ("the without of things"), which both appeared at the atomic level of creation. (This conflation of creationism and evolutionism was made possible by Henri Bergson's influential book *Creative Evolution,* from 1908.) Correspondingly, we may say that Vernadsky, who insisted on a strict distinction between live and inert matter, privileged the thought-content of the noosphere, never endowing it with a spatial or temporal existence of its own but treating rather as a specific non-material aspect of the biosphere. We should note, however, that both Teilhard and Vernadsky committed the cardinal sin of futures studies: making predictions about the future based on speculative observations of the present and past.

For all its ideological and methodological flaws, the noosphere remains an intriguing concept, ripe for rediscovery and reuse. It is tempting to read Teilhard's effusive notes about information technology as proof that the Internet, the medium that conditions our life today, somehow already *is* the noosphere. But does the Internet really make sense as an image of the sphere of thought? While it is sometimes said that the amount of writing added to the Internet every year is now greater than the combined libraries of the world, much of it is just typing, as Vilém Flusser would have said. And besides, quite a lot of this typing is about Justin Bieber or Kim Kardashian or Donald Trump…

The issue of "common thought" also remains intriguing, and perhaps more relevant now than ever, precisely because of this rapidly expanding infrastructure for digital communication. How do we, as the species that drives planetary change in the Anthropocene era, actually share thoughts which each other? How do we "think together"? The traditional answer, which has only been reinforced by the extensive use of writing on the Internet, is that telepathy is indeed possible – as long as it happens through the medium of language.

In his almost ecstatic vision for the noosphere, Teilhard suggests that we might be able to pool thoughts, and make them truly "common", without recourse to a shared language. This idea is probably as old as the faculty of speech itself, and the fragmented complexity it gave rise to. A recent hypothesis about land use in pre-conquest Australia is that the entire continent functioned as one commonly owned and sustainably managed estate for some 70,000 years, despite the fact that its various peoples spoke different and often completely unrelated languages. Did the ancient Australians have access to special telepathic channels of exchange? Should their "song lines" and "dream time" be interpreted as "noospheric" *avant la lettre*?

This little excursion into indigenous culture should not be understood as an endorsement of the new-age aspects (also *avant la lettre*) of how both Teilhard and Vernadsky used their term. Quite the opposite: that has left it slightly tainted. The interesting challenge now is to reclaim the noosphere for thinking about the common, for enabling humans to unite around common thought even if they appear to lack the necessary communicative tools, or the operative knowledge of the differences that separate them. How can the "uncontacted tribes" of the upper Amazon possibly think and work together with "radical" Westerners? Such examples abound. Their political connotations are obvious.

Perhaps – and this is a long shot, but one worth taking – institutions exhibiting contemporary art achieve noospheric results without quite realising it. In the final analysis, they appeal to our need for thinking rather than our love of knowledge. Thinking tends to address and be stimulated by visual experience. This is one reason why the "how" usually trumps the "what" when the output of art museums

and galleries is subjected to serious evaluation. Following this logic, which appears to be reconcilable with Teilhard's simultaneous quest for complexity and its absolute opposite, art and art exhibitions should challenge the unfair dominance that descriptive and prescriptive language is granted over our lives.

Moreover, what French artist Robert Filliou, in his "research on pre-biology", called the "built-in" and the "built-upon" appears to correspond to Teilhard's within and without of things. Advanced technology can only enhance the reality of thought, not fundamentally alter it. Thought does not need artificial intelligence. But it does need a workable notion of the common, unless it wants to remain a rarefied elite pastime with a somewhat ironical retrospective bent. No, dusting off Teilhard and Vernadsky is not the point here. And no, the Internet is not the noosphere they dreamt of 70 or 80 years ago. The noosphere remains an unrealised project. There is work to do in the sphere of thought.

Noosphere Miglena Nikolchina — Sofia, Bulgaria, September 2016

"Noosphere" is a term that has always fascinated me, so I am really glad Anders Kreuger brought it up. At present, the introduction of the term Anthropocene is being discussed to mark an epoch encompassing the geological effects of industrialisation. Noosphere, however, at least in the manner it was used not only by Pierre de Chardin but also by Vernadsky and other Russian "cosmists", has wider implications, in the spirit Anders emphasised. Introducing the term to designate the collectivity of intellect and communication as the commons of thinking, and juxtaposing it with the work of new technologies, is a great idea. Before I add a few footnotes to the curious fortunes of noosphere, I cannot help but point out that, as a concept, it has a direct bearing on Alex Garland's film *Ex Machina*, which I discussed in my talk, and on the planetary "nous" that becomes incarnated in Garland's character Ava.

In 1929, P. A. Florensky (unlike Vernadsky, he did not survive Stalinism) came up with the idea of a "pneumatosphere", which he described in a letter to Vernadsky: "As for myself, I would like to express an idea which needs concrete argumentation and is as yet just a heuristic beginning. The idea is that in, or perhaps on, the biosphere there exists something that could be called pneumatosphere, that is, a specific type of substance, which takes part in the circulation of culture or, rather, the circulation of the spirit."[243]

"Thought is not a form of energy. How can it change material processes?" – asked Vernadsky in 1942 by way of continuing the dialogue with Florensky.[244] With what degree of immediacy he envisions the metamorphosis of reason into a geological factor is a question of ongoing debates. In any case, Florensky's idea that "culture" and "spirit" are the circulation of "part of the substance" of the biosphere was taken up and elaborated decades later in the semiotic theory of Yuri Lotman. Lotman's semiosphere, which he explicitly relates to Verndasky's noosphere, is a collective *nous* that thinks itself into existence through processes of signification that appear to be automatic, suprasubjective, and inexorable. Transected by numerous boundaries of intensified semiotisation, traversed by messages that, moving across borders, must be incessantly translated and transmitted, the semiosphere is be-

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243   Pavel A. Florensky, "Perepiska" [Letters], *Novyi mir* no. 2 (1989), 197.
244   Vladimir Verndasky, "Neskol'ko slov o noosfere" [A few words about the noosphere], in *Russkii kosmizm: Antologia filosofskoi mysli*, eds. A. G. Gacheva and S. G. Semyonova (Moscow: Pedagogika-Press, 1993), 309.

yond individual but also (this was the hidden political message) beyond totalitarian control. It moves like a huge celestial body in semiotic space, where it clashes with other semiospheres and with the remnants – the comets – of former, now dead semiospheres. The semiosphere "seethes like the sun, clusters of activity boil up in different places, in the depths and on the surface, irradiating relatively peaceful areas with its immense energy. But unlike that of the sun, the energy of the semiosphere is the energy of information, the energy of thought".[245]

This description of the semiosphere is strikingly similar to the thinking ocean in Stanisław Lem's novel *Solaris*, which was rendered brilliantly in Tarkovsky's film version of the work. The idea of the noosphere is presented in *Solaris* literally like a brain the size of a planet. It controls its cosmic environment and enters into a strange sort of "dialogue" with the humans who try – with various degrees of good will and, ultimately, with dubious success – to understand this immense and lonely brooding. Sceptical as he is about the "vain hope" of finding human meaning in "the eternally silent abysses of which Pascal spoke with horror,"[246] Lem nevertheless presents a vista of the "anthropocosmic" dimension of intellect.

Translating this semiotic and hermeneutic vision into the practice of commons as collectivity of thinking, as Anders suggests, is, I believe, a perspective worth pursuing.

Palimpsest pantxo ramas

MACBA, Barcelona, Spain, September 2016

In *Morte dell'Inquisitore*, Leonardo Sciascia analyses something really interesting: the walls of the cells where the Inquisition would detain heretics. What strikes Sciascia is the multiplicity of voices taking ground on the walls of the cells of the Palazzo Chiaramonte, the Inquisition prison in Palermo, and the way in which words of desperation and fear, awareness, and pray, irony and remembrances, together with the images of saints, allegories, and dreams, constitute the most "living and direct" testimony of the experience of the Inquisition.

This composition of voices, languages, and signs inscribed on the walls of the cells is the counterpart of the records of the Judges. The rumours of the cells against the discourse of the palace, paraphrasing Ranajit Guha. The inscriptions on the walls are a living testimony of an institutional narrative. Documents that live on the margin of oral history, that inhabit an informal and unrecognised surface of expression. Sciascia refers to this composition of words and languages as a palimpsest, referring to the classical definition of a document on which many layers intertwine, rather than one where discourse is linear.

In the cell of the total institution, the traits are the imagination of another life beyond the institution, beyond the wall. By inscribing, accumulating, overlapping and contrasting words and signs on the same surface, a silent conversation emerges between the one interned now, the one that was here before, and the one that will be here again after you: this silent conversation allows the inmate to become a living agent in and against an endless and identical repetition of objectivation that the institution imposes on you through confinement. A palimpsest of survival.

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245 Yuri Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*, trans A. Shukman (London: Tauris, 1990), 150.
246 Stanisław Lem, *Microworlds*, ed. Franz Rottensteiner (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), 205–206.

I want to translate this approach to another epoch, another wall, and yet maintain my focus on the way in which a multiplicity of signs on an unrecognised surface permits us to grasp a subaltern expression. The palimpsest of written words and signs on the walls of the former Psychiatric Hospital of Trieste, the first to be dismantled and closed in Europe. These graffiti are part of a wider artistic collective practice that contributed both to the critique and invention of new institutional forms in the Italian psychiatric radical movement since the 1960s. (Figures 106, 107)

Throughout the deinstitutionalisation of mental health care in Trieste, another cry appears on the other side of the wall: "Freedom is therapeutic". The graffiti inscribes a new sense of mental healthcare based freedom and care instead of violence, negation, and segregation. It is a line from Franco Basaglia, the new director, who has contrasted this with the ergotherapeutic discourse of traditional psychiatry, affirming a different logic of care. After the liberation from the asylum, the palimpsest of survival invades the city. A palimpsest of the commons.

Franco Basaglia is the initiator of a radical reform of the psychiatric practice, that moves step by step, from the dismantlement of the mental asylum towards the reorganisation of mental healthcare as a series of services, facilities and resources of support that intervene in the complexity of social life and construct the project of care around and with the user. The deinstitutionalisation of the asylum is part of a bigger picture: a critique of medicine and of the welfare state. The welfare state is a prescriptive device to organise social production, and the technician is a functionary of oppression that divides the sick and the sane, the productive and the unproductive, the citizen and the outcast. The radical practice of healthcare involves not only a different understanding of biomedical practice and of public health. The crucial element is the invention of new institutions: the definition of a different organisation of care that puts the technical practice of welfare in the complexity of social reproduction, as a political dynamic of social change.

These inscriptions in the city make visible another understanding and another practice of care to the many: one based on the production of public services of support that guarantee a "constitutively difficult freedom" of the frailest and the less recognised citizens of Trieste. The multiple and unfinished expression of the palimpsest is in a permanent tension with another "grammar of space", the one that the Basaglian movement produces in order to legitimise the radical institutionality of Trieste. In this movement of invention and regulation, the palimpsest contests and opens the closed logic of the institution, affirms the possibility of a common speech, produced through a collective use and a collective practice of inhabitation. The possibility of inventing new institutional devices and new rules depends on the disruption of this static grammar, upon the permanent disarticulation of the institutional tendency to repetition, upon the rise of a continuous invasion from the outside towards the inside. The palimpsest contributes in producing a common speech, configuring a blurred urban space where the language of the institution lives with the language of the city.

With its constant inscription in the everyday life of the city, the palimpsest does not determine a solution, rather it rekindles an affection on which to hold and institute something new: care as a common, as a collective practice of social reproduction, contrasting the privatising tension of neoliberalism, reconfiguring the protocols of

Figure 106: Ugo Guarino, *Non abitato (Not Inhabited)*, graffiti, 1977.

Figure 107: Ugo Guarino, *La libertà è terapeutica (Freedom is Therapeutic)*, graffiti, 1977.

Figure 108: Ugo Guarino, *La verità è rivoluzionaria (Truth is Revolutionary)*, 1977, 2015. Photo: Emilio Tremolada.

the services, and contesting the grammar of the institution as a language of exclusion. The signs of the palimpsest do not constitute a discourse to be defended – the one of the prescriptive function of the welfare state – or, in contrast, to be dismantled in the name of an entrepreneurial neoliberal logic of governance. It rather permits us to inscribe the memory as part of the contemporary and to care "in the wake of the crisis". The walls of the city constitute a palimpsest where a common speech can be produced and reproduced, affirmed, contested and negotiated every day. These expressions are the constitutive ground for a space of possibility of the urban commons. (Figure 108)

Rog Aigul Hakimova

Figure 109: Andraž Rožman, "Hasan Hasan iz Kurdistana: Sanjam o nastopu na olimpijskih igrah" ("Hasan Hasan from Kurdistan: I dream of taking part in the Olympic Games"), *Dnevnik*, Ljubljana, 28 June 2016. Photo: Andraž Rožman.

Figure 110: Autonomous Factory Rog, bird's-eye view. Photo: Franci Iskra.

My presentation of the Autonomous Factory Rog just after its defence against the violent attack and attempt of eviction (6th of June 2016) from the side of city governmental authorities appeared to be emotional, subjective and human. I showed a picture of my friend, Hasan Hasan, activist and asylum seeker, who has worked with us on the Balkan route, the Balkan corridor, freedom of movement and right to stay issues at Social Centre Rog, one of many collective spaces in the autonomous zone. (Figure 109) His picture was published along with his story in a national newspaper article titled "Hasan Hasan from Kurdistan: I dream of taking part in the Olympic Games".[247] Although Hasan has lived nearly six years in different European countries, where all his applications for international protection (under a convention relating to the status of refugees) had been rejected, in the article he expressed the hope of realising his dreams that were not merely bound to the case of his legal status, have a roof overhead or even → basic income. In contempt of existing laws, strict asylum policies and exclusive border regimes, Hasan indicated the very possibility of being more than a subordinated subject of transcendental power, revealed a chance to grasp the common and tried to capture the intangible.

Factory Rog, occupied since 2006, is a place of encounter for those excluded from wealth but included in its production,[248] and of those who live various practices of citizenship and challenge the formal limitations of European citizenship.[249] (Figure 110) The republic of Rog is opposing the republic of property by producing alternative modes of production of art, languages, affects, social life and knowledge, and thus becoming one of the forms of the common that increases our powers to think and act together.[250]

The occupation of Rog more than a decade ago was also an act of a generational experience. "It started as a practical attempt to break away from the conceptual, practical and political hegemony of the generation that was in power since 1980s."[251] Such a particular experience of production of subjectivity was crucial to

247 Andraž Rožman, "Hasan Hasan iz Kurdistana: Sanjam o nastopu na olimpijskih igrah", *Dnevnik* (28 June 2016), https://www.dnevnik.si/tag/Hasan%20Hasan (accessed 23 June 2016).
248 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (2009), 53.
249 Barbara Beznec, *Konstituiranje evropskega državljanstva: državljanstvo kot družbena praksa* (Univerza v Ljubljani, Fakulteta za družbene vede: 2016), http://dk.fdv.uni-lj.si/doktorska_dela/pdfs/dr_beznec-barbara.pdf (accessed 23 June 2016).
250 Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 159.
251 Andrej Kurnik and Barbara Beznec, *Rog: Struggle in the City* (April 2008), http://eipcp.net/transversal/0508/kurnikbeznec/en (accessed 23 June 2016).

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basic income 223

understanding how the republic of property under the socialist state went through the transition and became the power of property of the current neoliberal policies that encourage public authorities to merge with private investments. Abandoned for more than 15 years, Factory Rog became the target of public-private partnership and local authorities launched a hunt for private capital.

From the perspective of the common Rog is going through the experience of standing against the notion that the only alternative to the private is the public. The summer of resistance (2016) and defence of Rog, hopefully, contributed slightly to the recognition of the common as a new space for politics, beyond the concepts of public → interest and public property rooted in the tradition of transcendental power, i.e. the power of law and capital.

Failure of sovereign power and the act of transcendental power

The use of violence during the attempted evictions at Rog led to strong resistance, → solidarity, and support. The sovereign power of the Mayor of Ljubljana, a figure of command, whose threatening statements enabled violence accomplished by a private security contractor also caused a reaction from the representatives of the transcendental power. A short visit of an inspector related to the issue of abusing power by the private security company, which entered the territory of the occupied factory at night and violently tried to evict people by beating them up and blocking the entrance and exit points of the area. An emergency of the still existing threat of violent eviction and of the substantial threat of irreparable damage or injury led to a decision to file for a preliminary injunction (court order), which was immediately (on the fourth day of barricades and defence) granted by the court.[252] From this point on, the strategy of battle changed greatly, but not deliberately. Rog is not fighting anymore a *violent sovereign* that can do all it pleases, but it just stepped onto the terrain of power, as Hardt and Negri explains, embedded with and supported by the legal system and institutions of governance, a republican form characterised not only *by the rule of law but also equally by the rule of property*. Put differently, the political is not an autonomous domain, but one completely immersed in economic and legal structures.[253]

Possession versus ownership

A preliminary injunction is a court order made in the early stages of a lawsuit or petition which prohibits the parties from doing anything in order to preserve the status quo until a pending ruling or outcome.[254] Since the sovereign power failed with the attempted violent eviction, the transcendental power of the republic of property took the stage to play a role. *De jure* and in a short time (prescribed by law) the preliminary injunction was followed by the right of possession lawsuit from the side of the Autonomous Rog, and in response the city filed a property ownership right lawsuit against Rog. The municipality of Ljubljana is suing Rog for one million six hundred thousand euros (1,600,000 EUR). It is the value of city's property right lawsuit. Almost every lawyer is convinced (as affirmed by practice) that the protection of the ownership of property stands higher than the right of

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252 In some cases, one of the requirements to filing a request for an injunction is that it would serve the public interest.
253 Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 15.
254 "Preliminary Injunction Law and Legal Definition", *USLegal.com*, https://definitions.uslegal.com/p/preliminary-injunction/ (accessed 23 June 2016).

possession of a property (*to have in order to have or to have in order to use*). In other words, local authorities are trying to convince the public that their perspective is representing the entire society, a sort of claim of universality; in reality, as we have already seen many times in the district courts, power exists based on an exclusive identity, the unity, and homogeneity of which is guaranteed by the ownership of property.[255] (Figure 111)

From resistance to the proposition of alternatives

From 2006 to 2017, it has been eleven years of building something that we would eventually call a desire towards the common. From the perspective of the common, the prolonged experience of Rog is a strong practice that includes (or included) both acts of resistance and bottomless attempts to build alternatives over and beyond the dialectical opposition of modernity and anti-modernity, property and possession, public and private. Although the red line of the defence of Rog was a demand to keep the space autonomous, it was not just a will to leave the things as they are; in the call for support launched before the attempted demolition Rog stated that they did not fight for preservation of the current state of affairs, but for the future of autonomous development.[256] The city authorities claim that their plan for the renovation of Rog is in accordance with the public interest, simultaneously Rog presents the argument that after ten years of working in precarious conditions, regenerating the area with cultural activities and producing content in the public/urban interest, they have a legitimate right to use and manage a property which is not legally theirs. The existing activities and horizontal mode of organisation carry greater potential for further development than the municipal proposal with a rigid organisational structure and commercial orientation.[257] The Autonomous Factory Rog advocates a different type of public interest, kind of a "living" public interest that is not managed top-down by public powers, but emerges as a necessity not only to create and develop autonomous practices of production and living inside the walls, but also to dare to think of a struggle that will not be faced with an alternative – either insurrection or institutional struggle, either passive or active revolution. Instead, revolution must simultaneously be both insurrection and institution, structural and superstructural transformation.[258] (Figure 112)

Figure 111: Protest against the eviction of Rog users in April 2016. The slogan *Neomejen Rog uporabe (Unlimited Date of Expiery)* addressed the legal procedures and the question of the ownership of property. Photo: Rio, an active member of Rog community and user of its facilities.

Figure 112: Plenary meeting of Rog users, 2016. Photo: Urška Savič, an active member of Rog community and user of its facilities.

Self-management Bojana Piškur

Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, Slovenia, September 2016

In order to discuss the commons today, especially in relation to art and culture and speaking from our particular location, we must return at least 60 years back, to the 1950s, a period when Yugoslavia broke with the Soviet Union after it refused to submit to the latter's domination, which left it in cultural, economic and political isolation from the rest of the socialist bloc. That also meant that Agitprop depart-

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255 Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 45.
256 "Ljubljana: Call for support for Autonomous Factory Rog", *[Squat!net]* (19 May 2016), https://en.squat.net/2016/05/19/ljubljana-call-for-support-for-autonomous-factory-rog/#more-17172 (accessed 23 June 2016).
257 Ibid.
258 Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 367.

ment, which until then controlled basically all cultural happenings in Yugoslavia (Agitprop took after the Soviet model and was controlled by the Yugoslav Communist Party) was abolished. Subsequently all these changes lead to the development of a new kind of state cultural politics – one based on self-management.

However, deliberations on the socialist cultural politics might sound anachronistic or even conservative, especially if observed in the light of current museological discourses on the so-called new prototypes of art institutions, uses of art, educational turn, participation in art and so on. In addition to all these categories the very notion of "working class" which represented the most important part of the self-management system has also become obsolete, especially due to the fact that in most of the Western world immaterial → labour has to a large extent replaced industrial work. Compared to the now historical proletariat → the contemporary cognitariat does not constitute a class. Seen in this light the socialist self-managed museums, their governance and the content which such museums provided could be considered today as conservative, subordinated to the state, ideologically restricted, highly → bureaucratised, while favouring conventional art formats, didactic means of providing knowledge about art and so on.

But, on another level, can we still even consider the question of class struggle and class struggle related antagonisms within art institutions nowadays, as used to be the case in Yugoslavia? What about the dichotomy between elitism, intellectual elitism included, and social and political engagement in such institutions? Or to put it in terms of a more modern vocabulary: How does the process of *communing* – a social process that creates and reproduces the common – happens within the cultural field today?

In order to answer some of these questions I would attempt to link some progressive socialist cultural policies, museum models and directions, as well as their → emancipatory utopias, to today's deliberations on the new prototypes of art institution – "a museum of the commons". It is not a coincidence that in many socialist countries around the world art and politics were united in their quest for creating utopian models adapted to social and political changes, especially in the 60s and 70s. Experimental museology and concepts such as the integrated museum, social museum, living museum, and museum of the workers were widely discussed in the so called → Global South. Progressive cultural politics considered culture and art as "commons", something that belonged to all; at least that was the case in theory.

Now let's return to Yugoslavia. As a consequence of all the political events and specific economic climate in Yugoslavia in the early 50s, self-management was introduced, even though some have identified the origins of Yugoslav self-management already in the Second World War anti-fascist committees. Its main ideologue was Edvard Kardelj,[259] and it was promoted by economists like Branko Horvat, theoreticians like Darko Suvin, Rudi Supek and others. They not only affirmed it, but were also critical towards it. Self-management had a profound influence on the society as a whole: it introduced a new type of managing labour organisations, the working people's participation in decision-making, and workers' councils. Self-management brought about increased → autonomy of production economic units, which was a step forward from the planned economy as practiced in the Soviet Union, as it handed the factories to the workers, moving towards the withering of the state.

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259   There are many books on the topic. For example: Edvard Kardelj, *Samoupravljanje* (Ljubljana: DZS, 1979) or in English: Edvard Kardelj: *Self-management and the Political System* (Yugoslavia: Socialist Thought & Practice, 1981).

Figure 113: J. Depolo, "Slika, kip i prostor", *Vjestnik*, 23 October 1960.

Workers officially managed the "socially" owned means of production (associative labour). Self-management was also introduced in cultural institutions, where it was called "social management"; with the museum workers' council, and later on with the delegate system, a collective body with a third of its members who were representatives of the employees and two thirds were external members who represented "social interest" in the activities of the institution. The basic idea was that those producing and those consuming culture jointly decided on matters of importance for the institution, i.e. the financial plan, annual accounts, the work programme. Stane Dolanc, a high-ranking Yugoslav Communist Party official, said in his speech in Moderna galerija, Ljubljana in 1973: "The new position of culture in socialist self-management destroys the historic wall between the working masses and the culture."[260] This new vision also produced a change in the interpretation of culture: culture was not anymore considered as artistic expression *per se*, but included all types of creative manifestation – in physical labour, politics, social life, education, science, and new solutions in social services. Culture was less and less treated as a sector and more and more as an integral part of the overall creative effort of society, a link providing interaction between intellectual and physical labour.[261] The old "statist culture" was replaced with the so-called "socialised culture". (Figure 113)

In a specific way it was the 1950s which were a period of cultural blossoming in the former Yugoslavia. For example: the formal status of a freelance cultural worker was introduced (including all the social benefits), a significant part of the national budget went towards numerous cultural activities, modernism was introduced as the favoured style (modernist works were thus sent to biennials), and cultural infrastructure, including museums, was built or reconstructed. Some of the main concerns of Yugoslav cultural policy at that time were, for example, including culture in the entire socio-economic context and transforming citizens from passive users into active co-creators of culture; which is definitely something that could also be observed today in the context of the "commons", as I already mentioned. The goal was that art (also top-level or high art) and culture were to be accessible to all. The idea behind this was to teach citizens/workers how to manage their country better. Such as, for example, organising the didactic exhibitions, which was already happening in 1952 in Moderna galerija,[262] or perhaps the better known *Didactic Exhibition on Abstract Art,*[263] an educational attempt by a group of artists from Zagreb in 1957. The exhibition was highly successful; it travelled all around Yugoslavia for almost ten years and was set up in various spaces: city halls, schools, and museums. Booklets on art were also produced within workers universities, and so on.

As noted above, these cultural practices took many different forms, including for example amateur cinema and photo clubs, which were established in factories and other workers' organisations. They provided opportunities for avant-garde experimenting in the spirit of socialist self-management. This is really a special case, similar to that of the Soviet Proletkult from 1917, because in this way certain links were maintained between the so-called high culture and the workers. If workers didn't

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260   *Čestitke, obračuni in načrti: 60 let Moderne galerije* (catalogue), (Ljubljana: Moderna galerija, 2008), 15.

261   For a more thorough analysis see: Stevan Majstorović, *Cultural Policy in Yugoslavia: Studies and documents on cultural politics* (UNESCO, 1980).

262   The series of didactic exhibitions included color reproductions of French Impressionists (1951–1952), Cubists (1952), Fauvists (1952) with accompanying lectures by prominent Slovenian art historians.

263   *Suvremena umjetnost I.: didaktička izložba: apstraktna umjetnost* (catalogue), (Zagreb: GSU, 1957).

come to the museums and galleries, artists and museum workers would go to the factories. In museums of modern and contemporary art in Yugoslavia, especially after the 1970s, art was brought from the museums to factories, to workers' associations and so on, where special seminars on modern art were conducted with the goal of reaching the broadest possible public. One such widely recognised program was called "forma viva", a sort of artists in residence program, where artists were temporarily working in various factories, and in exchange for the materials used they would in return leave their works to the factory. (Figure 114) Some of them, (for instance, the Panonija Agricultural Complex in Vojvodina) even built their own cultural centres with studios for painters. Others, such as the Podravka food producer[264] in Croatia or Lek pharmaceutical producer in Ljubljana, opened art galleries; the steel works in Sisak, Croatia, or steel factory Ravne na Koroškem in Slovenia also established → collaborations of artists with workers for jointly creating art works. The idea was to transform all forms of human labour into a creative activity, and this particular direction was known as the "culture of work".[265]

But what is also interesting is that at that time we had two different understandings of the idea of the "commons" in culture. The first was the official one, linking self-management with culture, opening the museums to the working people, educating all levels of population, etc. This direction included workers as an important part of the process of *commoning*, where an emphasis was put on the so-called "socialisation of culture". The → slogan was: Culture to the people!

And the other understanding of the "commons" was the alternative or more utopic one, the one which included, for example, the 1960s neo-avant-garde collectives where art was to become life, belonging to everyone in a process of democratisation of artistic production and reception, or the alternatives of the 1980s which were very much connected to the wider social and political movements of that time in Yugoslavia. Actually, many art collectives were organised on something that from today's perspective could be seen as the principles of self-management. In the sense of Massimo de Angelis who said: whatever is produced in the common must stay in the common. So, paradoxically, since there was no art market for those works of art, art was in a way emancipated from the "aesthetic regime", and the artists able to create without the interfering interests of the state or art market, so art could stay in the common. (Figure 115)

The negative side of self-management was a high level of → bureaucratisation; it was a very complicated system, with committees, assemblies, interest communities, chambers of working people and the like, established for basically everything, demanding too much time from workers who had to engage in various tasks for which they were not competent. (Figure 116) Moreover, conflicts between artistic missions and the collective management of the institutions were inevitable. It has been said that the introduction of self-management in culture only meant "to break cultural nationalism down into harmless units and to reduce the danger of elitism and cultural centralism".[266] There were also huge gaps with regard to the uneven economic and cultural development in various parts of Yugoslavia (a north-south division). As a consequence, the so-called "demetropolisation of culture"

Figure 114: Ivan Šučur, "Kugla kao simbol [Sphere as a Symbol]", *Borba*, 7 July 1974, no. 183, year III. On three new sculptural works in public spaces in Maribor. On the photo: Janez Boljka, Atomic Age.

Figure 115: J. Škunca, "Vizija svemirskog reda" ("The Vision of Cosmic Order"), *Vjestnik*, 26 October 1968.

Figure 116: From the exhibition catalogue *Peace 75 – 30 OZN*, Art Gallery Slovenj Gradec, Jugoslavia, 19 October 1975 – 19 January 1976.

264   Extensive research on the topic was done by Ivan Jakopović: Radnici, kultura, revolucija: Razgovori s radnicima (Zagreb: Zavod za kulturu Hrvatske, 1976).
265   Majstorović, *Cultural policy in Yugoslavia*.
266   Vesna Čopič and Gregor Tomc, *Cultural policy in Slovenia*, European programme of national cultural policy reviews (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1998), 47.

happened in the 1970s, with houses of culture being built in rural areas all over the country, stimulating and favouring amateur art production.

Opposition to the socialist system, even in the form of irony, was often sanctioned; for example, many Black Wave films were banned, film directors not allowed to film, writers were occasionally accused of being "bourgeoisie" or enemies of socialism, could not publish their works anymore and so on. However, many artists actually commented that it was basically possible to do almost any kind of artistic experiment during the time of socialism, with two exceptions: criticising President Tito and the Yugoslav Army. A quite well-known case is the *Oktobar 75*[267] project from Student Cultural Centre (SKC) Belgrade, where a group of artists organised a symposium on art and political engagement. Dunja Blažević, who was a head of the SKC visual program at the time, proposed that various artists to critically rethink "the sphere of socialist self-management in the sphere of culture". However, the one kind of criticism that was not tolerated was criticism of the left which came from the left itself.[268]

At the end this model – self-management – failed to be part of the actual "workers struggle". There are many reasons why it failed, although these are far too complex to debate in the frame of this text.[269]

There are some important points to be learned from the Yugoslav self-management project, not only to resurrect some forgotten traditions and cultural practices, but also as an alternative to the prevailing Western cultural model. Looking back at what happened in the 1990s, it is quite obvious that museums in the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe integrated into the global art system, adapting to a greater or lesser degree the Western canon of art history and subsequently to the logic of capitalism. What we are interested in today is not the repetition of old ideas, but rather considering self-management as a counter model to think about new forms of commons, also in art and culture.[270]

Credits: I would like to thank my colleagues from the Archives Department of the Moderna galerija for helping me with the archival materials.

267 A recent analysis of the case: "The Case of the Student Cultural Center in the 1970s" in *Political Practices of (Post-) Yugoslav Art* (Belgrade: Prelom kolektiv, 2010), 126–153.
268 I refer to the Praxis School, Korčula Summer School (attended by, among others, Ernst Bloch, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Jürgen Habermas, and Henri Lefebvre), and the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, which experienced repressive measures by the League of Communists (especially after 1974).
269 See for example an analysis in: *Samo jednom se ljubi: radiografija SFR Jugoslavije* [*You Love Only Once: Radiography of SFR Yugoslavia, 1945–1972*] (Belgrade: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung South East Europe, 2014), Suvin's attempt at dialectical history of Socialist Yugoslavia (as yet unpublished in English).
270 That reconsideration could possibly be done on three levels: on the level of governance, on the level of knowledge production and on the level of heritage.

Solidarity Rasha Salti

The history of solidarity as a notion identified, observed and studied as a practice inherent to communities and societies, long predates modernity. The sociologist Émile Durkheim understood Ibn Khaldūn's concept of *'asabiyyah* as a version of solidarity. Its etymological origin is attributed to the French *solidarité*, that was first coined in the 1765 *Encyclopédie*, and seems to have gained currency around 1841, specifically with a close association with → labour struggles. While solidarity became a seminal notion to the 20th century's political lexicon, its meanings and implications seem deceptively unambiguous and straightforward. There is the expression of collective will (whether voluntary or coerced), the conscious basis for collective action, as well as the principle for the establishment of organisations or the paradigm headlining international diplomacy. In reality, solidarity is a vexing, complex and misleading notion, perceived at once to be "organic", almost inevitable, to produce change immediately and effectively (especially for the labour movement and Marxist discourse), but at the same time to be slow to coalesce, and not to systematically impel a forward-looking, progressive, correctively egalitarian or transformative movement. Looking at the US labour movement, for instance, whose paradigmatic anthem is titled *Solidarity Forever*, the work of David Roediger, and Alexander Saxton has uncovered the racist origins of working class formation, and how, for decades, the movement's prevailing narrative has been primarily a history of white male workers. In Marxist discourse, the contradictions of capitalism and workers consciousness logically, or "teleo-logically", produce a unified oppositional political force grounded in solidarity that leads to action and produces profound change.

Figure 117: *Past Disquiet: Narratives and Ghosts from The International Art Exhibition for Palestine*, curated by Rasha Salti & Kristine Khouri, exhibition view, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2014. Photo courtesy of MACBA.

Solidarity has also produced an impressive iconographic, musical, literary and cinematic patrimony, as artists have been invariably mobilised to produce representations, narratives and a cultural repository to the political struggles that produced solidarity movements. As 2018 marks the fiftieth anniversary of May 1968, the countless exhibitions of visual art, film programs and cultural congresses, worldwide, attest to the wealth and relevance of these diverse patrimonies, and the central role of creative expression in mobilising and memorialising solidarity.

Between 2009 and 2017 I conducted research around "solidarity art collections" and "museums in exile" in collaboration with the researcher, writer and curator, Kristine Khouri. Together we traced and examined the intersecting transnational histories or four case studies, namely the Museum of Solidarity for Chile (1972—1973), and its subsequent iterations as the Museum of International Resistance Salvador Allende (1974—1990); the *International Art Exhibition for Palestine* (1978—1982), (Figure 117) intended as a seed for a museum in solidarity with Palestine; the *Art Contre/Against Apartheid* (1982—1994); and the *Art for the People of Nicaragua* and its subsequent iterations as the Museum of Latin-American Contemporary Art of Managua, and the Art of the Americas in Solidarity with Nicaragua. The notion of a "museum in exile", perhaps counter-intuitive and even perplexing, referred to a collection of art works donated by artists to attest of their support for a political cause. The collection travelled to museums worldwide (and sometimes to non-art specific places) with the mission of raising the awareness of a wide public, giving the cause legitimacy, and generating solidarity. Once the political struggle the "solidarity collection" or "museum in exile" incarnated and achieved its goals, it was supposed to become a museum in that country. In some cases, the administration

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and management of the collecting and touring was done by professionals in the fields of art and culture (curators and gallerists), but in others by a small group of artists.

In art history, exhibition history, or museology, these museums in exile/solidarity collections are almost entirely absent. By virtue of the impetus behind their existence, and of their constitution, they run against the grain of modern and contemporary paradigms of 20th century modern and contemporary art museums. They were established entirely outside the schemes of patronage, the legacies of colonial and imperial domination, and wealth accumulated from exploiting people and/or natural resources. They stand as emblems of a political ideal, wherein the transnational and national intermingle entirely uninhibited from ethno-cultural trappings of nationalism, and rather represent the sovereign political will of artists, curators, intellectuals. They are also registered as a patrimony to a people. The research into how they came to be revealed captivating networks of → collaborative work among artists, intellectuals and militants across the world. In parallel to their respective practice as individual artists, what Kristine Khouri and I discovered was an under-written history of actions, → interventions in public spaces, participation in protests and strikes, as short-lived collectives producing placards, posters, banners and painted murals. Mapping these activities brought to light surprising findings, namely close connections of artists with unions and other militant organisations (fighting for social housing, gender rights, immigrant rights, etc.), tight collaborations between international artists who had found asylum in Europe, sometimes across the Iron Curtain, and tight connections with the so-called "→ Global South". High-profile events such as Documenta and the Venice Biennale hosted these militant practices in peripheral programming.

These four cases of "solidarity collections" were launched during the Cold War, in the heart of what was known as the worldwide anti-imperialist solidarity movement. The causes that rallied artists across the world intersected transversally, opposition to the US intervention in Vietnam, the struggle against Pinochet's dictatorship, the fight to unseat the apartheid regime in South Africa, and several liberation struggles with the Palestinians at the helm. In the context of the Cold War, the notion of solidarity carried complex multi-layered connotations. In the geography known formerly as the pro-Soviet Eastern Bloc, solidarity was a state-sponsored instrument of diplomacy, a creed that trickled top-down from government bodies to artist unions or associations. This was in contrast with its deployment in the western flank of Europe, where it crystallised as the expression of radical grass-roots political engagement, that moved from the bottom upwards. The solidarity interventions conducted by artists after May 1968 have been overlooked by art historians, critics and curators, because in most cases the artists did not belong to an "avant-garde", or their practice did not propose radical or innovative formal or aesthetic language. In the case of the artists from the former Eastern Bloc, the artists who participated in solidarity actions were those officially sanctioned by the government, or in other words "official artists" whose motivations may not have been genuine.

Some of the interviews we conducted with artists from Poland and the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), who took part in solidarity actions against the Pinochet dictatorship and in support of the Palestinian struggle, respectively, confirmed this thesis. However, we also recorded other testimonies that challenged it. The case of the German artist Günther Rechn was an interesting case in point. Rechn and four other artists from the former GDR visited Lebanon twice, in 1979

and in 1980, answering an invitation from the Union of Palestinian Artists (UPA), one of several elements of the official protocol of collaboration between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the government of the GDR. The artists visited refugee camps, met with Palestinian freedom fighters (*fedayyeen*) and Palestinian artists. They produced work that they exhibited on their second visit in Beirut. While perusing Rechn's sketchbooks, we fell on a portrait of a man clad in the emblematic *kuffiyah* that *fedayyen* characteristically wrapped their heads with. We asked him where he met the man and whether he had agreed to pose for him. Rechn replied that it was in fact a self-portrait. We were startled because it transgressed our expectations of the regime of images and representations of state-sponsored solidarity. The identity switch, the subversive and surreptitious substitution of representation, was a transgression of self and other, beyond the "rules of the game". Rechn's case underlines how the → agency of the artist challenges wholesale assumptions about subjectivity and solidarity under totalitarianism.

What of solidarity today? While neo-liberal capital seems to have ended the currency of any form of social welfare systems, the notion of "the common" has resurged as a site of ideological, intellectual and anthropological resistance, the notional and practical soil for discovering and theorising political alternatives. Solidarity, however, is still lacklustre, sometimes tainted with cynicism, and the necessity and urgency for its revival is still latent. For instance, there has not been a dedicated issue of the *e-flux* journal, or international conferences, or Documenta projects dedicated to exploring and revisiting solidarity, as has been the case for "the common". There are nonetheless "symptoms" of solidarity – like the Avaaz.org and Change.org internet-empowered petition templates – that are as much a testament to their efficacy as their failure. There are also international campaigns calling for the boycott of goods, or divestment in national economic institutions and corporations, such as the one currently targeting Israeli public and private institutions and companies, to pressure the Israeli government into ending the military occupation of Palestine.

If we consider the modest realm of our own industry and trade, namely the world of contemporary art, does solidarity level currency? In contrast with other intellectual disciplines, the extent to which the logic of neo-liberalism prevails over the realm of the *métiers* in contemporary art is daunting. The criteria for success and failure, reward and sanction, and job security, are almost entirely ruled by the logic of the market (even within state-run institutions) and by perfidious perceptions of meritocracy. There are also "symptoms" of solidarity. Almost at a yearly rate, at least one curator is unjustly dismissed and humiliated because of exasperated patrons or offended publics, and a petition goes viral from mailbox to mailbox, in a gesture of solidarity. Some sign it because of empathy and/or affinity; others so as to safeguard the principle of job security or freedom of expression. There are also petitions dedicated to mobilising outrage against the abuse or sentencing of an artist, the shutting down of an → institution, the sale of an → archive or a collection. The question is not whether such petitions are useful or not, some do lead to the release of a detained artist, writer, or curator, while others provide emotional and psychological support for an aggrieved colleague in difficult times. The question is whether real solidarity is effectively imaginable in our professional milieu, knowing that we, cultural workers, operate under extremely precarious conditions in the present world order.

In a keynote address at the American Sociologist Association (ASA) annual meeting in 2015, David Roediger offered critical thoughts on the significance of solidarity in

our times. He aptly noted that solidarity should be "uneasy", rather than straightforward, obvious and efficient, citing Chandra Talpade Mohanty, he reminded us that solidarity is "not a being but a doing". In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed offers an important insight in that vein: "Solidarity does not assume that our struggles are the same struggles, or that our → pain is the same pain, or that our hope is for the same future. Solidarity involves commitment, and work, as well as the recognition that even if we do not have the same feelings, or the same lives, or the same bodies, that we do live on common ground." I will borrow Roediger's conclusion for this essay, which he phrased as an invitation: "let us seek solidarity "by owning its difficulties". Is solidarity in the professional fields of art and culture an idea whose time has not yet come?

Theft Ida Hiršenfelder

The phenomenon of artists fighting for the right to share, distribute and experience cultural contents outside the boundaries of local economies, politics, or laws is not limited to the present time. The arguments, which condemn the existing copyright laws as opposing the idea of the commons are as old as Marx's argument on the *Theft of Wood, and Working-Class Composition*. The argument states that in the case of claiming ownership over fallen trees the law is nullified, when applied to the exclusive advantage of the particular → interests of an isolated group. This means that the interest of the public is transformed into private compensation. By applying the category of theft where it ought not to be applied one exonerates it. The call of various initiatives in the copy-left movement with hacktivists and artists alike follows this argument. The act of piracy and theft is not an act of violence but rather one of kindness, it is aimed at promoting the allowance of cultural ambivalences, and it delineates from antagonisms when sharing immaterial cultural property. In these movements initiated by activists and artists alike, the right to share and wilfully renounce the market value of a cultural product is to allow for → collaborative, i.e. collective, modes of creating. The creators of open codes do not disown their work, but only allow it to change, grow, enhance and in their way create a new gift-economy. It must be noted that geek communities as groups share a moral order of openness and freedom, which sometimes may be quite naive. I once believed that the almost invisible DIY technological revolution, which took and is still taking place in art studios, media labs and fab labs, may shift closed-source systems. I no longer entirely believe in this potential, although this does not mean that the impotence of this endeavour is any less valuable, since it produces deeper cultural meanings that go beyond the prevention of purchasing the latest consumer gadget.

Copyright claims to protect the rights of the creators. What it does is protect the property of the rich and successful. To prove a point, in the dispute of the so-called collective agreement of GEMA (*Gesellschaft für musikalische Aufführungs* [Society for Musical Performance in Germany]), the artist Johannes Kreidler subverted the autocratic system of copyright laws in his multimedia theatre piece *Product Placements* from 2008. If one wants to register a song at GEMA, one has to fill out a form for each sample one uses, even the tiniest bit. At the time when the work by Kreidler was made (2008) GEMA stated that: "The widely believed notion that 8 or 4 bars may be used without permission is incorrect". Thus, every copied bar should be reported and accounted for. With this instruction the → bureaucratic machine of GEMA denied the right of remixing digital artworks and denied the right of the musicians to promote the idea of sharing. In *Product Placements* Johannes

Kreidler pushed the concept of the culture of non-sharing to the extreme by creating a 33-second-long computer-generated noise composition using 70,200 musical quotations, i.e. samples. In some way, he created the most illegal sound art piece in history. To officially register his new composition, he prepared the required 70,200 forms and announced he would deliver them to GEMA on 12 September 2008 to demonstrate the need for reforming the copyright collecting agency. (Figure 118) He demonstrated a completely absurd amount of administrative work in an effort to comply with the outdated registration requirements in a time of digital reproduction. He proclaimed that music does not exist on its own. It is connected with the politics of technology, consumption behaviours, market fluctuations, and the economic value of art. One of his statements was that the aesthetic question can never be identical to a legislative question, seeking → autonomy of his work.[271] The action met with international acclaim and forced GEMA to officially state that not every bit of music must be registered with a form. This only proved that GEMA interprets the copyright law and the idea of intellectual property theft differently however it may suit it, while the artists must abide by its laws. GEMA treated intellectual property in the same way as material property, being completely oblivious to the new cultural context of digitally produced artworks. The most urgent question that also concerns SAZAS (a similar organisation in Slovenia) is the idea of quantitative value measures of artworks. A member of GEMA earns as much money as there are users, as in the number of views on YouTube, but makes no effort to recognise the cultural value of less popular, experimental artworks. The answer is obvious, the majority is stealing the right of artistic minorities to exist, share, and enjoy the fruits of the social surplus.

The question of the ownership of digitally-produced artworks was also provoked by the Ljubljana-based radio-art collective radioCona (Brane Zorman and Irena Pivka) 88.8MHz in their 2008 Temporary Project Radio for Contemporary Arts broadcasts. RadioCona explicitly stated that it supports regulated copyright, though it does not support the obstruction of creativity that takes place through the implementation of the copyright laws in force at present. In practice, this happens rather often; for example, one cannot perform one's own artistic work in a public space without having to pay a reimbursement to the collective organisation SAZAS, from which an experimental sound-art platform can never benefit because it simply never reaches a large audience compared to pop culture works. The experiment by radioCona was rather simple and humorous. They made a field recording of singing birds, then played it on radioCona. Before each broadcast they posed a question: "Who is the creator of this recording, and thus the property owner of the piece: the birds, the one who recorded the sound, the one who played it on the radio, or the one who was listening?"[272]

Such aspects of theft and stealing are gestures and expressions of the power struggles and key tactics for actively creating an opposition to the dominant and normative relations. The art of stealing is by no means an invention of the digital realm. However, the conditions of digital production pose particular questions that are not known to the "common thieves of art".

One of the artistic example of stealing things is by artist Ivan Moudov, whose work is also a part of Moderna galerija collection. He was stealing small fragments of art-

Figure 118: Johannes Kreidler, *Product Placement*, action, 2008. Photo: Julia Seeliger (https://www.flickr.com/photos/modernezeiten/, CC BY 2.0).

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271   Johannes Kreidler, *Johannes Kreidler GEMA-Aktion product placements Doku*, video 16' 1", posted on YouTube on 27 February 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAptRZlwziA.
272   radioCona, *The Open Zone @ HKW, Berlin* (1 February 2011), http://www.radiocona.si/blog/2011/01/28/traces-loungetraces-and-radiocona-transmediale/ (accessed 25 August 2016).

Figure 119: Ive Tabar, "Acceptio", performance, 20 December 2004, a part of *7 SINS: Ljubljana – Moscow*, chapter "Masochism", Kapelica Gallery and Moderna galerija co-production. Courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

works by other artists exhibited in the museums of the West with his collaborator Alberta Pane. He then neatly placed them in Fluxus-like suitcases as trophies for a new Bulgarian national collection. Ivan Moudov is in this respect a thief – however negative this attribute may be – it is not his moral obligation, but rather an → artistic strategy by which he acts as an → intervenor, placing both his art, and the art of Bulgarian artists, into → the contemporary, international and global art context. Moudov's work has a particular significance, as it enabled him to "participate in colonial art history" by looting the treasures of one nation to add to his own national collection. Recognising the colonial relations between the East and the West Art Hemispheres, Moderna galerija invented a series of entirely legal yet still cunning tactics to create an international collection in order to form a dialogue, and present important artists from Eastern Europe who had been unknown or overlooked (such as Moudov). With regard to theft, Moderna galerija also initiated some exhibitions which were dealing with a positive evaluation of non-normative behaviour, which might be considered as illegal, criminal, or just morally unacceptable. One such exhibition was *Seven Sins: Ljubljana – Moscow* (2004–2005), which dealt with Eastern European identity through seven typical characteristics: Collectivism, Utopianism, Masochism, Cynicism, Laziness, Non-professionalism, and Love for the West. All these can be understood as deficiencies or weaknesses, but also as virtues. (Figure 119)

This means that criminal behaviour is not an objective thing. Theft in the digital realm may also be viewed as a form of virtuous behaviour. Theft often have a disruptive rather than a destructive power, it is a manifestation of ambiguities and contradictions rather than a result of direct confrontation and spurring antagonisms. Like Moudov, digital artists focus on illegal art tactics. Instead of a suitcase, their trophies are infringement letters. Performance artists promote controversial forms of art, using guerrilla tactics to protest against the fairness of intellectual property laws or privacy policies online. An Italian curator Simona Lodi humorously said that any artist interested in taking part in the movement chooses a good lawyer rather than a good gallery owner, since their art interventions investigate the boundaries between art and freedom, the end of techno-utopias, and the way business has co-opted hacker values, open source initiatives, and web freedom.[273] This means they are stealing digital data when the interest of the commons was transformed into private compensation. It also means that, from the perspective of a hacker, the private owners have stolen the right to freely distribute cultural goods or own their own identity. One such case would be the stealing of identities by Italian media artists Alessandro Ludovico and Paolo Cirio. They managed to expose the strict policy of data control perpetuated by the social networking corporation, and the implications of this for privacy and users' rights. Their hacker project *Face to Facebook* functioned by "Stealing one million Facebook profiles, filtering them with face-recognition software, and then, posting them on a custom-made dating website, sorted by their facial expressions and characteristics".[274] Of course, it was also an ironic attempt to disrupt Facebook's policy, but at the same time a way to expose the vulnerability of personal data on a social networking platform.

The values which hackers and artists assign to a particular stream of data may vary in form. Usually it has to do with producing pranks, confusion, memes or just stealing time. They protest by completely disregarding the stakes which are estimated

273   Simona Lodi, *Cease & Desist Art: yes, this is illegal!* (25 May 2010), http://www. lesliensinvisibles.org/2010/05/cease-desist-art-yes-this-is-illegal/ (accessed 25 August 2016).
274   Alessandro Ludovico and Paolo Cirio, *Face to Facebook* (2010), http://www.face-to-facebook. net// (accessed 25 August 2016).

the highest by the info-capitalism, that is monetary value. The closest they come to monetary value in recent years is when trying to hide their traces through proxy servers when purchasing illegal goods by shopping with bitcoins on the dark-web. The significance of time in relation to capitalist production is evident in the attempts to steal time by artistic misfits who try to express civil disobedience. One such protocol is the so-called DDoS – Distributed Denial of Service attack – oriented at saturating the server of the target with massive external communications requests, usually making the computers effectively useless.

Such acts must stay in the realm of disobedience, because the normalisation of sharing and stealing by hackers and activists has been to some extent capitalised and assimilated to the mainstream culture in the form of entrepreneurship and participation of hackers as well-behaved citizens of info-capitalism. The rule is: when capital is threatened, it co-opts its opposition. This process of fake inclusion may also be observed in the promotion of female computer programmers, which has been in fashion in the last five years. The idea of female programmers only became acceptable when there was a demand for more women in the workforce by the market. By some estimates, by the year 2020 there will be a deficit of 80,000 computer science professionals in Europe alone, and that is why the female workforce must be exploited. The acceptance of women in technological professions is therefore not just the benevolent result of persistent → emancipation. The question is still who is stealing what from whom.

The commons, especially in the so-called brand of Creative Commons, is not an independent realm. It is a dynamic object that falls into a field of forces defined by the laws of value and production. The network economy and monopolies of communication can now easily exploit, for instance, the generously provided Free Culture without imposing any form of traumatic enclosure or strict regime of intellectual property. The digital commons are not autonomous, they are infested by corporations and processes of gentrification of creativity. The idea of creativity has been one of the mind tricks used for voluntary exploitation of the new workforce. One such latest fad – crowdsourcing – which still bears the illusion of potentiality, feeds the competitive nature of → labour in the cultural industries. The artistic mode of production in crowdsourcing exists for the sake of creating good values of citizenship, public good, and accessibility, which are in themselves modes of gentrification not modes of cultural production. In this sense cultural production is a zombie, and the only way to make culture alive is in reversing the chain of value generation. In this way tactics of stealing or sabotage can equally be seen as creative and productive. When the cultural production is aimed at non-normative behaviour it is dynamic, and when it is aimed at "creative destruction" it must likewise be understood as belonging to the contemporary multitudes and the commons.

The idealised vision of the commons as a product of networking culture bears another trap which is often neglected, yet it provides the basic energy flow into the networked organism. All immaterial commons have a material basis. The political terrain for media theory is not only in the digital production of knowledge but in the material reality of the so-called "energetic unconscious" which is manifested in the energy crisis. The production of electricity and energy is at the heart of the mediascape. This is the very real impact of the digital life which appears so purely immaterial and sanitised. It is one of the production forces that are behind the anthropocene, causing earthquakes, droughts and other natural disasters affected by and affecting humans. It is of course not the only driving force behind conflicts, but it is one of the often-overlooked contributing factors. To illustrate this, I would

Figure 120: Michael Saup, *Pyramis Niger – the avatar of the Internet*, 2009. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Ricardo Liberato. In the background: "A lignite coal pyramid with a base side of 1,422 meters and a height of 905 meters created by the electrical power consumption of the Internet in 2009, totaling 1,000,000,000,000 kWh's. The lignite briquettes would create a line 1.5 times as big as the distance between Earth and Sun." http://openresource.1001suns.com/pyramis-niger.php, cc by-nc-sa 1001suns.com 2011–2012.

like to use an example of an art piece by Michael Saup. He created an algorithmic piece calculating the energy consumption of the internet. The use of the energy in the span of one year was a pile of black coal much greater than the size and volume of the Great Pyramid. Any digital action has therefore a direct energetic impact. (Figure 120)

This energetic interpretation of technology directly contests the dominant paradigm of Media Studies, that reduces and neutralises the network to a dialectics of two internal coordinates: digital code and the flow of information. In contrast, any system should be defined by the external excess of energy that operates it. The call to consume less will continue to remain ineffective until the capitalist core of production is questioned.

In conclusion, I would like to contest the notion that networking is somehow producing the commons, implied by the idealised version of the Free Culture and Creative Commons. Being an active member of the free culture, open source software and free hardware movement, I have serious doubts about the:
1. impact that it makes in the face of the global market;
2. the self-righteousness of the movement trapped in its own morals or geek ethics;
3. the swift appropriation of any genuine change in the movement by the forces of info-capitalism.

Who is stealing what from whom, and who is to decide on the verdict of criminality?

Other Institutionality

Many institutional structures inherited from both the bourgeois and the socialist national states survive today either as ruins of the past, ready for touristic consumption, or as precarious organisations sieged by spurious powers. Social and political movements of many different kinds are now reclaiming the institutional space from a new political imagination. A few contemporary institutions all over the world are rehearsing forms of negotiation with these instituent practices. During the other institutionality seminar, the narrators presented their terms in the context of artworks, social and institutional practices that were shaped either by historical cases which were signified by specific local environments, such as the former Yugoslavia or similar, or with newly commissioned artistic proposals related to different issues about the future. As for the historical cases, the seminar focused on a comparison between the "institutional critique" in different non–Western localities; as for works about the future, they were linked to the context of the global "new world chaos".

The seminar took place at the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, +MSUM, Ljubljana, Slovenia from 17 and 18 January 2017.

Introduction

Terms

Institutionality "After" the Institution Jesús Carrillo

Rethinking the art institution is the central mission of L'Internationale confederation. The five previous referential fields of the *Glossary of Common Knowledge* can be seen to an extent as a meandering approach to a question, which involves us and our practices within the object of interrogation.

The institutional debate has acquired unexpected relevance since the beginning of the new century. It was not exclusively a new wave of the institutional critique of the 1970s and 1980s. Although it soon connected with many open questions raised within our realm, it emerged from positions and disputes taking place elsewhere. The institution was not called forth as that pertinacious object of analysis and critique, which ultimately fed its proverbial narcissism, or as the enemy to be beaten in order to clear the path of → emancipation, as targeted in traditional antagonist movements. Institutionality came forth both as a challenge to political imagination and as a horizon for collective action in a context of extreme social vulnerability and increasing delegitimation of the dispositives and structures of the existing system. The invocation to radically "other" or "new" forms of organisation arrived at art institutions at a moment in which this was under siege by neoliberal productivism, general disaffection and cultural wars.

The 1990s observed the dissemination in the intellectual and artistic circles of the powerful image of a society of interconnected individuals who, once the potential of new communication technologies was released, would be able to cooperate and develop synergies without institutional mediations or any structural support beyond the dictate of those technologies. The new modes of relation/production and the new processes of subjectification attached to them seemed to demand a new political economy which did not require, apparently, the → construction of new institutional structures. According to this *fin de siècle* view, the TAZ, those Temporary Autonomous Zones which, for Hakim Bey, emerged spontaneously from the will of individuals and collectives, were to impose their evanescent nature and *ad hoc* forms over the aspiration to build permanent institutions. These were not seen only as dispositives of social control working for the perpetuation of the structures of domination, but as the anachronistic remains of an inefficient and obsolete system. The TAZ were not any more a way to scape an almighty state as imagined by the libertarian Hakim Bey, but the prototype for a stateless society. Not only the existing institution, but institutionality itself was said to be over.

This radically utopian vision responded, however, to the same premises that neoliberalism was simultaneously identifying in order to design the new global order, and their respective vocabularies and procedures were easily confounded. But, whereas for the former the state would eventually collapse due to its obsolescence, for the latter it should remain instrumental in order to guarantee the limitless unfolding of financial capitalism. The believers of the post-institutional truth: creative, self-employed and flexible workers, would end up becoming the "*precariate*" of the new machinery of post-Fordist capitalism.

But the *fin de siècle* did not only produce the image of a network of interconnected singularities floating in technological amniotic liquid. The Italian post-operaist thinker Paolo Virno denounced the *arriviste* cynicism of those who hailed the end of institutions, becom-

ing collaborators with the new forms of neoliberal domination. As an alternative, he identi-fied in his *Grammar of the Multitude* (2001) the potency which may lead to a new form of society. The multitude, the bunch of singularities which, according to Hobbes, preceded the institution of the social body, would return from the remote origins of pre-modern politics to push away the vanquished remains of the modern subject.[275] Certainly, civil disobedi-ence and exodus, as ultimately prescribed by Virno's text, did not seem to provide with the best grounds for a new institutional imagination. However, his powerful description of contemporary society identified the pillars of a "radically other" public sphere, as well as "radically new" conceptualisations and forms of democracy based on the innate tendency of the multitude to communicate and cooperate through affections.

The tempering of millenarianism, and the rise of new waves of political action and organisa-tion to counter the increasing violence and instability of the system of domination, brought about a gradual displacement of the previous emphasis on defection on behalf of the pow-er of the "general intellect" to produce new forms of life in → common. In 2007, the online journal *Transversal* produced by EIPCP (European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies) issued a monograph on what were called "instituent practices". As I note in my contribution to the *Glossary*, this issue included a text by the activist thinker Raúl Sánchez Cedillo under the title "Towards new political creations. Movements, institutions and new militancy".[276] Taking a little-known text by Gilles Deleuze as a point of departure, Sánchez Cedillo pro-posed an alternative approach to the "institution" which emerged from the "general in-tellect", and led to affirmative, non-constraining and non-repressive or exclusive forms of action. Perhaps, the actual shape of such institutions could not yet be recognisable, and could only be perceived as part of specific and contingent "instituent practices". This text revealed, however, that social movements were reshaping their agenda according to a new political imagination in which the "institution" should play a central role.

Working on the semantic ambivalence of the term, this approach to the "institution" did not refer to the formally constituted structure, the institution defined as such, but to the action of instituting, and, above all, to the political practices moved by an instituent im-pulse. Gerald Raunig conceived this instituent practice as a process: as a concatenation of instituent events which escaped the binary instituent/instituted, constituent/constituted, departing from the traditional movimentist opposition to institutions.[277] This reading exor-cised the closed and centripetal image of the state institution and allowed the recognition of the instituent nature of the cooperative and affective practices which Virno identified as appropriate for the multitude.

In 2008, *Transversal* devoted a special issue to "mental prototypes of political action"[278] which could overcome the "frustrated virtuality" of the 1968 revolts as well as the more

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275   Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT, 2004).
276   Raúl Sánchez Cedillo, "Towards New Political Creations. Movements, Institutions, New Militancy", *Transversal*, Instituent Practices (July 2007), http://transversal.at/transversal/0707/sanchez/en (accessed 22 April 2018).
277   Gerald Raunig, "Instituting and Distributing: On the Relationship between Politics and Police Following Rancière as a Development of the Problem of Distribution with Deleuze", *Transversal*, Art and Police (September 2007), http://transversal.at/transversal/1007/raunig/en (accessed 22 April 2018).
278   *Transversal*, Monster Institutions (May 2008), http://eipcp.net/transversal/0508 (accessed 22 April 2018).

recent alter-globalisation movements. Universidad Nómada, one of those agencies which emerged from the mutations of political subjectivity in the late 1990s, proposed the "untimely irruption" of "monstrous institutions", as itself was defined. This monstrous institution was described as a hybrid and contradictory dispositive, permanently negotiating with heterogenous elements in which both "movement" and "institutional" ingredients mingled together. It was seen as a strategic dispositive bursting in the state or privatised public spheres in order to transform them from within. Their monstrous nature, typical of the multitude, prevented them from having a recognisable and stable shape but, by the same token, provided the conditions from which to produce collective political actions and intellectual creations which may contribute to the invention of new political paradigms. The oxymoron "monstrous institution" allowed us to recognise in the exodus of the multitude the matrix of an instituent process.

The "new" or "alter" institutionality invoked in the last chapter of the *Glossary of Common Knowledge* relates, to a great extent, to such a monstrous nature, reluctant to fit in an institutional shape defined in terms of clear identity. The novelty resides in the fact that monstrosity is now vindicated from the museum itself. Institutions, as discussed in the presentations and debates which took place in the *Glossary* seminar, are not planning an updating of their structures either to respond to the demands of the new "prosumer" publics of neoliberal societies, or to feed the self-referential cultural minorities which already share their vocabularies and values. Our museums are not anymore striving to catch up with a tide which does not hide its hostile and violent nature, or trying to identify its "true" community. They choose to → deviate, to get mad, to erotise themselves, in order to → conspire with others beyond their walls, so to keep on making sense of the world. Instead of following the logics of branding, growth and novelty, they aim at holding "*altern*", → reflexive, minor dynamics, and relating to the environment in terms of → interdependence and → sustainability instead of territorialisation, competition and gain. Rather than a reform or an updating, to be a valid social dispositive the museums involve an → estrangement with regard to our logics and to become a → *stultifera navis*, which navigates unknown rivers and seas without a fixed destination.

The picture rendered by the discussions held during the seminar prevents us from looking for a vantage point from which to define the new institution. Social movements may never articulate *ex novo* structures which would eventually replace the existing ones, and these may never transform themselves in a relevant way by merely applying reformist recipes. Both the crude nature of our times and the very essence of what we are seeking should lead us to find the answers to the institutional question in the ethics and politics which define the specific procedures, protocols and economies organising the relationships among different agents. An "other" institutionality may only be possible by rearticulating institutional practices from an ethical and political perspective, taking into account their contingent and conflictive nature and suspending the binary structures in/out with which institutions divide social space. Obviously, to introduce alterity in the institution requires breaking up blockages and countering inertias, as well as the rehearsal of monstrous, hybrid and contradictory dispositives in which the encounter and the negotiation may take place.

The word I propose is "alternating"; and I begin with a commonplace: that the hegemonic institution is foiled if it is negated and constructed in an idealised alternative, which is conceived as something diametrically different from that which activates the negation. It is this alternative that refuses the norm and tends to harden in the course of its career, or tenure, as the seemingly preordained opposite of the institutional. Perhaps, the word "counter-culture" may be revived provisionally just to set up the stature of the "alternative". Of interest to me are the categories "counter" and "culture" and how the two would consolidate into a fairly stable element that supposedly threatens the existing doxa. The term culture is obviously attractive, largely because it invests a transcendent moment such as the "aesthetic" or the "zeitgeist" with a context or a ground, or that fine grain of materiality. That being stated, how culture inevitably becomes captured through meaning and tradition has prompted scholars to calibrate its valence and investigate the capillary circulations of power. For instance, Lila Abu-Lughod challenges the "coherence, timelessness, and discreteness" that the rubric of culture presupposes and urges us to write against it by way of "discourse and practice", "connections", and the "ethnographies of the particular".[279] I take these to mean the intense interrogation, reciprocities, and annotations of the idiosyncratic. The "counter" and the "cultural" dissipate in this hectic exchange of energies, this "proliferating act of → translation".[280]

In light of this reconsideration, I ask: What if instead of alternative, the term "alternating" is contemplated? I am keen on a term that infuses institutionality with a current that changes direction from time to time, every now and then, and is not constant and direct. In alternating current, the charge carriers move back and forth instead of merely transferring from positive to negative; they in a way carom, or bounce back at an angle, beyond the binary continuum or a predictable polarity, as it were. Eventually, these charges drift, wander across an indefinite cycle. I try to inscribe alterity, a charge of difference, into the institutional to harness its transmission more broadly, and to some extent more efficiently, because of the repetitive translation and eccentric switching through the subjectivity that is the alternator, the conduct of which may be embodied by the curator.

Let me discuss "alternating" across different scales.

First is the scale of political economy. The term "alternating" is seen in relation to the context of the "developmental". The "developmental" references the potential of transformation in which a world "suddenly turns visible" in the words of the artist-curator, poet, designer, and thinker Raymundo Albano. He regarded contemporary art and his curatorial work in the 1970s through the 1980s, at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, which stands on ground reclaimed from the sea, as akin to the way the government of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos was priming the Philippines to become an industrial nation through a regimen of development strategies. The developmental agenda largely meant, according to Albano, the "building of roads, population control, the establishment of security units".[281]

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279   See Lila Abu-Lughod, "Writing Against Culture", in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, ed. Richard G. Fox (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1991), 138–162.
280   J. Hillis Miller, *Tropes, Parables, Performatives: Essays on Twentieth-Century Literature* (New York, NY: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 212.
281   Raymundo Albano, "Developmental Art of the Philippines", *Philippine Art Supplement* 2, no. 4 (1981): 15.

Developmental art in his mind was verisimilarly made from the same facture and affect: "sand, junk, iron, non-art materials such as raw lumber, rocks" and "people were shocked, scared, delighted, pleased and satisfied" when confronted with this method of making art".[282] Alternating here comes in two forms: the → alignment of contemporary art with the economic policy of a Third World, Southeast Asian developing nation-state that had undergone three successive colonialisms from the late 19th century to the middle of the 20th, on the one hand, and the insertion of experiments into the official program of a cultural centre which postured to be simultaneously civilisational and international, on the other. Let it be said as well that attending these successive colonialisms were the Pacific War, the Cold War, and the Vietnam War. Albano demonstrated that what "embodied → bureaucracy" might be able to insinuate in the technique of cultural work, which is not entirely estranged from development work fostered by the state. An artist-curator like Albano, a position that in itself had been an alternating one, would vacillate between regulated assimilation and nimble intermediation at a time when a "world" was sensed as "suddenly turning visible", a prospect that puts its faith in the "turning" and is thrilled by suddenness. It is the visible, however, that may prove to be more complicated, alternating between what Mark Currie posits as "anticipation" and the "unexpected", open to both the calculated and the unforeseeable.[283] The alternating, therefore, is always a suspended, suspenseful dynamic. The artist-curator Albano executed programs in an institution which he was building almost from scratch, and at the same time mediated the various demands and pressures of administrators and politicians who intervened in the field of art and culture. In other words, Albano was at once elusive and present, a proficient worker and an unknown quantity, a cog in the machine, so to speak, and also a monkey wrench.

The second aspect of the alternating is the aesthetic underlying its logic of practice. Albano, in an effort to convey a post-colonial critique of Western modernism, wrote in an essay that installation is, first, as innate as "childhood urges" and, second, indigenous to the Philippines, as opposed to painting that he deems Western. Here, he alternates between a desire for authenticity, even originality, on the one hand, and a desire to belong to the currency of international contemporary art by contracting the language of installation, on the other. He sketches out this memory as a link between the memory of hometown lifeways and "an artist's open-mindedness in expressing new sculpture – especially the kind that hangs, leans, or gets support from an existing structure, something that we call an installation".[284] In Albano's mind, the connection is primal, and he crosses the gap between "custom" and "academic evaluation". Of consequence here is the way Albano recovers something bodily, seemingly unmediated, to situate or provide a context for an inculcated norm in the field of art. According to him, this "gives an explanation to the roots of the concerns of artists doing this type of art".[285] On the one hand, Albano saturates the urge to install with local and intrinsic integrity; and, on the other, he finds it necessary or strategic to contract the idiom of the international art world to make it intelligible. In a significant way, the option of installation permitted Albano to draw several lines of critique: first against the primacy of painting, and second against the kind of art that the allegiance to painting had generated. He points out that "through the years, installations enabled artists to broaden their list of materials for art: sand, stones, bags, rubber tires, painted bread... items taken from the

282 Ibid., 18.
283 See Mark Currie, "Anticipation/Unexpected", in *Time: A Vocabulary of the Present*, eds. Joel Burges and Amy J. Elias (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2016), 97–110.
284 Raymundo Albano, "Installations: A Case for Hangings", *Philippine Art Supplement* 2, no. 1 (1981): 2.
285 Ibid.

outside world".[286] It was not only the medium that had expanded but the technology as well: "spreading, hanging, stretching, laying down arbitrarily, et cetera".[287] This critique of form for Albano was ultimately a critique of space, or more specifically, the limitations of gallery space as furnished by the museum institution. For him, the said conventional space "does not provide the 'nature' that their works depend on. Hence, the necessary hanging or leaning".[288] He explains that "in echoing the natural world, the artists confront the characteristics of installation itself… The fact that a sculptor no longer depends on gravity alone changes attitudes towards the concept of art itself".[289] The installative, therefore, serves as some kind of a vehicle of translation, an alternator.

The third register in the alternating is the disposition of the agent who alternates. The Philippine lexicon yields the fascinating word *diskarte,*[290] which is basically a kind of *metis*, a sense of cunning that is able to refunction the dominant structures or adverse circumstances through a series of turns in form, in other words through a multiplicity of tropes.[291] The alternating, polytropic agent is able to ultimately transcend the binary of mastery and hybridity by entitling himself or herself to both in going through the tricky processes of imitation and intimacy so that the foreign and the native would no longer be feared or reified; they would neither be heroically resisted nor hopelessly orientalised.

Finally, the alternating implicates a possible theory of interval. In the atmosphere of the alternating, the interval is key in resisting reconciliation and in pursuing risk through embodied bureaucracy and the everyday improvisation of an embedded and emergent interlocutor. In a climate of ubiquitous tropical decay and political corruption, natural calamity and endemic exploitation of power, the alternating ingrains in the agent exceptional practical intelligence in which the institutional is lived out and outlived in-between crises. The interval is neither disruption nor nexus; it is an opportunity, a relief from routine and transaction, and in a setting of scarcity, a time to make the most of.

The alternating, however, because of its vigorous oscillations may at a certain point be exhausted and inevitably overcome by the complicity with discrepant interests and expectations. It may also tax the quick-change talent and virtuosity of the alternating agent who has to relentlessly translate, rescale, and perform temporary conditions of possibility though cannot prefigure lasting results, or regulate → sustainable infrastructure because of fluctuating sources of capital and patronage. That being said, the alternating is, I think, generative and hospitable, indeed, in a way more political than the radical schemes of the seizure of the dominant apparatus or abandoning it for extremely opposite structures. The alternating is not so much anti-institutional as it is proto- or para-institutional, always incipient and tangential relative to that which is aspired to and infringed upon. The temptations of seizure and rupture are surely irresistible. But they tend to be uncompromisingly committed to the ideological, the dialectic, and the → autonomous, too

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286 Ibid., 3.
287 Ibid.
288 Ibid.
289 Ibid.
290 See Patrick D. Flores, "Palabas", *Ctrl+P Journal of Contemporary Art* no. 11 (March 2008): 8–9, http://www.ctrlp-artjournal.org/pdfs/CtrlP_Issue11.pdf (accessed 8 January 2017).
291 See James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998). See also Peter Hulme, "Polytropic Man: Tropes of Sexuality and Mobility in Early Colonial Discourse", in *1642: Literature and Power in the Seventeenth Century*: Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature, eds. Francis Baker et al. (Colchester: University of Essex, 1980).

beholden to the avant-garde as the episteme of transformation or the fundament of any alteration. The alternating dynamic is successive but not necessarily progressive, reversive but not immediately subversive. I am reminded of the Filipino woman revolutionary Salud Algabre, who took part in a peasant rebellion in the 1930s against the Americans, who said: "No uprising fails. Each one is a step in the right direction".[292] The alternating is patient, spirited.

While the alternating dwells in that delicate tension between everyday and emergency, the timely and the untimely. Raymundo Albano spoke of "metaphysical → unrest" and the "time to unlearn" in the same breath amid the designs of the state to speed up development and stage its spectacles. The alternating responds to what Ben Anderson calls "everyday emergencies", the "precariousness of the everyday", the critical condition that demands urgent action and persistent attentiveness.[293] It is drawn to the modality of the series or the cycle, to incremental, accretive engagements that may not necessarily cohere into a centre like what Imelda Marcos had imagined as the classical Parthenon or the First World Lincoln Center in Manila. Intimating the nature of the country, with its intermittent monsoons and exceptional humidity, the alternating in the Philippines may be reckoned as archipelagic, at once aesthetic and natural history, like islands surrounded by a level of water that continually channels and mutates. It can only be finally tropical: prone to turning, likely to decline.

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unrest 86

The Art Hypothesis Anders Kreuger, Bart De Baere   M HKA, Antwerp, Belgium, January 2017

Figure 121: Alice Creischer, *The Greatest Happiness Principle Party*, 2001. Collection M HKA, Antwerp © M HKA.

For this last session of the glossary, M HKA would like to return to a term we have been using tentatively for a while, because of our largely → intuitive feeling that it fits our activities and our "philosophy" (if we may allow ourselves to use also this term a bit loosely).

One reason for coining the term "art hypothesis" to describe what a museum of contemporary art does and should do is our desire to break away from the 19th century bourgeois understanding of art as an activity and system (and to some extent a field of knowledge) ultimately serving the cohesion and continued flourishing of "the cultured classes" or, in the twentieth-century formulation, "the interested public". Another reason for the coinage is our conviction that art should not be reduced to a service provider for the leisure economy of today's bourgeoisie, i.e. those who benefit from the new accumulation of wealth – and the new scarcity of meaningful employment – that characterises globalised reality. (Figure 121)

The "collectors' community" is still a major force in the Belgian art world, not least because it is not limited to the old establishment but keeps itself open to new members from the entrepreneurial sectors of post-industrial society. The Belgian approach can be marketed, with some credibility, as "democratising art without politicising it", and therefore as a system sympathetic to and supportive of "the freedom of art". But it rings true only as long as bourgeois notions such as "public" and "audience", "exhibition" and "curator", "creator" and "mediator" and "viewer"

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292   David Reeves Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines, 1840–1940* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976), 288–289.

293   See Ben Anderson, "Emergency/Everyday", in *Time: A Vocabulary of the Present*, eds. Joel Burges and Amy J. Elias (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2016), 177-191.

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intuitive 33, 241

still wield their power over our minds. And those are the very notions we continuously seek to question and challenge.

We combine the words "art" and "hypothesis" into a term because we prefer not to pretend to know what "art" is. We do it also because we wish to avoid defining the meaning of "art" by default, as a mere function of the context we work in. Put simply, we want to strengthen the community we are part of by not accepting its consensual definitions of what we do and should do (as a contemporary art museum) before we have tested them to see how meaningful they are to us. In this sense, we insist on the subjectivity of the institution, on its → agency as a societal subject and on its capacity – indeed its obligation – to create, disseminate and defend its own concepts and operations. By coining this and other new terms, we (we who represent the institutions that create and recreate collective memory) insist on our own right to be a "constituent power" of the society we inhabit (and, incidentally, on our right and need, as a museum, to do our own research).

What, then, does "hypothesis" mean, to us and in general? Encyclopaedic knowledge is always a good first step towards understanding. Wikipedia entries (in various languages) remind us that the Greek ὑπόθεσις literally meant "to put under", "to set before" – in other words "to suppose", "to suggest" – and that it referred to a summary of the plot of a classical drama. Interesting. Here we already have "the provisional idea whose merit requires evaluation" and which "will enable predictions by reasoning" – not only an application of the rules of logic, but also the aesthetic treatment that the unknown may undergo too.

In science, moreover, it is not considered ethical or good manners to formulate a hypothesis about something we already know too much about. Instead it is the realisation that our knowledge is insufficient, no matter how diligently gathered, that should prompt us to use hypotheses as tools to at least prove ourselves wrong. To be of scientific value, hypotheses must be falsifiable, preferably through experimentation. "If the researcher already knows the outcome, it counts as a 'consequence' – and the researcher should have already considered this while formulating the hypothesis."[294]

The framing and interpretation of concepts and theories are rarely clearly separated operations, in science and elsewhere. Their interpretability is part of what makes hypotheses "vibrate from their own putting-into-question" (Ernst Bloch, *Über Fiktion und Hypothese*, 1953, my translation). Yet for scientific researchers, it is advisable to construct hypotheses in ways that ensure testability (or at least falsifiability), parsimony (the economy of rhetorical means), scope (applicability to multiple cases), fruitfulness (prospects for future explications) and, perhaps somewhat counter-intuitively, conservatism (the "fit" with existing recognised systems of knowledge).

Let us look closer at the Art Hypothesis with all this in mind. For our purposes as a contemporary art museum, and to help create "other institutionality", the concept must be as open-ended as possible (so that it clears our mind for new perspectives and prevents us from falling back onto established dichotomies such as "art and society" or "form and content") and as general as possible (so that it avoids excluding not-yet-known ways of making and understanding "art" from today's discussions). The concept should be well grounded in our → intuition of what we do and should

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294   All these quotes are, alas, from the English Wikipedia page. *Hypothesis* (21 March 2018), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypothesis (accessed 8 April 2018).

do, and also in the facts that our operations and activities help create. It should take into account the progress we make with our concrete → collaborations with concrete people. At the same time, it should not limit itself to the institution and its own self-understanding (which has sometimes been an unwanted consequence of Institutional Critique). An Art Hypothesis that fails to develop with the dynamic interaction the institution maintains with society (where artists and audiences are just two of many → constituencies) also fails to be useful. It is therefore important that the concept be open to amendment, since the practice of hypothesising always implies risk.

To us, these general requirements for the Art Hypothesis add up to a *raison d'être*. They seem to take care of "scope" and "fruitfulness", while "parsimony" is a somewhat fluid requirement that may or may not have been addressed with the soundbite itself: "The Art Hypothesis". But what about the more challenging criteria of "testability" and "conservatism"?

It may not be possible to convince sceptics of the usefulness of our new term without offering more specifics on what its "art" component should and should not do. One of our purposes is to work out a concept that helps us be horizontal in our work. Not flat, not afraid to raise our heads, but combining the democratic virtues of horizontality in organisation and collaboration with a capacity for verticality in the meetings (between both people and ideas) that our activities orchestrate. We should not exaggerate the possibility to successfully transplant the criterion of testability from science into art, but it is also healthy to remind ourselves that we must never start believing our own propaganda. We must always carefully monitor what actually happens before and during and after those meetings.

Another purpose for the term is to make sure that the Art Hypothesis remains ever-developing, by being informed, as much as possible, by all the specific engagements and insights and missed opportunities from our past, the already existing images and objects and their various combinations in exhibitions, and their encounters with the urgencies of our present time. Thus, while the art of hypothesising is in itself futures-oriented, a certain form of conservatism, or at least of → continuity, is indispensable if the Art Hypothesis is to become more than an intuitively pleasing phrase.

Our term has consequences not only for the institution of art (the Institution with a capital I) but also for the art institution (which we prefer not to capitalise, because we see it as a support structure). We have a hunch (as Robert Filliou used to say) that it is the Art Hypothesis, in its open-endedness and openness to change, that can bring about the constitutive moment allowing us, in our institutional work, to pass from the institution to the Institution and back again. The Art Hypothesis constitutes an autopoiesis of the given institution, different in each case, propelling it forward through time and experience and allowing it to reproduce and maintain itself in its given environment.

An art institution (in our case a museum of contemporary art) that bases its work on an Art Hypothesis grounded in its own reality will, we hypothesise, identify neither with the master narrative of fine art museums (such as Le Louvre or El Prado, or less majestic examples closer to home), nor with the leisure economy logic of the much-touted trans-historical museums (of which The Met Breuer – The Metropolitan Museum of Art has already become a clear example). An institution that allows itself to hypothesise, and to experiment to verify or falsify its hypotheses, is,

we think, better poised to be relevant in the various futures we can now imagine. In the end, every institution is its own Art Hypothesis!

Addendum: Quotes from M HKA's Policy Plan 2012–2016

This hypothesis is the image of art which is shaped by the museum and is presented to the world at large. M HKA constantly calls this image into question, tests and rethinks it. A traditional museum marshals the artistic past into a "master story", a precept. This precept creates the impression of being definitive and unchangeable. A museum of contemporary art constantly checks and rechecks the past, the present and the future – with the artists, its audience and society. In this way insights can be reappraised and reformulated. As a result the image of art presented by the museum lives and evolves and thus constantly gains strength. It is acquired internally and is simultaneously presented.

Two pairs of concepts are at the heart of M HKA's art hypothesis. On the one hand, the tension between the immaterial – art as an attitude, as thoughts – and the cultivation of the factual. On the other hand, the contrast between social commitment and a poetical, existential dimension. [...]

The attention the museum pays to globalisation is in keeping with Antwerp's character as a port city. That M HKA thinks so explicitly in terms of a hypothesis is a direct consequence of its localisation. In contrast to many other museums, M HKA was not founded by citizens and collectors. The roots of the Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp lie in the Antwerp art scene. It starts from current developments in the world and from artists, since they have always defined the Antwerp scene.

Any activities – collecting, conservation, study and presentation – occur within a framework of ongoing exploration of the artistic and art-historical climate. At the same time this is positioned within the broader, prevailing social, political and economic trends. M HKA, in order to live up to its art hypothesis, has formulated five essential points in its policy plan, each of which is subdivided into two objectives. (page 6)

A museum is audience-orientated by nature. But "being public" is not sufficient: "becoming public" is better. How are we doing that? M HKA aims to establish five links:
> – *With the public in the usual museum domain (presentation, collection, public relations, etc.);*
> – *With the broad social context (major events, partnerships, specific target groups, etc.);*
> – *With the museum context (purpose of the collection, vision, expertise and training, etc.);*
> – *With the commissioning authority (manage innovative projects, publicise discursive visions, etc.);*
> – *With artists (represent the vision, artistic quality, positioning abroad, etc.).*

These links also operate multilaterally, i.e. between public, social context, museum context, authority and artists. The museum aims to ensure that as far as possible these links reflect the art hypothesis central to the museum. The diverse interactions between M HKA and its constituencies contribute to the museum's becoming-public. In this way the museum assumes the role of meeting point for a multiplicity of partners. The art hypothesis becomes public in as many directions

as possible; it becomes part of a social fabric. "Everyone" can be informed about this and thus has the opportunity to become acquainted with M HKA. The museum aims to be alert to diversity and actively apply its staff to reaching the various focus groups. (page 25)

The triad of research, experiment and → reflection has gradually taken shape during the past few years, and will now be systematically and publicly developed. During the past five years the collection has become an actuality, and the actual deployment of the art hypothesis is now being realised. (page 33)

The website can collect and produce insights, ideas and thoughts, become a knowledge centre and eventually be a virtual community, grafted onto and forward-thinking in terms of M HKA's art hypothesis. (page 39)

At the same time the final goal, the ongoing realisation of the art hypothesis, is kept in mind. To this end M HKA intends to devote attention to training, discussion platforms and the like, but also learning and acquiring insights from practice itself. (page 42)

Conspiratory Institutions? Jesús Carrillo

<div align="right">Madrid, Spain, January 2017</div>

The rise and, particularly, the fall of "alter-worldism" in the first decade of the new millennium brought about an unexpected alter-institutionalist political imagination in European social movements, perhaps as a deferred action of the virtualities of the "general intellect" revealed around 1968. To embrace the issue of institutionalism was *contra-natura* and a risky business for antagonist movements, but the brutal crisis that inaugurated the new century made patent the blatant obsolescence and banality of existing institutional structures.

The Universidad Nómada appeared in Spain in early 2000 as the conveyor of this instituent imagination: a war-machine designed to develop new conceptual tools to understand "the specific patterns of exploitation and domination we are submitted to today, and to devise projects and actions able to short-circuit them".[295] Meanwhile, public institutions, our museums and universities among them, were trapped in the governance of an opaque mass of individualised subjects, their sustainability underscored by the very neoliberal regime they were obliged to serve. The unbearable awareness of living "on the edge" and in a state of structural crisis made some cultural institutions look around and recognise in the questions on institutionality contemporarily raised by social movements a possible *raison d'etre*, an ultimate life saver against "zombification".

Some contemporary cultural agents found in this → radical imagination an echo of the promises of → emancipation of 20th century avant-garde movements, as well as a luminous horizon towards which to look up to in a time when they were obliged to keep their eyes on their feet as the floor was cracking beneath them. Jorge Ribalta, director by then of public activities at MACBA, was pioneering in realising that the best way to go beyond the tendency to replace the old bourgeois notion of the public with that of the consumer and "to understand publics as transformers and not as reproducers" was to engage with the activities of the so called

295   Universidad Nómada, http://www.sindominio.net/unomada/ (accessed 7 January 2017).

"new social movements".[296] → Alliances were held and projects were developed in which "monstrous institutions", as the experimental movement structures called themselves, and "progressive institutions", as our museums were usually identified, improvised and negotiated a common ground for action.

On our side, this probably happened due to the increasingly thin and → fragile walls of contemporary institutions and the proverbial ambivalence of artists, academics and curators, who were seldom becoming double agents of some sort. On the side of the movements, this was seen as a way out from previous *cul de sac* and as a step forward in the longer-term task of building institutions of a new kind. In 2007 Raúl Sánchez Cedillo, a founding member of Universidad Nómada, used a little-known text by Deleuze on David Hume's work "Instincts and Institutions" to rescue a notion of institutions that, unlike laws, were structures of social invention, a means to steer individual experience to satisfaction; to affirmative, and non-constraining nor exclusionary modes of action. Raúl's text, "Towards New Political Creations. Movements, Institutions, New Militancy", was part of an issue of the *Transversal* online journal that the EIPCP (European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies) devoted to instituent practices.[297]

The case of Reina Sofía's → intervention on behalf of *La casa invisible* in Malaga is a good example of these experiments. As you may know, *La casa invisible* (CSA), an autonomous social centre occupying an abandoned building in downtown Malaga, which in 2007 brought together activists, artists, architects and neighbours as a counterpoint to the tourist-based cultural policies of Malaga City Council.[298] In June 2009 the public activities department of Reina Sofía, together with Universidad Nómada, organised in the *La casa invisible* the seminar *Cultural Governance vs Institutions of the → commons. The right to the city and new cultural policies*.[299] The issue at stake was the discussion of the diverse forms institutions of the commons may have based on existing experiences all over Europe: from Hamburg to Seville, London, Barcelona, Venice and Madrid.

Our hidden agenda was to play with the expectations of Malaga's city council to have a branch of the prestigious Reina Sofía in Malaga, as they had with the Thyssen Museum, and would have soon with the Pompidou, and so to prevent the imminent eviction of *La casa invisible*. *La casa invisible* is still open and active in Malaga today, and beyond that, its "institutionalisation" process, in which our department was active, brought about the *Fundación de los comunes* in December 2011.[300] Enthusiast and optimistic as we were from both sides, this was not an easy path, as were forced to invent and create the space for every step. Jaime Vindel, in "The Displacement of Criticism: Cultural Institutions and Social Movements Since the 90's", a text published in *Desacuerdos 8*, that we edited together in 2014, talked about the "uncomfortable situation of institutions being simultaneously leading progressive institutions in Europe, and moving awkwardly behind grassroots pro-

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296 Jorge Ribalta, "Experimentos para una nueva institucionalidad", in *Objetos Relacionales: Colección MACBA 2002–2007* (Barcelona: MACBA, 2009), https://www.macba.cat/PDFs/jorge_ribalta_colleccio_cas.pdf (accessed 7 January 2017).
297 Raúl Sánchez Cedillo, "Towards New Political Creations. Movements, Institutions, New Militancy", *Transversal*, Instituent Practices, trans. Maribel Casas-Cortés and Sebastian Cobarrubias (July 2007), http://eipcp.net/transversal/0707/sanchez/en (accessed 7 January 2017).
298 La Casa Invisible, http://www.lainvisible.net (accessed 7 March 2017).
299 *Governance cultural vs Instituciones de lo común. Derecho a la ciudad y nuevas políticas de la cultura* (7 June 2009), http://www.museoreinasofia.es/fundacion-comunes/governance-cultural-vs-instituciones-comun-derecho-ciudad-nuevas-politicas-cultura (accessed 7 March 2017).
300 Fundación de los Comunes (The Commons Foundation), http://www.fundaciondeloscomunes.net (accessed 7 January 2017).

cesses of political empowerment, which eventually would end up in the taking over of public institution by destituent powers".[301]

Even if today general pessimism may obscure our diagnosis of the present, the violence of the current situation in 2017 seems to problematise severely the viability, although not the urgent need, of both instituent processes and institutional transformations, at least as we imagined them when we conceived *The Uses of Art* five years ago. The intensification of budget cuts, → bureaucratic control and cultural wars tends to make of contemporary institutions either complicit instruments of power or suspicious conspirators against what is depicted as a vulnerable social order under attack, within a black or white, normal or radical, binary logic. In this context, our cherished artistic ambivalence has definitively lost its grounds.

As long as this "state of war" is going on, may we assume conspiracy as a plausible logic for action? In such a case, should we encourage an "art of conspiracy"? With whom should/could we conspire? With which purpose? How would this conspiratory attitude affect our definition as institutions? Conspiracy has always been a common practice, even structural, in our cultural public institutions, at least in the → South, as the way to overcome bureaucratic suspicion and control in order to do what we are supposed to do.

I have conspired with my students and colleagues at the university in order to develop different learning practices; conspired with members of different departments of Reina Sofía to work together despite the hermetic institutional boxes we were incapsulated within; conspired with our peers at the L'Internationale to adjust the rigid structure of European Commission Grants applications to really existing projects; conspired with my team of civil servants at the Madrid City Council to get out from our bureaucratic glass box in order to negotiate with neighbours. I always found this kind of conspiracy tiring and unproductive, since it keeps the formal carcass of the institution intact while replacing its engine with an informal and intersubjective → network which rarely leaves a trace behind, which rarely changes anything. You could achieve your institutional goals only as long as you knew the right people and as a personal favour. This sort of conspiracy is not subversive. Quite the opposite, it guarantees the → continuity of an inadequate institutional system and of the subaltern status of workers.

The kind of conspiracy we learnt to develop in our institutional experimentations, first in the early steps of the *Desacuerdos* project and then in Reina Sofía public activities department, was of a different kind. Somehow, the etymological meaning of conspiracy, *conspiratio*, breathing together, or even the more general sense of "plotting" was suddenly recovered. We were not conspiring *within* our inadequate institution in order to make it work, we were conspiring with others *from* our inadequate institution in order to open up the conceptual, imaginary and political space for a different kind of institution to emerge.

Our conspiracy was meant to break out our insularity and to recognise relevant others to conspire with. By the same token, we were recognised from the outside as a useful tool in an ongoing collective instituent process. Conspiracy meant blowing, breathing, plotting, knitting together at the same time as it recovered its deep,

301   Jaime Vindel, "Desplazamientos de la crítica: instituciones culturales y movimientos sociales entre finales de los noventa y la actualidad", *Desacuerdos. Sobre arte, políticas y esfera pública en el Estado español* no. 8 (2014): 290–308, http://www.museoreinasofia.es/publicaciones/desacuerdos#numero-8 (accessed 7 January 2017).

subversive function, since it was ultimately oriented to the radical transformation of our institutional structures.

Obviously, this kind of radicality could only be allowed if undetected, or as long as it happened under the cover of avant-garde art experimentation.

But in 2011 the vision of a few became the *indignación* of many, and the desire for political → autonomy accumulated through years mutated into a powerful image of destitution and restitution of what it was called "real democracy". The rise and public visibility of a massive social movement in the 15-M Occupy process, coinciding with the victory of conservatives in Spain, displaced institutional experimentation from the museum to the streets and squares, local assemblies, internet social networks and, eventually, new political parties. The desertion of conspirators from the museum coincided with an increasing pressure on cultural institutions, from the financial side, through budget cuts, the managerial, through a restriction of their autonomy, and the ideological through the inspection and preventive clearing of any potentially subversive content they may convey. The temptation to embrace corporate powers and assume a role within leisure and tourist industry seemed to have no alternative.

I have the conviction, however, that the alternative is here and now, within ourselves. We are conspirational institutions endowed with highly sophisticated tools to engage in actual processes of social transformation. We may just have to assume that conspirational, collective breathing, attitude in the way we organise ourselves, the way we administer our budgets, the way we address our constituencies, and the way we design our programmes. Conspiracy, with all its subversive power, is at work when we take part in the collective and cooperative endeavour of resisting expropriation, segregation, commodification and banalisation. We do not need anymore that relevant other, the visionary social movements, to conspire with, in the same way that we do not need to be that exclusive and detached laboratory we once aimed at. Today, the conventional boundaries of institutions, defining clear in and out positions, are nothing but a carcass which does not say anything significant about what we are as organisations of social relations.

Conspiracy involves a detachment from our traditional structures of legitimation and may bring unexpected travel companions, people you would have never recognised as your peers, since conspiracy means negotiating with others. Conspiracy means a commitment with a collective cause, but it also implies secrecy, to operate within a dead angle from which you will not be seen by power and the risk of being discovered, exposed and erased. Conspiracy, the act of blowing together may, be the only way we have today to build institutions today.

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Dark Room Francisco Godoy Vega Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain, January 2017

According to Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of the Space*, the principles of institutions are repetition and reproducibility.[302] The terms according to which we interact with institutions (museums, libraries, prisons, hospitals, and so on) are thus based on the naturalisation of specific actions. This was finely designed by the museum during the Enlightenment, providing models of bourgeois public behaviour for cultural institutions. These terms were based on the apparent neutrality of the

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302   Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of the Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

Figure 122: Miguel Ángel Rojas, *Faenza series – Antropofagia*, 1979, five black and white photographs on aluminum, 50 x 70 cm each. Courtesy of the artist.

museum and the exhibition space, which were questioned by Brian O'Doherty in his classic *Inside the White Cube*.[303] Even though many artist and critics have analysed the ideological structure of the "→ white cube", I would like to focus on those that had approached the issue from "the dark side". Fred Wilson, for example, in his 1992 key project *Mining the Museum*, posed fundamental questions in order to imagine a non-reproductive institution, one becoming from below. That institution would dirty the whiteness of the museum. Questioning the false transparency of vision in the museum allows us to imagine an institution that assumes the abject, the possibility of contagion and, as a place of becoming, the confrontation against Western disciplinary structures.

The concept of "darkroom" involves a reinvention and erotisation of the institution; a revolt against the illuminist conception of the museum as a bourgeois public space based on the control of the social interactions of people. In the museum you cannot dance, you cannot be dirty, you cannot sleep, you cannot fuck. This imagination of a "museum of darkrooms" should be addressed from, at least, three starting points, which belong to three different, even contradictory, traditions, informed by colonial and feminist theories.

I.

Firstly, the darkroom allows us to conceive the institution as an architecture of desire. This pulsion-based architecture eschews disciplinary instructions, assuming the abject spaces of → deviant desire. A queer space: a perverse, useless, amoral, sensual, experiential and obscene space. It is a queer space that, as Aaron Betsky says, "instead of references to buildings or paintings, instead of a grammar of ornament and syntax of facades, here was only rhythm and light".[304] It is the place for the hidden geography of the abnormals who use the normalised architectures of social life to construct their reverse. In Foucauldian terms, it could be a "place of liberation", a political space for transforming living conditions in modern cities. The transformation of parks, public toilets or other modern institutions occurs as the opposite of the evident and normed: it happens mostly in the dark. As the Spanish artist Pepe Miralles says: "darkness is the ally needed for sexual interaction: light is heterosexual, darkness is the habitat of vampires".[305]

Those spaces of vampires are, in sexual terms, the places of cruising. The Colombian photographer Miguel Ángel Rojas took pictures – and developed them in a photographic darkroom – of the sexual subculture of the Faenza theatre in Bogotá during the 1970s. (Figure 122) Almost at the same time, Alvin Baltrop did it on the piers of Manhattan. Those cruising areas where spaces of freedom and sexual liberation, but at the same time were places of social interaction, generating microsystems that confronted the standardised system of the → family, monogamy and bedroom. Finally, these photographs register the possibility of assuming the insecurity of public space, something that has been completely erased by the cultural dispositives of modernity, as is the case of the museum. Those public places have recently mutated, as the Chilean artist Felipe Rivas San Martín has shown in the work *Cabina* (2012), where he presents the way modern public spaces have taken

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303   Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*: *The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, expanded edition (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1999).
304   Aaron Betsky, *Queer Space: Architecture and Same-Sex Desire* (New York: William Morrow, 1997), 5.
305   Pepe Miralles, "Geografías del morbo", *Bostezo digital* (August 2012), http://bostezodigital. blogspot.com.es/2012/08/geografias-del-morbo.html#more (accessed 8 May 2017).

a new camouflage: places such as bars or internet cafés, and more recently mobile applications, that are explicitly made for sexual interaction.

In a more experiential way, the Argentinean artist and sociologist Roberto Jacoby used the metaphors of the darkroom on his homonymous work from 2005, that was presented in 2011 at the vaults of the Reina Sofía museum. He showed a series of video recordings of a performance that was held in complete darkness, visible only through a night vision camera, where different sexual and non-sexual situations occurred. (Figure 123) In a different sense, this approach was used by the Spanish artist Andrés Senra in his ongoing project *Cruising, common and queer psychogeography,* developed as a critical approach to Madrid's upcoming World Gay Parade. By using different technological devices he proposed tours to cruising areas, taking the bodies of others as well as your own as places of the → commons, open to multiple uses and possibilities of transformation.

Figure 123: Roberto Jacoby, *Darkroom*, video still, 2005. Courtesy of the artist.

II.

Secondly, we can approach the darkroom considering the ideas of the French feminist thinker Luce Irigaray, who developed some concepts that confronted the phallocentric structure of modernity. In the book S*peculum of the Other Woman,* she proposed the reinforcement of the concept of opacity and the phenomenon of the labyrinth. Both concepts were conceived as epistemological experiences of the interior of the vagina. Where Freudian theory had seen an absence of the phallus, she argues a reinvention of the experience of the interior as a space full of folds. The turn of the speculum of gynaecology was proposed not as a medical instrument, but as a breaking off with regard to the supposed universality of the gaze: the tactile experience is a micropolitical experience that never tries to have an overview of a phenomenon but a fragmentation. In this sense, women are "the opacity yet non-differentiated of sensitive material".[306]

In 1992, the American former sex worker Annie Sprinkle entered into the art world through her vagina. With the performance *Public Cervic Announcement* she showed to the public the interior of her vagina, making a more tactile and intimate relation between the public and that work of art. In her more recent projects, she has continued dealing with the paradox of medical discourse and, in an ecological turn, has worked on the idea of "making love to the earth", introducing sex and nature intro an erotic setting inside or outside the museum. Other Latin American artists, such as Johan Mijail or Fannie Sosa, have worked on this idea of a "natural love", but in their case related to indigenous, negro and mestizo religions on the continent.

Other artists, in particular in the queer scene of Barcelona, have worked on a displacement of Sprinkle's concern with the vagina to the anus. María Percances and Jordi Flecos have developed in different contexts the project *Arte enANO*, that can be translated at the same time as "small art" and "art in the anus". In their projects, Percances changes at different moments the images shown of the interior of her anus. The same can be said of different projects developed by Mariokissme, where he uses the anus either as a site of pain or as one from where it is possible to listen to music that reflects the colonial and contemporary tensions of sodomy. In this sense, these artistic practices have expanded the complexity of the vagina to the anus as a key space of → the contemporary that has been privatised by modern medicine.

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306   Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

Figure 124: *Marica Multitude. Activating sexual-dissident archives in Latin America*, exhibition view, 2017. Courtesy of Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende.

The invention of an institution that assumes the contemporary chaos becoming the interior of the vagina and the anus makes them productive in a revolt against the Western *logoculocentric* experience of the museum. We should remember that Irigaray criticised Derrida's analysis of logocentrism, as he did not recognise its intrinsic masculine structure. The phenomenon of the labyrinth, in contrast, rejects transcendental meanings and the perception of truth as a masculine → universalism. The *"femina vita"*, as Irigaray called it, hides the truth and assumes the second sex traditionally posed as a revolt. It is then the reinvention of a knowledge produced by pulsions before symbolic language: against beauty and clarity, precise definitions and perfect forms. The dark continent of femininity assumes the lack and reinvents it from the memory of the fluids of milk, tears and menstruation.

III.

Finally, there is a third possible approach to these dark continents considering Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui's concept of *ch'ixi*. This Aymara word refers to a place where white and black can never give birth to pure grey. The *ch'ixi* mix operates not by subsuming but juxtaposing concrete differences. It works as an image to think of the coexistence of heterogeneous elements that don't produce something new and closed. Whereas Walter D. Mignolo launches the idea of the "dark side" of the Renaissance,[307] Rivera Cusicanqui takes a transhistorical turn in order to think of the place of the "encounter" as an insoluble problem. Particularly, she refers to the contemporary colonial conflict, considering that the trauma of the conquest in the Andes is still alive in multiple bodies.

In artistic terms, we can relate this idea to the Mexican artist Pedro Lasch. In his project *Black Mirror* he generated a conflict of language and opacity juxtaposing, without a hierarchy, pre-Columbian sculpture with images of modern Spanish paintings.

IV.

From these three different points of departure the main question that it is still open is how not to "represent" sexual and racial dissidence, but to "transform" the logics of institutional spaces. How to imagine a darkroom that confronts the false neutrality of the Western hetero-enlightened museum. How to imagine an institution that hosts the danger of desire and the risk of the contagious, confronting its modern disciplinarity and assumed neutral hygiene. We have rehearsed this in the exhibition *Marica Multitude. Activating sexual-dissident* → archives *in Latin America* at the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende. The art works, the museography and the debate spaces have been conceived as darkrooms, including different experiences beyond vision, such as smell or touch. But there is always a gap, and the structure of our own unconscious relation with the museum needs more exercise in order to make whiteness explode. (Figure 124)

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307   Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2003).

A museum properly understood is not a dumping place. It is not a place where we recycle history's waste. It is first and foremost an epistemic space.[308]
— *Achille Mbembe*

For the referential field "other institutionality" the Van Abbe proposes the term "deviant". Like other terms we have proposed during the glossary seminars, deviant has been circulating within the Van Abbe for some time. It is borrowed from the title of an essay written by our colleague Charles Esche in 2011, titled "The Deviant Institution".[309] For the Van Abbe, and myself, the term came into focus when I was writing a research policy paper for the museum in 2015. That paper was a process where we were trying to articulate and embed processes of research more explicitly within the institution. The term research was used by different departments (collection departments "researching" the provenance of art works or "research-based" exhibitions), the aim of the paper was to explore what type of research and research-based practice (artistic, curatorial, archival) we wanted to institute and the implications that would have for our working processes. Here the notion of deviance, as I shall discuss, felt prescient (so it is important to understand deviance in this context as focused around research – rather than other types of bodily, → dark room deviance that might be instituted in the museum). The policy paper resulted in the research programme Deviant Practice, involving research projects by artists, curators and archivists. Many of the ideas and reflections, then, as well as some of the examples discussed here, derive from that process.

In its simplest terms, to be deviant can be understood as veering off the entrenched path – as its etymology ("de" - off and "via" - way) makes clear. Two paths currently seem to determine the trajectory of the modern European (or even Western European, from where I write) art museum. The first, that came to define the cultural institution, is inextricably linked to and emerges from Europe – and the West's – understanding of itself and its relationship to others. A self-understanding that was born by the white Enlightenment male subject and a relationship to others that was defined through power (either military or economic), with inextricable links with the formation of the nation state and its ties to both the modern and colonial projects. Here, to be deviant within the museum would be to find methods and forms of knowledge that might expose and unravel those links, as well as the cultural and political formations that gave rise to them. In this sense we can understand deviance as adopting a position vis-à-vis the institution's historical processes, its forms of projected authority and its modes of categorisation.

Today, a second, equally problematic path pervades, one that calls for cultural institutions to define its success – or efficacy – through numbers: either visitor numbers or the amount of money it can raise. This path has been embedded through the museum confirming and captialising on an artistic and epistemic canon, (as Gerald Raunig states "back to the bosom of the canon, of art historical tradition, of

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308   Achille Mbembe, *Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive* (2016), https://wiser.wits.ac.za/system/files/Achille Mbembe - Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive.pdf (accessed 14 December 2017).

309   Charles Esche, "The Deviant Art Instituion", in *Performing the Institution(al)* vol. 1 (Lisbon: Kunsthalle Lissabon and ATLAS Projectos, 2011).
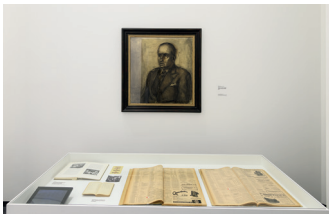
Figure 125: *Here or There? Locating the Karel 1 Archive*, installation view, curated by Michael Karabinos, Van Abbemuseum, 2017. Photo: Peter Cox.

aesthetic rules"),[310] one that is unsurprisingly dominated by artworks, theories and systems of ordering knowledge from Europe and America. This approach overlays one form of hegemonic structure with another – namely that of the market and the attention economy. Both intertwined paths, one formed by Euro- or Western-centric self-understanding, the other the logic of the market, deny space for different types of knowledge and working methodologies to enter the museum – they deny the possibility of other institutionality by demanding that we conform to their logic. At a time when both these systems are in crisis, it would seem vital to try and conceptualise and institute forms of practice that find ways to deviate from these paths, in both methodology, content and historical approach, as a means to unravel different lineages.

Attempts at resisting conformity have defined or propped up different avant-garde and experimental approaches throughout modernism's history, which in turn have been successfully folded into and co-opted by the institution at different moments. Similarly, and more recently within the context of cultural institutions, institutional critique and later new institutionalism have found ways to challenge institutional structures that can, by and large, be read in a similar vein of experimentalism and non-conformism that allowed the Western museum to redefine itself and, subsequently, extend its lifespan. Therefore, the term deviant needs to avoid functioning simply as a performative or rhetorical move by the institution to break rules whilst furthering its own self-preservation. Rather, to be deviant within the context of the museum and other institionality should be seen as an attempt to start undoing some of the institutional and political formations that underpin its practices. Therefore, we might understand the prefix "de-" ("off") in deviance in relation to processes of demodernising, → decolonising, or de-neoliberalising, or de-enlightening that might be part of deviant practices. These deviant approaches might offer a way to question past suppositions and hierarchies. Such an approach has been most theorised in relation to processes of decolonisation, beginning perhaps with Frantz Fanon, where in his searing opening to *The Wretched of the Earth* he writes: "Decolonisation, we know, is a historical process: In other words, it can only be understood, it can only find its significance and become self-coherent insofar as we can discern the history-making movement which gives it form and substance".[311] Such "history-making" lies at the core of the museum and its modes of collecting, categorising and presenting art. (Figure 125)

With this in mind, the notion of deviant practice needs to be further conceptualised and grounded in relation to the tools the museum has at its disposal in a way that could genuinely infiltrate the institution's methods for collecting, mediating and narrating. A first step would appear to be to acknowledge the implications for our processes and timeframes of working, governed as they so often are by the museum's → event culture. This would mean, as I have argued in previous glossary seminars, that the museum should increasingly understand its work as taking place away from its exhibition galleries, collection displays and public events (the visible – or illuminated parts of the museum).[312] Instead, its work would increasingly unfold through invisible processes and projects, initiated via relationships among different institutions, agents and constituent groups associated with the museum (these glossary meetings being a prime example). Central to this would be instituting different time frames within the museum that extend beyond exhibition cycles,

310 Gerald Raunig, "Flatness Rules: Instituent Practices and Institutions of the Common in a Flat World" in *Institutional Attitudes: Instituting Art in a Flat World*, ed. Pascal Gielen (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2013), 172.

311 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 2.

312 See my entry on → agency, page 157.

allowing processes of research to take place whose purpose is not wholly defined or determined by public outputs – whether in the form of exhibitions, commissions or publications. Such a move would necessarily entail redirecting budgets away from more visible activities to those that take place amongst different constituents, whether these are researchers, educators or activist groups. Significantly, it would be an attempt to reorient or refocus the museum as an educational, epistemic centre.

At the Van Abbe we identified the → archive and → constituencies as tools or frameworks that might allow these processes and relationships to unfold. Our archives are what defines us as a museum. They are, for better or worse, the heritage we hold. If we accept that deviant practice holds within it the need to consider and undo paths that led us here, the archive would appear to offer the means with which to do that. With this in mind, a formative example of deviant approaches to the archive was the ongoing project *Archivo Queer?*, initiated by Fefa Vila Núñez, promoter of the artist group LSD, and Sejo Carrascosa of the group Radical Gai – with Andrés Senra and Lucas Platero. *Archivo Queer?*, housed at the Reina Sofía, consists of an open archive with a → palimpsest of images, publications, videos, oral histories and writings from public performances, actions, parties and campaigns of queer movements in Madrid in the early 1990s. The archive, which was presented at the Van Abbemuseum as part of the exhibition *The 1980s. Today's Beginnings?* aims to subvert hetero-centric and patriarchal forms of categorisation through its formation and display. (Figure 126) Central to the project's methodology and its central question – Can an archive be queered? – is an interrogation of what constitutes an archive and the inherent processes of inclusion and exclusion that are part of the museum's "history-making" processes. (Figure 127)

At the Van Abbe, we are aiming to introduce some of these deviant approaches to the archive via our research programme which, taking its cue from SALT, issued an open call to artists, curators and archivists to undertake research into the museum's archives and in → collaboration with different constituent groups. A first step, however, has been allowing the time and resources for a thorough interrogation of our own institutional heritage. The archivist Michael Karabinos, for example examined Karel 1, the tobacco company owned by Henri Van Abbe, the Van Abbemuseum's benefactor who in the 1930s donated his modest collection of Dutch modernist paintings to the city as part of a deal that would see the → construction of the museum. Karabinos' research shows that Van Abbe, whose wealth (and ability to collect art) came from the profits of Karel 1, was sourcing tobacco from Java in Indonesia, at the time a Dutch colony, via the tobacco trading markets in Amsterdam. Karabinos' research into the trading records of the Dutch tobacco markets is exposing how the Van Abbemuseum's history is tied to the Netherlands' colonial history and the trading partnerships that emerged from the Dutch East Indies company.

Elsewhere Petra Ponte examined the Van Abbe's colonial exhibition history through the exhibition *TINSA, Tentoonstelling Indonesië, Suriname, Nederlandse Antillen* (*Tisna*), which opened in the Van Abbemuseum in 1949. The Van Abbe was the 17th venue for this vast touring show, which attempted to show "kinship" with the Dutch colonies. Sara Giannini's research project "Can We Talk about Art with Aphasic Tongues?" examined the extraordinary archive of drawings and sketchbooks of Eindhoven-based artist René Daniëls. Through a series of workshops and performances Giannini proposed both a new relationship with the Daniels archive – one not defined by chronology or biography – and the art work itself, by resisting the stifling restrictions of language.

Figure 126: *Archivo Queer?*, curated by Fefa Vila Núñez, installation view, as part of the exhibition The 1980s. Today's Beginnings?, Van Abbemuseum, 2016. Photo: Peter Cox.

Figure 127: *Archivo Queer?*, curated by Fefa Vila Núñez, installation view, as part of the exhibition The 1980s. Today's Beginnings?, Van Abbemuseum, 2016. Photo: Peter Cox.

Figure 128: *Ahy-kon-uh-klas-tik*, installation view, Brook Andrew, Van Abbemuseum, 2017. Photo: Peter Cox.

Deviant research practices, as Francisco Godoy Vega alludes to in his term, similarly need to speak from different subaltern, black, indigenous and queer voices.[313] As part of the research programme the Van Abbemuseum worked with the artist Brook Andrew, on a residency and exhibition that interrogated the Van Abbe's collection in combination with his own collection of indigenous archives, ethnographic photographs and colonial memorabilia. The outcome of Andrew's research was an exhibition titled *Ahy-kon-uh-klas-tik* that combined works from the Van Abbe's collection, including a Picasso (upended on its side), along with pieces from Wifredo Lam, Gilbert & George, El Lissitzky, Anna Boghiguian, Yael Bartana, Gabriel Orozco, Nilbar Güreş, Keith Piper, and Mike Kelley, as well as Andrew's own archives and art works, all set with an immersive wall drawing inspired by ancient Wiradjuri carving practices found on trees (dendroglyphs) and shields. (Figure 128) Andrew's → constellation of art works, references and histories sought to both → decolonise and queer the archive (both through content and through its approach to historiographical). In this way it points to ways in which our museum's heritage and its methods for ordering and classifying knowledge might be brought into the shadows allowing other histories, voices and narratives to emerge.

The examples of Andrew, Karabinos, Ponte and Giannini's research begin to explore what a deviant approach to the Van Abbe's history might yield in terms of offering alternative histories that expose the interconnectedness of its modern and colonial legacies, as well as new ways of reading its archive and collections.[314] But what would it mean to deviate more radically from the types of knowledge that the museum is accustomed to fostering and facilitating: namely disciplinary knowledge such as art history, critical theory, and so on? How would more structural relationships with different types of knowledges affect the research we are involved with and the outcomes it yields?

In closing, it is worth considering L'Internationale as a potentially deviant structure or institutional mechanism. It seems that L'Internationale's transversal make up – across different historical, social and political context, as well as the different scales and legal structures of its partners – mean that it cannot be determined, tied to or governed by one path. It constantly needs to traverse them. Equally, as a confederation that is not tied to a single city, regional, or national identity, but one that claims its ethics are "based on the values of difference and antagonism, → solidarity and commonality", there appears the potential for forms of deviance that would be harder to galvanise in single institutional, regional or national institutions. Its potential organisational structure and partners across different knowledge centres (museums, universities, archives, activist groups) and constituency groups might be a way to institute other, deviant epistemological and cultural projects – what Jesús Carrillo refers to as a "conspiratory" mode of institutionality.[315]

Family Igor Španjol

Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, Slovenia, November 2017

"Family" was one of the finalists among the nominees for word of the year 2016 in Slovenia, organised by Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (other finalists words were refugee, wire, precarious, Trumpism, uberisation, recycle, participle, approximation and health). It seems that the idea of the family

313 See Francisco Godoy Vega, → "Dark Room", page 283.
314 To see details of the research programme 2016–17, see https://vanabbemuseum.nl/en/research/research-programme/deviant-practice-2016-17/ (accessed 14 December 2017).
315 See Jesús Carrillo, → "Conspiratory Institutions?", page 280.

persists, uninterrupted, still strong. In the 1960s and 1970s, people called for sexual liberation and lived in communes. They found out this was just another family. Then the 1980s and 1990s came, and the familiar family returned. We hoped that this would be a return with a difference. The family is here, as sickness incarnate, ironically strengthening the idea of the family even more. So instead of inventing new terms, I would prefer to reread an old one. The family is here as structure, model, metaphor, as place of origin and point of no return, as an institution. Do we need to save the family, or to destroy it? Do lines of descent still make sense for artists, or have networks taken their place? From the nuclear family to the queer family, from the commune to neopatriarchy, it lives on in many forms. We understand different things when we try to define "family".

For example: America's first family – not the Trumps, but the Kardashians. Robert Kardashian is best known for being the lawyer that defended O. J. Simpson. Kris Kardashian's second husband, Bruce Jenner, in one of the greatest media spectacles of our time, who divorces Kris and undergoes male-to-female transition to become Caitlyn Jenner. The world's attention is on this family, which has redefined what family business means. The family is a real-estate issue; it is within its architecture – within its specific organisation of space – that desire is allowed to flow. Has the family improved even a little since Freud? Can hysterical sickness still be seen as a site of resistance? Is there any space for hope? The spa no longer offers an escape from the family house: it is the house, it is the family. What the Kardashians seem to prove is that anything goes in the family as long as the family is strong.

Speaking about a strong family: the definition of the family became one of the main tasks of the ex-Yugoslav → postsocialist countries. A constitutional referendum was held in Croatia three years ago. The proposed amendment to the constitution would define marriage as being a union between a man and a woman, which would create a constitutional prohibition against same-sex marriage. A total of 38% of voters took part, and 66% of them voted *yes*. The referendum was called after a conservative organisation *U ime obitelji* (On Behalf of the Family, established in Croatia in 2013 to "promote family values and to protect dignity of the family") gathered more than 700,000 signatures demanding a referendum on the subject. The initiative was supported by conservative political parties, the Catholic Church as well as by several other faith groups. In Slovenia, *Družina* (Family), is a weekly Roman Catholic magazine, launched in 1952. A referendum on a bill legalising same-sex marriage was held in Slovenia a year ago. The bill was rejected, as a majority voted against, with the votes against representing more than 20% of registered voters. Earlier in 2015 the National Assembly passed a bill defining marriage as a "union of two" instead of a "union of a man and a woman". Conservative opponents of the law, including a group called *Za otroke gre* (Children Are at Stake), gathered enough signatures to force a referendum on the issue. Unfortunately, here family is not one of the institutions abandoned by the state.

But let's leave this discussion and create different → imaginations. Almost all amateur photography begins with family photos. However, many fine-art photographers also focus on family subjects. It seems that there is no family without children, even Nan Goldin, known for intimate and uncensored photographs of her circle of → friends whose lives revolved around drink, drugs, obsession, joy and death, sometimes couldn't resist this topic.

In a grand family photograph that was taken at the Cetinje Biennale in Montenegro in 1994, members of the family of Jusuf Hadžifejzović and his friends gathered for

Figure 129: Jusuf Hadžifejzović, "Čarlama (Fear of Drinking Water)", performance, clothes, easels, graphics "Fear of Drinking Water", 1994, part of *The Heritage of 1989. Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents Exhibition*, 26 April 2017 – 17 September 2017, Moderna galerija. Courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

Figure 130: OHO Group, Marko Pogačnik, *Family of water, fire, air and earth: water – fire static*, 1969. Courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

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the first time after three years of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this project, Hadžifejzović once again implemented his idea of creating site-specific installations. The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina raged that year, and the artist came from Belgium, where he lived as a refugee, to Montenegro, where he was invited as an eminent artist. Instead of looking for material in depots in Cetinje, he asked the Biennale organisers to invite to the exhibition all the members of his large family who had, for years, been living there, in a sort of "hostile territory", as second-class citizens. What else could Hadžifejzović do in Cetinje but exhibit his "deposited kith and kin", which was so much in tune with the spirit of his art? This photograph has become a basis of a continuous performance through the years that followed. (Figure 129) It was followed by some other family photographs, including friends and statements.

According to Marko Pogačnik, a member of the group OHO, the relationships within the family can be either static or dynamic. For example, within his project *Family of Water, Air and Fire* (1969), it is dynamic if the interaction between three components of the works (fire, water and air) caused a process or transformation to occur. The elements in his projects were connected in dynamic, functional, and mutually defining relations that Pogačnik described as "family". The real "subject" of these works was not their immediate materiality, but the relations and transformations of the materials used. (Figure 130)

Some examples will help us understand this type of work better. In "Water-Air Static", for instance, Pogačnik filled a number of plastic bags half with water and half with air and put them in a river. The part of the bag where the water remained below the surface, while the part with the air remained above it. In *Air-Water Dynamic*, however, he filled the bags only with air. He attached weights so they would stay in water, thus creating a tension between the water and the air in the bag that was trying to rise above it.

In *Water-Fire Dynamic*, he set fire to a plastic bag filled with water. The result was air (carbon dioxide and steam) and plastic residue. These works were presented through documentary photographs and conceptual drawings that explained the relations among the elements and how they developed.

The abstract and conceptual aspect of his work is even more obvious in his next "family" project, called *Family of Weight, Measure and Position* (1969). From the title itself, it is obvious that Pogačnik was dealing with relations, not materials. He was demonstrating the → interdependent connections of three types of relations. The clearest example is a work in which Pogačnik hung a series of different weights to lines that ran across razor blades. The position of each blade was different, depending on the size of the weight. His → interest, clearly, was in general – and therefore abstract – relations; in principle, it would have been possible at any time to re-install different projects from the series or even to replace them with a sketch, since it was the basic relationships that formed the "content" of the works, and these can be grasped only conceptually. It was with these works that OHO, in fact, entered the realm of conceptual art.

In March 1971, the OHO artists, along with their families, took up residence on an abandoned farm in the vicinity of the village of Šempas in the Vipava Valley in the

western part of Slovenia. The Šempas Family, as it was called, was founded on ideas that had been developed during OHO's last period. The main idea was to discover a way of life based on balanced relations within the family and between the group and its more or less immediate contexts.

The decision of the OHO group to form a commune and thus expand its artistic practices into the broader field of life and work turned a number of things upside down. Everything (along with art) was now of equal importance: all areas of everyday life, agriculture, and the beginnings of a spiritual centre. At the outset, the commune had 12 members (two of them children). The will to carry on with artistic work soon proved to be illusive and unrealistic due to the amount of work required around the house, stables, vineyard, garden, and fields. As a result, most members of the former OHO group left the community in the following few months. A series of articles published in the magazine *Mladina* helped the commune out of this crisis, as young people came and joined it.

Artistic work was resumed two years later in the form of Pogačnik's concepts of art as collective work in which all members of the commune participated, including the children and random guests or visitors. There was a School of Drawing and mobiles were made, comprising the four elements. The commune chose a name for itself as an artist group only when it was invited to publicly present its life and work: The Šempas Family. The decisive input here was the root of the Slovene word *družina* (family), which is *družiti se*, to come together.

The members of the commune were deeply involved in meditation, breathing exercises, and similar esoteric practices. Drawing was a daily ritual, and the drawing style was directly connected to the standard reistic drawing from the early 1960s, while the subjects of their drawings were plants and other things found in their everyday life. They produced objects using traditional crafts, which represented their life in a concentrated way, revealing it as the intersection of many circulating nets and processes. They used conceptual drawing to present relationships. Instead of geometrical shapes, Pogačnik began using more organic forms – circles, spirals, and curves that indicated the processes, their circulations and connections. The Šempas Family dissolved in 1979 when it became the "ordinary" family of Marko Pogačnik.

It seems that Pogačnik did with the notion of family what IRWIN did with the state. Instead of the typical leftist refusal of those traditional institutions, it seems that today we need even more state involvement. The same we can say for the family: the only way to prevent radical conservative takeover of the family is to take it seriously and practice our own versions and definitions of it.

Interdependence Alenka Gregorič

Interdependence is a mutual dependence between things, and it's often used to describe complex systems. In biology there is a great deal of interdependence between plants and animals which varies from: "commensalism" (when one of two different organisms receive benefits from the other without damage), "parasitism" (when one of two different organisms benefits from the other by causing damage to the other), "symbiosis" (when both of two different organisms benefit from each other without any damage), "reciprocality" (a relation of mutual dependence or action or influence), "sharing" (using or enjoying something jointly with others),

"trophobiosis" (a symbiotic relation in which one organism protects the other in return for some kind of food product).

In organisational structures there are four levels of interdependence: "pooled interdependence" (a low level of interdependence and conflict while drawing resources from a shared source), "sequential interdependence" (the output of one unit becomes the input for another unit), "reciprocal interdependence" (a network of two-way relationships), "comprehensive interdependence" (a high-level organisational structure based on combination of other levels of interdependence).

The art system is a complex system. Its integral part consists primarily of artists and their works and activities. This is followed by spaces of presentation (exhibition spaces from non-profit galleries and centres to spaces of the Kunsthalle-type and museums), systems of interpretation (curators, theorists, critics), education (pedagogic and andragogic programmes, publishing, symposia, conferences), the art market (commercial galleries, art fairs, auction houses, collectors), collections (private and public), and, last but not least, sources of funding (public and private).

The product-driven society, which is mirrored in the art system, results in art that is created for the market, and then judged and traded just like stocks. Caught in the vice of the market – with its "laws" of supply and demand – and production, art becomes adapted to the desires and tastes of buyers, collectors, and commercial galleries, all trying to cash in on the popularity of a certain trend or artist. This may compromise the quality of art, as in many cases ethics is replaced by aesthetics, content by taste, and quality by quantity.

One of the oldest and the most developed organisational structures of the art system is a museum. The basis for the professional working of a museum – collection policy, programming and exhibition activities, public communications, publishing, education, and marketing – is a coherently conceived vision. But today, when museums seem to focus principally on ways and means of marketing their collections and collection-related content, it is necessary to be aware of the dangers of marketing-based approaches in the conception of museum polices. I'll call such collections and their host institutions "product-based" museums.

Comparing the usage of the term "interdependence" in biology, sociology and management theory, it (paradoxically) seems there is a stronger → humanist tone in the biological use of the term than in any other. In the context of art systems, the term stems from the marked distinction between "product-" and "project-based" art, and it follows that there are "project-based" institutions as well. I could argue that one of the founding institutions of the L'Internationale +MSUM (Museum of Contemporary Art Ljubljana) based around its forward thinking ArtEast 2000+ International Collection of Central and East European art is an example of a project-based institution. However, I will present a few other examples on a much smaller scale. I'm talking of the role that is played by artists' museums with their own collections in the countries of ex-Yugoslavia.

Already in the past, more progressive artists critically assessed the institutions, trying to co-create some general guidelines for the future with their knowledge and experience of various models of art systems and art institutions. For the most part, their suggestions concerning the restructuring of institutions went unheeded. This induced a number of artists to use ideas that emerged from their critique of institutions as platforms for the foundation of their own "private" institutions. These

ranged from galleries and artist-run spaces, to art collections, museums, associations, institutes, and other organisations for the production and presentation of art.

These project-based collections and artist-run museums already started appearing in Yugoslavia in the 1970s, but they proliferated during and after the breakup of the Yugoslav Federation (1991–2001). Let us look at some examples:

Vladimir Dodig Trokut's *Anti-museum* was established as an idea in 1968, and registered as intellectual property, knowledge transfer, patent and innovation in 1972. It is a collection which now consists of over 500,000 artefacts and has been displaced to more than 35 sites in Croatia and a smaller part is also abroad. This Anti-museum is a dynamic museum, a museum without walls, a museum for the everyday, with 176 registered names of storage units and collections. Since 1981, the collection was protected as a cultural monument and put on the register of national treasures. In 2010 Trokut combined all the spaces in one name: the *Anti-museum of Croatia*. (Figure 131)

The Inner Museum of Dragan Papić is a "simulated institution" created as a collection of memories from the socialist and → postsocialist past. The process of collection, which was established in 1976, ran in parallel with Papić's other art projects. Located in Belgrade, in the artist's flat *The Inner Museum* takes the form of a collection of curiosities and an archaeology of the rubbish dump to be a laboratory and a space of communication for the observation of personal and collective memory. In 2007, the artist closed the doors of the museum to the public. In October 2010, the museum was listed as a site of cultural significance in the territory of Belgrade.

P.A.R.A.S.I.T.E. Museum of Contemporary Art was founded by Tadej Pogačar in 1990 as a museum of contemporary art, and in 1993 it was renamed as the *P.A.R.A.S.I.T.E. Museum of Contemporary Art*. Its operation is oriented on the analysis and deconstruction of the symbolic centres of power and the search for parallel models of cultural, economic and social operation. The *P.A.R.A.S.I.T.E. Museum* establishes inter-specific relations with institutions and social groups in order to enforce changes in their operation. It takes over territories, chooses spaces, interrupts relations and gets fed by the juices of institutions. It is a mobile organism and critical model, which takes over only the exterior form and name of the related cultural institution. (Figure 132)

Artists' museums appeared in all ex-Yugoslav republics, but majority appeared in Serbia, where the feeling of the loss of the Federation was arguably the strongest. Serbia was also the republic where the → residual elements of Yugoslavia (its name, state institutions, laws and currency) stayed in power the longest.

The Metaphysical Museum was founded in 1995 and is located in the studio and wherever the work of Nenad Bračić, artist and founder of the museum, is presented and exhibited. Bračić publishes a column *The Contributions to the Metaphysical Museum* in the journal *Beorama*, and by doing so introduces a daily cleansing of thinking about art. The entire production of the artist is presented under the name of *The Metaphysical Museum*.

Figure 131: Vladimir Dodig Trokut, in the *The Heritage of 1989. Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents Exhibition*, exhibition view, 26 April – 17 September 2017. Courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

Figure 132: Tadej Pogačar & the P.A.R.A.S.I.T.E. Museum of Contemporary Art, *Hills and Valleys and Mineral Resources*, exhibition view, 4 November 2014 – 8 February 2015. Courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

Figure 133: Mrđan Bajić, in the *The Heritage of 1989. Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents Exhibition*, exhibition view, 26 April – 17 September 2017. Courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

The Yugomuseum was established by the artist Mrđan Bajić in 1998, but it is incomplete, unopened and partially accessible to the public only by appointment with MoCA, Belgrade; MCA Vojvodina; Depot. It is also available online (www.yugomuzej.com). The Yugomuseum has over 300 exhibits. It was first introduced to the public in 1999, and set up as a result of the violence and heavy historical circumstances during the late 1990s. (Figure 133)

Kunsthistorisches Mausoleum is located in Belgrade and was founded and opened to the public for the first time in 2003. Named after Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum, the Kunsthistorisches Mausoleum is in fact the Tomb of Art History. It is the place where two art histories are buried. One chamber confines "The History of Modern Painting" by Herbert Read, while another "The History of Art" by H. W. Janson. Art histories are written narratives based on previously existing art works and artefacts. In the case of the Mausoleum, it is the narrative that came first and the artefacts were produced after the story. Illustrations from both books are in the Mausoleum turned into the "real" paintings.

The Rabbit Museum was founded in 2006 by the artist Nikola Džafo. In accordance with the principles of museology, the exhibits were sorted into ten collections, and for the purposes of classification a book inventory was established. Today *The Rabbit Museum* has around 2,000 exhibits and is → stealing the living space from around its owners.

The Museum of Childhood project was started in 2006 by the artist Vladimir Perić, who was later joined by Milica Perić, an art historian and curator. The project was conceived as having a ten-year duration. The Museum of Childhood doesn't have a fixed address where it is open to the public, but is instead presented via a series of solo and group exhibitions, presentations and lectures. The collection has hundreds of thousands of items, systematised into five areas of childhood and numerous sub-categories. The number of objects is continuously growing, because the collecting of objects by purchase from flea markets takes place at least once a week.

Most of these "parallel" art spaces started to appear at the same time as the visions and programmes of national institutions were being transformed. With the introduction of new legal and economic frameworks in the new countries of ex-Yugoslavia, the formalisation of existing and newly established art spaces and organisations became possible. In the 1990s, during the so-called "transition" period, the art systems of many of the → postsocialist countries had to re-establish, reorganise, and redefine their cultural policies. Consequently, some artists became involved, at least for a while, in transforming their institutional frameworks. Some became active participants in the system they used to observe and critique, while others established their own museums, galleries and project spaces, and → archives, or constructed entire parallel historical narratives.

In contrast to public museums and galleries, these institutions and projects are about creating a space of personalised memory and multiple authorship which does not depending on global art historical narratives, and often operates outside the demands of the art market. All of these museums are deeply personal, even sentimental, conceptual and in most cases possess no market value. Some of them

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are in line with other projects by artists who practice within the field of institutional critique, and others are one-off projects.

Nowadays contemporary art museums are for the most part aspiring to become significant sites on the map of entertainment and pleasure, of leisure-time activities, and indirectly, tourism. Consequently, they (more often than not) adopt a modus operandi that is organised and promoted more as a leisure-time facility, with stores, bars, restaurants, and areas for lounging. Museums are becoming more and more like shopping malls, and the content they present is increasingly subject to the logic of the market.

As many art institutions have in the past largely internalised institutional critiques, embracing the artists' suggestions and projects, we are now (again) at the point of wondering about the inner workings and future development of museums and galleries. Can we foresee the potential for a future, based on "symbiosis", "sharing" and "commensalism" (rather than "commercialism") between public museums and artist-run museums in the region and abroad?

Lobbying Azra Akšamija

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, September 2017

The term I would like to propose for the *Glossary of Common Knowledge* is "lobbying". This term has two main meanings. First, it can denote a group of people or representatives of an interest group working together to influence government decisions on specific issues. The second meaning is spatial; it refers to a foyer or an anteroom, for example, the one in the British Parliament, where members assemble to vote during a division. My proposal embraces these two meanings as a starting point to explore how lobbying, in the cultural sphere, gives form to an alternative institutionality in the ongoing museum crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Let me begin by describing an event in Sarajevo, which happened on 4 October 2012. Dozens of protesters, students, and citizens of Sarajevo were gathered in front of the entrance of the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, witnessing what has already become a historical event: the doors of the museum were to be locked and nailed with wooden panels, as if a tornado were on the horizon. In handwritten red letters, "Zatvoreno" and "Closed" were inscribed on the panels, making clear that the Bosnian National Museum was being closed to the public for the first time in its 125 years of existence. The cultural activists had been mobilised to make this desperate attempt to save cultural heritage in Bosnia-Herzegovina in response to one of the distant but still pertinent effects of the political framework sealed with the Dayton Peace Agreement from 1995 that ended the 1990s war. That agreement displaced ethnic conflict from the sphere of armed forces to the sphere of culture, where new battles took place over history and memory. Six other state-level institutions in Sarajevo, including the National Art Gallery and the National and University Library, were also suffering from an unresolved legal status and lack of funding, and, it was rumoured, were also on the verge of shutting their doors to the public.

This cultural crisis, which is easy to minimise even as it works to lobotomise whole cultures, caught the attention of artists, academics, students, cultural workers, and activists from Bosnia-Herzegovina and beyond. Their lobbying activities shed light on both the museum crisis and the unprecedented → solidarity that it unleashed among various groups across ethnic and disciplinary borders, culminating in a

multiannual collective effort to save cultural heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) through new forms of self-organised cultural production. The examples of lobbying that I would like to present for the *Glossary* work through an artistic lens to address the causes of Bosnia's institutional crisis within the context of the socio-political transformation processes that have traversed and remade → Postsocialist Eastern Europe.

Among the first to act was one by the Bosnian conceptual artist Damir Nikšić. In 2011, Nikšić occupied the National Gallery of BiH following an announcement that the gallery would be shut down. In his artistic response, Nikšić proclaimed himself the "Mini Star of Culture", taking on a position as, literally, the country's *only* Minister of Culture. The artist occupied the National Gallery for eighty-three days, calling for a "gathering of intellectuals, artists and experts". His intention was to lobby for a new Constitution of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Republic, critiquing the present Constitution as "racist, segregationist and found illegal by The European Court of Human Rights".[316] To organise this gathering, Nikšić invited Sarajevo's prominent intellectuals and cultural auteurs for conversations held in the National Gallery, which were recorded and publicised daily via the artist's YouTube channel, throughout the entire period of the intervention. This occupation was aimed at calling attention to the fact that BiH lacks a state-level Ministry of Culture to represent all ethnic groups in the country. In this sense, Nikšić's action linked the cultural crisis of BiH directly to the disintegration of Yugoslavia and its political consequences of the past two decades, pointing at not only the absence of a state-level cultural ministry but also the lack of a shared perspective on the country's history, identity, and sovereignty.

A year later, when the National Museum in Sarajevo shut down in 2012, a series of protests and spontaneous actions were organised by various groups in public spaces. These included the Anti-Dayton activist group and numerous protests from university and high school students. The Third Gymnasium and the First Bosniak Gymnasium, for example, even presented the Federal Ministry with an action plan to rescue the National Museum. Besides the local lobbying activities, a number of both regional and international cultural institutions organised various campaigns and actions involving major transnational museum networks, such as the ICOM and CIMAM. The Museum for Contemporary Art Metelkova and the Moderna galerija Ljubljana have been continuously documenting and archiving accounts of these cultural protests over the years.

Inspired by all of these actions, I wanted to address the cultural and political crisis in BiH through my access to an international network in order to connect the realms of art, academia, and museums. In January 2013, together with my colleague, Maximilian Hartmuth, an art historian from the University of Vienna, I launched the CULTURESHUTDOWN platform. We formed a focused editorial board group and a wide international network gathering more than 50 international artists, scholars, and experts from various fields, who at that point had already been lobbying against this crisis from the perspective of their respective disciplines.

CULTURESHUTDOWN was set up as an international civic platform that operates through a website and connects cultural activists across geographic and disciplinary borders. The platform's mission is to host and give visibility to various indi-

316 Damir Nikšić, *MINI ★ STAR – The Occupation of Bosnian National Gallery*, YouTube channel (9 June 2011), https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLE1A68A403D2F1CC7 (accessed 4 September 2017).

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vidual responses, and it attempts to resolve the acute crisis of BiH's cultural institutions. Over time, CULTURESHUTDOWN has grown in scope and depth into a global platform connecting cultural producers who voluntarily lobby through their work and production of multidisciplinary projects. Our shared objective is to envision a better future for Bosnia's war-torn society and to reimagine, through a cultural dialogue, new modes of coexistence in the region. (Figure 134)

Reaching this objective necessitated a thorough investigation of the causes behind the museum crisis, looking behind the established understanding that the budgetary problems were the source of the institutional collapse. To that end, I hired a local investigator, journalist Selma Gičević, to interview the representatives of all affected institutions, map the status quo, and collect the institutions' individual perspectives on the crisis. After the survey was completed, the CULTURESHUTDOWN editorial board wrote a report that unified all of the museums' individual problems into a joint perspective, showing how all of them are affected by a common concern. Collecting all voices into one was very important, because the affected institutions had previously not been working as a group to address the problems that impacted them all.

This initial survey led us to a key discovery: the cultural institutions in BiH had no legal status as state-level institutions. While all of them exist physically – they were established during the previous regime as regional institutions of Yugoslavia's Federal Republic of BiH – none of these institutions were legally recognised as state-level institutions when BiH became an independent state and established its constitution through the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995. That is to say, the state of BiH never proclaimed, "Yes, this is my state museum, or no, it's not my museum" – the museums do not exist on paper. This problem of lacking a legal status affects all other problems because no one feels responsible for securing sustainable financing for these institutions, and there is also the problem of responsibility over leadership: Who will appoint the next museum director after the current one retires?

With this insight, the first agenda for the CULTURESHUTDOWN platform was to raise awareness about this specific underlying cause of the museum crisis by promoting the perspective that the cause of the problem is not just the lack of budget but also the unresolved political conflict. Another important goal of this first agenda was to promote an understanding of why it is important to have museums at all, and to recognise that they serve as keepers of memory, which the nationalist extremists sought to erase in the recent war. In a society recovering from the consequences of war, museums and → archives represent a contested sphere – they are in crisis precisely because they preserve this memory and material → evidence of existence and coexistence that was targeted during the war.

We could see BiH as a mini model of Europe – a place where different cultures and civilisations have met and lived together for centuries. This coexistence was not always peaceful, but the cross-cultural exchange and fertilisation were quite dynamic throughout history, which is very much evident in the region's rich cultural heritage. In almost every village and city in BiH, major religious buildings of the Muslim, Catholic, Orthodox Christian, and Jewish faiths are standing literally side by side. This cultural heritage represents material evidence of the transcultural détente put into practice over generations in BiH, and, because of this, nationalist extremists specifically targeted it during the 1992–1995 war. Mosques, churches, libraries, archives, and museums were targeted deliberately, and this destruction reached a wide scale. For example, over 70% of the Islamic cultural heritage in

MODERNA GALERIJA LJUBLJANA
Ljubljana, Slovenija
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

DAN SOLIDARNOSTI / DAY OF SOLIDARITY
WWW.CULTURESHUTDOWN.NET

Figure 134: Azra Akšamija and Maximilian Hartmuth, *CULTURESHUTDOWN*, artistic platform, 2013, with sculpture by Duba Sambolec, "Soc. realizem", mixed media, 197 x 71 x 46.5 cm, 1976, in *20th Century. Continuities and Ruptures: A selection of works from the national collection of Moderna galerija*, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana. Courtesy of the artist.

MUZEJ FARMACIJE, FARMACEUTSKI FAKULTET, Beograd, Srbija
MUSEUM OF PHARMACY HISTORY,
FACULTY OF PHARMACY, BELGRADE, SERBIA
DAN SOLIDARNOSTI / DAY OF SOLIDARITY
WWW.CULTURESHUTDOWN.NET

Figure 135: Azra Akšamija and Maximilian Hartmuth, *CULTURESHUTDOWN*, artistic platform, 2013, from Museum of Pharmacy History, Faculty of Pharmacy, Belgrade, Serbia.

BiH has been destroyed or significantly damaged. In 1992, the National Library of BiH in Sarajevo was targeted with incendiary grenades. When Sarajevo's citizens built human chains to try to rescue books from burning, they were shot by snipers who were making sure that firefighting operations could not be executed. András Riedlmayer, director of the Aga Khan Documentation Center at Harvard University and an editorial board member of CULTURESHUTDOWN has called this destruction "the largest single incident of book burning in modern history".

The systematic destruction during the war in BiH represents, in fact, a process of territorial conquest and demographic rearrangement through ethnic cleansing and genocide, as evidenced in the demographic maps of the country from before and after the 1990s war. The ethnic → constellation before the war shows the distribution of all ethnic groups across the entire country, while after the war the three main ethnic groups were separated into three homogenised ethnic territories. This new and brutally constructed demographic landscape was then confirmed through the territorial arrangements of the Dayton Peace Agreement, which split the country into two political entities, the Serb Republic and the Federation of BiH. Constructed through genocidal actions, this internal political division is considered unacceptable by many and has led to a post-war continuation of the conflict within the cultural sphere. Today, ongoing battles are taking place over history and memory through the political instrumentalisation of cultural heritage. The museum crisis in BiH exemplifies this ongoing struggle. In one part of the country, you have people saying, "Well, this is not our history and not our national museum. We have our own history and we have our own museum." Another part of the country is saying, "We need a shared cultural ministry and a shared national museum" to counter the effects of the ethnic cleansing and genocide.

The second agenda for the CULTURESHUTDOWN platform was to promote an understanding of museums as symbols and instruments for reinstituting the idea of the BiH as a multi-ethnic state. To that end, we were seeking ways in which people in BiH can reclaim their shared history and create a new cultural capital for the shared state to counter the violence of war and competing nationalisms of today. That necessitated making the case for cultural preservation and for the museum as an instrument for state building and peace. With this agenda in mind, I initiated a campaign called Museum Solidarity Day. I wrote to 2,000 directors of galleries and museums and hired students to help me find these contacts. Participants were invited to sign up on our website, upon which I sent them a strip of our yellow barricade tape with the CULTURESHUTDOWN logo. Participants were invited to cross out one artefact in their collection for one day using this tape, to take a picture of this action, and then upload the pictures online. This was an "insane" logistical action. To get the campaign started, we had a lot of support from colleagues in Ljubljana; Zdenka Badovinac was especially instrumental in promoting this action through CIMAM, of which she was the president at the time.

After a couple of institutions participated, the action went viral and global, reaching 390 institutions in 40 countries on five continents, with everyone using the same visual trope of crossed-out artefacts. The participation included major national museums, history museums, contemporary art museums, a number of Jewish and Holocaust museums, art galleries, and universities. Some participants, who did not sign up in time to receive the tape, improvised their participation by making their own tape. All major cultural institutions in Ljubljana participated and supported this action. A very significant outcome was that many institutions from BiH, Croatia, and especially Serbia, supported this campaign, sending a political signal to in-

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stitutions in the Serb Republic of BiH, which had boycotted the call. The → solidarity actions in Serbia proper represented a powerful counterstatement to Serbian nationalists in BiH. (Figure 135)

The presentation of all the collected photos achieved a major media presence in BiH though national TV and radio channels, paying tribute to museum workers who were keeping these institutions alive for 20 years with minimal and irregular salaries. Showing some respect to the museum workers was very important, because they were previously publicly perceived as unprofessional and not able to gather the funds for the museums. Subsequently, I used these crowd-sourced images to create an exhibition of CULTURESHUTDOWN banners on the façades of the affected museums, where they were displayed for more than a year. (Figure 136)

Despite these moving and global acts of solidarity, we should not forget that the establishment of the National Museum in BiH was a product of a colonial project. The museum was founded in 1888 by the Austro-Hungarian Empire as an institutional form of identity creation for the region, which up to that point had been part of the Ottoman Empire. The museum's collection has never been significantly revised after the 1990s war. Hence, the third agenda for our lobbying activity was to force a discussion about the content of the museums. In this context, I developed a project called *Future Heritage Collection*, which aimed to relocate the discussion about cultural preservation from the realm of closed-door → bureaucracies and academia into the public realm and ask the following questions of citizens of BiH: "What is to be preserved for the future? If your museum is closed, could you take on the responsibility to be a curator of your heritage? What is → missing in these collections, and what would you store in these museums?"

For this project, I staged myself as an archaeologist from the future who is sending a video message to citizens of the world and asking ten questions about heritage and preservation. In one such question, while suggesting that aliens have come in contact with the inhabitants of Earth, the archaeologist from the future asks citizens of the world to propose one artefact of cultural heritage that would represent the entire world. In another question, the archaeologist from the future asks whether access to cultural heritage that is currently inaccessible should be considered a form of human right. Another question addresses expertise over preservation, as exemplified by the instance of the "restoration gone wrong" of the *Ecce Homo* fresco in the Sanctuary of Mercy church in Borja, Spain. A local artist, Cecilia Giménez, had restored the face of Jesus, according to her own standards and was subsequently mocked and laughed at by the entire world. The archaeologist from the future, however, puts the judgment over her restorative → interventions in question, claiming that she has become a very famous artist in the twenty-second century because of her preservationist masterpiece. (Figure 137)

The call for participation in establishing the *Future Heritage Collection* in Sarajevo was distributed through various media channels. Working with the <rotor> Center for Contemporary Art in Graz and local artists and curators, I arranged a public discussion about the museums' collections, which took place within the international theatre festival MESS. We invited local cultural actors and NGOs, such as Akcija, to discuss the contents of the BiH museums, including whether they had an opportunity to revise them. A temporary office of the *Future Heritage Collection* was set up at the JAVA gallery in the centre of Sarajevo, where citizens were invited to bring artefacts of cultural heritage that represent BiH's shared history. Many beautiful examples were brought in, such as a sample of embroidered textile that appears to

#1 FUTURE HERITAGE COLLECTION

Figure 136: Azra Akšamija, *Museum Solidarity Lobby*, Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, +MSUM, Ljubljana, 2013. Courtesy of the artist.

Figure 137: Azra Akšamija, *Future Heritage Collection*, postcards, 2013. Courtesy of the artist.

be a typical Islamic cultural artefact but was brought by a Serbian woman who explained that this cloth was her wedding band, part of a Serbian wedding tradition in BiH. All the collected artefacts were then photographed, displayed, and catalogued during the show, allowing citizens to follow, in real time, the establishment of the collection in the making. Images of the artefacts were transformed into postcards on which participants were able to add their own stories. The postcards were given to the Centre for Cultural Heritage, International Forum Bosnia, for public distribution. (Figure 138)

While our lobbying activities have been informed by previous actions of BiH citizens, students, artists, and cultural workers, they have also informed the establishment of subsequent lobbying undertakings in the region. One of the succeeding actions in Sarajevo included the wonderful project conducted by the NGO Akcija. *The Museum Guards (Čuvari muzeja)* project acknowledged the hard work of the museum workers over the years through photographic essays and a public exhibition in the museum. Another powerful campaign – *I am the Museum (Ja sam muzej)* – involved inviting prominent BiH citizens (politicians, religious leaders, high school students, different independent organisations) to spend a night in the museum as its guards. This major campaign involved more than 3,000 people as museum guards, making the citizens responsible for preserving their own history and institutions. Ultimately, Akcija's lobbying activities have continued the spirit of CULTURESHUTDOWN's lobbying into the local realm, having an impact on cultural policy and, finally, to the reopening of the National Museum. The questions of a countrywide cultural ministry and the legal definition of the museums, however, still remain unanswered.

The culminating process of cultural lobbying has led to some successes on both an international and regional scale, and it continues through discursive projects and exhibitions, such as the *Inside Out – Not So White Cube* exhibition curated by Alenka Gregorič and Suzana Milevska at the City Art Gallery Ljubljana in 2015, which then travelled to the Contemporary Art Museum in Belgrade for the *Upside Down – Hosting the Critique* exhibition in 2016. All these forms of cultural lobbying in the region are collectively interrogating the Institutional Critique against regional politics and parameters of artistic production and exploring new potentials for the museums to catalyse new understandings of citizenship, cultural preservation, and artistic practice. The notion of lobbying, notably for the museum, introduces a unique dimension in the context of Institutional Critique, acknowledging the museum's institutional power structures in instrumentality, colonialist, and nationalist projects, while simultaneously, and perhaps paradoxically, creating an understanding of the museum as a site in which we can begin to reclaim the lost notion of public virtue. Museum Solidarity Lobby is a phenomenon of other institutionality, that is, a vehicle to reclaim things such as the solidarity, cross-cultural empathy, collective memory of coexistence, and integrity of public institutions, as well as an opportunity for cultural renewal in conflicted societies.

Figure 138: Azra Akšamija, *Future Heritage Collection*, postcards, 2013. Courtesy of the artist.

The concept if no doubt an oxymoron, yet the argument here is that there are multiple universalisms parallel to → the subject-centred post-enlightenment conceptualisation of the discourse. The recent interest in Everyday Aesthetics questions the fine arts-centred discourse of aesthetics and its focus on the spectator in Yuriko Saito's problematisation, and the autoeroticism and inwardness in the words of Byung-Chul Han, of the said discourse. What both of these thinkers and a number of others have in common is that the aesthetic discourse needs to be expanded for it to cover other aspects of life and be interpreted relationally within the social and environmental. Saito quotes David Orr insisting, "what we must do to ensure human tenure on this earth is to cultivate a new standard that which causes no ugliness somewhere else or at some later time".[317] In other words, while appraising the aesthetic value of a product, an experience or an action, we need to consider the processes, means and methodologies that are integral to the creation of the object of appreciation. To this we can add that it is not only what we do, but also how we do it, even if they have seemingly similar outcomes.

Minor Universalisms include modes of relationality, communication, and social and personal practices that are recognised by different societies and cultures. Examples of such aesthetic/ethical → tendencies include *adab* or what Hamid Dabashi calls Persian literary → humanism; the South African concept of *ubuntu*, "I am because you are"; and the Scandinavian Law of *Jante*, and various other similar/different concepts. While admittedly these notions have disciplinary consequences and application, and are and can be used as nationalist tools of operation, yet beyond the possible political (mis)appropriations they offer different aesthetic tendencies that expand beyond the limits of fine arts and include the broader field of social relations. Along similar lines, Schiller writes in his *Letters* that while needs draw man into society and reason gives him "principles of social behaviour, beauty alone can confer upon him a social character".[318]

The concept of *ubuntu* became prominent through the Zimbabwean and South African → decolonialisation and antiapartheid struggles. While its exact definition is up for debate, its Zulu etymology implies "humanity" or "humanity toward others", a certain bond that connects all human beings, or in the words of Desmond Tutu "my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours [...] we belong in a bundle of life [...] a person is a person through other persons".[319] The Law of *Jante* or *Janteloven* promotes social equality by insisting that no one has any advantages over others, and while different people might have different qualities they also lack in others.

It is suggested that *adab* (which I am more familiar with and therefore will expand further) is rooted in the Zarathustrian triad of "good thoughts, good words and good deeds", and in Iran and Iranian literature could be defined as the ideal refinement of the said triad. According to the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, apart from a genre of literature, its Persian equivalent is *farhang*, which roughly implies education, culture, good behaviour, politeness, proper demeanour; thus it is widely believe that it is linked with ethics – it is sometimes an exaggerated form of politeness almost

317   David W. Orr, *The Nature of Design: Ecology, Culture, and Human Intention* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 134.

318   Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man: In a Series of Letters*, trans. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 215.

319   Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (London: Rider, 1999).

verging on indiscreet discretion in the modern world.[320] Firdawsī's *Shahnameh (The Book of Kings)*, from the 11th century, is considered one of the main references, and his heroes paid a great attention to the concept in their speech (in their soft-spokenness) and actions (especially in their approach to generosity, which is not unsimilar to the Nietzschean gift that expropriates to give) and set examples of conduct with regards to *adab*.

In *Shahnameh* we learn about maxims addressed to the king and his officials during Anoshiravan's reign that offer some of the manifestations and attributions of *adab*. The list is exhaustive and includes, directly from the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*:

> honesty; concurrence of heart and tongue, i.e. sincerity; generosity and magnanimity; affability; forbearance; calmness; chivalry; abstemiousness; godfearingness and trust in God; hope; trustworthiness; abstention from gossip, from fault-finding, and slander; reticence; silence; care not to interrupt; knowing the right time to say and to do things; avoidance of frivolous talk; soft-spokeness; care not to frown and clench the fists while speaking; avoidance of harsh and wounding words, because pain is caused by the tongue; gentleness; modesty; humility, et cetera.[321]

Similar to *ubuntu* and not unlike *jantaloven*'s maxims, *adab* remains always relational, and thus individuals are always aware of another other, the self is as much alien as other people and one becomes relationally self-aware. All of these notions encourage moderation, and *adab* in particular also promotes proportion. Yet these concepts remain relative and contingent, and in particular with regards to *ubuntu* and *adab*, their undefined ambiguous subject whose boundaries are unsettled as its always measured relationally. Thus poison for one might be cure for the other, advice to one is an insult to another.

The question is how to follow such maxims in an institutional setting in contemporary art, where value is produced through scarcity and authenticity through differentiation. If we think about Orr's paradigm, we can think about practices that reduce their negative aesthetic traces e.g. don't rely on exploitative → labour practices, have minimum environmental residue if not having a positive impact, don't replicate the abusive social hierarchies, even and particularly when they are underlining such matters, so on and so forth. It is now a rather cliché example in the art world that a biennial or an exhibition that reflects on the unjust labour conditions of capitalism uses unpaid or severely underpaid workers. We can follow proportion and moderation and to employ an "economy of means", to quote the artist John Knight, in thinking about material, environment, waste, production, sustainability, to carry out our "modest" – and even immodest – proposals.

Thus, we can follow gestures of generosity promoted in these maxims in artistic and institutional practice and acknowledge the fact that our practice is inextricably bound to others in a → network of → interdependencies. This not only means sharing knowledge, ideas, theoretical expertise, experience and resources, but also how and when to share, under what circumstances or conditions, to what end and with whom. How to give a gift that keeps us (the curators, artists and institutions) accountable to our → constituents and audiences, and holds us responsible for the

320 All references to the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* are from: Dj. Khaleghi-Motlagh, "ADAB i. Adab in Iran", *Encyclopaedia Iranica,* Online Edition (1982), http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/Adab-i-iran (accessed 5 January 2017).
321 Ibid.

content we make → common. Or we can think of → self-reflexivity and practicing what we preach and follow *adab* as the "ability to recognise and give up one's own bad habits, and to avoid conceit about one's own knowledge; and care to speak only within the limits of one's own knowledge; and not to let one's tongue over-shoot one's ability". Similarly, the *janteloven* advocates a self-restrain that advises against believing in one's superiority toward others.

Arguably *adab*'s other ultimate book of reference is Sa'dī's *Golestan* (1258), "The Floral Garden", that as they say has flowers of *adab* abound and offers in Dabashi's words "the lyrical undoing of the unitary subject". While here we focused more on *adab*, what is significant in all three of these concepts, and similar ideas in other cultures, is the subject that is defined vis-à-vis others, socially.

To go back where we started, Minor Universalisms are minor as they are not prompting a grand imperative that applies to everyone, everywhere, equally and at all times. They are universal, as they consider the self in relation to others and in a "bundle" of life that includes humans and nonhumans, the living and the in-animate. They consider a subject that is dispersed, decentralised, diffused, non-knowing and not all-knowing, and perhaps ever more conscious of what s/he is not, than is. A subject who does not create beauty for him- or herself at the expense of ugliness for others.

Reflexive / Reflexivity Kate Fowle

The reflexive museum

What would it mean to develop a reflexive museum? By this I mean one that is re-sponsive to the social, political, and cultural context in which it functions, as well as to the historical precedents of 19th and 20th century museums. (Figure 139)

Figure 139: © Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow, 2016.

The term is borrowed from social theory, where concepts of reflexive modernisation (Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens, Scott Lash) suggest that, as a result of the gradual disintegration of "simple" modernity – namely the institutional structures of industrial society such as civil rights, universal suffrage, public education, health care, the welfare system, and so on – a process of "modernising modernisation" is taking place. This relates less to "self-reflection" than to a "reflex" – an action that is performed in response to a stimulus – which arises through alienation from the impact of previous → bureaucratic systems.

As opposed to "post" modernity, reflexive modernity is based on the notion that modernisation is not yet over. Instead, it is evolving: through societal changes brought on by the fruition of modernity's so-called ideals; in the face of transna-tional forces such as corporations and NGOs; and through the rise of individualisa-tion as traditional forms of → solidarity – such as political, religious, or → family ties – collapse. This is happening in part because of economic and cultural globalisation and also as a result of the liberation of → agency from modern institutions as they begin to fail the populations they were established to serve. In this gap, people are initiating alternative structures to circumnavigate the hierarchies of power and harness a surplus of human resources. The resulting new social movements oper-ate alongside the mainstream configurations of modern society, often relating to global issues – from, for example, ecology to civil rights – on a local, networked basis.

To consider reflexivity in relation to the museum, it would follow that new formations would acknowledge shared genealogy with the 19th and 20th century Western, modern, public art museums: as instruments for democratic education; for cultivating the masses; that care for public collections (19th century.); as places for connoisseurship, specialisation, and discourse; as laboratories for experimentation; and as vehicles for visual spectacle (20th century). But these would be understood as key traits of the "simple" museum. It would be recognised that some functions are becoming obsolete, or being exploited, but that in its overarching purpose the museum is not yet exhausted, or satisfactorily replaced in society: there is no post-museum. (Figure 140)

Logically, the reflexive museum would be created by those who no longer feel beholden to traditional institutional mechanisms: who feel at liberty to be receptive to the → constituencies they operate within. They would focus on addressing issues of national and international relevance locally, while building → networks and → collaborations with like-minded organisations around the world. They would not be bound to larger state or federal mandates, drawing on infrastructural and financial resources that support the particular intentions of the museum. Driven by the impetus to be flexible and proactive, their form of governance would be reflected in the diversity of the workforces who produce the programs. (Figure 141)

Where the term "new institutionalism" gained traction at the end of the 1990s and early 2000s, as a way to describe the re-shaping of (mostly northern European) *kunsthalles* and how they could transform the production of contemporary culture for small, specialised constituencies, the reflexive museum operates with a broader public in mind. Through the impact of globalisation, as infrastructures in emerging art world geographies shift from the biennial model to the institutional, the reflexive museum is a cogent framework. Untethered from Western traditions and assumptions, it is free to borrow from, mix, or regenerate all previous museological configurations. In particular, by developing outside established art centres, in the outskirts of Western culture, it can more readily adapt to the outcomes of deterritorialisation (Deleuze and Guattari) to reflect the new sense of conjoined cultural proximity and distance. (Figure 142)

Unlike the late capitalist museum – with its emphasis on scale, spectacle, interactivity, and entertainment (weighted in history) – the reflexive museum – as a 21st century mode of modernisation – operates fluidly within the present stages of technosocial evolution. As such, social practices – which increasingly influence and drive the museum – will no longer be associated with the immediacies of context, shaped as much by processes existing in other places as they are in the local situation. Amidst omnipresent mediatisation, new imaginaries of the laboratory can be introduced: time and space become as malleable as our understanding of contemporary art forms in the re-evaluation of ideas and actions; pedagogy is dematerialised, while the pursuit and problematisation of objective knowledge – particularly in relation to overlooked or underrepresented phenomena – is reinstated as a meaningful endeavour. Through the reappraisal of historically-entrenched classifications and terminologies, the canon of art – as a Western construct – is challenged. By rejecting the influence of the inflated art market, what constitutes a collection is reassessed, what constitutes value is questioned, what constitutes cultural authority is contested.

Figure 140: Photo: Kate Fowle, Beijing, 2009.

Figure 141: Philippe Parreno, *Marilyn*, 2012, © Garage Museum of Contemprary Art, Moscow, 2013.

Figure 142: Raqs Media Collective, "Please Do Not Touch the Work of Art", 2009 & Matthias Gommel, "Delayed", 2009, installation view, *The Art of Participation 1950 to Now*, Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, November 2008 – February 2009. Photo: Kate Fowle, San Francisco, 2008.

The following text is a transcription of Vasıf Kortun's contribution to the seminar on Other Institutionality.

Operating as a non-capitalist institution in a late-capitalist society that is managed by different regulatory funding bodies, I have to think about who assesses us, how we get assessed, how our production is measured and quantified, who has the authority to decide, on whose behalf are those decisions made? How do we make decisions when the public does not have an → agency? And who claims that agency? It is not at all that I regard institutions and museums to have inalienable rights to keep existing and go on ad infinitum no matter what they do. My questions are not institution centred, they are not posed from the inside, and it is not about survival or preparing for harder times. My question is immaterial. It is about curiosity, about a state of not knowing, and being → fragile.

The institution is asked to constantly perform and make itself available to the present – not to bring things into light and enlight as its history would have it – but to be under the light, to be a representative and neophiliac without an urgency. So this kind of "presencing" suppresses time and prefers a perfunctory treatment of its → interest where there is little possibility for an institution to allow itself be transformed by the activities it commits to. If institutional time is not only the present how do we tell stories in it?

Institutional opacity could be registered as a sign of a retreat from the public, and we can no longer do certain things the way we did four years ago, we had to move some activities away from the spotlight. It is the way we have been operating at SALT and many institutions are in a similar predicament. Having a mental construct of an institution as a sturdy and steady distribution of functions of research and output, similar to a monastery and a church, the dark, and the light, brackets out the question of → constituents within that opposition. What can stay hidden in what is opaque from the public? How long should it stay invisible and protected from public scrutiny? Should it be absorbed by that urgent necessity? What is the visible in the light, and if it is a concession, and what form of a concession the visible may be? However, withdrawal is not disgraceful, we are not to be ashamed of fermenting away from the threatening gaze of the Order. Rather, our problem may be how the programs we pursue in the shade and in the dark, come back to us, how we are considered. Like any privately funded public service institution, we are in a paradox. Those who fund us are not those to whom we are accountable. Furthermore, those whom you take care of are not sufficiently equipped to impact those who fund you. Within the public domain, the situation is more opaque, even if the mechanisms are quite similar. Both operate in a field where they have no public endorsement and abide by the particulars of instant assessment, where short-term efficiency changes priorities and attends to the moments in which they operate.

The tension between oppositional ideas and models of historical institutions, contemporary capitalism, and ideas of what public good is are not resolved. How do we become → aligned with the public? The point is not to interpret the world and present it as a kind of commodity, but to be a part of it. We need to accept the consequences of this co-ownership and also be a part of it.

I doubt that the major question is about private or public initiatives. As long as the overwhelming concept is about the receiver and audience, a viewer or a visitor,

who lacks the capacity and tools to articulate his/her desires. This absence of a reciprocal transmission between an institution and its outside is constantly in need of addressing. What remains outside doesn't have a place for the desire to be recognised, unless it's invited to perform in the image of itself for a designated time. Seamless spaces are offered between the customer and the provider in the charade of market-tested projects as the possible public is extracted from the equation and replaced by the processes of managerial quantification. Our "benchmark" is not media coverage, it is not a head count or aggregated → data analysis. No programme can be assessed in its complexity at the moment of its actualisation. This is not a murky relativism that makes the most of each subjectivity just because it exists. It is all about stimulating and provoking undisciplined curiosity. I want to speak very briefly about a concept to reflect back on our practice. The hardest thing is to know what you are from behind your desk and well behind the entrance door of the institution. Worse, we have a normalised, naturalised capacity of self-affirmation, counter-affirmation through colleagues, our sense of self-righteousness, our clinging to narratives in which we find ourselves a place carrying a great tradition of practice and the burden of history.

I am curious to figure out what accumulates outside our self-appointed authority and the conditions we constantly suppress. At the same time, despite all odds, our attendance at SALT has been quite amazing and increasing each year since we opened. We were recently analysed by an independent research company on the so-called "social return on the investment". The results were phenomenal. And don't ask me what this all means. I've been told it is apparently great, yet I pose a question, how this may → translate into really wrong ideas about funding and the capitalisation. Press and social media and once or twice a year a long-form essay is icing on the cake but is that it? What is it that we cannot measure? Is that something an institution can question? That we are not alone in the world? Did our ideas have a greater effect than expected? Have we touched those we never expected? We may be a part of the environments we are hardly aware of. Our users benefit from things we don't even know we are offering. Their accumulations of knowledge, accumulations of sense and curiosity – we are clearly and certainly unable to quantify most of these experiences. So today I'm not interested in the big picture. Or about professional to professional activity.

Looking for this thing that I cannot name, I stumbled on the idea of "a residual", not "the residual" yet "a residual". I wanted to pick up on an amorphous idea, the idea of a residual risk, that can be thought as a negligible error. As they use in mathematics, a residual is a variance between an observation and a computation, or a variance between two different observations, a negligible differential. It is the kind of differential that does not affect the outcome and is not computable, so it can't be foreseen. So this variance is often expected and also disregarded. It escapes evaluation because it's negligible. Hence a residual is overlooked by an assessment methodology and ignored by the narrative machinery.

When I started to seek other uses of residual, my ignorance hit me. How could I forget Raymond Williams and his use of residual in the book *Marxism and Literature* (1977)? For him, a residual is about the complex layering and the process of sedimentation of culture as it faces change. In his short essay, he uses, rather broadly, with two other terms, the concepts of "the emergent" and "the dominant". Dominant being what it is referred to as the understandings embodied in the majority of society, such as heterosexual normativity. According to Williams, the dominant could embody aspects of a residual, that is elements of the dominant that are nor-

malised and projected onto → the contemporary. Let us not mistake Williams' residual with heritage. A residual is harder to place. It is not merely a question of language. A residual can continue to linger on because it can be neglected or even ignored. In which case a residual could be marginal. A residual in Williams' view is a range of beliefs and customs that look quite antediluvian. Often coming from a set of different social formations, political and religious orientations, life positions and ideologies. The social conditions may not be around any longer. The authority may be removed, yet a residual lingers through. They may be a bit ancient and may be coming from history. Yet a residual has a very particular trait of staying through change. I don't intend to level the potential of the concept.

The difference between a residual and heritage are obvious. Heritage can be turned into an apparatus or an ideological weapon which can become an instrument of oppression, whereas a residual escapes the capacity to impact harm in the same way. You may not take this seriously. What good is it then, if you cannot name it and turn it into a tool, yet this may be precisely the position that I hope to offer here? According to Williams, a residual is an influence old cultural practices – consciously or unconsciously – have when existing in a contemporary moment. Which is the fundamental difference between a residual and the archaic? The archaic may be abandoned or silenced, and it may have an object status. Meanwhile, a residual may be active in the shaping of things without being dominant. I would say that a residual has an effect on the notion of the private and public. Not in terms of ownership of space, yet in terms of what could be retained from the public realm in the form of practices. So the dominant culture can't do anything about this, whether it approves or not.

Trying to figure out different uses of the term in different fields, I came upon a use that satisfied me most; in chemistry, the residue is what remains after a chemical process. Like the substance that remains on the surface, in a container, or in a test tube that cannot be removed easily. So the term itself comes from the Latin *residuum* ("a remainder"). Which refers to its qualities not only as a reminder yet also as what is left behind. There's obviously a difference between what remains (*residuus*) and *residue*, which is what is left behind, which comes from residēre. I have no intention to engage in this kind of exotic self-serving discussion about the etymology, nor to define borders so I can present an alternative to these borders. The critical thinking here is the difference of the → agency between *residuus* which remains and *residēre*, which is what is left behind. This is the difference between what Raymond Williams notion of cultural residue. Williams understands a residual as not only a remainder but as always throwing itself further. It's not left behind. Continuing, if I get back to mathematics and sum it up, a residual is the difference between the measured and predicted values of some quantity. To understand a residual as you know it, it can be thought of as a negligible problem. Hence a residual is overlooked by assessment methodologies and ignored by narrative machines.

I am much more interested in the apparent inconsequentiality of a residual. You may say it is inconsequential, yet it is not incidental. Not being tangible and limited to language alone, a residual exists in the relationship between subjects and time. It refers both to the weakness of the institution and to its narrative and singularity. So the question is how to make a conversation that turns and returns, each time building consciously towards a residual, that is not embedded in the situation, yet it uses the culture of doing things. One cannot programme a residual. The question is how can we produce registers that can be attuned to its recognition.

By the end of the Middle Ages, madness had replaced leprosy as the illness that existed on the margins of society.[322] Sebastian Brant's book *Stultifera Navis* (*Ship of Fools*), from 1494, is a symbol of this process. The Ship of Fools wandered the rivers of Europe, and madmen travelled on it to some other world(s). Madness was fascinating because it was a different kind of (forbidden) knowledge related to the end of the world, and Foucault described the ship as a → heterotopia:[323] an inventive space, a reservoir of imagination.

In the 18th century, when ideas based on reason became the primary source of legitimacy, madness was locked away from the rest of the world. In the so-called "great confinement" process of enlightened absolutism, society created a space in which criminals, the poor and the mad were locked up and excluded, kept in a kind of total institution. In the 19th century these houses of confinement were replaced by lunatics' asylums.

Antipsychiatry

The way madness was treated came under greater scrutiny after the Second World War, and this led to the emergence of antipsychiatry movements in France, the UK, Brazil, Italy, which were linked to other social and political movements of the time. Antipsychiatry is a term coined by R. D. Laing, and it came into use in the 1960s. Another important antipsychiatry or radical psychiatry process took place in the 60s and 70s in Italy, first pioneered by Franco Basaglia in Gorizia and Trieste. But it was only in 1978 that the 180 Act was passed in Italy which finally closed the remaining insane asylums. Antipsychiatry movements did not only aim to close down psychiatric – or total – institutions, but also aimed to carry out a "critique of power knowledge" and of power relations. For example, Basaglia introduced the idea of psychiatry as an apparatus of social control.[324] As pantxo ramas (aka Francesco Salvini) explained: "It was about breaking apart the institutionalisation of life built through the production of healthcare as a system, and of medicine as knowledge."[325] It was thus necessary to destroy the place in order to produce another place altogether: with the inmates, with the workers, with the nurses. This is what deinstitutionalisation was about.

However, the aim was not only closing down or changing the institutions, but also producing new subjectivities and new relations among those subjectivities. This was not something new, as it had already been practiced few decades earlier at the La Borde clinic in France – where Felix Guattari was among the staff. The demands of the various antipsychiatry movements differed from country to country, from context to context. In France, for example, in contrast to Italy, those working in in-

322   See Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason …* (New York: Random House, 1965; original French ed. 1961).
323   Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias", http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/foucault1.pdf (accessed 10 January 2017). The text, originally published as "Des Espace Autres" in the French journal *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité* (October 1984), was the basis of a lecture given by the author in March 1967.
324   See Franco Basaglia, "The Distruction of the Mental Hospital as a Place of Institutionalisation: Thoughts Caused by Personal Experience with the Open Door System and Part Time Service", in *First International Congress of Social Psychiatry* (London, 1964), http://www.fondazionefrancobasaglia.it/images/pdf/BASAGLIA_THE_DISTRUCTION.pdf (accessed 10 January 2017).
325   Francesco Salvini, *Instituting on the Threshold* (September 2016), http://eipcp.net/transversal/0916/salvini/en (accessed 10 January 2017).

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stitutional psychotherapy tried to subvert the institutions from within. La Borde[326] employed freedom of movement, a critique of professional roles, as well as institutional flexibility. Creativity played a big role in this, being linked with madness. In 1965 Fernand Deligny arrived at La Borde. Deligny created a network of facilities for taking care of children with autism and those "outside of speech". Especially well known are the drawings, cartographic tracings of gestures, movements, and trajectories of the autistic children in this project. Among other guests at La Borde was a Japanese *butoh* dancer, Min Tanaka.

To return to Trieste, what they achieved was not only the closing down of asylums but also the establishment of open centres for mental healthcare in public services, as well as cooperatives and the development of mechanisms of economic support. These events in Italy had a strong influence on a group of students and professors of social work in Slovenia, which took the name of The Committee for the Social Protection of Madness in 1988.

Civil society and antipsychiatry movement in Slovenia

In Slovenia, the 1980s were a time of new radical ideas that no longer took the political, social and cultural norms for granted, and which aimed to change the overall socio-political landscape. The main protagonist of these changes was the civil society. In comparison to other Eastern European countries, the concept of civil society in Slovenia had a significantly different starting point: rather than arising from dissidence and opposition, "the civil society against the state", it represented above all a link among various new social movements (for peace, the environment, and LGBT rights, the antipsychiatry movement, etc.). The idea was thus the creation of institutional structures which were not merely in "opposition" to the existing ones.

The goal of the antipsychiatry movement was deinstitutionalisation (interpreted differently in different contexts, as noted above) – i.e. the closure of the institutions and their substitution with the alternative provision of community services. These ideas had already been articulated in Yugoslavia in the early 1980s. Lepa Mlađenović, an activist/feminist from Belgrade, was one of the organisers of the international conference *Alternative to Psychiatry* held at the Student Cultural Center in Belgrade in 1982. The conference was attended by numerous guests, such as David Cooper and Felix Guattari, and was very influential as it articulated the idea of psychiatry as an institution of violence and exclusion. However, the goal was not only closing down the institutions, but the entire socio-political transformation of society, and thus establishing new production relations as well as producing new subjectivities, and such aims were part of the general demands of that time in Yugoslavia.

Perhaps more than any other social movement in the 1980s in Yugoslavia, the antipsychiatry movement in Slovenia theorised and put into practice ideas about other/different institutions. Members of the movement called the changes that began occurring in psychiatry "the long march through institutions". This was an echo of Herbert Marcuse, who when speaking of the student movements of 1968 stated "the strategy of the long march through the institutions actually meant working against the established institutions while working within them".[327]

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326   See François Dosse, "La Borde: Between Myth and Reality", in *Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari: Intersecting Lives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).
327   Javier Sethness-Castro, *Eros and Revolution: The Critical Philosophy of Herbert Marcuse* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2016), 242.

The antipsychiatry movement organised two youth-student camps in Hrastovec psychiatric asylum in 1987 and 1988, and one in Ljubljana in 1989.[328] Hrastovec was and probably still is the most known institution of its kind in Slovenia, with almost 700 people living there now. Regardless of the changes in psychiatry and the improvement of the living conditions in psychiatric institutions since the 1980s, the old dictum still holds true in Slovenia: "If you're mad you get sent to Hrastovec." Hrastovec is more than an institution, as it is a symbol of a total institution. The building is a castle that was first mentioned in the 15th century. It became a lunatic asylum after the Second World War, when all the castles in Slovenia were nationalised. It is not a coincidence that nearly all psychiatric institutions were located in such buildings, as the formalised and strict architectural order of these represents authority, discipline and control. Disturbing behaviour is sanctioned, life is strictly planned and regulated, and the use of time dictated and organised in timetables. This is the description of a total institution.

The Committee for the Social Protection of Madness sprang out of the second camp in Hrastovec. Initially, it was a group campaigning for the rights of the mental health users and against the wrongs of the institutions. In their founding manifesto they wrote: "Hrastovec is the dumping ground of Slovenian psychiatry and society. Society disposes of people from the margins it no longer wants in its midst by depositing them far away, so they can no longer be seen or heard."[329] The group managed to raise some degree of public awareness of the problem of total institutions, of confinement and exclusion, and its members went on to organise help and support in the community. But the important thing was the movement not only problematised madness, but society's attitude to it. Madness, they wrote, was a creative principle and a driving force, and should be protected as such. Their → slogan was: "Being called a lunatic should become a compliment!"[330] It was thus not by chance that the Ship of Fools was one of the symbols of the movement in Slovenia, as well as an artistic happening on the Ljubljanica River organised in 1989. The happening attempted to symbolically bring madness back to the city from which it had been expelled. The slogan was: "What we do not see does not exist".[331]

The Committee also emphasised the "development of cultural production" – with the aim of searching for various forms of madness. They organised cultural events such as theatrical, circus, and dance performances in the psychiatric institutions, in Ljubljana and Maribor, as well as at demonstrations, where the motto was: "We do not want a madhouse, we want a civil society." Vito Flaker, one of the main protagonists of the movement, stated that the people from psychiatric institutions started to chant: "We want freedom!"

Art and madness

Artists have always been fascinated by madness, and the antipsychiatry movements worked to stimulate the artistic expression of their "patients" as a kind of therapeutic process. Franco Rotelli, one of the key players of the psychiatric reforms in Italy, said "we ought to have a therapeutic practice, artists, culture, poets, painters, cinema operators, journalists, inventors of life, young people, jobs, par-

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328   Vito Flaker, "Hrastovec v Ljubljani – Mladinski delovni tabor Hrastovec '89", *Časopis za kritiko znanosti* 19, no. 138/139 (1991): 47–98.
329   "Ustanovni manifest odbora za družbeno zaščito norosti", *Socialno delo* 27, no. 3 (1988): 254.
330   Ibid, 256.
331   Flaker, "Hrastovec v Ljubljani", 57.

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ties, playing, words, spaces, machines, resources, intelligence, multiple subjects, and the meeting of all of these."[332]

During the First World War André Breton had been assigned to work in a psychiatric hospital, and those experiences strongly influenced his work (such as the *First Manifesto of Surrealism* in 1924), and Jean Dubuffet's fascination with the art of mentally ill (*art brut*) is also notable. At the *Degenerate Art* exhibition in Munich in 1937, the slogan "Madness becomes method!" was written on the wall.

However, there is an exceptional case with regard to the relationship between mental illness and artistic creation that happened in Brazil, a context quite different from Europe. Kaira Cabañas said this was because "in Europe art of the mad refreshed and expanded the formal vocabulary of modernist art, while in Brazil art of the mad was regularly exhibited in the space of modernist museums."[333] In 1933 the artist Flavio de Carvalho organised an exhibition titled *Month of Children and the Mad* in São Paulo. Nise da Silveira, a Jungian psychiatrist working in Rio de Janeiro, developed a form of occupational therapy[334] within a psychiatric hospital in the 1940s where the patients engaged with art, music, dance, and theatre. She also established within the institution the Museu de Imagens do Inconsciente, with the purpose of preserving the works produced by patients and using them for educational purposes. Bispo do Rosário, one of the most well-known patients and today an internationally recognised artist, spent 50 years in the institution. The writings of Mário Pedrosa gave great visibility to the museum, and he called the art there *arte virgem*, or "virgin art". Mário Pedrosa was very much influenced by this museum and the works it contained, and in 1978 actually proposed that the new MAM RJ (Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro) would consist of five independent yet organic museums, the so-called Museum of Origins[335] that would include a Museum of the Indian, of the Unconscious (Mad), Modern Art, Black People, and Folk Art.

However, in our local context it was not until recently that the connections among the antipsychiatry movement, art institutions and their → constituent practices became a subject of deliberation. *The Politicisation of → Friendship* in Moderna galerija (+MSUM) in 2014 included a project dedicated to the antipsychiatry movement, where the "users", activists, and social workers acted together with the curators to select materials for a kind of "didactic exhibition" about the history of the movement and the lives of mental health users, which included photographs, films, diaries, letters and notes. The idea was to find some → common points between the movement and the processes of deinstitutionalisation and other changes that have been taking place in both psychiatric and art institutions. There was thus a consideration of the meaning of creativity, and the commonalities between artistic creativity and madness. (Figure 143)

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332   Franco Rotelli, *The Invented Institution* (1986), http://www.triestesalutementale.it/english/doc/InventedInstitution.pdf (accessed 10 January 2017).
333   Kaira M. Cabañas, "Learning from Madness: Mário Pedrosa and the Physiognomic Gestalt", *October* no. 153 (Summer 2015): 52.
334   See Elizabeth Maria Freire de Araújo Lima, "For a Minor Art: Resonances between Art, Clinical Practice and Madness Nowadays", *Interface* 3, no. se (2007), http://www.scielo.br/pdf/icse/v10n20/en_04.pdf (accessed 10 January 2017).
335   See Mário Pedrosa, "The New MAM Will Consist of Five Museums", in *Mário Pedrosa: Primary Documents*, eds. Glória Ferreira and Paulo Herkenhoff (New York: MOMA, 2015).

Figure 143: "Deinstitutionalisation of Madness", a part of *Politicisation of Friendship*, exhibition view, Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana, 1 July 2014 – 5 October 2014. Courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

End notes

What can we learn from the antipsychiatry movement today? First, as Basaglia made clear, one movement's struggle cannot remain isolated and only within a specific field or context. Second, new institutions must be established to serve a subject who is no longer in equilibrium with the institution but is, by definition, in a state of non-equilibrium. This is the basis of *The Invented Institution*[336] text written by Franco Rotelli. Institutions, as he said, should always be invented and never given (here there is a similarity with the idea of "Monster Institutions"). This means that any progressive institution should constantly reflect on how it operates. Third: to repeat the questions after Deleuze,[337] if the institution is useful, then useful for whom? For all those who have needs? Or just for a few? Or only for those who control the institution?

Finally, we should not forget that many total institutions still exist, such as refugee camps and detention centres for asylum seekers, so when we discuss other institutions we should also bear in mind these places.

The Sustainable Museum or Repetition Zdenka Badovinac   Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, Slovenia, May 2017

In museums such as Moderna galerija, and as well as the different art practices form our region, we can find some similar "survival approaches" that we tried to describe with our *Repetition* series and also *Low-Budget Utopias* exhibition, both composed of works from our collection.

It seems that innovations or big breaks in art and its institutions are not something that is characteristic of our time, and that we are more or less repeating the forms from the past. But it is exactly in repetition where we can look for radical shifts. Not in innovations inside the existing art genres, but in the repletion of difference between disciplines, different ontologies, and between the present and past.

But there are different reasons why we need so much history in this post-historical time, one can be in that along with history we also lost orientation, general topos, or general intellect. Repetition can be understood also as protection form this loss. The fact that history became one of the central themes for art and for its institutions might lead us to the conclusion that all of this is very much about postmodernism, post-history, post-orientation. If this is true, then we all live in the same post-historical time.

As for Eastern Europe, which has recently undergone major historic changes, history became one of the most important subjects. Local histories in particular are something that is being constantly revisited. Not only historians, everybody does this – from politicians, for whom history is an instrument in their present-day power games, to contemporary artists, who are focused on the → emancipatory potentials of the past and on their present-day erasures.

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336 Rotelli, *The Invented Institution*.
337 Gilles Deleuze, "Instincts and Institutions", in *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974* (Semiotext(e), 2004), 20.

Similarly, it is very important to distinguish between the different needs and reasons that lead a given cultural space to turn to the past. While quotation, appropriation, collage or pastiche can be defined as typical postmodern approaches, what interests me here is repetition. Repetition is especially relevant when attempting to describe the sustainable museum, and as such it is far removed from the above-mentioned postmodern approaches. The sustainability of the contemporary art museum or of art practices that I will briefly describe here lies in repeating something from the past not because there is nothing new to tell, or because only what already exits is relevant, but because there is an urgent need to retain a difference between what was selected and what was omitted. As Gilles Deleuze would say, what is repeated is never identical with what we select from the past. What is repeated is a difference between different positions, and it is exactly through this kind of repetition that clear statements about the past and present can be formulated.

In a series of collection exhibitions that took place at Moderna galerija between 2012 and 2015 under the title *Repetition*, we repeated the same exhibition nine times as a reference to both the unbearable conditions of our work and to some characteristics of contemporary art. These were defined through a series of *re-*'s such as abound in the international art and curatorial jargon: *redefine*, *rethink*, *revisit*. (Figure 144)

Repetition became crucial for the museum concept that we named "the sustainable museum". This concept was developed in more detail in the exhibition from our collection entitled *Low-Budget Utopias*, which initially took up the whole building of the MSUM, but was later reduced by one floor to make room for temporary exhibitions. The first exhibition of this type was *Again and Again* by David Maljković, whose idea was actually very similar to our concept of sustainability. Maljković's exhibition referred to the impossibility of a retrospective as an impossibility of an integral and coherent history, and to the necessity that absence becomes an integral part of history. As with all his artworks, his exhibition was only retrospective insofar as it recycled elements taken from his previous works as well as elements taken from previous exhibitions at our museum, old frames, pedestals and even pieces from an installation. (Figure 145) In his work, Maljković refers strongly to the neglected monuments from the history of the so-called socialist modernism. He refers to history and heritage as something that does not concern one single practice or discipline, or a strict division of work. It seems that museums can learn a lot from Maljkovič's presentation of history. In a museum that incorporates such an artistic approach, a line in art history can jump over into the structure of an artwork or cross paths with themes from the social and political reality, from the immediate environment, from the organic or inorganic nature. This means that the contents of the museum should be in a continual process of transformation, hybridisation, composition and recomposition. But this is not only about recomposing already known elements from history, but also about what is present in our memory and what is not, and exactly in this difference we find a clear position. And a clear position is something that is not characteristic of post-historical time, at least how we normally understand it. What is crucial is to recognise the history or the heritage in these kinds of moments within processes of both becoming and unbecoming. This is also how I understand the following words found in several essays by David Maljković: "Your moment, your heritage."

Figure 144: *The Present and Presence: Repetition 3 – The Street*, exhibition view, 3 January – 2 June 2013, Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana. Courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

Figure 145: David Maljković, *Again and Again*, exhibition view, 25 October 2016 – 11 December 2016. Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Lubljana. Courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana. Photo: Hrvoje Franjić.

Figure 146: "The Sustainable Museum", schematics, a part of *Low-Budget Utopias*, 26 April – 25 Oktober 2016, Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana. Courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

The exhibition from our collection entitled *Low-Budget Utopias*, which is now smaller by an entire floor, refers to different ways of utopian thinking regarding different contexts. Obviously, what we are especially interested in is the East European → postsocialist world. One of the crucial questions asked by this exhibition is which museum model can best serve communities in this region given its specific historical and present-day conditions.

In the museum space, the exhibition opens by introducing the idea of the sustainable museum. (Figure 146) First we outline the history of our micro-location, the history of our building, part of a former Yugoslav army barracks; next, we present our collection Arteast 2000+, explaining how it serves as a tool for context building and raising awareness of local conditions, and how it can help to establish different international dialogues. Then there is a schematic presentation of four museum models. It is followed by an ambience called *Meta-Museum*, which includes two installations by Walter Benjamin: *The Modern Canon*, 2016 (Beyond Art Museums) and *Made in China*, 2011, which in fact represent the fourth museum model in our schema.

The four models suggested in our schema are the following: the universal museum, the global museum, the sustainable museum and the meta-museum. The universal and the global museum models belong to the rich Western world and they treat → the rest of the world as a colony. Both of those models look at the world from an abstract position: the position of the former can be described as non-geographical, and that of the latter as supra-geographical. While the universal museum, which can be understood as the modern art museum of the 20th century, collects mostly Western art but introduces it as → universal, the global museum (like MoMA or The Tate nowadays) collects art from all over the world to create one dominant idea of a global contemporaneity. What was once outside the map of "universal art" is today included in the global art map as charted by those who conquered the world. As can be seen from this schema, rather than representing the world through its geographical diversity as expressed through artworks collected by rich museums, the sustainable museum strives for local-to-local communication. It is not built on a counternarrative to the dominant canon, but rather proposes multiple narratives based on different emancipatory positions. These positions can be reactivated with the help of repetition, as I suggested above. In contrast with the accumulation of artworks, which sooner or later become actors in the stories of rich collections, repetition in the sustainable museum keeps difference alive. This means that it makes clear that each collection is a result of different selection mechanisms. Our *Low-Budget Utopia* exhibition foreground the fact that exhibitions are about composition and recomposition, as illustrated by Maljković's exhibition; a retrospective offers an opportunity to see his works as an infinity of different relations. The fourth museum model in our scheme is also an artistic project, and as such it takes the museum of modern art as its subject. Two installations, the *Museum of American Art* and *MoMA Made in China*, show that the modernist canon can now become subject matter for contemporary art or for the contemporary art museum, so that what was once the principle of artistic development is now merely an object contemplated from a distance. As Walter Benjamin would have said, any museum based on a single narrative and on a corresponding accumulation of artefacts is unsustainable in the long run. The sustainable museum counters accumulation with → self-reflexion, contextualisation and repetition. Benjamin with his MoMA presentation repeats records of surveillance

cameras in its collection presentation. Mimicking the surveillance camera perspective, he repeats not only the exhibition look but also the system of values of modern art that is protected again and again with reproductions, also those ones done with surveillance cameras. (Figure 147)

The following quote from Walter Benjamin inscribed on a wall at our museum suggests that learning is not necessarily limited to the rich world:

> *The Museum of American Art (MoAA) is a meta-museum whose main subject matter is the Museum of Modern Art in New York as the founder of the modern art canon. It is a place from which we could observe the history of MoMA and the shaping of the modern narrative while at the same time being outside of it. However, while the MoMA today is a multimillion dollar enterprise, the annual budget for MoAA is less than ten thousand dollars. This shows that, with very humble means, it is possible to define a meta-position which is out of the reach of mega-museums like MoMA.*

Figure 147: Walter Benjamin, "Museum of American Art", a part of *Low-Budget Utopias*, 26 April – 25 Oktober 2016, Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana. Courtesy of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana.

The sustainable museum is a museum capable of operating in a low-budget environment by drawing on its own resources for its developmental potential. If the universal and the global museum can only operate as part of the cultural industry, the sustainable museum can still be a place where we learn from each other without making a profit. In the confederation L'Internationale we talk about → constituencies, about → interdependency between different agents in a community – artists, various interested individuals, socially engaged groups and organisations. Both its community and the museum itself are continually being transformed by these constituencies through mutual coordination and discussion. Along with developing conditions for such participation and interaction, the sustainable museum also continually reimagines and redefines itself by means of the collections and → archives it holds.

Unlike the universal museum, which presents its idea of modern art as a totality, or the global museum, which attempts to cover the entire world by filling its depositories with artworks, the sustainable museum strives to process and reveal the possibilities within its own environment and to develop local-to-local → alliances based on similar → interests and visions.

Translation Meriç Öner

SALT, Istanbul, Turkey, January 2017

This writing on translation includes one children's song, one musical composition, two tales about one university professor, one good window, a mention of average windows, one quasi-scientific article, one highly incriminating interview and one design biennial; not necessarily in this order. They all aid to illuminate various institutions of human making and are instrumental in questioning what such institutions truly achieve.

A good window showcases material translation in the case of a house renovated to become a bookshop. Its typical late 19th century wooden frames are made up a series of laths, which scale and resize the building in perception. Not ornamental but surely elegant in positioning, this good window is attained merely out of a

dedication to exact translation. The average windows of our days though, depend on cost and heat efficiency, and are made of coarse, synthetic material. (Figure 148)

What the professor expressed in a fleeting moment of one of the many architecture studio sessions was a salute to the wooden window frame. He spoke of its section as not being a late technological wonder, but a structural linearity. How do you catch that one tiny moment that none of the twenty other pupils do? A perspective for a perspective on materials…

> *Hear this song:*
> *Twinkle twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are!*
> *Up above the world so high, like a diamond in the sky.*
> *Twinkle twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are!*

Figure 148: *A good window*. Courtesy Selda Baltacı Mimarlık Atölyesi.

Apparently this tune was a popular European one that was made even more popular by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart when he started playing it in 1761. The professor had his fascination with a vision for curiosity. It was another crammed studio session when he stressed the difference between the two versions of the song, one with the English verses and the other with Turkish. I tend to protest generalisations and comparisons, as they tend to suggest that we better form the exact same perfect human institutions. However, I had to hand this one to him, as the Turkish lyrics would substantially deviate from the ones above and fully manifest two impassable institutions of the culture. Hear this:

> Daha dün annemizin kollarında yaşarken*,*
> *[Just yesterday we were living in our mothers' arms,]*
> Çiçekli bahçemizin yollarında koşarken*,*
> *[Running in our flower gardens,]*
> Şimdi okullu olduk, sınıfları doldurduk.
> *[Now we are all schoolers, filling all the classes.]*
> Sevinçliyiz hepimiz, yaşasın okulumuz!
> *[Exhilarated we all are, long live our schools!]*

Last year there was a design biennial in Istanbul. I was asked to write a review of it. It was tough because it was a good biennial. Numerous works across disciplines, many ideas – old and new but maybe new to the context – and record attendance. It was a good biennial. It was called *Are We Human? Design of the Species.* It was all good but felt 3D printed good, not wooden frame good. It was hard to point at what was lacking in the translation of the thought to the space. I was left wondering; "Are humans designs or institutions?", but more importantly "Are all intellectual accumulations to be translated into exhibitions?" They say "Yes!" nowadays. They say architecture lost its grip with theory and works mainly through exhibitions. Maybe that's what makes them feel 3D printed.

"The elitist, obscure, rather smug art that we've had over the last five or six years is part of the sort of metropolitan stubbornness that Brexit reacted against in my country, and that the Trump voters reacted against in your country", says Adam Curtis in an interview by Loney Abrams at artspace.com. Curtis continues: "Ever since the 1960s there has been this idea that the function of art is to change the world, and it will do so by changing the way people think and see. Whereas I think,

if you look at the history of art, really brilliant art steps back and shows to you clearly what really is going on in the world you live in, in a vivid, imaginative way."[338]

That reminds me that inclusion is as bad a translation of human institution as exclusion. It seems that a human's greatest investment is in agreement, but only with her own ideas. I look up for → evidence and get at least one Yale behavioural economist showing that the use of reason actually aggravates partisan beliefs. Dan Kopf's article on qz.com suggests that "rather than using our best thinking to reach the truth, we use it to find ways to agree with other in our communities. 'The process is called biased assimilation,' says [Dan] Kahan. 'People will selectively credit and discredit information in patterns that reflect their commitment to certain values.'"[339]

The human, in an ideal world where it is neither designed nor instituted, has one extreme potential to go beyond all that is projected for it and that is inconsistency. Where the institution is as resilient as its consistency – only of its services – the human in it is actually free to change minds. The long tale of rationality sure has drowned in a rush to form packs and conform to expectations. There, inconsistency is the only promise for a sudden break. The art institution, with its sturdy tradition as well as myriad of contemporary challenges, holds on to its position at the forefronts of conversing societies merely for the genuine curiosity instilled in its humans. Could it now be the ideal time for an exact translation of this curiosity rather than its well-elaborated end products?

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338 Loney Abrams, *Is the Art World Responsible for Trump? Filmmaker Adam Curtis on Why Self-Expression Is Tearing Society Apart* (12 December 2016), https://www.artspace.com/magazine/interviews_features/qa/adam-curtis-hypernormalisation-interview-54468 (accessed 9 January 2017).
339 Dan Kopf: *Data shows that using science in an argument just makes people more partisan* (23 December 2016), https://qz.com/869587/using-science-in-an-argument-just-makes-people-more-partisan/ (accessed 9 January 2017).

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evidence 62

On the Method of Making the Glossary

Glossary of Common Knowledge (GCK) was a five-year research project by Moderna galerija (MG+MSUM) in the frame of L'Internationale. It was curated by Zdenka Badovinac, Bojana Piškur and Jesús Carrillo, and the contributions were made in collaboration with the L'Internationale narrators and the global family narrators. *GCK* was coordinated by the Moderna galerija and its executive board. The roles of the curators were mainly to formulate an overall concept of the project, to structure the seminar, and last but not least to invite the global family narrators.

The goals of the seminars were twofold: to compile a glossary of art terminology that differs substantially from what is found in the existing literature on art, and to do so in collaboration with institutions and individuals from Europe and other parts of the world who proposed terms relating to their own practices and contexts, and subsequently compare them. They were given some guidelines how to choose a term that corresponded to a referential field: contemporary understanding of the referential field (related to our own practices); historical reference to the referential field (history or art history); political, social reference to the context; L'Internationale projects. The seminars aimed at discussing how to approach referential fields, and to enable performative methods of collaboration. Before the seminar, the narrators wrote a short draft or abstracts of their term. During the seminar they presented their terms – quite often accompanied by screenings, book and catalogues presentations, and other visual materials. The terms were presented, discussed and edited by the narrators in a communicative and transparent process. The method enabled collective work based on transparency and communication. Working together was at the same time both a method and a translation tool – as everybody was present, there was no need for mediators or translators. Additionally, each narrator was asked to assume responsibility for his or her term (to re-edit it after the discussion).

Narrators created a plurality of voices and narratives which examine the proposed terms and add their different viewpoints, bringing with them overlooked, suppressed knowledge and also non-Western categories of thought, memories and various "absences" (such as the absence of archives, of museum collections, of art schools, etc.). The work method was based on common interests – creating other kinds of knowledge, that is, re-entered into the glossary concepts that have been largely excluded from epistemic legitimacy and in this way confronted the attempts to control and seize knowledge. This method enabled different ways of participation, sharing and using the knowledge and working together trans-globally.

L'Internationale Confederation

A confederation comprising six major European museums, L'Internationale proposes a space for art within a non-hierarchical and decentralised internationalism, based on the values of difference and horizontal exchanges among a constellation of cultural agents, locally rooted and globally connected. The confederation takes its name from the workers' anthem "L'Internationale", which calls for an equitable and democratic society with reference to the historical labour movement.

The partners in the confederation are:
- Moderna galerija (MG+MSUM, Ljubljana, Slovenia);
- Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (MNCARS, Madrid, Spain);
- Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA, Barcelona, Spain);
- Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen (M HKA, Antwerp, Belgium);
- SALT (Istanbul and Ankara, Turkey);
- Van Abbemuseum (VAM, Eindhoven, the Netherlands).

L'Internationale is supported by complementary partners such as:
- Grizedale Arts (GA, Coniston, United Kingdom);
- Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU/LSAD, Liverpool, United Kingdom);[340]
- Stiftung Universität Hildesheim (UH, Hildesheim, Germany);
- University College Ghent School of Arts (KASK, Ghent, Belgium)
- associate organisations from both academia and the arts.

The ethics of L'Internationale are based on the values of difference and antagonism, solidarity and commonality. L'Internationale also serves as an apparatus for making visible the standardisation of individual and collective beings, and defends the critical imagination of art as a catalyst in times of crisis for concepts of the civic institution, citizenship and democracy. L'Internationale declares that art and its institutions have the power to question and challenge their own specific systems, as well as the formal structures of institutions in general, and to be an appropriate platform for the discussion of a renewed social contract. It intends to rehearse new protocols and provide decentred models that transcend the bureaucratic and self-referential structure of cultural institutions. L'Internationale represents a new internationalist model for heritage today, challenging traditional notions of exclusiveness, closure and property. It defends a concept of common heritage that is based on interconnected archives and collections, and it brings together those who view legacy as an active tool in the processes of individual and collective emancipation. While anchored in Europe, L'Internationale is connected with different parts of the world by a shared sense of urgency with regards certain common questions. One of these urgent questions concerns the possibilities of participation in the global exchange of ideas from any given space. Thus, L'Internationale challenges the way globalising art institutions replicate the structures of multinational powers and the streamlined, centralised distribution of knowledge.

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340   The Liverpool John Moores University, School of Art and Design (LJMU, Liverpool, UK) hosted one of six *Glossary of Common Knowledge* seminars.

MACBA, The Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art

The Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) opened to the public in 1995. Since then, it has forged an international reputation as a model in the field of contemporary art: the substantial growth of its collection now makes it possible to chart a path through the principal references of the art of our times, while the lines of work it has developed have positioned it as a key centre for research and reflection on artistic activity. As a public entity, the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) assumes responsibility for disseminating contemporary art, offering a diverse range of visions, and generating critical debates on art and culture, while aspiring to reach increasingly diverse audiences. MACBA is an open institution where citizens can find a space of public representation, and also prioritises education and innovation in its field. In addition to its commitment to heritage preservation and networking with other institutions, such activities place MACBA at the forefront of the art system in Catalonia and confirm Barcelona's position as a world art capital and an international benchmark. The Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona is managed by a consortium created in 1988. Its current members are the Government of Catalonia, Barcelona City Council, the Spanish Ministry of Culture and the MACBA Foundation. In 1995, MACBA officially opened its headquarters in the heart of the Raval, in a new building designed by North American architect Richard Meier. From that time forth, the Museum has continued to break new ground in the diffusion of contemporary art and cultural practices, and its impact has helped to confirm Barcelona's reputation as a city of innovation.

MG+MSUM, Museum of Modern Art plus Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana

Moderna galerija is a national museum that works, in accordance with its mission, in the fields of modern and contemporary art. It was founded in 1947 as a museum of modern art. With Slovenia's independence in 1991, Moderna galerija became the principal national institution of modern and contemporary art and an increasingly active link between the local and the international, in particular Central and Eastern European, contexts.

The concept of museum advocated by Moderna galerija resists the existing hegemonic models. In the crucial period of the 1990's, Moderna galerija refused to become a postmodern museum of sensations and intense experiences; on the threshold of the new millennium it developed the concept of an art museum that advocates the plurality of narratives and priorities of local spaces that intend to enter equal dialogues with other spaces only with their own symbolic capital.

Since 2011, Moderna galerija has been open in two locations: in the original building of Moderna galerija (MG+) in the centre of Ljubljana, and in the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova (+MSUM) located on the renovated premises of former military barracks. As a museum of modern art it systematically explores, collects, and presents the art of Modernism and its traditions. It deals primarily with Slovenian 20th century art from the beginnings of Modernism around 1900, but also with contemporary artists who continue the tradition of Modernist trends. As a museum of contemporary art it covers contemporary practices in the field of the visual arts. It presents new contents and new ways of expressing, exhibiting and interpreting contemporary art. By regularly purchasing works by Slovene artists, it

is building a permanent collection of the 21st century art and adding to the international Arteast Collection 2000+ by purchasing works by foreign artists.

Moderna galerija addresses both the museum of modern art and the museum of contemporary art from the aspect of multi-temporality derived from the critique of linear time and its universal validity. Moderna galerija attempts to develop a different model of museum based on the criticism and redefinition of democratic institution. Its priorities include the construction of a local context and dialogues with different localities that follow especially similar priorities and interests in developing different institutionality and new models of cultural production.

M HKA, Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp

The M HKA is a museum for contemporary art, film and visual culture in its widest sense. It is an open place of encounter for art, artists and the public. The M HKA aspires to play a leading role in Flanders and to extend its international profile by building upon Antwerp's avant-garde tradition. The M HKA bridges the relationship between artistic questions and wider societal issues, between the international and the regional, artists and public, tradition and innovation, reflection and presentation. Central here is the museum's collection with its ongoing acquisitions, as well as related areas of management and research. M HKA is a cultural-heritage institution, one of the eight major institutions of the Flemish Community. The museum keeps its finger on the pulse of current events in contemporary art both at home and abroad. Located in the avant-garde city par excellence, M HKA houses a rich and diverse collection which it displays in frequently changing presentations both inside and outside the museum. M HKA is a dynamic meeting place for art, artists and culture lovers alike; every year, it presents a versatile exhibition program that is supplemented with numerous artists' talks, performances, lectures, book presentations, walking talks and activities for young and old. Another initiative housed at M HKA is Cinema Zuid. In the building of the FotoMuseum – where Cinema Zuid has made its home since 2009 – daily film screenings are organised in two state-of-the-art viewing rooms. This initiative brings the history of cinema to life through numerous introductions, lectures and seminars.

The Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid

Today's world of culture is shaped, on the one hand, by the prominent figures in the culture and communications industry and, on the other, by the diffuse magma of culture producers whose actions are governed by the subordination of their creative singularity. This subordination is manifested in artists having to sell their creative capacity or in their being expropriated of it. In addition, we are in the midst of a systemic crisis to which the museum is not immune. If the economic paradigm based on speculation and easy money has proven unsustainable, it should also be clear that the primacy of the building and of art as spectacle over the museum's artistic program has ceased to be valid. There is therefore a pressing need to invent other models. Museo Reina Sofía is working to develop various approaches aimed precisely at transforming the museum from a public institution into one that belongs to the common sphere:

> – *The Museum's Collection does not tell a compact and exclusive story, although it is not a hodgepodge of multiculturalism either. Their idea is to build a collection characterised by multiple forms of relation that question their mental*

structures and the established hierarchies. They propose a relational identity that is neither single-faceted nor atavistic, but rather has multiple roots. This condition creates an openness to the other and to the presence of other cultures and ways of doing things in their own praxis, without fear of a hypothetical loss of identity.

— *The creation of an archive of communality. A kind of archive of archives. They are aware that "the archive" has become a recurring place in contemporary artistic practice, a rhetorical figure that serves to bring together the most dissimilar of actions, often characterised by the mere compilation of an irregular documentation. Following Derrida they ask themselves if perhaps the archive does not bring with it a certain danger of saturation of memory, and even of the denial of the narrative. However, for the archive of communality, the narrative or narratives that its members create are as important as the document itself.*

— *Museo Reina Sofía is organising a heterogeneous network of partnerships with groups, social movements, universities, and their bodies that question the museum and generate spaces for negotiation rather than mere representation.*

SALT, Istanbul

SALT is a not-for-profit cultural institution in public service, engaging in research, exhibitions, publications, web projects, conferences, and other public programs in Istanbul and Ankara, Turkey. It was founded as a post-departmentalised institution, which does not prioritise any period, discipline or object-based practice. The aim is to channel objects and materials into a broader discussion. Through SALT Research, which comprises a specialised library and an open-access online archive, the institution collects sources material culture in visual practices, built environment, social life and economic history.

SALT is spread across two venues in Istanbul, SALT Galata – a concentrated learning space with library, workshops and auditorium – and SALT Beyoğlu – a dynamic program space for exhibitions, screenings and talks – and an office in Ankara that facilitates collaborations within the capital. The institution works with a drive towards co-learning and sharing resources with individuals, collectives, universities, and NGOs seeking a space of production that enables it to engage with users who range from persons to constituents from diverse fields of knowledge.

Van Abbemuseum, Museum for Contemporary Art, Eindhoven

The Van Abbemuseum opened in 1936 as one of the first public museums for modern and contemporary art to be established in Europe. It was named after the cigar manufacturer H. J. van Abbe, who financed the building as well as a contribution towards purchases and running costs for its first few years. Karel 1, Van Abbe's cigar company, sourced his tobacco from the fields of Sumatra and Java in Indonesia, the former colony of the Netherlands. The history of this modern museum, like so many others in the western world, is intimately linked to that of the colonial project.

Understanding and attempting to decouple the inter-connectedness between the colonial and the modern project drives the current programming and thinking of the Van Abbemuseum. Charles Esche, the museum's director has used the term

"the demodern option" to speculate how we, and others in Western Europe, might address and seek to unravel many of the preconceptions the modern world gave us: namely Europe's perceived centrality to the global order and the exploitation, injustice and inequality that wrought. This perceived centrality is echoed in the historical collection of nearly 3000 objects and archives of the museum, which we use as tools to interrogate and rethink our modern heritage from the perspective of today. Similarly, we aim to foster practices that deviate from the modern path, that harness decolonial approaches or work through decentralised methodologies. This, we think, can help us realign the museum away from the logic of modern, co-lonial, capitalist thinking to a more critical, inclusive and holistic institution that can contribute to imagining new possibilities for our collective future.

Central to this project are the museum's constituents: local publics, visitors, the students staff at the museum teaches and the partners they work with. They un-derstand a fundamental shortcoming of the modern museum was its insistence on broadcasting to, rather than thinking with, its public. Museums cannot define their subjects. Rather, they should form positions with them. With their constituents, including their friends and colleagues of the L'Internationale, they hope to institute a decentralised museum, one that is porous, open and hospitable – to both people and ideas.

LJMU, Liverpool John Moores University

Liverpool John Moores University is a public research university in the city of Liv-erpool, England with more than 24,000 students – 20,410 undergraduate students and 4,270 postgraduate students, making it the largest university in Liverpool by student population – as well as being the twentieth largest in the United Kingdom.

The LJMU is an ambitious and forward thinking institution that challenges conven-tion and believes passionately in the concept of "One University" – a community working together to achieve common student-centred objectives within a clear strategy. Their vision is to be recognised as a modern civic university delivering solutions to the challenges of the 21st century.

Their values are based on the belief in transformation – the power of education to drive transformation across social, cultural and economic boundaries; innova-tion in thinking creatively about new ways to do things; excellence – striving for the highest standards; partnership – by working together in partnership to achieve strong and lasting results; leadership – challenging convention and breaking new ground; community – the power of sharing expertise, and of people coming to-gether with a common purpose.

Biographies

Note: The biographies describe the position of the narrator at the time of their participation in the Glossary of Common Knowledge. Given the long duration of the project, many of the narrators have changed their respective positions by the time the book was published.

L'Internationale Narrators

A L'Internationale narrator is a person from any of the L'Internationale partner institution. L'Internationale partners sometimes also delegated external collaborators at their discretion. The narrators chose a term that was relevant in the context of their respective institution; provided a definition of that term resulting from discussions within their institution; participated in a seminar at which the terms were collectively edited, together with other narrators and without losing the plurality of voices; and prepared a longer text about the term with visual references (when needed).

Nick Aikens engages in work that encompasses curating, editing, writing and teaching. He is currently a curator at the Van Abbemuseum (since 2012). He is a Research Affiliate, CCC at the Visual Arts Department, HEAD, Geneva (since 2016) and a member of the editorial board for L'Internationale Online (since 2013). He is a course leader at the Dutch Art Institute (since 2013) and was recently a tutor at the Design Academy Eindhoven (2015–17).

Burak Arıkan is an artist and also the founder of graphcommons.com. He is an institutional client for the new program called "Hub" at SALT.

Zdenka Badovinac is a curator and writer, who has served since 1993 as Director of the Moderna galerija in Ljubljana, comprised since 2011 of two locations: the Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova. Badovinac has curated numerous exhibitions presenting both Slovenian and international artists, and initiated the first collection of Eastern European art, Moderna galerija's 2000+ Arteast Collection.

John Byrne is currently a Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) and Co-Director of Static. He is also LJMU's coordinator for *The Uses of Art – The Legacy of 1848 and 1989* project and is currently developing research for LJMU's School of Art and Design around the area of art, use and use value. Central to this research is an ongoing evaluation of the kind of work, or labour, that the work of art is becoming in a globalised and networked society. Over the last two decades, Byrne has published internationally on issues of art, technology and popular culture.

Jesús Carrillo is a professor of Contemporary Art History at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, and has been Head of the Cultural Programmes Department of the Museo Reina Sofía since 2008. He combines the analysis of contemporary culture and cultural institutions with a critical reading of historical narratives of art.

Anyely Marín Cisneros is a researcher, professor and producer of social television. She is a collaborator of Diásporas Críticas, a platform for artistic research that functions as a space of resistance to the neoliberal policies of racial and sexual surveillance.

Bart De Baere studied archaeology and history of art. He became director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Antwerp (M HKA) in 2002. Since its merger with the Centre for Visual Culture in 2003 the M HKA has had a film component and is co-publisher of *Afterall Journal*. He served as chairman of the Flemish Council for Culture, which advises the government on cultural policy. From 1999 till 2001 he was the advisor for cultural heritage and contemporary art to the Flemish Minister of Culture. Before that time, he was chairman of the Flemish Council for Museums. From 1986 till 2001 he was a curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Ghent (now S.M.A.K.) where he organised various exhibitions. He organised and curated events for several venues abroad, including Documenta IX in Kassel.

Carlos Prieto del Campo is a militant participant in European social movements, has a degree in Law and a PhD in Philosophy from the Complutense University of Madrid, and is an expert in accounting and public sector auditing after having worked as a civil servant for the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Finance between 1989 and 2010. He is also an independent editor and activist in the field of culture, and has been editor of the Spanish edition of *New Left Review* since 2000, and director of the publishing projects Cuestiones de antagonismo (1999–2012) and Prácticas constituyentes since 2013. He is currently Director of the Study Centre at Museo Reina Sofía and is a member of the editorial board of L'Internationale Online.

Chema González is a curator and researcher. He is the Head of Cultural Activities at Museo Reina Sofía, where he programs, collaborates, oversees and coordinates the seminars, film and performative programs. He has curated extensively on film and video, like the recent "The shape of time: Filming the museum" and "Diaspora sounds: The work of the Black Audio Film Collective".

Rebecca Close is a researcher and writer. She is a collaborator of Diásporas Críticas, a platform for artistic research that functions as a space of resistance to the neoliberal policies of racial and sexual surveillance.

Beatriz Herráez is an art historian and curator. Her field of research includes the construction of historiographic stories linked to contemporary art languages and feminist theory. Some of her recent curatorial works include an exhibition of the sculptor

María Luisa Fernández, which was based on her works from 1979 to 1990, presented at Azkuna Zentroa in Bilbao (2015). Among other curators, she worked on *Mínima Resistencia* exhibition at the Museo Reina Sofía (2013–2014). She was chief curator at the Centro Cultural Montehermoso Kulturunea, in Vitoria-Gasteiz (2007–2011), which integrated feminist thought in a transversal/crossed way in its programs.

Ida Hiršenfelder
works at the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova (Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana) on projects related to digital archives. She is a coordinator and editor of the Web Museum, a repository for contemporary audio-visual art, and the museum's online editor. She was a digital archivist at Slovene Center for Contemporary Arts, SCCA–Ljubljana, where she co-developed DIVA Station, Digital Video Archive (2007–2013). Media archaeology, archives and their disappearance – the digital life and the digital afterlife – are among of her key interests.

Marianna Hovhannisyan (San Diego/Yerevan) is a researcher and a curator, a PhD student in Art History, Theory, and Criticism at Visual Arts Department, UCSD. Her curatorial work and writings focus on the relationship between contemporary art and education, as well as on the hegemony of archives, exploring "unattended" objects and scripting ontological and geopolitical gaps. In 2016 she curated *Empty Fields*, an exhibition commissioned by SALT, Istanbul originating from her research in the American Board Archives.

Marko Jenko studied art history and French at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana, where he also worked as a PhD researcher at the Department of Art History. He is now a curator for 20th century art at the Museum of Modern Art (Moderna galerija) in Ljubljana. In his theoretical work, he focuses primarily on questions concerning the knot between art, art history, psychoanalysis and philosophy. He has translated works by Gérard Wajcman, Jacques Lacan, Jacques Rancière, Gilles Deleuze, Jean Starobinski, David Freedberg, and others, into Slovenian.

Vasıf Kortun served as the Director of Research and Programs (2011–17) at SALT. Under his direction, SALT has organised numerous exhibitions and public programs around visual and material culture, amassed a library of over 40,000 publications, and built an archive on art, architecture and social history of Turkey with over 1,500,000 digitised items available online. Kortun curated numerous exhibitions in Turkey and internationally: co-curated the 9th International Istanbul Biennial (with Charles Esche, 2005) and the 6th Taipei Biennial (with Manray Hsu, 2008). He also curated the Turkish Pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007)

featuring the artist Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin, and the United Arab Emirates Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale (2011).

Anders Kreuger was the founding director of the Nordic Council of Ministers Information Office in Vilnius from 1991 to 1995, director of the Nordic Arts Center in Helsinki from 1995 to 1997, and founding director of the Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art in Helsinki from 1997 to 1999. Since 2006 he has been a curator at Lunds konsthall, and director of the Malmö Art Academy (2007–2010), Lund University. Since 2010 he has been a curator at M HKA, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp. He has also taught at the Royal Academy of Art in Copenhagen, Royal College of Art in London, and several other European art academies. Anders Kreuger regularly writes essays for catalogues and journals, and he has edited numerous publications.

editor of the publications *Tracing Istanbul (from the air)* (GG, 2009) and *Mapping Istanbul* (GG, 2009). She is on the advisory board of the 4th Istanbul Design Biennial.

Thomas Lange is a professor at Department of Fine Arts and Art History, University of Hildesheim.

Meriç Öner is a trained architect and Director of Research and Programs at SALT. Focusing mainly on Turkey and its surrounding geography after the 1950s, she develops material culture research with a comprehensive and progressive approach. Her work circulates in the forms of print and online publications, exhibitions, and public programs. Öner is the

November Paynter is Director of Programs at the Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto Canada, opening in spring 2018. She joined the organisation in March 2017 during a distinct phase in its evolution, as it moves into the Tower Automotive in the Junction Triangle, with a program dedicated to exhibiting, collecting and nurturing contemporary art and cultural practices that engage with issues relevant to our times. Prior to this Paynter was a founding Associate Director of Research and Programs at SALT, Istanbul and Ankara , from 2010 until December 2016; Curator, Platform Garanti, Istanbul (2003–07) and Assistant Curator, 9th International Istanbul Biennial (2004–05).

Bojana Piškur, PhD is a writer and curator who works at the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova (Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana). Her focus of professional interest is on political issues as they relate to or are manifested in the field of art, with special emphasis on the regions of the former Yugoslavia and Latin America. She has written for numerous publications and lectured in many parts of the world on the topics such as post avant-gardes in the former Yugoslavia, radical education, cultural politics in self-management and the Non-Aligned Movement, always in relation to the wider social and political environment. In 2006 she initiated the project *Radical Education*, the aim of which was "to translate" radical pedagogy into the sphere of artistic production, with education being conceived not only as a model, but also as a field of political participation.

Paul B. Preciado is a philosopher and queer activist. S/he is the director of the Independent Studies Program at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona (MACBA). A Fulbright Fellow, s/he earned a PhD in Philosophy and Theory of Architecture at Princeton University and an M.A. in Philosophy and Gender Studies at the New School for Social Research where s/he studied with Agnes Heller and Jacques Derrida. His/her first book, *Contra-Sexual Manifesto* (Balland, 2000), was acclaimed by French critics as "the red book of queer theory" and was translated into five languages. S/he teaches seminars on Gender Studies and Political History of the Body at Université Paris 8 – Saint Denis and l'École National de Beaux-Arts de Bourges.

pantxo ramas (aka Francesco Salvini) is an activist and researcher. pantxo is based in Barcelona, participating in Barcelona en Comú and collaborating with Radio Nikosia. In Italy also collaborating with Conferenza Permanente per la Salute Mentale nel Mondo in Trieste, and with the blog euronomade.info. pantxo ramas's research and activism deal with the issues of precarity and public policies in the fields of culture, health, and urban rights.

Aida Sánchez de Serdio Martín is an educator, researcher and cultural worker in the fields of visual culture, education and collaborative art practices. She holds a PhD in Fine Arts and she has been a lecturer at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Barcelona for 15 years. She is currently an advisor to the departments of Education and Publics at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Spain. She also teaches at the MA and PhD programme in Arts and Education at the University of Barcelona, and is a member of the research group "Esbrina: subjectivity and contemporary educational environments". She is an author of many articles and book chapters exploring the relation between the arts, education and cultural politics.

Igor Španjol has worked as a curator at Moderna galerija Ljubljana/Museum of Modern Art since 1999. Some of his most important collaborative/curatorial projects are the exhibition trilogy *Slovene Art 1975–2005* at Moderna galerija (co-curated with Igor Zabel, 2003–2005), a series of solo exhibitions at Moderna galerija's project space Mala galerija of artists Andrei Monastirsky, Danica Dakić, Harun Farocki, Deimantas Narkevičius, Silvia Kolbowski, David Maljković, and others (2007–2009), permanent display of the collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova (co-curated with Zdenka Badovinac and Bojana Piškur) and retrospectives of Marko Peljhan (2010), Marko Pogačnik (2012) and Tadej Pogačar (2014).

Francisco Godoy Vega is a Chilean researcher, writer and curator based in Madrid. He is currently a PhD candidate at the Department of Art History and Theory at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, and research fellow at the Exhibition Department of the Museo Reina Sofía. He is a founder member of the independent research platform "Península. Colonial Processes, Art and Curatorial Practices".

Adela Železnik holds an MA in Art History from the University of Ljubljana and was a visiting student at the University of London, Goldsmiths College, London. She curated two exhibitions of Tacita Dean and took part at the Private View exhibition, curated by Paul O'Neil at the London Print Studio Gallery and Kent Institute of Art and Design, 2002. Since 1993 she has been working at Moderna galerija Ljubljana/Museum of Modern Art, as a curator for education and public programmes (from 2011 at the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova). She collaborated with the Radical Education Collective, 2007–2009 and writes on art education and participation within the museum context.

Global Family Narrators

Global family narrators are international curators, academics, and theoreticians invited by *GCK* curators to join the project. Some were also representatives of other organisations. The global family narrators were asked to: choose a term that was relevant for their group/network, organisation, context or individual position; provide a definition of the term resulting from a collective discussion if the narrator represents a group/network, organisation; participate in a seminar at which the terms were collectively edited with other narrators and without losing the plurality of voices; work in the postproduction (post-editing) of the term; prepare a longer work text about the term with visual references (when needed).

Azra Akšamija is an artist and architectural historian, an Associate Professor in the MIT Art, Culture and Technology Program. Akšamija holds master's degrees from the Technical University Graz and Princeton University, and a PhD from MIT. In her multi-disciplinary work, Akšamija investigates the politics of identity and memory on the scale of the body (clothing and wearable technologies), on the civic scale (religious architecture and cultural institutions), and within the context of history and global cultural flows. Her projects explore the agency of art and architecture in transforming conflicts, and in so doing, provide a framework for analysing and intervening in contested socio-political realities.

Marwa Arsanios obtained her MFA from University of the Arts, London, UK (2007) and was a researcher in the fine art department at the Jan Van Eyck Academie, Maastricht, the Netherlands (2011–2012). Marwa Arsanios is a founding member of the artistic organisation and project space 98weeks Research Project, which focuses its research on a new topic every 98 weeks.

Sezgin Boynik lives and works in Helsinki. He completed his PhD in Jyväskylä University's Social Science Department on the topic of *Cultural Politics of Black Wave in Yugoslavia from 1963 to 1972*. He has been publishing on punk, the relation between aesthetics and politics, on cultural nationalism, Situationist International and Yugoslav cinema.

Boris Buden is a writer and cultural critic based in Berlin. He received his PhD in cultural theory from Humboldt University in Berlin. In the 1990s, he was editor of the magazine *Arkzin* in Zagreb. His essays and articles cover the topics of philosophy, politics, cultural and art criticism.

Zoe Butt was an Executive Director and Curator of Sàn Art, Vietnam's most active independent contemporary art space and reading room in Ho Chi Minh City. From 2007 to 2009, she was the Director for International Programs of the Long March Project – a multi-platform, international artist organisation and ongoing art project based in Beijing, China. From 2001 to 2007, she was Assistant Curator for Contemporary Asian Art of the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia where she assisted in the development of the Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT) and in key acquisitions for the contemporary Asian art collection. Her curatorial work has been pan-Asian, with an increasing focus on the Global South.

Colin Chinnery is an artist and curator based in Beijing. He is currently Artistic Director of the Wuhan Art Terminus (WH.A.T.), a contemporary art institution under development in Wuhan, China, and Director of the Multitude Art Prize, a pan-Asian art

award and international conference. In 2009 and 2010 he was Director of the ShContemporary Art Fair in Shanghai, and before that Chinnery was a founding director of the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) in Beijing.

Keti Chukhrov is a philosopher and poet who teaches at the History of Art Faculty of the Russian State University for the Humanities (Moscow, Russia). She is an editorial board member of *The Art Magazine* and the author of books and collections of poems.

Lia Colombino is Director of Indigenous Art Museum in the Museo del Barro, a complex of three museums that gathers the different production of art in Paraguay. Since 2009 she has coordinated the Espacio/Crítica Seminar, an educational program carried

out by the same institution. From 2010 to 2012 she was chief coordinator of the project *Desalmidonar los párpados* (To un-stiffen the eyelids) – rescuing the archive of Cira Moscarda, Asunción. Since 2010 she had been a Professor at Instituto Superior de Arte (Art Institut, National University of Asuncion), and since 2009 an active member of Red Conceptualismos del Sur.

Marta Malo de Molina (Manos Invisibles) is a freelance translator, activist, researcher and mother living in Vallecas, a working-class neighbourhood in Southern Madrid (Spain). Since 1999 she has been committed to the development of theoretical discourse on power, gender, borders and governmentality, as well as to grassroots action-research and pedagogical practices. Her collaborative projects include *Precarias a la deriva* (Precarious Women Workers Adrift) (2003–2007), and *Manos Invisibles* (Invisible Hands), an ongoing collaborative research project on neoliberal governmentality. In the post-M-15 context,

she has got involved in the establishment of Escuela de Afuera (School from Outside), which aims to develop new pedagogical tools to decolonise our ways of knowing, building transversal and unusual connections between the university and its outskirts.

Ekaterina Degot is an art historian, writer and curator. She is Artistic Director at the Academy of Arts of the World, Cologne, and professor at the Rodchenko Moscow School of Photography. Her work focuses on aesthetic and sociopolitical issues in Russia, predominantly in the post-Soviet era. Degot lives and works in Cologne and Moscow.

Galit Eilat is an independent curator, writer and founding director of The Israeli Center for Digital Art in Holon 2001–2010. She is the co-founder and was the chief editor of *Maarav* – an online arts and culture magazine 2004–2010. She served as a research curator at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven 2010–2013. Between 2012–2013 she was the President of the Akademie der Künste der Welt. Recently she co-curated the 31st São Paulo Biennial. Her projects tackle issues such as the geopolitical situation in the Middle East, activism and political imagination in art.

Róza El-Hassan was born in Budapest in 1966, of Hungarian and Syrian descent. Her extensive graphical and sculptural

works have been shown at various international institutions. Her works examine contemporary history, sociopolitical and philosophical issues and her new series of projects focusing on social design and ecological architecture. Róza El-Hassan portrays human complexity from all relevant dimensions: social, political, environmental, psychological, emotional and symbolic. Artistic and political actions are inextricably linked for her. She works on individual projects, cooperates with other artists and is active as a curator and blogger. She lives in Budapest, teaching at the Intermedia department at University of Fine Arts, Budapest.

Patrick D. Flores is Professor of Art Studies in the Department of Art Studies at the University of the Philippines, which he chaired from 1997 to 2003, and Curator of the Vargas Museum in Manila. He was one of the curators of *Under Construction: New Dimensions in Asian Art* in 2000 and the Gwangju Biennale (Position Papers) in 2008. Among his publications are *Painting History: Revisions in Philippine Colonial Art* (1999); *Remarkable Collection: Art, History, and the National Museum* (2006); and *Past Peripheral: Curation in Southeast Asia* (2008). In

2013, he convened on behalf of the Clark Institute and the Department of Art Studies of the University of the Philippines the conference "Histories of Art History in Southeast Asia" in Manila. He curated the Philippine Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2015.

Kate Fowle is chief curator at Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow and director-at-large at Independent Curators International (ICI) in New York. From 2009–13 she was the executive director of ICI. Previously she was the inaugural international curator at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing (2007–08) and chair of the Master's Program in Curatorial Practice, which she co-founded in 2002 for California College of the Arts in San Francisco. Before moving to the United States Fowle was co-director of Smith + Fowle in London. She has written on curating and exhibition practices for numerous publications and magazines.

Cristina Freire is Full Professor at the Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo (MAC USP), and a Professor of the Post-Graduate Program in Aesthetics and Art History at the same university. She has been Chair of Department of Research in Art, Theory and Criticism (2005–2010), and Vice Director of MAC USP (2010–2014). Freire has been researching the conceptual art in MAC USP's collection since 1996, and is currently Chair of the Research Group Conceptual Art and Conceptualisms in the Museum at the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq).

Anthony Gardner is Associate Professor of Contemporary Art History and Theory at the University of Oxford, where he is also the Director of Graduate Studies at the Ruskin School of Art. He writes extensively on postcolonialism, postsocialism and curatorial histories, and is one of the editors of the MIT Press journal *ARTMargins*.

Alenka Gregorič is an art historian, curator and writer. She was the Art Director of the Škuc Gallery in Ljubljana, and also as a curator, organiser and coordinator of all the programme activities of the Gallery (2003–2009). Since 2009, she has been the Art Director of the City

Art Gallery in Ljubljana. She is a member of several international councils, commissions and civil initiatives. The responsibility of those producing contemporary art and of cultural institutions, as well as their role in contemporary society, constitute the focal point of her interests.

Dušan Grlja is an independent scholar and practitioner of political philosophy, social and cultural critical theory, a former member of the Prelom collective and of *Prelom* journal editorial board, he is still living and working in Belgrade.

Khwezi Gule is a curator and writer based in Johannesburg. He is currently Chief Curator at the Soweto Museums which includes, the Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum and the Kliptown Open Air Museum. Prior to that Gule held the position of curator: contemporary collections at the Johannesburg Art Gallery. Gule has curated a number of projects locally and internationally. He has contributed essays to various publications including exhibition catalogues, journals and newspapers and has delivered numerous conference and seminar papers straddling his areas of interest namely: the art field and heritage studies such as presentation at the Artists' Congress (convened by Chus Martínez) for dOCUMENTA (13) and an essay for the exhibition catalogue of *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid* (curated by Okwui Enwezor and Rory Bester).

Aigul Hakimova is an activist and community organiser. Aigul is based in Ljubljana, Slovenia and since 2002 has been involved in numerous self-organised movements in the field of migration and autonomous spaces. Her main field of engagement in late years includes the questions of political organisation, resistance and commons.

Vít Havránek is a theoretician and organiser based in Prague, Czech Republic. Since 2002 he has been working as a project leader of the initiative for contemporary art tranzit. He has also worked as curator for the Municipal Gallery, Prague and the National Gallery in Prague. He lectures in contemporary art at the Academy of Applied Arts, Prague.
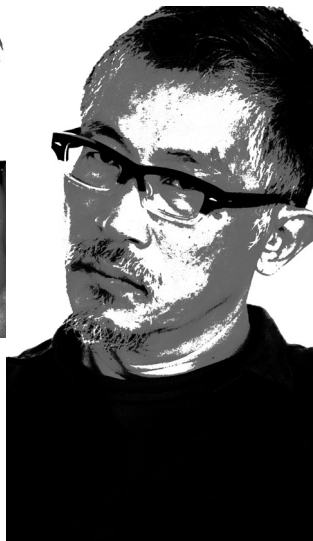
Manray Hsu is an independent curator and art critic based in Taipei. Manray is co-founder and chairperson (2010–2012) of Taipei Contemporary Art Center, editor-in-chief of ArtCo Mainland China edition (2013–2014), has taught at National Taiwan University of Arts, National Tainan University of Arts, and National Taipei University of Education.

Lisette Lagnado (1961, Kinshasa – Congo) has lived in Brazil since 1975, where she has been working as a journalist, art critic, curator, and professor. Her PhD in Philosophy at Universidade de São Paulo developed the concept of *Programa ambiental*, coined by Hélio Oiticica. She organised the archives of the artist available since 2000 at the website "Programa Helio Oiticica" (Itaú Cultural). She also co-coordinated a Course of Post-Studies in Curatorial Practices and Cultural Management at Faculdade Santa Marcelina (2007–2012). Since August 2014 she has been directing the Escola de Artes Visuais do Parque Lage (Rio de Janeiro).

Miguel A. López is a writer, researcher and Chief Curator of TEOR/éTica and Lado V, San José, Costa Rica. His work investigates collaborative dynamics and transformations in the understanding of and engagement with politics in Latin America in recent decades, and also queer re-articulations of history from a Southern perspective. He has published in numerous periodicals.
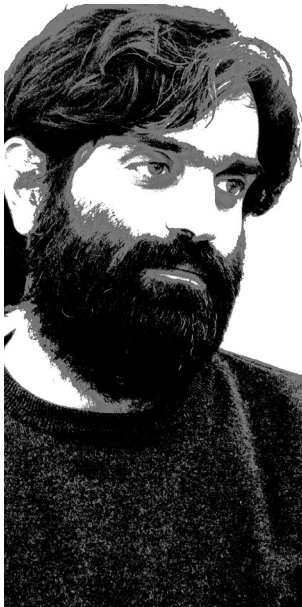
Sohrab Mohebbi is a curator and writer based in Los Angeles, where he is the associate curator at REDCAT. He is a recipient of Tremaine Foundation Award for the exhibition "Hotel Theory". His blog presencedocuments.com was supported by Creative Capital – Warhol Foundation Arts Writers.

Gabi Ngcobo is a Johannesburg-based curator and artist. She is the co-founder of the collaborative platform Center for Historical Reenactments (CHR) and faculty member at the Wits University School of Arts. Ngcobo is a graduate of the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, New York.

Miglena Nikolchina is a writer, literary historian and theoretician whose research engages the interactions of literature, philosophy, political studies, and feminist theory. She is a professor at the Department of Theory of Literature at the University of Sofia, Bulgaria. Her writing has been motivated by a lasting interest in the (para) human as process and transformation, and the artificial being as an artistic and philosophical challenge. It is in this context that she investigated, historically but also in terms of structural impasses, the discursive attainments and failures of two grand projects from the second half of the 20th century: the feminist and East European "velvet" revolutions.

Ahmet Öğüt is a sociocultural initiator, artist, and lecturer who lives and works in Berlin and Amsterdam. He is the initiator of the Initiator of The Silent University, which is an autonomous knowledge exchange platform by refugees, asylum seekers. He co-represented Turkey at the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009). Working across a variety of media, Öğüt's institutional solo exhibitions include *Forward!*, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (2015); *Happy Together: Collaborators Collaborating*, Chisenhale Gallery, London (2015); *Apparatuses of Subversion*, Horst-Janssen-Museum, Oldenburg (2014); Stacion – Center for Contemporary Art Prishtina (2013); Künstlerhaus Stuttgart (2012); SALT Beyoglu, Istanbul (2011); The MATRIX Program at the UC Berkeley Art Museum (2010); Künstlerhaus Bremen (2009); and Kunsthalle Basel (2008).

Alexei Penzin is Reader at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Wolverhampton (UK), and Research Fellow at the Institute of Philosophy, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow. His major fields of interest are philosophical anthropology, Marxism, Soviet and post-Soviet studies, and the philosophy of art. He lectures widely on these topics and has participated in many international research projects, seminars, and symposia such as dOCUMENTA (13) and Former West. Alexei is a member of the group Chto Delat (What is to Be Done?), which works in the space between theory, art, and political activism. Penzin is also a member of editorial boards of the journal *Stasis* (Saint-Petersburg) and the *Moscow Art Magazine*. He currently lives and works in London and Moscow.

Jabulani Chen Pereira
is the Director of Iranti-org,
an African Queer Visual
Media and Human Rights
reporting organisation
based in Johannesburg,
South Africa. The he/she
descriptions of gender are
limiting, and Jabu often uses
the pronoun they. Jabulani is
a curator and human rights
media activist. Jabu has a
Master of Arts degree with
a focus on museums and
photography from New York
University. In 2011–2012 Jabu
worked with South African
photographer Alf Kumalo,
they digitised his collection
and worked with the Center
for Historical Reenactments
in creating an on-site
residency at his museum
in Soweto. Iranti-org was
founded by Jabu and uses
photographs, video and audio
documentation to engage on
issues of sexual orientation
and gender identity in Africa.

Tzortzis Rallis is a
graphic designer and
researcher based in London.
He studied graphic design
and fine arts in Greece, Spain
and the UK. After finishing his
master's studies in London,
he has been working as a
freelance graphic designer.
Rallis is currently a PhD
student at London College of
Communication, undertaking
a practice-led research on
modern agitational graphics,
and is a member of the
Design Activism Research
Hub. In his personal practice,
he uses design to explore the
social and political role of
visual communication in the
public sphere. He supports
grassroots collectives in
Greece, he is a co-designer
of *The Occupied Times of
London* and co-founder of the
Occupy Design UK.

Rasha Salti is a film
programmer, curator and
writer, who lives in Beirut,
Lebanon. She writes about
art and film in the Arab
world. She has edited *Insights
into Syrian Cinema: Essays
and Conversations with
Filmmakers* (Rattapallax
Press, New York, 2006); co-
edited with Issam Nassar *I
Would Have Smiled. A Tribute
to Myrtle Winter-Chaumeny*
(The Institute for Palestine
Studies, 2008); co-edited
with Layla al-Zubaidi,
Samar Kanafani and Munira
Khayyat, *Anywhere but Now:
Landscapes of Belonging in
the Eastern Mediterranean*
(Heinrich Böll Foundation,
2012).

Raúl Sánchez Cedillo
is a philosopher, activist
and translator who lives in
Madrid. Since 1991 he has
been collaborating with
post-operaist research and
political networks, and has
edited a number of works
by Antonio Negri, Félix
Guattari and others. He was
active in the antimilitarist
and Insumisión movement
during the 1990s, and
later in the *okupación* and
Centros Sociales Okupados
movements. He is a member
of the first cyberactivism
network in Spain, www.
sindominio.net. Since 2000
he has been promoting new
autonomous educational and
political projects: Universidad
Nómada and the Fundación
de los Comunes.

Ania Szremski has been the curator at the Townhouse, one of Egypt's longest running non-profit contemporary art spaces located in downtown Cairo, since 2011. She is a founding member, editor and culture writer for *Mada Masr*, a bilingual news site that is Egypt's leading voice in progressive journalism. Szremski received a dual MA in Modern Art History, Theory and Criticism and Arts Administration and Policy from the School of the Art Institute in 2011, where she won a fellowship award for her thesis *The Revolt of Objects: Abdel Hadi al-Gazzar and fear of things in post-colonial Egypt*.

Mabel Tapia is an independent researcher from Buenos Aires, living in Paris. She is finishing a PhD at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) and the Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA). Her research focuses on art practices from the 21st century involving the use of archives, activism, and political engagement, and that have as one of their main characteristics the deactivation of the aesthetic function. Her investigations also examine the processes of legitimation, valorisation and visibility of contemporary practices in their relation to the phenomenon of reification in the frame of new paradigms in both artistic and socio-economic fields. She is member and coordinator for the year 2015 of the platform Red Conceptualismos del Sur (Southern Conceptualisms Network). She also works as an editor.

Jelena Vesić is an independent curator, writer, editor, and lecturer. Active in the field of publishing, research and exhibition practice that intertwines political theory and contemporary art, she is also co-editor of *Red Thread*, a journal for social theory, contemporary art and activism and a member of editorial board of *Art Margins*. Vesić explores the relations between art and ideology in the field of geopolitical art history writing, focusing on experimental art and exhibition practices of the 1960s and 1970s in the former Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe. She also writes on artistic labour and practices of self-organisation in the environment of cognitive capitalism. Her recent curatorial projects are based on experiments with the form of lecture-performance and the immaterial quality of the exhibits.

Stephen Wright is an art writer and professor of the practice of theory at European School of Visual Arts, Angoulème / Poitiers, France. Over the past decade, his research has examined the ongoing usological turn in art-related practice, focusing on the shift from modernist categories of autonomy to an art premised on usership rather than spectatorship. More recently, his writing has contributed to the growing body of extra-disciplinary research on contemporary escapology, theorising practices deliberately avoiding ideological, institutional and performative capture by the conceptual architecture inherited from modernity.
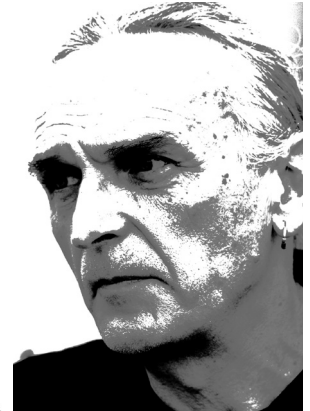
Darij Zadnikar has a PhD in philosophy and is currently an associate professor at the University of Ljubljana. He was for 15 years co-editor and editor-in-chief of *Review for Criticism of Science, New Anthropology and Imagination*. His primary interest is the conceptualisation of new global emancipatory movements and political philosophy. He took an active part in these social movements from their beginnings twenty years ago. He took part in Genova G20 protests, has been in Southeast Mexico numerous times, is a supporter of the struggles of erased people in Slovenia, and co-organises the No-border movement.

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