

# THE

CONSTELLATIONS OF  
KNOWLEDGE, POLITICS  
AND MEDIATION

A Generator of  
Social Change

# CONSTITUENT

# MUSEUM

Valiz



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THE CONSTITUENT MUSEUM



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# CONSTITUENT MUSEUM




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 CONTENTS
 

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 INTRODUCTION
 

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I.1	THE CONSTITUENT MUSEUM Editor's Introduction	10
I.2	THE RAINBOW WRASSE Francis McKee	14

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 PART 1  
 BECOMING CONSTITUENT
 

---

1.01	BECOMING CONSTITUENT <i>Introduction</i> John Byrne	26
1.02	THE REST IS MISSING <i>On Constituencies as a Matricial Notion for New Institutions of the Commons</i> Raúl Sánchez Cedillo	30
1.03	NEGOTIATING INSTITUTIONS <i>Janna Graham</i>	44
1.04	MIDDLESBROUGH'S NEW COMMUNITIES Elinor Morgan	50
1.05	NEW COMMUNITIES OF MIGRANTS Adela Železnik	56
1.06	UNTIMELY NOTES ON 'THE NEW ABDUCTION OF EUROPE' Francesco Salvini and Raúl Sánchez Cedillo	60

---

 PART 2  
 ARCHITECTURES OF USE
 

---

2.01	ARCHITECTURES OF USE <i>Introduction</i> John Byrne	76
2.02	ARCHITECTURES OF ENCOUNTER, ATTENTION AND CARE <i>Towards Responsible Worlding Action</i> Alberto Altés Arlandis	80
2.03	NEGOTIATING JEOPARDY <i>Towards a Constituent Architecture of Use</i> John Byrne	92
2.04	TENSTA MUSEUM L'INTERNATIONALE Maria Lind	114

2.05	THE USES OF ART LAB @ LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY John Byrne	122
2.06	HONEST SHOP Alistair Hudson	126
2.07	SEED JOURNEY Futurefarmers/Amy Franceschini	130
2.08	MUSEUM SOLIDARITY LOBBY Azra Akšamija	138

---

 PART 3  
 PEDAGOGIES OF ENCOUNTER
 

---

3.01	PEDAGOGIES OF ENCOUNTER <i>Introduction</i> Aida Sánchez de Serdio	154
3.02	'GIVE HER THE TOOLS, SHE WILL KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH THEM!' <i>Some Thoughts about Learning Together</i> Nora Sternfeld	158
3.03	A CONSTITUENT EDUCATION Yaiza Hernández Vélazquez	166
3.04	ANOTHER ROAD MAP SCHOOL FOR ARTS EDUCATION Alejandro Cevallos Narváez and Nora Landkammer	170
3.05	POSSIBILITIES FOR EMANCIPATION Bojana Piškur	174
3.06	'REALLY USEFUL KNOWLEDGE' Manuel Borja-Villel	178
3.07	'REALLY USEFUL KNOWLEDGE' AND INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING Jesús Carrillo	182
3.08	BETWEEN ACTS: INFLUENCE, NEGOTIATE, ENCOUNTER, INSTIGATE, NARRATE <i>Re-writing the Relations Between Art and Situated Knowledge Found in Times of Crisis</i> Subtramas (Virginia Villaplana, Montse Romani and Diego del Pozo)	196
3.09	TOWARDS A COORDINATION ETHIC Sara Buraya Boned, Paula Moliner and Manuela Pedrón Nicolau	202
3.10	CLOSE THE FOLDING SCREEN BEFORE LENIN ESCAPES <i>Somateca and the Closet</i> Bárbara G.F. Muriel, Sara Buraya Boned, Loreto Ares, Diana Vázquez somateca	206
3.11	A GREEK CHOIR TEARING THE CANVAS OF PUBLIC HEALTHCARE Carmen Esbrí	212



## PART 4

## DISTRIBUTING OWNERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

4.01	DISTRIBUTING OWNERSHIP <i>Introduction</i> Elinor Morgan	220
4.02	DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS VERSUS CULTURE WARS Jesús Carrillo	234
4.03	PRESERVING PRECARIOUSNESS, QUEERING DEBT Isabell Lorey	242
4.04	NOTES ON FRIENDSHIP Céline Condorelli	250
4.05	SOLIDARITY Igor Spanjol	256
4.06	ANTAGONISM Francesco Salvini	260
4.07	'VSAK ČLOVEK JE KUSTOS! / JEDER MENSCH IST EIN KURATOR!' <i>Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, 16 June–30 September 2007</i> Tjaša Pogačar Podgornik	274
4.08	LODGERS AT M HKA Nav Haq and Alan Quireyans	278
4.09	A MODEL FOR A CONSTITUENT MUSEUM <i>MOCA Toronto Canada</i> November Paynter	283
4.10	NEW LINTHORPE Elinor Morgan	286

## PART 5

## ARCHIVING AND COLLECTING RELATIONSHIPS

5.01	ARCHIVING AND COLLECTING RELATIONSHIPS <i>Introduction</i> Aida Sánchez de Serdio	292
5.02	REVISITING AND RECONSTITUTING NETWORKS FROM JAPAN TO BEIRUT TO CHILE Kristine Khouri and Rasha Salti	296
5.03	ARCHIVES IN USE <i>A Laboratory of Political Imagination for the Present</i> RedCSur	316
5.04	RELATIONS OF THE UNDERCOMMONS <i>About the Work of Making, Unmaking and Remaking Organizations</i> John Hill talks to Tiziana Terranova, Sean Dockray and Adelita Husni-Bey	322
5.05	VULNERABILITIES AND SHIFTING MEANINGS OF CITIZENSHIP Özge Ersoy	330

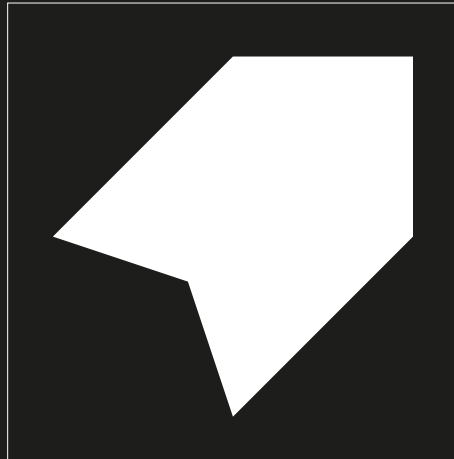
5.06	DATA ASYMMETRY Burak Arikan	336
5.07	GRAPH COMMONS Burak Arikan	340
5.08	OPEN SOURCE PROTOTYPES Oriol Fontdevila	342
5.09	THE SALT OFFICE OF USEFUL ART Onur Yıldız	356

## APPENDIX

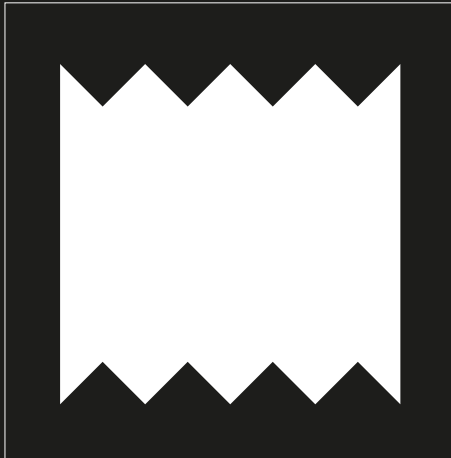
Contributors	362
Index of Names	372
Index of Works, Exhibitions, Projects, Organizations	376
Acknowledgements	380
Colophon	382



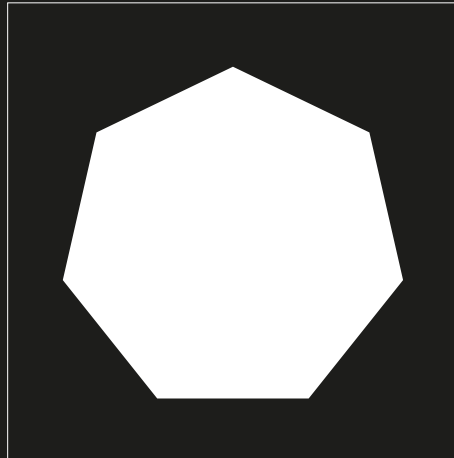
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ACTIVATION



STRUCTURES



NEGOTIATIONS

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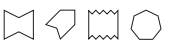
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# THE CONSTITUENT MUSEUM

THE CONSTITUENT MUSEUM

What would happen if museums put relationships at the centre of their operation? This question inspires this publication, which offers a diverse, rigorous, and experimental analysis of what is commonly known as education, mediation, or interpretation within museum institutions. It takes the visitor not as a passive receiver of predefined content, but as a member of a constituent body, who it facilitates, provokes and inspires. Moving beyond the practice of mediation as such, the publication situates these practices within the social-political (neoliberal) context and the physical and organizational structure. By placing the relation to one's constituent at the centre of the museum organization, and by considering a constituent relationship as being one of collaboration and co-production, the relative positions of both the museum and its constituencies begin to shift and change. Understanding this change holistically is what this publication aspires to.

As a composition of new commissions and case-studies, *The Constituent Museum* draws from the diverse experiences of the institutions that together form the museum confederation L'Internationale, and the partners with whom it has collaborated during the five-year programme 'The Uses of Art: The Legacy of 1848 and 1989'. Central to the development of 'The Uses of Art' project was the instigation of a 'Mediation Task Force' that began to explore and address some of the key issues surrounding the evolution of relationships between museums and their publics. Initial debates around these complex and shifting relationships were played out through an examination of the terms 'use' and 'usership'. As museums begin to see themselves as sites of collaborative knowledge production, and begin to replay their earlier, nineteenth-century roles as active sites for the co-production of new civic identities, it became apparent that the terms use and usership did not fully implicate the necessity for museums to re-think their own operating systems and managerial structures. Or, to put this another way, it began to seem apparent that museums could do little more than 're-brand' their existing relationships with audiences—as the oneway and non-reciprocal broadcast of established knowledge—unless museums were prepared to open themselves up to the reciprocal possibility of change. Parallel this was the realization that many who work within, or collaborate with, existing museum structures already share in the belief that institutions need to change if we are to begin to reimagine our futures for the better. Furthermore, it also became apparent that many also

believe that museums have a key role to play in this social reimagining of our futures: and that new forms of fluid, flexible, and collaborative institutionalization are necessary if this reimagining is to move beyond the level of symbolic and utopian rhetoric.

With this in mind, the Constituent Museum actively seeks to present and make visible the diverse and sometimes contradicting strategies that institutions deploy when working to implement this change, depending on the context in which they operate or the size and history of the institution. In order to do this, the publication is introduced by a piece of fictional writing and then organized into five Chapters, composed of essays, project studies and discussions, which focus on different elements of museum practice that could be affected by a rethinking of the relation between the museum and its constituency. In 'The Rainbow Wrasse', Francis McKee gives us a 'future fiction' of a Constituent Museum yet to be in the form of a written email dialogue between Uschii and Leila. As Uschii arrives at the former terminal of Glasgow airport in 2068, he is part of a familiar landscape of scarcity, recycling, repurposing, reimagining and hope. As such, McKee's 'The Rainbow Wrasse' helps us to look back upon some of the key questions that are arising for us all now and, in doing so, begins to ask key questions of constituent commitments to both possible pasts and probable futures. Following this, Chapter One 'Becoming Constituent' seeks to frame some of the overall debates that underpin our relationship to the term 'constituencies' as a site of active, and ongoing, political struggle. By simply accepting that constituencies themselves are always mutable, fluid, protean and self-generating, it becomes possible to re-frame this term as one of active engagement. If this is the case, then we can also begin to re-imagine the Constituent Museum as being a generator of social change, a site in which meanings and identities are themselves coproduced and continually re-negotiated through our collaborative uses of art. Chapter Two, 'Architectures of Use', attempts to build on the broader themes and issues of the Constituent Museum by looking at some of the developing relationships that are opening out between the physical specificity of the museum as institutional edifice, and its ideological roles and functions as producer of meanings, site of exchange, and progenitor of social re-imagination. Chapter Three, 'Pedagogies of Encounter' begins to imagine the Constituent Museum as a space for the emergence of both critical discourses



and practices, in which new forms of hybrid and constituent education allow for the coproduction of difference, encounter and dissent, whilst relationships between aesthetics, politics, and knowledge are problematized and redrawn. In the light of this, Chapter Four, 'Distributing Ownership and Empowerment', turns our attention to the thorny, real as well as hypothetical, issues surrounding constituent collaboration and coproduction. What does it really mean to empower constituencies, publics and audiences? Beyond the rhetorical and well-meaning, such an activity would require that museums renegotiate certain levels of control in collaboration with their constituencies or, at the very least, that they at least begin to problematize previously received wisdoms surrounding traditional and sedimented forms of operational logic. Finally, Chapter Five 'Collecting Relationships' begins to think about a future in which relationships, and constituency, are already a core part of a museum's operational and relational logics. At the heart of this institutional re-imagining is the use of the archive as an active and constituent tool in the production of power and knowledge regimes. As the institutional archive is traditionally invisible, or at least less visible than the other dimensions of the museum (which is, after all, an institution dedicated to developing certain regimes of visibility and display) what would happen if the archive became the central, and most accessible, form of institutional constituency and collaborative and/or open-source self-management. This final Chapter, and it is hoped the overall critical, theoretical, and practical narrative arc of the book as a whole, will lead us back to the future, to our opening fiction and, most importantly, to the stark reminder that our constituent futures will largely be shaped and formed by the dreams and actions we take today and tomorrow.

# THE

THE RAINBOW WRASSE

Francis McKee

# RAINBOW

# WRASSE



21.8.2062 6.43am

Dear Leila

We arrived last night in a rainstorm. Winding our way through muddy trenches and cuttings for hours before we surfaced at the back of a vast building. The horses were taken away and stabled while we were led through dim corridors to our quarters. I fell asleep instantly without exploring my room and had that odd feeling of waking and not knowing where I was in the world. And yes, there is internet!! My machine tells me I've got a three-hour ration per week. I'll write offline and send you more in bursts...

X Uschii  
(I miss you)

21.8.2062 8.38am

Leila—me again!

Ok—I'm writing quickly here. Just been walking around the building. It's breakfast time and everyone is gathered in an upstairs balcony—i think it may have been a 'food court' once (the building itself is the old Glasgow Airport terminal). There's a rota of course and everyone cooks at some point during the week and cleans—either the kitchens or the other areas of the building. I'm on the rota from tomorrow.

From the big windows you can look across a vast plain towards a distant horizon. They dug up the main runways and now they're full of crops—I can see people bending along the furrows as I'm writing this... I'm down for that too, I don't mind but the rain...! The sky is sludge and the rain just keeps falling—forty days and nights of rain. The landscape is brown—tilled earth everywhere, waiting for the greenness the crops will bring.

I remember being in an airport when I was a child. It was a forest of human legs and me holding on to my father's hand for dear life. He took me to the big windows and we watched the airplanes turn on the runways in slow motion as they lined up and then roared off into



the sky. Now it's hard to believe everyone used them, going somewhere just for a few days—impossible! It took me three weeks to get here and I'm staying for two months. I hope those vegetables they're picking are tasty...

X Uschii

26.8.2062 8.38am

Habibi...

So. Those first two messages were indulgent. This is a logbook for the week. I'll use the rest of my ratio for searches.

First: my disappointments. There are no dogs—I'd hoped some might have survived up here but everyone says not. There are bees though—hardy and productive—but does that mean there are plenty of flowers??

Now the good things:

I met my curator this morning—Agnes Lozac'h—an amazing person. She's subtle, quick and intelligent. Within a few minutes my head was spinning as she described the origins of the museum. After the great floods and the 2042 hurricanes the airport was decommissioned, though in truth it had barely been used for many years. At first it was repurposed as a sanatorium—the region was badly hit with disease as the water laid waste to everything. But gradually the beds emptied and, same as everywhere, the great transition began. Solar power, waste not, work brigades, the new medieval, refugees from the burnt out zones...

Amid all the replanting of the runways the airport apron was left empty and the terminal building evolved as a public forum, a meeting place for the inhabitants of the new shelters and caravans that were springing up in its hinterland. It was the only space big enough for large-scale convocations, or the weekly market or religious festivals.

The iconoclastic revolt in 2045 determined the fate of the building. The director at the time, Adam Kirk, was an apostate. He knew many of the great collections had been decimated over the previous decades from the disastrous subsidence of the British Museum



and the Tates, undermined by floods and revolt. As the same thing happened in Scotland he assembled a team of agents to rescue what they could, hoping that, one day, people would distinguish between commodities and art. Not so much survived it seems—one or two magical things but the waters went high here and much of the rest got buried in the collapses. Agnes said she'll keep the remainders a surprise for the moment because there is a presentation next week. In the meantime (and I guess for all my time here) I'll be working alongside her in the physic garden—that is one of her curatorial specialisms—'one of the founding elements of museums in the first place' she said.

X Uschii

28.8.2062 10.14am

Dearest Uschii

You know I'm reading your emails. I love the formality and tradition of the form. I'm glad, in a way, that we can't afford the immediacy of chat because I can hear you thinking in these letters.

I don't have much time to reply these days though. Work is non-stop as we feel we're near a breakthrough. We're working on a newly found mutation of the ideonella sakainesis—my god it's a real beast (for a microbe!). It's hungry for plastic, ravenous even. The problem is the plastics are slowing its cell division, killing it really, no stamina.

Your description of the museum reminded me of Charles de Gaulle. There, of course, the planes still land for presidents and generals. But in the vast abandoned areas a true monastery evolved: austere, spiritual, a total renunciation of the object and the spectacle. If your journey continues then you should make it a real pilgrimage and head there, however long it might take. Which reminds me... have you seen any rainbow wrasse? I've heard they rule supreme in the east Atlantic, tell me it's true!

Love, Leila x



01.9.2062 11.23pm

Leila

It was so good to hear from you—I wanted to reply immediately but I kept discipline and recorded life for you when I could. Your beastie (as they say here) sounds impressive and tragic. My gardening is beginning to rival your pursuits though: Agnes has introduced me to the research constituents, locals from the surrounding caravans. They visit in the morning and work closely with a fungal colony that extends far beyond the garden. There are roughly twenty researchers: they microdose and then link to the mycelium threads through a fine web of cuts on their forearms. I'd heard of this in Preston but only as a rumour. Here, it's a daily reality. It's all based on the Dorsett theory of junk genetics: activating latent codes, reanimating fossil DNA, merging with the colony. For the first few weeks Agnes led the researchers but now they guide her work, logging their discoveries and mapping the next steps—she calls it 'curatorial transference'.

The rain eased off finally on Wednesday morning and suddenly the terminal was illuminated with sharp, precise light. Bennet and Maha, Agnes' co-curators quickly announced just after breakfast that there would be a presentation in half an hour. We were directed towards one of the largest bays on the first floor though most people had already headed to their tasks. There was a small painting on the back wall, a picture of an old woman feeding a dog. A man looked on from a doorway and above the lintel there was a large pot holding a flower. Near the painting Bennet had written 'Gabriel Metsu. c. 1654–1657' on the wall. The light poured in as the curators retreated, leaving a few of us standing in some disarray unsure how to deal with this thing. I know you've told me about seeing great paintings before but still, I was totally unprepared for the shock. The quality alone was difficult to absorb—how did they make this? The richness of the colours—so many browns, seemed right for this landscape but gradually the blue of the old woman's apron, the luminous white of her bonnet began to glow among all those dun colours. The real shock though, and I think the others were experiencing this too, was the question of how to look. I didn't know how to pay attention to this either as an object or as an image. I couldn't bring myself to move away from it. There was a later moment of vertigo when I began to see how closely cropped the image was within its frame and suddenly I sensed how this



was simply a fragment of a larger reality. And a reality that is gone forever. The dog, of course, brought me close to tears. Extinction and all that.

I couldn't leave and I couldn't look continuously. I knew that I needed time. I sat down on the floor and tried to think. Slowly other elements of the thing became more apparent: there was some water damage in the top corner, the frame had taken a battering, the man at the doorway was probably the old woman's husband, there was a light source inside the house behind him that made no sense logically, there was a whetstone in the corner of the painting...

I was aware of Agnes sitting down beside me.

'What do you think then?' she asked.

'I think I'm angry and I don't understand how that can be...' I replied.

'What is making you angry?'

'I'm not sure. It's something to do with paying attention. This painting demands more attention than I can give it. I can't respond in a few minutes... instinctively I knew when I saw it that it's wrong to show it here like this.'

'What do you mean...?'

'Its demands are greater than we are giving it. Something like this demands a decade or several of them, a lifetime.'

Agnes looked hard at me, her lips pursed in a silent reprimand. Eventually she explained how the painting would have to be shared by everyone and could only be seen on certain days. 'Perhaps', she said, 'we will all have to learn to have that experience together.'

I like Agnes and I think she may be right but I also know that she is wrong. At this rate, I would not survive in Charles de Gaulle.

Yours forever, Uschii.

04.9.2062 4.57pm

Dear Leila

So much to tell you since my last. I know I sounded angry at the end and I was—the Metsu got to me in ways I never expected and raised all sorts of questions. Now that feels so far away. Something momentous happened last Saturday morning.

I woke to find the whole area covered in fog. The usual market, and all the noise that comes with it, was not to be heard. Everywhere was unusually empty. Heading down to the terminal apron I could hear voices arguing and reaching ground level I could finally see that a large group of people had arrived. They didn't look like refugees from the south. Rather, they looked like a small regiment or brigade: alert, poised, and capable. Agnes, Maha and a taller person stood to one side of the group, in deep conversation with a stocky couple, who seemed to be the group leaders. The tall figure was Weever, the sub-director, and it was the first time I'd seen them. They looked at me as if they knew me already.

Agnes came over and explained that the roamers were looking to settle in the terminal and demanded rooms. This would entail removing the artefacts and public spaces so Weever was now confronting their demands and explaining the wider need for the space. The roamers' leaders, Rainborough and Fatou, were claiming that such ideas were against the common need—in this new world a level distribution of the land was the most important thing. Empty sheltered spaces such as the terminal were too precious to be kept as a luxury. Weever appeared calm and unruffled by this development. Agnes though looked worried—perhaps torn between devotion to her artefacts and the demands for common space.

The meeting ended quickly and Weever announced there would be a public debate at the start of next week. In the meantime the roamers were to be hosted generously, allowing them to settle and prepare their arguments.

Now I know how subtly Weever was thinking. The terminal was to remain unoccupied while the local population found temporary space among their own huts and caravans to host the roamers. Sunday was spent in minor festival mode. Bonfires and barbecues punctuated the afternoon and as everyone here is vegan the bees didn't lose their honey. The roamers blended in quite easily and told stories of their travels. Some just made the journey from the south beyond Preston but others had come from as far away as Spain, Morocco, Southern France, and Mali. Somewhere through the evening they visibly relaxed (the terminal-brewed beer did help) and the talk veered more to crops, the weather, the gleaning of cities and what was left of the nearby ruins. They asked so many of



the same questions I had asked Agnes when I first got here: did the submarine fleet really exist; was it true the fleet lay at the bottom of the river and all the bombs too; had the city subsidence really left a vast crater; did the gleaners there really find a Viking hoard?

On Monday, the roamers sent petitioners to the curators apparently asking for the apron to be arranged in a particular configuration. Weever, Agnes, Maha and Bennet listened carefully and then went into a huddle, emerging quickly and agreeing to the demands. Afterwards I had my daily meeting with Agnes but she wouldn't tell me anything about their plans or what was going to happen on Wednesday. She looked calmer than before, determined maybe, but refusing to crack under my sly interrogation. She did, though, work out a personal project for me that would extend over the rest of my time here. She had noticed my interest in the mycelium researchers and remembered that I'd wanted to know more about what they experienced when they were linked to the fungus. For my project, she wants me to interview each of them and record their visions. Then, using a theory from an old British philosopher, she wants me to investigate whether the dreams could actually be caused by future events—assuming that the interaction with the mycelium could mean the researchers are tapping into a backwards time flow. I don't have to produce any outcomes from this but, if I feel inclined, Agnes has made a space available for me (the same bay that held the Metsu) and one of the researchers is also a sign painter and has said he is willing to collaborate with me if I want to go in that direction...

First thing on Tuesday I raided the strange library housed in the terminal—a beautiful space in what must have been the departures lounge. It's filled with light, lines of seats from its past life and a sea of odd mismatched shelves rescued from the fallen world outside. I tracked down the book Agnes mentioned—John Dunne's *An Experiment with Time*. It was published in 1927 and it's bonkers. I love it.

I just hope this amazing library and all the stored treasures survive the week. I still haven't seen more than one work...

All for now  
xx Uschii xx

---

05.9.2062 8.22pm

Dear Uschii

I'm in transit and only have this link for a few minutes... I've heard there is a hurricane heading your way and there are signs of it here already. Take care, please—I'm thinking of you

All my love

Leila

---

08.9.2062 9.05am

Oh Leila ...so much to tell you!

Weever, the curators, some of the researchers and a few fieldworkers sat cross-legged in horizontal lines across the terminal apron. Everyone else lined the space in a square and waited for the arrival of the roamers.

They came with noise: a small battery of kettledrums firing a sharp tattoo across the dead runways, forcing a breach in the crowd. Then the debaters entered, in dark red robes, drawn across their shoulders like a shawl. Once on the apron, they dispersed, each one standing in front of a seated opponent. The drums stopped and there was a tense silence with just the crows still squabbling on the roof of the terminal.

Fatou lifted a square of blue linen in the air and let it drop. When it hit the ground the roamers started. Each whirled in front of their opponent and thrust themselves forward to stare into their eyes. Each produced a string of beads that they coiled around their left arm and then let loose towards their opponent, pulling it back and starting all over again. All the time they flung a tirade of arguments into the air with only fragments reaching the surrounding audience—'elite...!', 'fetishizing things...!' and 'for who?'. Quickly this rose to a torrent and began to synchronize across the lines of roamers as they repeated: 'what does this have to do with our everyday? why is there a hierarchy? what is art—why do we need it?'

And then silence.



Only Weever replied and spoke quietly. I couldn't hear much, just fragments: 'a place for self-criticism and a place to observe the world... contamination... things become alive when there is friction...' The wind carried their words away—your hurricane has almost arrived—and then I could hear again: 'where ideas can ferment in a cool, dark place... a forum... a life force... the friction between ideas and experience... we need communal space...'

It all ended quickly and inconclusively—more drumming and a procession of debaters leaving the arena. Agnes and Bennet were back quickly though to enlist my help to arrange a large screen in the main hall. They had a projector and one of the big, precious solar batteries already in place with Maha working on the cabling. While the crowds outside set to organizing a makeshift kitchen we created a mobile field cinema in the terminal.

As people drifted in, some still with plates of food or cups of tea, they found space on the floor or made their own cocoons. The film was relatively short—another of the terminal's rescued works called *Garden Conversation*. Agnes explained to the audience that it was made by a Moroccan artist called Bouchra Khalili. The Moroccans cheered, recognizing her name from the Mille Nuits Rouges in Paris during the 2020s. The film depicts a conversation between Che Guevara Lynch and Abdelkrim El Khattabi—two old revolutionary heroes of the twentieth century. They conduct a secret meeting in Melilia in 1959 and discuss the nature of revolution, ghosts of the past and what the future could hold. It was a perfect choice. We still didn't know the outcome of our own squabbles but so many thoughts were running through our minds that we began talking to each other as soon as the film finished. Even on our way back to work (vegetables do not wait for art) we were still discussing it.

Towards the end of the afternoon Bennet came loping through the furrows and broadcast an update—we'll know the results of the debate tomorrow at noon. His face was impossible to read. And now the wifi is shaky. I'm pressing send and we will have to wait for the squalls....

Take care you, in love

Uschii

**BECOMING  
CONSTITUENT**

# BE COMING CON STIT UENT

BECOMING CONSTITUENT

John Byrne



Constituencies are fluid, mutable, protean. They grow, change, adapt, hybridize and reform according to circumstance and need. As such, constituencies, as well as the status of being constituent, are always in the process of both becoming and unbecoming—constituencies result from a process of social production whose mediums and vehicles are, of necessity, collaborative. The etymological root of collaboration (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, provides us with the means to both re-imagine the kind of work, or labour, that art has now become and the role and function that the museum of the future could play within this re-imagining. It is the organic and piecemeal nature of collaboration which allows us to do this. Constituencies are, then, by their very nature dialectical.

However, while the case for imagining a Constituent Museum of the future would seem compelling—as do recent radical attempts on behalf of L'Internationale to re-imagine 'The Uses of Art'—the tactical and strategic shifts implied by such constituency thinking on current Museological operating systems would be immense: At the very least they would engender the radical re-thinking, and physical re-distribution, of the organizational and curatorial power structures that currently underpin our neo-Kantian paradigms of Modernist exhibition and display. Further to this, such constituent forms of collaboration or co-labour would also imply that museums of the future 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.

In light of this, this Chapter offers a framework for existing debate around the role and function of constituency thinking while, at the same time, providing an opening debate to consider the possible consequences of re-thinking the 'Constituent Museum' as a fluid constituency amongst others. In the opening text 'The Rest is Missing. On Constituencies as a Matricial Notion for New Institutions of the Commons' by Raúl Sánchez Cedillo, the common notion of constituent power—as the embodiment of a

governmental and juridical fiction of a democracy underpinned by, and enshrined within, a constitution—is replaced with that of a political power or force that ontologically precedes such constitutional embodiment. Following this, both Adela Železnik (MG+MSUM) and John Byrne (Liverpool John Moores University) introduce an extract drawn from a document developed by Janna Graham and Elliot Perkins, which responded to a L’Internationale seminar ‘Negotiating Institutions’ that took place during the early stages of ‘The Uses of Art: The Legacy of 1848 and 1989’ project. Whilst some of the ideas and sentiments of the original document, or ‘Blue-Print for Change’, remain unfulfilled, this text still remains an important moment of partial failure, one that acts as a kind of index for the ideas and imperatives that subsequently developed around the themes and issues of constituency. These two opening texts are then followed by three shorter ‘Project Studies’. The first two of these studies look at different ways in which two participant museums in the L’Internationale programme ‘The Uses of Art: The Legacy of 1848 and 1989’ have responded to the growing necessities and urgencies of migration and the so-called ‘Refugee Crisis’. Both present ways in which museums are actively attempting to work as constituents and co-collaborators within this crisis. Finally, in the third Project Study of the Chapter ‘Untimely notes on “The New Abduction of Europe”’, Francesco Salvini and Raúl Sánchez Cedillo give their response to an event they proposed and organized at the Reina Sofía in Madrid, which, again, formed part of the L’Internationale project ‘The Uses of Art: The Legacy of 1848 and 1989’. Here, Salvini and Cedillo both describe their attempts to open out a forum for understanding and re-thinking the legacies of the 2011 Spanish mobilizations, one in which they concluded their ‘cry against the New Abduction of Europe’ and simultaneously called for the ‘monsters of the old country to gather in Madrid and imagine alter-realities for our lives’. In this way, both Salvini and Cedillo remind us that ‘Becoming Constituent’ is not simply a process in which museums attempt to simply ‘re-brand’ existing relationships between art, institutions and publics—they are already sites in which constituencies gather to make sense of, and re-imagine, their local, national and international urgencies and common needs.





# THE REST

THE REST IS MISSING

On Constituencies as a Matricial Notion for New Institutions of the Commons

Raúl Sánchez Cedillo

# IS MISSING



This essay will deal 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 primarily the juridical notion coined during the English and American Revolutions and then coded by Sieyès 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.

To begin with, though, a destructive critique of the current meaning and use of the word constituency is due. Only then we will be able to dig out a productive use of the word while at the same time retracing its genealogies in the history of the democratic revolutions in England during the seventeenth century.

Today, ‘constituency’ appears to be quite a banal term in the English-speaking countries and political traditions. By it, according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, we refer to ‘the body of electors who choose a representative for parliament or for any other public assembly, for the place or district possessing the right to elect a representative, and for the residents generally, apart from their voting powers, in such a locality. The term is also applied, in a transferred sense, to the readers of a particular newspaper, the customers of a business and the like’.<sup>1</sup> According to this, ‘constituency’ tends to overlap meanings with terms such as ‘electorate’, ‘audience’ or even ‘interest group’, which speak mostly of a domesticated and functional asymmetric relationship between representatives (or governments, institutions, firms) and voters (‘constituents’), customers or simply the general public. But, how did it come to this? To get an answer it is good to pay attention to the shift from ‘constituent’ to ‘constituency’, which involves a journey from the legal and political debates of the English and American revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the period subsequent to the Great Reform Act of 1832, which paved the way to the establishment of a proper Victorian system of political representation in the UK.<sup>2</sup>

In the midst, there is the defeat of the link between the constituent power of the multitude of the poor and the yeoman against the gentry. Words travel around and back and forth in space and

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1911 edition.  
<sup>2</sup> See H. J. Hanham, *The Nineteenth-Century Constitution 1815–1914: Documents and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

time, and the term ‘constituent’ that we find in English texts since the 1640s is a translation of the latin ‘constituens’. In this early use, the term points to the ultimate source of legal power and authority, which in this case happened to be the parliament against any absolute royal prerogatives.<sup>3</sup> As Martin Loughlin has noted, the term ‘constituent power’ is no translation of the French revolutionary ‘pouvoir constituant’, but, on the contrary, the former precedes and preforms the latter across the journey of the concepts from the British islands to the American revolutionary colonies and then back to the pre-revolutionary France of the Abbé Sieyès.<sup>4</sup> So now we have the historically repressed link between the term ‘constitencies’ and the historical struggles for a democracy of the oppressed and disenfranchised against the ‘constituted power’.

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’, namely, 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 a 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, at the very moment he starts dealing with democracy as *omnino absolutum imperium*, that is, the absolute State-form in every sense, 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. That’s the mystery of Spinoza’s *Tractatus Politicus*: we don’t know whether this incompleteness has to do with the final illness and death of the author, or else it has to do with the inner contradiction of Spinoza’s definition of the *multitudo*. But there is something we should keep in mind: for Spinoza, the multitude is the foundation of the imperium, of the

<sup>3</sup> See Martin Loughlin, ‘Constituent Power Subverted: From English Constitutional Argument to British Constitutional Practice’, in Martin Loughlin and Neil Walker, eds., *The Paradox of Constitutionalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> See Joel I. Colón-Ríos, ‘Five Conceptions of Constituent Power’, *Law Quarterly Review* 130 (2014), pp. 306–336.



State-form and, according to his conception, the more absolute a State-form is, the more democratic it has to be.

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.

### THE THREE DILEMMAS OF CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL REASON

In order to explain that critical evolution and to ascertain its crucial role, it seems useful to take into account Negri’s view on the historical limits of the notion of a constituent power under the influence of three Western ideological formations, namely, the Jewish-Christian tradition of creativity; the ideas on the foundations of society based on natural law; and the transcendental thought about foundation.

We are surely facing problems that have not to do with a transcendental limit of the 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. So we have, according to Negri, these three dilemmas of western political reason that are key to getting us out of the double bind between constitutional democracies and late financial capitalism.

The first dilemma is that of command and/or measurement. It is about what can rationally be the Oneness of command or, to put it differently, how come that we can compare or commute different, heterogeneous kinds of power and/or value. So, the question: Where does the One of command come from? How do those different powers add up to the One of the State, and how do different value relationships get subsumed under the oneness of (measured) Capital? We may well follow the reasoning from one argument to another but up to a certain point we’ll realize that we are in the midst of a circular reasoning, that we’ve entered into an aporia. This is the history of Jacobinism in emancipation processes. This is the history of the transformation of constituent power in just pure State power. There is the One of the State, of the Party, of the Revolution,



they seem to have existed since, but we can't base them on any sequence of common notions coming from the logical and political composition of heterogeneous, autonomous social powers.

Hence, we can't know what the One of power is. But what then about its counterpart, what is then counter-power, antagonism, the 'Other' of power? This is our second dilemma, according to Negri. In the long-standing theological-political tradition of State power, be it Hobbesian and absolutist or Jacobin, Bolshevik revolutionary, the One must dissolve the multiple or rather, the multiple must 'return' to the One. So what's the Otherness of counter-power? Is it just a formal one? For Hobbes, the multitude opposes the People the same the State opposes anarchy or the war of all against all. In short: Is the Other of the One of command just another One, symmetrical but just isomorphic?

This is the question of whether there is an ontological difference between Power (or *potestas*, according to Spinoza) and (counter-)powers (*potentia multitudinis*, again with Spinoza). And, if we concede that such a difference has been existing throughout modernity, what does it consist of? We can't accept Hobbes dismissal of the multitude as an alternative to the absolutist commonwealth, to the sovereign power, since for him

for the security of particular men, and, by consequence for the common peace, it is necessary that the right of using the Sword for punishment, be transferred to some Man or Counsell, that Man or Counsell is necessarily understood by Right to have the supreme Power in the City. For he that by Right punisheth at his own discretion, by Right compells all men to all things which he himselfe wills; than which a greater command cannot be imagined.<sup>5</sup>

We see that for Hobbes the multitude amounts to a gang of criminals as long as it doesn't 'transfer' all its joint power to the 'supreme Power'. This notion of a transfer of power is key to the understanding of all theories of sovereignty, popular or democratic sovereignty included. While for Hobbes (but also for Locke, Rousseau and all theories of social contract), there can be no coextensivity between singular and multiple degrees of (social, political) power (*potentia*) and sovereign (monopolistic) State power (*summa potestas*).

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive*, Ch. VI.



Nothing to do with Spinoza, who in spite of the similarities in the terminology, famously wrote:

I always preserve the natural right in its entirety [*ego naturale jus semper sartum tectum conservo*], and I hold that the sovereign power in a State has right over a subject only in proportion to the excess of its power over that of a subject.<sup>6</sup>

The third dilemma deals with the problem of the 'other' of power, of that which opposes the One, of the multitude as an antagonistic counter-power. How is that counter-power to be measured? How does it relate to and measure against the power of the One? Can we get a mean value out of the singularities of the multitude to be measured against the mean value of the components of the One? These are the dilemmas of any reformism—be it mild or radical. The incommensurability between the One and the Other leads to the stalemate of the transformation process or, to put it differently, to the becoming One of the Other for the sake of commensurability of the ontological difference of the value fields in play, both economic and ethical.

If the possibility of progressive, reformist transformation appears to be precluded by the incommensurability of the ontological value fields between the One of State and Capital and the Other of the multitudinous counter-powers, what happens then to the idea of a radical, forceful deconstruction and destabilization of the existing political order and its replacement by a new, different one; what happens to Revolution?

#### THE FOUR MATRICES OF NEW CONSTITUENCIES

I will now try to describe the current traits of that relationship on the basis of the recent global and European upheavals since 2011. This involves also 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. To this purpose, let me enumerate what I consider to be the main matrices

<sup>6</sup> Baruch Spinoza, *Epistle 50*.

of constituency that still are excluded today, i. e., missing, from the consideration of the theory of democracy in the present times.

#### A. The post-colonial matrix. A new syntax of immunity and security

We may say, if it wasn't too theologico-political on our part, that coloniality is the original sin of the European ideal, and to many it is the very essence of its current geopolitical and cultural meaning. The 'happy days' of financial-fuelled globalization, which correspond in time with the second (neoliberal) wave of European integration and enlargement, seemed to (or rather boasted to) have 'solved' this issue—by way of successful multiculturalism, according to the 'British model'; integration, according to the 'French model' of *républicanisme*; or a functioning *verzuijing* for the Netherlands and Belgium. We knew that this was not true, only by looking at the urban landscapes of the European cities or assessing the polls and surveys about the perceived links between immigration and crime by the 'normal' populations during those very years.

#### B. The technopolitical matrix

We can define technopolitics in general terms as the politics (collective action) done through the assemblages of networked computer systems and human brains. The genealogy of technipolitics can lead us back to the hacker and cyberpunk utopias of the seventies and eighties respectively. But they have become a common feature since the world implementation of the Internet in all spheres of human life, and in particular with the introduction of smartphones and the colonization of the Internet by the 'social media'. But politically they have become a key element only in the two-thousands and definitively in the 2011 cycle of social and political upheavals, from the 'Arab springs' to the Spanish 15M and Occupy Wall Street in the USA.

The technopolitical approach goes far beyond the practices and experiences encompassed by terms and categories such as 'cyber activism' or 'network politics'. It is not only about the use of and experimentation with new digital tools for traditional activism—which it is indeed—but technopolitics is a new realm of human-machine interaction and hybridization in the field of politics. At this point, one could say: define 'politics'. Under this light, politics is an activity that can't be restricted to the institutional and



representative politics, nor to the media-party system. These are integrated into a different and more complex entity, which consists of what Michel Foucault would define as 'strategic relationships' among individuals and social groups, by which 'one acts on the possible actions of others'. Power-politics, political domination, force relationships, come later and are a result of the interactions of a set of strategic relationships. This strategic dimension of power relationships is about influence, affection, rather than coercion or *Gewalt*. It is about the power of affecting the others and being affected by them. These affections operate among, from, over and into bodies *and* digital machines, through very different 'matters of expression' (Guattari): signs, symbols, icons, postures, chemical signals, rhythmical patterns of interaction, etc.

Technopolitics has been a processual invention of the last decade, but it is firmly rooted both in the machinic becomings of human labour and in the life-wide expansion and deepening of capitalist exploitation, that has come to subsume all aspects of human life and human cooperation, from manual labour to care and affective labour to all kind of cognitive activities. In this sense, Christian Marazzi has written of the 'machine-body' as the contemporary condition of living labour. Its hybrid character is already a permanent feature of its composition, both material and 'wet' medium of abstract languages, affective demands and obligations, and active, living labour of invention of new values, meanings and qualitative affects.<sup>7</sup> It is permanently excited and mobilized by digital interfaces and algorithmic work routines, just like fixed capital, but made of wet human flesh. But the same time it is able to express all kinds of machinic and affective surplus values through strategic relationships, and it is able to do so precisely because of its networked, hybrid condition. The machine-body, its multiplicity, its agonism and antagonism, is the living subject-object of technopolitics. The technopolitical matrix is no doubt about organization: networks, swarmings, distributed democracies; but it is first and foremost about the production of (political) subjectivities by means of massive affective and cognitive assemblages, contagions, emergencies.

<sup>7</sup> See Christian Marazzi, *The Violence of Financial Capitalism* (New York: Semiotext[e], 2010).

To my knowledge, the Spanish 15M movement is a token of the technopolitical realm and its powers, and a happy one.<sup>8</sup> These days, though, we are starting to witness what a non-emancipatory, fascist technopolitics can look like, in which, instead of a networked contagion of an increase of the power of acting, the arousal of a perception of the common, it is hatred of difference, colonial phobic affects that take the lead.

### C. The symbiopolitical or anthropogenetic matrix

There are no such things as individuals as last foundations of the human biological, social and political orders. The feminist cultural revolutions of the twentieth century have shown that the making and remaking of human life is a complex social, technical and institutional process that relies on women's subalternity. Only upon that assumption can we understand the current developments in applied robotics, deep learning, human microbiology, and so on. Against and beyond all technological determinism, we must search for the universality of these processes across different strata of organized matter, from silicon to organic systems. If, as we have just done regarding the technopolitical matrix, we consider this issue from the perspective of labour, both in its 'human' and physical aspects, we may be able to identify one such universality in the trend towards networking distributions of labour processes, but also in their increasing complexity. At the same time, the increasingly hybrid traits of human labour correspond to the physical hybridity between the analogical processes of thermodynamically regulated labour and the digital processes of informational computation. Forms of labour and forms of life are consistent with this networked, hybrid, hence symbiotic condition. The assumption here is that there is no 'Life' as an overarching, transcendent entity, but that life consist only of multiplicities, that there are only 'forms of life' that live through their own symbiotic singularization processes. 'Life did not take over the globe by combat, but by networking. Life forms multiplied and complexified by co-opting others, not just by killing them', Lynn Margulis famously wrote.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> About the 15M movement, see my 'Something Constituent this Way Comes', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 111, no. 3 (2012), <http://saq.dukejournals.org/content/111/3/573.abstract>.

<sup>9</sup> See Lynn Margulis and Dorion Sagan, *Microcosmos: Four Billion Years of Microbial Evolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986).



So, human labour consists increasingly of and in a network of activities whose agents or realizers are, as we have mentioned above, (digital) machine-bodies. Human bodies are the products of this symbiopolitical labour, which not only involves interfaces of analogical and digital machines and organic entities, but mainly are based on symbiotic relationships among forms of life, not only across the phylogenetic map, but also and critically among human forms of life. For instance, no human health and hence no human life seems to be possible without the symbiotic microbiome made of networks and distributions of both bacteria and human cells. Accordingly, no general human labour and hence no value at all can be created without this symbiopolitical process among human forms of life, which in turn cannot consist without the multi-layered networkings of a hybrid, symbiotic mechanosphere.

These symbiopolitical processes are anthropogenic. Hence, the living labour of this cooperating, symbiopolitical machine-body produces humans by means of humans, and the main purpose of today's social cooperation, but also of the capitalist exploitation of that cooperation, is this anthropogenic process: its surplus values, its alternatives, its excesses, its constituent powers. Education, healthcare, affective and care labour, cognitive and digital labour, 'social networks', social movements: these are the realms of the anthropogenic production in which a battle to liberate those powers is fought against the capitalist biopower and its algorithmic command.

### D. The post-national matrix

Is there any art field that, in its works, doesn't add up eventually to the glory and greatness of some nation or empire? There are sound reasons to doubt it, even for contemporary artworks. Not the least because that has been the main role of museums and national galleries throughout since the ancient times. The wealth of nations does include artworks as its finest products. The end of outright colonial rule after the anticolonial revolutions of the twentieth century hasn't changed much about that.

In our archaeological world of political values and institutions, we are witnessing a revival of the Nation as the pillar of any feasible political arrangement. While, on the one hand, the process of globalization (and at the same time, to use the French word, *mondialization*) involves an array of irreversible transformations in the

realms of technological infrastructures and standards, global communications, financial networks, climate regulation, transportation systems, migration trajectories and so on, on the other hand the backlash of neo-colonial nationalism runs counter to these irreversibilities, which by all standards imply a thorough interdependence of regions, territories and societies across the globe, rather than the need for competition among them.

It is not hard to see that posing the Nation against all these irreversibilities is not just a fearful reaction motivated by the gaps among different realms of human activity (between economy and technologies vs. political structures; or between global interconnectedness and transportation vs. cultures and mentalities). The main cause of those nationalist reactions in the Western world has to do with the inability of the Nation-State democratic systems to cope with the irreversibilities of the world market system. This inability has been deepened by the chronic systemic crisis of finance, economy and political institutions in the leading Western countries since 2008. The predicament of the European Union is exemplary in this regard. The conventional wisdom about the European project was that of the neo- or rather ordoliberal credo of self-limitation of the State in order to give way to the 'natural' economic processes of the *homo oeconomicus*. In this sense, the economic and financial integration should have the lead before any political federalization of the European system of Nation-States could be enacted.

#### PROVISIONAL CONCLUSION: MONSTER CONSTITUENCIES FOR THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS OF THE COMMON

So, the contemporary art institutions should be able to approach the 'constituencies' problem in the light of these matrices. They should be able to problematize the traits and implications of their crisis according to their dynamic and non-linear combinations and configurations. More in particular, when we speak of a 'Museum of the Commons', the challenges to that project should be pinpointed as problematic nodes in the intersections of specific determinations of the matrices. For instance, a post-colonial stance about the commons for/in the museum cannot avoid to address also the matter of the post-colonial reality in the cities in which they are based.



Sorry I didn't count Art as one of these matrices. Not because it doesn't matter, but rather because I see it here and there throughout these matrices.

A constituent process today belongs to nobody. As an extra-legal force, namely constituent power that is never abolished or suspended, that refuses any capitalist *Aufhebung*, it can be neither public nor private. The constituent process can only be a common, inappropriate one.

According to this, we think of a constituent process without the assumption of the State as a sole, central, sovereign actor that monopolizes the last resort of political decision and of the use of force. The aim being the constitution of a non-State political entity, which should (or perhaps must, for the sake of realism) include a certain State-form, always weaker in regard to its repressive functions and always stronger in regard to its 'pro-commoning' operations. In this diagram, the State-form loses its overarching point of view, its transcendent and paradoxical positioning as an 'above all and overwhelming everything' actor. The State has always been a form, not a substance. In this sense, it is always immanent and not transcendent, it is just a counter-power that throughout modernity has managed to absorb, capture, coordinate and 'rationalize' other sources of counter-power, appearing to be on top of the forces of (civil) society, as the One encompassing the multiple, the fragmentary, the weaker forces, while separated from them.

Again, this is about updating the critique of the theological-political credo of capitalist modernity. This is about the common against the One. This is about a State-form that is 'forced' to be not on top but 'to the side', along with n-1 networks of social-political counter-powers, some democratic, some others not. A 'subalternized' State-form, by which it becomes just another 'subject' (without a 'S') that must struggle to survive by turning itself useful to the constitution of the common and its corresponding institutions. Hence, the n-1 constituent processes cannot be State-centric anymore. Instead, they turn into processes of the constitution of a time of the unpredictable interplay of freedoms, of the productive and distributed cooperation among singularities and of their ability to become common. They are about the post-history of the transcendent State-form.

What does this mean for the idea of the political process? How do consensus, conditional obedience come out in such a constituent diagram? This is far from being clear, as long as we don't put the

multitude together with the idea of real democracy in the centre of the stage. In this diagram, agonism and antagonism alternate and coexist with each other according to a complex system of ethical and political tensions, the constitution of the common and of its institutions being the standard by means of which one can evaluate not only the direction of the processes, but also whether the conditions are met for consensus and obedience or not, from the point of view of any of the singularities of the common in process.

Hereafter, what can a legitimate political power be at all? It becomes the 'acceptable' vector sum of the interplay, both the agonism and antagonism, the negotiation and translation processes inside an open network of counter-powers. Nonetheless, the legal standards by which a regulation of the agonisms and antagonisms among classes, collectives and individuals is made possible are not arbitrary. They rely on an incomplete axiomatic of human rights that as a result become immanent to the constitution of the common, and therefore they become no more transcendent and powerless, but rather an immanent telos of the constituent processes.

What is the role of Europe in this transformation? According to our post-national and post-colonial matrices, from here on Europe becomes the space-time for any constituent process of the common. The European constituent process is to be conceived as the moving site where all these problems are to be composed into a high political energy zone, into a historical-political crucible. At this point, there is no doubt that today Europe refers to a crossroads in contemporary history. It may well be the final episode of the autonomy of the political, namely, of the theological-political tradition of the State and sovereignty that eventually finds its own self-fulfilling prophecy in a war of all against all; or, rather, it may well mark the emergence of the constituencies without political monotheisms. It's not difficult to see how the European contemporary art museums could contribute to this project of the constituent imagination.







# NEGOTIATING INSTITUTIONS

NEGOTIATING INSTITUTIONS

Janna Graham

The long debate about ‘constituencies’, which in many ways this book represents, emerged toward the end of 2013 among members of the Mediation Taskforce of the L’Internationale project ‘The Uses of Art: The Legacy of 1848 and 1989’. After meetings in Liverpool and Coniston, UK, members of the group agreed that ‘institutionality’ would be the key topic of discussion in the first of a series of seminars.

To start this discussion, and to do so in a way that would not be too self-referential, Jesús Carrillo, who at the time was Head of public programmes at the Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid, posed some crucial questions: Do art institutions feel addressed and compelled by social demands? Do we have a constituency or just audiences? By whom and how are our addressees identified and defined? What new forms of social engagement should we encourage in order to overcome the insularity of art institutions?

Out of these questions Jesús Carrillo (MNCARS) and Adela Železnik (MG+MSUM), in collaboration with Janna Graham and Carmen Mörsch, made a concept for the ‘Negotiating Institutions’ workshop, which was organized by John Byrne (Liverpool John Moores University) and which took place at Tate Liverpool on 10 December 2014.

The meeting aimed at debating the conditions of negotiation required by joining together cultural institutions and groups from different parts of Europe that were already participating in L’Internationale collaborative programmes

in their specific contexts.<sup>1</sup>

Conceived within the terms of the L’Internationale project ‘The Uses of Art: The Legacy of 1848 and 1989’, and also bringing together representatives from Liverpool John Moores University and Tate Liverpool, this meeting was also intended to catalyse an ongoing discussion process which should operate both locally and internationally.

With Janna Graham and Elliot Perkins (members of Ultra-red collective) as facilitators of the encounter, ‘Negotiating Institutions’ hoped to be the first in a series of such debates. However, due to differences in agenda, organizational scale and ways of working that exist between independent collectives and those of regulated institutions, these debates were never subsequently realized. Nevertheless, the discussion about



1.03.01 – ‘Negotiating Institutions’, L’Internationale seminar, mediation strand, Tate Liverpool, 2013. Photo: Quad Collective

<sup>1</sup> The groups participating in the Negotiating Institutions meeting: Diásporas críticas PEI-MACBA, an artistic research platform related to the PEI (Independent Studies Program) at MACBA; Tate Collective and emerging Family Collective from Tate Liverpool; Meet me@MHKA, a programme of the Museum M HKA, developed in collaboration with the University of Antwerp, which organizes tours for people with early dementia and their caregivers; Neteorit-Moderna galerija (MG+MSUM), an independent programme of lectures, talks, and debates related to art, theory, and politics; Somateca-Museo Reina Sofia, a heterogeneous research group/network of artists, feminist and queer activists and researchers, who were originally engaged in the Critical Practices Studies Program of the Museum with the same title, under the direction of Beatriz Preciado (now Paul Preciado?); Van Abbemuseum after Museum of Arte Útil, a report from the Van Abbemuseum on the collaborative/constituent practices it initiated during and after the exhibition ‘Museum of Arte Útil’ (December 2013 to March 2014) and its plans for developing and progressing these initiatives.

the potentiality of the constituent museum that stemmed from 'Negotiating Institutions', and which continued to be developed within the Mediation Strand of the L'Internationale, soon became a central issue within the 'The Uses of Art: The Legacy of 1848 and 1989' project.



1.03.02 - 'Negotiating Institutions', L'Internationale seminar, mediation strand, Tate Liverpool, 2013. Photo: Quad Collective

At the core of this 'constituent museum' debate is a process of trying to think through the new and emerging roles and functions of museums or galleries as potential sites of constituent alternative and alterity: especially as the utopian dream of a society free from the constraints of institutions, as well as the imagination of a well-ordered community regulated by the benevolent plans of the welfare state, seem to be well and truly over. In light of this, the Mediation Taskforce of L'Internationale, via the emerging 'Constituency Research Strand' of 'The Uses of Art: The Legacy of 1848 and 1989' project, also began to consider if any claim for democracy, either individual or collective, would also be a claim for social responsibility? And, if so, would such a claim also demand a radical redefinition of institutions themselves in the management and defence of the common good?

These questions, in turn, led to the re-identification of the term 'Constituency' or 'constituencies' as a kind territory, or

tool-kit for re-thinking the role and function of the museum and gallery—where the museum or gallery, in and of itself, could be conceived as a democratic and collective process rather than the ideological embodiment of a centralized dogma.

As agreed in the 'Negotiating Institutions' Seminar of 2014, it is still relevant that such a process cannot simply be undertaken by means of self-referential institutional critique—as a one-way broadcast of utopian ideals from institution to public. Nor can it be undertaken by the autonomous operations of social movements working alone. Instead, this process must involve, indeed could only grow out of an open, plural and ongoing negotiation for which a new space and new protocols have yet to be defined.

The document which follows, called 'Blueprint for Change', was written by Janna Graham and Elliot Perkins as a direct response to the debates encapsulated in the moment of 'Negotiating Institutions'. Even though still only a draft it is also somehow the documentation of a need for change.

As such it might also act as a kind of Rosetta Stone for the debates, ideas and thoughts that have subsequently developed around the 'Constituencies' strand of research amongst L'Internationale members and Associate Partners collaborating on 'The Uses of Art: The Legacy of 1848 and 1989'.



1.03.02 - 'Negotiating Institutions', L'Internationale seminar, mediation strand, Tate Liverpool, 2013. Photo: Quad Collective

## USES OF ART: NEGOTIATING INSTITUTIONS DECEMBER, 2014 TATE LIVERPOOL

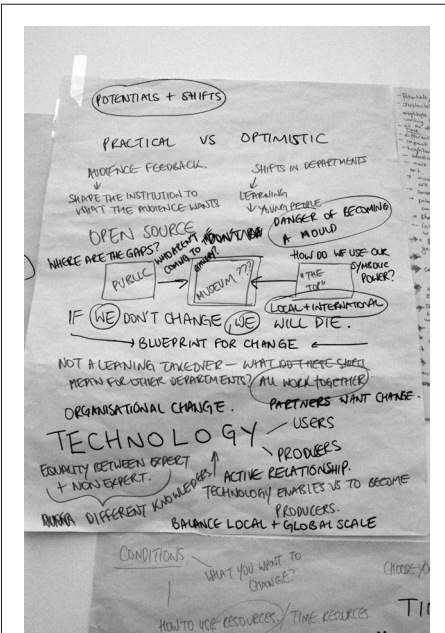
Notes by: Janna Graham and Elliot Perkins (Ultra-red)

### A/ DRAFT FOR A BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE: PROPOSITIONS AND DEMANDS

1. Expose the mechanisms of Visibility & Invisibility used by institutions in their relationships with broader publics.
  - Find ways of making the institution's own accountabilities visible; e.g. objectifying marketing segmentation systems that institutions are asked to use against their publics; these could be revealed and contested publicly, and as a result both institution and publics released from such systems. Groups working within institutions should be able to define their own terms of visibility. Create a regular space in the gallery in which terms of visibility could be re-negotiated—but one apart from or uncoupled from spectacle or 'programme'.
  - Use the Internationale web platform (but for whom/speaking to whom?) to develop ideas for how to make things visible.
  - Establish a common definition for the term 'Mediation'.
2. Democratize the Management of Resources
  - Human & Economic/Material & Immaterial, *first* consider these horizontally and integrally, before developing means of managing and distributing them.
  - Map how the hierarchies of

resource management operate in each institution.

- Develop a framework for how Museums who need to respond directly to the Government can develop a horizontal system nonetheless, i.e. how/can a horizontal process live under the control of an essentially vertical and top-down system?
- Develop direct bottom-up relationships with those with most power (e.g. trustees) via workshops and other relationship-changing exercises.



1.03.04 - 'Negotiating Institutions', L'Internationale seminar, mediation strand, Tate Liverpool, 2013. Photo: Quad Collective

- Be transparent—allow users to know how decisions within institutions are made.
- Use Pilot Projects—document and evaluate resources managed in a horizontal way to demonstrate how this might work (give it a form, one that can be used as a blueprint).
- Report/quantify the time invested by

- those who contribute free labour in order to get this time compensated.
3. Develop Engagement Practices Based in Difference
- Defined as attracting the interest of a group so that they have access not only to exhibitions but to critical thinking.
  - Mediators need to use the right language and show sensitivity to need and circumstance (e.g. childcare and other expenses).
  - Preserve identity—this also includes the essential identity of the institution, i.e. the group may need to change their mind or their practice.
  - Consultation, institutions openness to critique.
  - Use of digital platforms (such as social media) as well as physical encounters/spaces.
  - Dissemination and use of points of contact (teachers/community leaders).
  - Importance of friendship/affective relationships with/amongst groups.
  - Overstep the line—get to know where your publics live/get on the bus with them.
  - Create a safe environment & do not add to already existing boundaries or reinforce alienation (the idea that expertise is threatening).
4. Work with a broad base of people to articulate Value/s of Cultural Processes and Institutions.
- We openly use art to re-evaluate existing ideas/values/beliefs by creating a politically secular space.
  - If we accept that we are at a point of crisis/change then we need to publicly renegotiate institutional constitutions and mission statements—with input from users/publics.
  - Draw from examples—e.g. Office of Useful Art & Confessions

- of the Imperfect.
- Each museum and gallery needs to develop its own way of working (amongst and beyond the Internationale network).
5. Question and Demonstrate How Art Can Be Used For Social Change.
- Show them how it works (it does work).
  - Analogous to the breaking of laws (the law appears fixed but is changeable).
  - Identify precedents (e.g. Mechanics Institute) and amass models.
  - What kind of practices/existing organizations are already active in modifying these relationships?
  - How can we use these experiences?
  - Can the institution be used for making specific political questions visible?
  - How can critical/political questions contaminate institutions?



1.03.05 - 'Negotiating Institutions', L'Internationale seminar, mediation strand, Tate Liverpool, 2013. Photo: Quad Collective







# MIDDLESBROUGH'S NEW COMMUNITIES

MIDDLESBROUGH'S  
NEW COMMUNITIES  
  
Elinor Morgan



1.04.01 – Community lunch at Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, 2017

Middlesbrough (UK) is a town built on immigration. In the early nineteenth century, it was formed of a handful of farms and houses. On the discovery of iron in the Cleveland Hills, the region was rapidly industrialized and populated, with workers arriving from nearby areas and further afield. During public workshops organized as part of 'Localism' (2015)—a crowd-sourced exhibition of social and art histories on the Tees Valley—an important phrase was written on a collectively made timeline of the region: 'town of immigrants'. Despite our attempts to include overlooked stories and voices, we found a distinct lack of materials relating directly to narratives of migration in Middlesbrough's public archives.

Those disenfranchised by political and economic systems, whose voices needed to be heard, did not have a public space in which to share. As an organization with a civic agenda, which aims to be useful to and connected with its context and publics, the team at Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art began to address this. With Alistair Hudson as Director, Miguel Amado and myself as Senior Curators, and a programme team of curators specializing

in learning, public programmes, exhibitions and collections displays, we began to focus attention on a constituent-led approach to bring the experiences and expertise of our most marginalized publics to the fore.

We initiated new public programmes such as Cinema Paradiso, a monthly film screening with a shared meal and discussion, and weekly sessions in our Community Garden, both organized with Biniam Araia, co-founder of Investing in People and Culture, a local charity supporting Middlesbrough's new communities. Via gentle conversation during these activities, through home visits, and meetings with service providers, we began to get to know people who had arrived in the town through the asylum system. We began to understand some of the traumas, barriers and bureaucratic systems faced by Teesside's newest residents.

In recent years, mounting clamour, xenophobia, and debate swelled around the supposedly large numbers of people arriving in Europe from around the world. Dubbed either 'migrant crisis' or 'refugee crisis' (depending on where you looked), news outlets, discussions

on online platforms, and conversations in the pubs around us circulated around many myths, half-truths and outright lies. Middlesbrough is a key dispersal point in the current British asylum system, which—to cut a long story of corporate wealth and individual poverty short—places those seeking sanctuary in low-cost towns and cities across the country. At that moment, the town had the highest proportion of people seeking asylum in England, and had exceeded its legal quota.

By January 2016, a story that outlined a fraction of the struggles faced by those within the asylum system in Middlesbrough hit the local and national news. It revealed that the doors of asylum seekers' houses were painted red by the landlord, making the dwellings conspicuous and leaving inhabitants vulnerable. A Select Committee (a small committee formed of Members of Parliament who are commissioned to investigate a specific area of concern or importance for the UK government) found that there was a 'shortage of asylum seeker accommodation' and 'appalling prejudice', chastised the private companies contracted by the Home Office, and made a number of recommendations. As the workers of a civic organization, one of the few truly public spaces in a small town that was deeply impacted by the



1.04.02 - Community garden at Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, 2017

trauma of displacement, Miguel Amado and I decided to centre our programme around a conversation on immigration. A project involving research, an exhibition and public programmes, scheduled for the summer of 2016, began to take shape. Ironically, twelve days after the exhibition's opening, the United Kingdom was to vote to leave the European Union.

We began the process by meeting with partner organizations with whom we had built relationships, particularly Biniam Araia of Investing in People and Culture. They were agencies and charities with

different roles and expertise in supporting those seeking asylum, refugees, and new communities of immigrants. We shared the basic idea of the project, our motivations, and asked, simply, what would be useful for the people around us. Some responses were practical: 'The computers in the public library are oversubscribed; could there be internet access in the exhibition?' Others were about representation: 'There are artists living in the region who have experienced displacement; can they show their work?'; 'People do not understand the realities faced by people living around them who have experienced persecution and are now marginalized.'

These responses, and many conversations with the museum's team, resulted in an exhibition of work that aimed to share information on Europe's migratory control systems, give platform to those experiencing exile, and counter mainstream narratives. The title, *If All Relations Were to Reach Equilibrium, Then This Building Would Dissolve*, is an artwork by Liam Gillick. It was originally proposed in the early 2000s as a text piece that would wrap the Home Office's new London headquarters in a cryptically critical phrase as part of a commission led by the Government Art Collection. The Home Office is the government department responsible

for immigration, counter-terrorism, police, drugs policy, and related science and research. While aspects of the commission were produced, the original intention did not come to fruition.

The exhibition included established artists such as Babi Badalov, Chto Delat, and Lawrence Abu Hamdan, alongside local artists from a refugee background such as Omid Hashemi and Ausama al Khalil. Newcastle University Architecture students designed a furniture system, and a new film by Isabel Lima gave voice to residents of Middlesbrough who were



directly experiencing the locally-dubbed 'red doors scandal'. The display merged artworks with information on the British asylum system and how to navigate it, manifestos from Immigrant Movement International and RISE, films made by scholars associated with Forensic Architecture, and other awareness-raising materials.

or on screens. Paintings were shown on stands that could be moved, and textiles were presented in more sheltered parts of the gallery.

In preparation for putting these conversations at the centre of our institution, we organized awareness raising sessions for the team around the complexities of the asylum system as well as the experi-



1.04.03 - *If All Relations Were to Reach Equilibrium, Then This Building Would Dissolve*, 2016, installation view. Courtesy of Jason Hynes, Hynes Photography

An intensive public programme focused around a weekly day of activity which included making workshops, conversation classes where people put newly-learned English into practice, chess meet-ups, and IT classes. At the centre of the day was a free, shared lunch, paid for by the museum's budget and prepared by a local Community Interest Company that employs people from a refugee background. All activities happened within the gallery. The display was developed with as little cost as possible, and with this use in mind. Works were generally text-based

ences of those who had faced the trauma of persecution. Gallery Assistants developed research notes to share with colleagues and publics. The exhibition launched with a Study Day with local and national partners, activists and academics setting the scene for the project. Our preparations for welcoming such large and mixed publics to the museum were not enough and throughout the project, problems arose. The team did not feel equipped for requests for help with legal applications; tensions from outside the institution were brought inside; eating lunch



within the gallery created practical issues. Working with a broad spectrum of people, all in one space, was new territory for us.

At the end of the exhibition, the weekly classes, workshops and lunch paused. We needed to re-think these and resource them properly so that they could be central to the programme going forwards. In February 2017 we launched a re-imagined version of this in the form of a Community Day, which sees the museum transformed, each Thursday, from 10.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m., into an active public space, accessible and inclusive, that welcomes all. Rather than binding a group of people to one activity, this programme deliberately brings together people of different ages and from many ethnic and economic backgrounds through making workshops and discursive sessions, led by the interests and needs of those attending. At the centre of these activities is a free, communal meal. Those who contribute to Community Day have become part of the museum's vast and diverse constituent body. The Community Day is where we speak with and learn from our constituents, and gather concepts and concerns that feed our overall programme.

We work closely with various partners and constituents whose ideas and concerns feed the institution. We aim to give a platform to topics overlooked by mainstream policies and discourses, and to disenfranchised people, to develop a tone of openness. We are not afraid of being overtly political. The discussions, making workshops, exhibitions, collection displays, commissions and off-site initiatives that form our programme continue to reflect on themes connected with displacement, xenophobia and structural injustice. Through this approach we endeavour to create a different kind of cultural institution—one that listens and responds and joins.



1.04.04 - *If All Relations Were to Reach Equilibrium, Then This Building Would Dissolve*, 2016, installation view. Courtesy of Jason Hynes, Hynes Photography





# NEW COMMUNITIES OF MIGRANTS

NEW COMMUNITIES  
OF MIGRANTS

Adela Železnik



1.05.01 – COMMENTARY #4: Vladan Jeremić and Rena Raedle, *This is not a Fence*, 2016, mural drawing, Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana. Photo: Dejan Habicht, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana

When the so-called ‘Balkan migratory route’<sup>1</sup> expanded to Slovenia’s state borders, many cultural institutions as well as individuals kept asking themselves how to act. Moderna galerija saw its role in establishing a discourse that would fight against racial prejudice, would recognize existing initiatives,<sup>2</sup> and reflect on the possibilities of building a common solidarity network.

<sup>1</sup> There were several migratory routes to Europe: besides the Mediterranean and Africa, a Balkan route already existed that led from Syria-Turkey through Greece-Macedonia-Serbia-Hungary towards Northern Europe. On 18 September 2015, when Hungary closed its borders, migrants/refugees re-directed their course to Austria and Germany through Croatia and Slovenia.

<sup>2</sup> Besides some non-governmental organizations, which concentrated mainly on the humanitarian aspect of help, there were political actions by the ‘Antiracist Front Without Borders’ initiative, who organised solidarity protests such as ‘Refugees, welcome!’ and activities at the borders.

In September 2015 we organized a panel called ‘The Geopolitics of Migration’ where participating theorists, artists and activists presented their views of the refugee crisis in Europe, primarily from the Balkan perspective.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, Moderna galerija started a series of drawings on the wall in the vestibule of the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, entitled ‘artists’ commentaries’; some of them focused on specific issues related to state policy towards migrants (e.g., a barbed razor wire fence and ‘robocops’ on the border, fear of Islamism).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The public debate was organized within the L’Internationale project ‘Glossary of Common Knowledge’, with speakers and theorists Boris Buden and Darij Zadnikar, activists from the field, Ela Meh, and artists relating to the subject, Djordje Balmazović (Škart collective) and Tzortzis Rallis.

<sup>4</sup> See [www.mg-lj.si/en/visit/1576/exhibition-series-commentary/](http://www.mg-lj.si/en/visit/1576/exhibition-series-commentary/).

Theory turned into practice when, as the result of an increasingly restrictive EU migration policy, the number of asy-



1.05.02 – Djordje Balmazović, maps, guided tour at the exhibition 'Low-Budget Utopias', Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana, 2016. Photo: Dejan Habicht, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana

lum seekers in Slovenia grew; they were accommodated in asylum centres across the country.<sup>5</sup> When another asylum centre opened in the neighbourhood of the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, we initiated a series of activities with local residents, mostly young men from Syria, Iran and Afghanistan.<sup>6</sup> Moderna galerija had already joined forces with artists and political activists to comment on the living and working conditions of former

<sup>5</sup> Volunteer organizations started to arrange activities with the asylum seekers; 'Antiracist Front Without Borders' organized regular social meetings called Cafe International, English and Slovene language classes, legal and medical consultations for the refugees, etc. Moderna galerija participated by providing space and organizing workshops for children.

<sup>6</sup> We invited them to various events at the museum, involved them in the carpentry workshop with students from the Faculty of Architecture and Design; we are about to publish a book by a resident poet from Syria; we provided some residents with temporary jobs as exhibition guards at the Moderna galerija.

residents of Bosnia-Herzegovina,<sup>7</sup> who came to Slovenia in the nineties after the break of Yugoslavia.<sup>8</sup> In 2017 we continued this relationship by giving space to an alternative cultural association run by recent migrants to Slovenia who took over the cafe at the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova.

We have a part-time working contract with the migrants, who started their traineeship as guards at the 'Heritage of 1989: Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents Exhibition'.<sup>9</sup> Within the same exhibition we initiated a series of workshops where female asylum seekers from Iran and Afghanistan made embroideries together with local women and migrants



1.05.03 – Workshop with the asylum seekers' children, social centre Rog, Ljubljana, 2016. Photo: archive, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana

<sup>7</sup> There were two projects related to this topic: 'Workers without Frontiers' by Andreja Kulunčić, Ibrahim Čurić, Said Mujić and Osman Pezić and 'School on the River' by Gašper Kralj, both being part of the 'Museum in the Streets' exhibition, curated by Zdenka Badovinac and Bojana Piškur and organized by the Moderna galerija in 2008 in the Ljubljana public space when museum was closed for renovation.

<sup>8</sup> Mass arrivals to Slovenia (over 10,000 people) from the South preceded the latest migrations and were the consequence of the war in the Balkans when Yugoslavia fell apart in the nineties.

<sup>9</sup> The exhibition was part of an extensive project entitled 'THE EIGHTIES', which constituted part of the five-year program 'The Uses of Art: The Legacy of 1848 and 1989', organized by the L'Internationale.



1.05.04 – 'Heritage of 1989: Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents Exhibition', Azra Akšamija and participants of the workshop, 2016. Photo: Andreja Bruss, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana

who had arrived in Slovenia from Bosnia-Herzegovina in the early nineties. These workshops were connected to Azra Akšamija's projects 'Palimpsest 1989' and 'Digesting Dayton'. The idea of inviting women of different generations, ethnic and cultural backgrounds to socialize, exchange their experiences and do something together originates in our belief that by creating things, participants are reminded that they have power. This is especially true for female asylum seekers, who often come from patriarchal societies and take care of small children, and as a result have considerably less opportunities to socially integrate in a new environment than men.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> We continue those workshops in collaboration with the group for women, belonging to the Front Without Borders initiative at the Social centre Rog.



1.05.05 – 'Heritage of 1989 Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents Exhibition', guided tour, 2016. Photo: Matija Pavlovec, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana



1.05.06 – Embroidery workshop, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, 2016. Photo: Matija Pavlovec, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana



# UNTIMELY NOTES ON 'THE NEW ABDUCTION OF EUROPE'

UNTIMELY NOTES ON 'THE NEW ABDUCTION OF EUROPE'

Francesco Salvini and Raúl Sánchez Cedillo

## As the dream of European reason fades, the time of monsters begins



It is vital that we call for new actors for a **radically new cultural and political agency**. We should examine movements such as May 15, Syntagma Square or Gezi Park to revive hopes for a **European spring** that can bring an end to this nightmare.

**The New Abduction of Europe**  
**Debt, War, Democratic Revolutions**  
Madrid, 27th February - 2nd March 2014

**l'internationale** Fundación de los Comunes >> <http://nuevoraptodeeuropa.net>

1.06.01 - Banner for 'The New Abduction of Europe', Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2014. Courtesy of MNCARS

Late in 2013, we concluded our cry against the New Abduction of Europe, calling for the monsters of the old country to gather in Madrid and imagine alter-realities for our lives:

There is no political reinvention of Europe without a reinvention of freedom and equality, capable of corresponding to the needs, creativity and desires of the new subjects of social cooperation ... laying the basis for new constellations of solidarity toward the South and the East.

Uprising against the attempt of abduction imposed by the 1%, these Europas cannot be disciplined anymore: the present is our kairos for monstrous metamorphoses. Hydras, chupacabras, medusas, aatxes, banshees, golems, marids, bordas. Monstrous descendants of Gaia: new bodies of Europas, inventing myths to be imagined, territories to be inhabited, fleshes to be incarnated.

'The New Abduction of Europe', the hybrid event we proposed to and organized together with l'Internationale Confederation, was precisely the attempt of exploring those looming threats for democracy and emancipation in Europe: we did not need a showcase of critical opinions, but rather a material and complex assemblage of practices and experiences, capable of mingling together different social, political and institutional actors from across the real fabrics of the European mille-feuille. It was meant to be a very practical thing.

We tried, and partly failed, to involve these monstrous practices in a collective effort of social imagination, but also in a critical commitment for social change. This we did by organizing a series of workshops where activists, artists, cultural managers and, more in general, a social network of collectivities could deal with those questions we identified as crucial, back in late 2013.

Debt, democracy, commons, crisis, technopolitics, war and revolution were some of the issues that we started to





1.06.02 - Panel with Valery Alzaga, Ada Colau, Antonio Negri and Raúl Sánchez Cedillo. 'The New Abduction of Europe', Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, 2014. Courtesy of MNCARS



1.06.04 - Debt workshop. 'The New Abduction of Europe', Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, 2014. Courtesy of MNCARS



1.06.03 - Panel with Manuel Borja-Villel, Zdenka Badovinac, Bartomeu Mari and Raúl Sánchez Cedillo. 'The New Abduction of Europe', Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, 2014. Courtesy of MNCARS

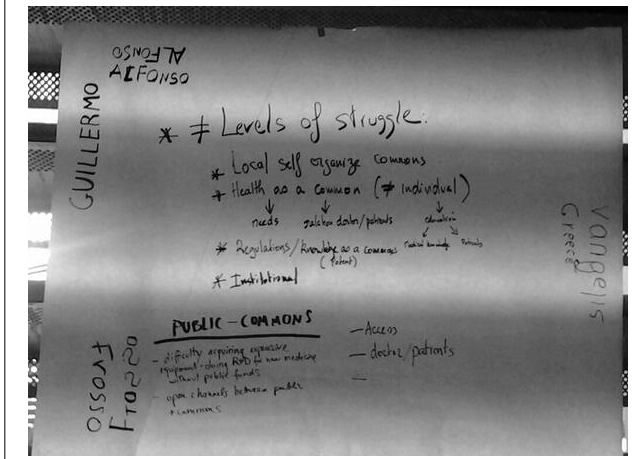
discuss. Charters,<sup>1</sup> networks, campaigns were the tools we started to build and use. These words moved from the public events to the panels and workshops, into the corridors of the social spaces involved in the events, becoming a common ground for discussing what was at stake in the period ahead.

The European regime of indebtedness and impoverishment of whole populations and countries was the most translucent surface and the brightest appearance of a constitutional crisis in the material composition of democracies in Europe.<sup>2</sup> Europe understood as a recent and fragile attempt to respond to the violence of war, the desperation of human experience and of the social movements of labour, care, peace and solidarity that cried for dignity and humanity after the dramatic events of World War II. But also Europe as an attempt of the contemporary to question and challenge the endless repetition of dominance and dispossession, operated by the European elites towards the rest of the world.

Fuelled by the theological injunction of austerity, we witness today the failure of that possibility: corruption and authoritarianism, the dramatic escalation of racism, the dreadful emergence of energetic poverty, the violence of gender relations in the realms of private lives, the rising fragilities in health and, especially, in mental distress, are taking the lead. These terrains inevitably constitute the fragile surfaces on which where we are moving today, in the attempt of exploring the broken Europe that lies before our eyes. Words to be repeated as frightful

<sup>1</sup> We did start the work on a Charter for Europe in the 'democracy' workshop, and a version of it has been published in L'Internationale blog: [www.internationaleonline.org/research/real\\_democracy/8\\_charter\\_for\\_europe\\_1\\_2](http://www.internationaleonline.org/research/real_democracy/8_charter_for_europe_1_2).

<sup>2</sup> The crisis of the underlying assumptions of constitutional democracies in Europe: mainly a nearly universal welfare state from health to education to reproductive rights, together with the effectiveness of constitutional checks and balances both in every european country and in the UE as a whole.



1.06.05 - Commons workshop. 'The New Abduction of Europe', Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, 2014. Courtesy of MNCARS

and yet mindful mantras to avoid feeling trapped by the vertigo of an impending catastrophe.

The destinies of Europe are linked to the rise of *new commons* of production and reproduction. Commons that have to be, we affirm, monstrous and machinic if we want to imagine a different mode of organization in social life. In other words, Europe is not only a space that cannot exist without the commons, but also the reverse is true: there is no commons if not by challenging the European space.

In the wave of the Spanish 2011 mobilizations, the meeting of Madrid 2013 helped us to understand that we need to become *hopeful monsters* if we want to challenge the sorcery of a European political space possessed by ethno-nationalisms and new fascisms while it remains regulated by financial overlords. We need to become monsters capable of affirming the immense richness of plurality to constitute a different present against the nightmares of total sovereignty; monsters capable of breaking the spell of homogeneity, the enchantment of identity and the ultimate damnation of European supremacy.

**IT IS A  
PRACTICE  
OF**

---

Alberto Altes  
2.02

**EXPOSURE,  
VULNERA  
BILITY,  
FRAGILITY  
AND CARE.**





The idea of inviting women of different generations, ethnic and cultural backgrounds to socialize, exchange their experiences and do something together originates in our belief that by creating things, participants are reminded that they have power.

RiddoDuottarMuseat and Nordnorsk Kunst Museum, *Sami Dáiddamusea*, 2017, museum performance, work by Rose-Marie Huuva. Photo: Marius Fiskum, 2017. Courtesy of Jeremy McGowan and Kjetil Rydland at Nordnorsk Kunst Museum

Adela Železnik  
1.05

I consider friendship as an essentially political relationship, one of allegiance and responsibility. Perhaps one of my favourite definitions of cultural production, and especially of making exhibits is that of 'making things public': the process of connecting things, establishing relationships, which in many ways means befriending issues, people, contexts.

4.04  
Celine Condorelli

Coordination is often seen as a merely bureaucratic task,



Somateca, Actos improprios, performance within Subtramas, *Four Questions for a Usefulness to Come* installation, part of 'Really Useful Knowledge', Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2015. Photo: Sara G.F. Muriel

yet it goes beyond the management of temporalities and resources to connect with affection and care.

Sara Buraya, Paula Moliner  
and Manuela Pedrón Nicolau  
3.09

# THINKING PUBLIC

Inhabiting this constituent museum requires attention and care. It requires its members to go along, to walk along. It is a practice of exposure, vulnerability, fragility and care.

Alberto Altes  
2.02

Attention is not something that is completely directed by a subject within this museum, but something that emerges from the event, from what is happening. It is activated by the specificities and directions of what happens.

I like  
Agnes and  
I think  
she may  
be right  
but I  
also know  
that she  
is wrong.

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Jesús Carillo  
4.02

At this rate,  
I would not survive  
in Charles de Gaulle.

# ARCHITECTURES OF USE





# ARCHITECTURES OF USE

ARCHITECTURES OF USE

John Byrne

What are the implications of creating a Constituent Museum—both physical and ideological—when considering a shift from object to relational/durational-based practices? To an extent, the Van Abbemuseum’s speculative collaboration with the artist Tania Bruguera, which resulted in the show ‘Museum of Arte Útil’ (2013), directly addressed the limitations of museum architecture. The attempt to make a ‘show’ out of 1:1 scale work reenvisioned the space of the museum as a ‘social power plant’, built around ‘use’ and ‘usership’.

In this instance and others, the normative physical, ideological and conceptual architecture of the museum—as a top down, curatorially driven construct for developing and disseminating knowledge—has become speculatively replaced with a conception of the museum as a constituent and constituted form of process that operates within a rhizomatic network of exchange and collaborative production. As a result of this, it becomes possible to begin imagining the Constituent Museum of the future as a model of dispersion and connection as opposed to a model of expansion and colonization.

This section will begin to look at the implications of 1:1 scale practice on the social, political, economic and ideological architectures of the museum, as well as the physical demands that this shift in practice might make on the ‘relational’ museum. A range of activists, doers, thinkers and makers, from within and beyond the currently inherited conceptual framework of museum architectures, here propose tactical and achievable forms of activity that go beyond the simple binarism of either object/process-based art and the corresponding oversimplification of a useful or useless art bifurcation. They question the established relations of production within museums and crucially the division of labour between curators and mediators/audiences to suggest a shift from vertical to horizontal forms of usership and organization. The ultimate aim is to conceive of the museum space as a site of constituent practice that is capable of accommodating relational discourses between process, discourse, object, and archive as a living producer of histories and futures.

In the opening essay of the Chapter, ‘Architectures of Encounter, Attention and Care: Toward Responsible Worlding Action’, Alberto Altés Arlandis asks what it would be like to ‘include responsibility and matters of care as primary dimensions of spatial practices in order to approach architectures of encounter, attention,

and care'. As such, Altés Arlandis invites us to begin thinking what it might be like to think of care as a form of doing, as both a 'situated ethics' and as a 'politics of architecture' in the exploration of 'fragile power' and 'anarchic share'. Following this, in his essay 'Negotiating Jeopardy: Toward a Constituent Architecture of Use', John Byrne begins to ask what it might be like if museums began to act beyond their potential role as site of constituent collaboration based on the uses and re-uses of art as we know it. Instead, Byrne asks what it might be like if museums began to operate as collaborative and constituent progenitors of new forms of hybridized art practice, or 'social and political hubs of the Commons', through which new forms of constituent activism could be used and re-used as art. In her essay 'Tensta Museum L'Internationale', Maria Lind begins to concertize some of these more speculative debates by looking at the example of Tensta konsthall as 'a fragile private foundation struggling for survival year by year'. Beginning in 2013, Tensta Museum started as 'an eclectic group exhibition about history and memory in the late modernist Stockholm suburb of Tensta' and, for Lind, began to function constitutively as a kind of 'quilt with many radically different patches'. In the light of these three essays, the Chapter then continues with four Project Studies that all, in their way, address and question the established physical and ideological architectures of use within and the museum as institutionalized edifice. In the first project study 'The Uses of Art Lab @ Liverpool John Moores University' John Byrne speculates how a small research lab can begin to repurpose its relationships to local communities through developing and undertaking constituent forms of collaborative and ground-up education. In this way, Universities, as well as their staff and students, could actively re-learn what they do and why by working directly alongside local constituencies as they co-produce projects that are intended to change the fabric of their shared local environments. In the 'Honest Shop', Alistair Hudson describes an ongoing programme of collaborations, happening both in and out of museum environments, in which local constituents are invited to make their own products and to put them up for sale at a recommended price. This seemingly simple, though complex project, acts as a means by which institution and its constituencies can actively work together as they think through the real implications of both sharing and re-imagining their economies of relationship, coproduction, and co-labour. In 'Seed Journey' the artist group Futurefarmers describe both the ideas and



the ethical imperatives that lay behind their voyage from Norway to Istanbul carrying a 'chalice' of a model wooden ship which, itself, contains seeds taken from a museum in Saint Petersburg, Russia as well as seeds found in the roof beams of a sauna in northern Norway. For Futurefarmers 'These seeds are like jewels. The disproportion in size between the small chalice and the mother vessel carrying it symbolizes preciousness, as does the very idea of a prolonged voyage using wind and sail as the means of propulsion'. As such, Futurefarmers begin to use their own voyage as a means to both describe and rethink the networks of constituency, communication, and use that are capable of reactivating processes of sharing, growth, and collaborative co-production.

Finally, in *Museum Solidarity Lobby*, Azra Akšamija describes a project that is 'giving form to a new phenomenon in post-socialist cultural production—a collective form of civic lobbying for the survival of state institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina'. Following the closure of The National Museum in Sarajevo in 2012, citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina and assorted international activist groups and associations joined forces in an attempt to resolve this issue with the Bosnian government. For Akšamija, the collective lobbying that took place in this campaign 'was the first time after the 1990s that the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina joined forces across ethno-national borders, acting in solidarity, for their state'. In this way, Akšamija's Project Study provides us with a means to re-think the previous proposals, essays and Project Studies assembled here on 'The Architectures of Use' by reminding us that, far from passive publics that may attend well-publicized shows, constituencies are lobbies for change that can, and will, use art and culture as an active means to care.



# ARCHITECTURES OF ENCOUNTER, ATTENTION AND CARE

ARCHITECTURES OF  
ENCOUNTER, ATTENTION  
AND CARE

Towards Responsible  
Worlding Action

Alberto Altés Arlandis



In what follows, I argue for the need to include responsibility and matters of care as primary dimensions of spatial practices in order to approach architectures of encounter, attention and care: perhaps the architectures of a constituent museum. Responsible practices need to contribute to increasing the sheer amount of care and love in/on the planet: non-cynical love and care are our tools, energies and intensities to resist cynicism and toxic irresponsibility. Combining what I call dwelling and performative perspectives, I try to think of 'care' as a doing, as a situated ethics and as a politics of architecture, to explore the fragile power of the anarchic share: an active listening, a generous gifting, an open encounter based on accepting that we are not single beings, and carefully enduring the waiting of becoming-with others in/through an 'amphibian', constituting practice.

## 1 DELAY AND CARE

... [S]taying with the trouble is both more serious and more lively. Staying with the trouble requires making 'oddkin'; that is, we require each other in unexpected collaborations and combinations, in hot compost piles. We become-with each other or not at all. (Haraway 2016, p. 4)

We have to do away with this notion of urgency associated with politics, because it's the contrary of love. That's where it starts. Politics is love. (Costa 2013)

In these times of despair, and downward spiralling darkness, of increasing social asymmetries and inequalities, of planetary trouble and fear, and of overpopulation and disorientation, we cannot fall in the trap of believing that technology will solve our problems, nor should we concede to temptations of nihilist, opportunistic or apocalyptic cynicism or indifference. If spatial practices are to become socially (and intellectually) relevant again, it must be through a turn towards more 'responsible' modalities of practice.

Beyond the toxic irresponsibility that affects both investors and consumers (Stiegler) and in order to confront the overwhelming encroachment of managerial and administrative stupidity (Stengers 2015), we must stick stubbornly to the places and situations we inhabit; and, as Haraway demands (2016), responsibly,

carefully, slowly but steadily stay with the trouble. We have to stay and we have to care.

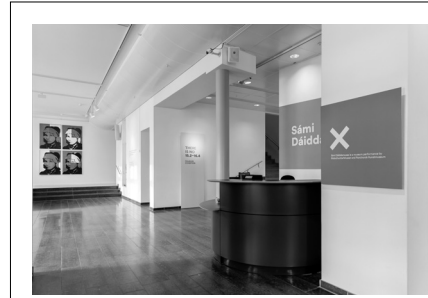
As artists and designers, as thinkers, as inhabitants and makers of the worlds we live in, we need a responsible practice that makes us aware of the things we care about and the ways in which such care matters: the impact it has in the mattering of the world. Maria Puig de la Bellacasa explains how ‘care joins together an affective state, a material vital doing, and an ethicopolitical obligation’, and how speaking of matters of care, beyond matters of concern and matters of fact, can be useful to help us understand our material obligations and responsibilities, while remaining critical to moralism(s) and humanist explanations.



2.02.01 – RiddoDuottarMuseat and Nordnorsk Kunst Museum, *Sami Dáiddamusea*, 2017, museum performance, opening night. Photo: Tomasz A. Wacko, 2017. Courtesy of Jérémie McGowan and Kjetil Rydland at Nordnorsk Kunst Museum

Resonating with the idea of a constituent museum, architectures of encounter, attention and care emerge from the combination of a dwelling perspective and a performative perspective: a valuing of and a focusing on the right to stay in and inhabit a situation, and a shift from an almost exclusive focus on what-a-thing-looks-like towards a clear privileging of what-a-thing-does. These two perspectives rely also on, first, a re-encounter with the body as the first (and probably ultimate) space-making apparatus, second, an acknowledgement of our movement and interdependence (we are in motion and we are not

alone, we become-with, we make things with others), and third, an engagement with love, or what I refer to as ‘the non-cynical’: adding a dimension to space and making sense of it, or re-articulating it, is not enough. We must contribute to increasing the sheer amount of love in the planet. To make the world responsibly is to operate not so much by acting upon the environment, but considering and understanding instead that ‘we are nature working’, we are already part of the spaces, times and situations we inhabit and in which we participate. There are no ‘relata’, no things, prior to relationships—things are constituted *in* relationships, they are interior, or ‘intra’, to them. We become within relationships, and this has important implications for production processes, including design and artistic processes: production is not owned but owed, things we create and learn through belong to others rather than to ourselves. Architectures of encounter, such as that of a constituent museum,



2.02.02 – RiddoDuottarMuseat and Nordnorsk Kunst Museum, *Sami Dáiddamusea*, 2017, museum performance, entrance. Photo: Marius Fiskum, 2017. Courtesy of Jérémie McGowan and Kjetil Rydland at Nordnorsk Kunst Museum

will thus seriously interrogate and question authorship and autonomy.

The etymological Latin and Greek roots of the word ‘museum’ relate it to a place of study, a library, a site for the muses. The museum could be therefore imagined or conceived as a place of study, a place of doing and learning together with others, a place of thinking with others distinct

and separate from the thinking that any institution requires from us. As Harney and Moten put it, ‘study is what you do with other people. It’s talking and walking around with other people, working, dancing, suffering, some irreducible convergence of all three, held under the name of speculative practice. ... a ... rehearsal ...’ (Harney and Moten 2013, p. 110) Once the institution is not there, there is no need for institutional critique, we can focus our energies on something else. We can ‘world’ with others. We can inhabit to constitute, being involved, taking part in a collective transformative practice.

And this practice is not about conforming to a set of predefined aims or interests, but a practice of moving along, of inhabiting, of encountering others and building up responsibility and correspondence—a correspondence based not only on attunement and affinity but also on disagreement and friction, because:

... limbs move, stones settle, timbers bind, voices harmonize, and family members get along through the balance of friction and tension in their affects. They are not ‘and ... and ... and’ but ‘with ... with ... with’, not additive but contrapuntal. In answering—or responding—to one another, they co-respond. Accordingly, I propose the term correspondence to connote their affiliation. Social life, then, is not the articulation but the correspondence of its constituents. (Ingold 2016, p. 14)

Such a practice, it could be argued, moves towards the constitution of a community not founded in the defence of predefined common interests, but in a commitment to getting along together,

to co-responding, feeling through others whilst feeling others feel you. And this, in turn, allows us to think about ‘responsibility’ differently: not so much as a behaviour that conforms to a set of defined moral principles of best practices, but precisely as a practice of co-responsibility, a ‘becoming-with others’, not necessarily always human or alive.

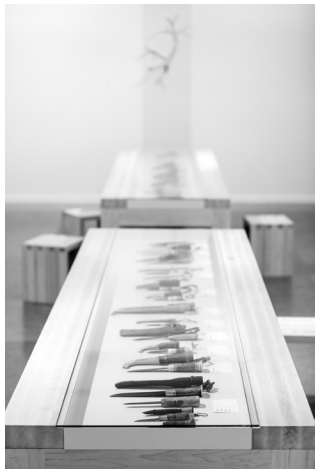
If this is the case, then the constituent museum operates as a network of practices, affinities and encounters rather than as a building. Its architecture is therefore an organizational architecture, a fragmented architecture, a territorial architecture—an architecture of encounter. The constituent museum is a collective practice,

but it is also a constellation of real places and situations, through and with which the museum emerges and ‘becomes’. The size, modalities of action, relations, and needs of the constituent museum are, therefore, to be determined, agreed upon, rehearsed and articulated for each situation, and in relation to its specificities and its inhabitants, as well as their care and responsibility. Meanwhile, the museum as an apparatus, as a thing, constitutes a meshwork of infrastructural support: although there are a number of elements that are somehow ‘always’ needed in the everyday activities that surround a museum—toilets, computers, storage spaces, a roundtable, a kitchen, and maybe other things—these elements are re-configured and/or redesigned for each occasion, based on the demands of the situation and its inhabitants. The constituent museum is therefore not a stable object, but a growing/shifting thing—perhaps an amphibian ecology as we will see below—a set of

delicate, intricate and complex relations between an environment and its inhabitants.

The constituent museum, then, does not have a department of education but it is entirely constituted as a collective learning space: rather than exhibit, it performs. It does things to its members and to the situations and places in which it operates.

Inhabiting this constituent museum requires attention and care. It requires its members to go along, to walk along. It is a practice of exposure, vulnerability, fragility and care. Attention is not something that is completely directed by a subject within this museum, but something that emerges from the event, from what



2.02.03 - RidduDuottarMuseum and Nordnorsk Kunst Museum, *Sami Dáiddamusea*, 2017. museum performance, knife table. Photo: Marius Fiskum, 2017. Courtesy of Jérémie McGowan and Kjetil Rydland at Nordnorsk Kunst Museum



is happening. It is activated by the specificities and directions of what happens. ‘Care invokes involved, embodied, embedded relations in closeness with concrete conditions.’ (Puig de la Bellacasa 2016) Responsible artistic and transformative or ‘worlding’ practices, such as those emerging from a constituent museum, would encourage knowledge and action to be developed in close connection, in touch, with life, with ordinary dwelling practices and with their materials. At the same time, caring makes us vulnerable, so there must be in these practices an important dimension of acknowledgement and welcoming of vulnerability as a positive vector, in the sense that it enables care: we need to be open to becoming fragile if we are to care; and this goes along with accepting failure as a dimension too, almost as a method.

Speaking of care and of matters of care in ‘worlding’ practices pushes our focus toward ‘attention’ as opposed to ‘intention’. To care is to attend, and ‘attendre’ is also to wait. Waiting implies a delay, a duration. An attentional mind operates ecologically rather than cognitively: it is less about capturing, knowing, describing, than about thinking-with, becoming-with, making-with. The constituent museum emerges from and further enables an attentional ecology in which inhabitants and environments touch and feel one another intensely and carefully.

The constituent museum is a space of ‘correspondence’. It is a site for giving. And it is characterized by its fluidity, immediacy and duration. These are to be explained in opposition to solidity, stability, institution, and lack of engagement. The constituent museum shifts and changes, as social life, it is fluid, it does not aim at instituting anything or stabilizing any power, but engages instead with what is going on, with what happens, it is always in the middle, in the midst of things. And unlike liquid, unengaged, irresponsible and toxic behaviours so common today, the constituent museum emerges out of the responsible and enduring engagements of its members. It is a slow museum.

The constituent museum functions by encouraging, enabling and hosting encounters and the subsequent joining of lives through knotting, weaving and binding. ‘In the meshwork, ..., each constituent line, as it bodies forth, lays its own trail from within the interstices of its binding with others. Thus the joining of lives is also their continual differentiation.’ (Ingold 2016, p. 11)

## 2 ENCOUNTER AND LOVE

Move along! There is nothing to see here!—The police says that there is nothing to see on a road, that there is nothing to do but move along. It asserts that the space of circulating is nothing other than the space of circulation. Politics, in contrast, consists in transforming this space of ‘moving-along’ into a space for the appearance of a subject: i.e., the people, the workers, the citizens. It consists in refiguring the space, of what there is to do there, what is to be seen or named therein. It is the established litigation of the perceptible, on the *nemein* that founds any communal *nomos*. (Rancière 2001)

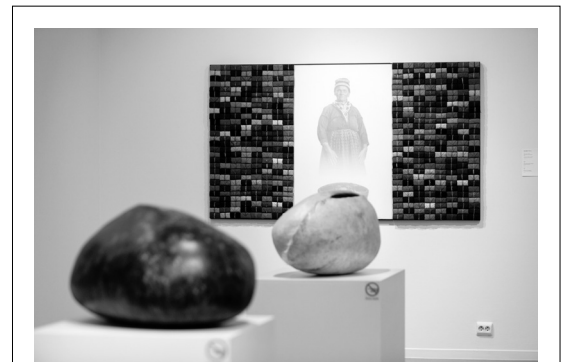
An encounter is not very different from Rancière’s politics;. It is a situated duration (a passing of time—be it abstract or imagined/suspended—in a given location, physical or figured) in which the clashing of moving things (flows of conscious awareness or material flows) and their environments, turns the situation into a space and a time of appearance that enables the emergence of the new. An encounter is also, then, a refiguring of what is, and an opening to what could be. ‘[P]olitics is an aesthetic matter, a reconfiguration of the way we share out or divide places and times, speech and silence, the visible and the invisible.’ (Rancière 2003, p. 203) The movements—any movements—of those moving things (materials or conscious awareness) are ways of reconfiguring the frameworks of the visible and the invisible, of what can be said and heard and felt (or sensed). An encounter is a disagreement in itself, in the sense of mismatch, or what Rancière refers to as ‘*la mésentente*’, a non-coincidence, the emergence of a field of potential that tends to be independent from pre-existing constraints. The encounter is also dissent in as much as it is a proposal to trespass or violate pre-existing distances; it is an invitation to dwell in the intimacy of closeness and in the tension of conflict. It indicates the possibility of exploration. An encounter is the momentaneous intensification of the relationality of our movement. A dissenting opening in our ongoing and never-ending state of development and learning. Politics is a situated activity that is always precarious and depending on the conditions around it; it is always at the verge of disappearing, and, therefore, fragile. An encounter is an unexpected invitation to dwell in this precarious fragility.



Thinking ‘encounter’ as intensification of relationality and as disagreement/mismatch/tension, it is also possible to approach the notion of ‘littoral landscape’ (Nilsson 2009) to imagine the spaces and times of the constituent museum. The philosopher Per Nilsson has used this notion to discuss research processes within the arts in a way that I find inspiring also to think through and towards an aesthetics of encounter, which would be in my view the aesthetics of the constituent museum. ‘Littoral’ is that what is close to the shore, the coastal environments, including some permanently submerged areas and the zones that are only touched by the high water on rare occasions. All kinds of interesting processes and encounters happen within these areas, and well beyond their strict edges. The littoral is actually larger than it seems. It defines a wide zone of exchange and encounter—not only between water and land—and its specific conditions of humidity, diversity and shifting openness support unique types of life. Littoral landscapes also move in very particular ways, what is commonly referred to as ‘littoral drift’.

I think about littoral drift in connection with what Tim Ingold refers to as ‘wayfaring’, which he opposes to ‘transport’, connecting them, respectively, with moving ‘along’ and ‘across’. ‘To go along ... is to thread one’s way through the world rather than routing from point to point across its surface. ... For the wayfarer, the world has no surface.’ (Ingold 2011) Inhabiting can be seen therefore as moving along, and inhabitation understood in this way breaks the opposition between settlers and nomads (seen as placebound, and placeless, respectively). The wayfarer, moving along and not across, is neither placeless nor placebound but in a constant practice of placemaking. ‘The Amphibian’ is therefore a wayfarer that inhabits littoral landscapes and cares about them and their drift: she endures the encounter with the land and its fragile ecologies.

Responsible practices of transformation—of the places in which our lives happen—ought to invent and explore littoral landscapes. They could happen there and not in predetermined, clearly demarcated categories and locations. This requires an openness to



2.02.04 - RiddoDuottarMuseat and Nordnorsk Kunst Museum, *Sami Dáiddamusea*, 2017, museum performance, work by Rose-Marie Huuva. Photo: Marius Fiskum, 2017. Courtesy of Jérémie McGowan and Kjetil Rydland at Nordnorsk Kunst Museum



encountering things as they happen, leaving a priori assumptions aside, and a generosity to becoming amphibian in the process. In turn, of course, this openness and this generosity contribute to the maintenance of the littoral and hybrid character of those landscapes and situations. These can be seen as practices of design as de-creation, as opposed to destruction: not to destroy littoral landscapes but to foster their emergence.

The inhabitants, the correspondents, the members of a constituent body, are to some extent like wayfaring amphibians. Generous, engaged, caring dwellers that become-with each other in unexpected constellations and ways. Open to encounters, ready to share while moving. The community of the constituent museum is therefore a space and a time, a practice through which we communicate and become-with others, and through which we build (constitute) something common. (To common as a verb)

I have elsewhere introduced the notion of intravention—qualitatively different from intervention—implying both the need to inhabit a situation throughout time in order to become part of it, and a performative approach that focuses on the transformative character of practices and that privileges what a thing does over what a thing looks like. The processes through which the constituent museum emerges, or ‘constitutes’ itself, are also somehow ‘intraventional’: it is necessary to inhabit the process consistently, and endure it, in order to become part of it, and the focus is on the transformational and performative dimension and powers of the practices of those who take part. The constituent museum happens from the inside.

Perhaps an interesting case to think through while discussing the idea of a constituent museum is that of the controversial and successful museum performance *Sámi Dáiddamusea /There is No*, an impressive collaborative effort between the Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum (Tromsø, Norway) and RiddoDuottarMuseat (Karasjok, Norway)<sup>1</sup>. The project radically performed a non-existing museum, to the extent that during the two months that the performance lasted, the Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum ceased to exist. Through alterations and changes in the physical spaces of the museum as well as in its visible presence and identity, a (real) fiction of a possible Sami Art Museum was articulated. The emergent museum, as an

<sup>1</sup> *Sámi Dáiddamusea/There is No* is an original idea of Jérémie McGowan, Director of the Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum in Tromsø, Norway, developed in collaboration with numerous other participants and institutions. Please see the project's website at: [www.sdmx.no/en/sami-daidda-museum](http://www.sdmx.no/en/sami-daidda-museum).



alternative reality, constituted itself in the relations with various members of the Sami people as well as artists, curators and other inhabitants of the North, and engaged radically with a long trajectory of work around the idea of a Sami Art museum that originated in the seventies, as well as with ongoing discussions about cultural politics, identity and art in the North. Such a performance of course cannot be subsumed exclusively into what happens or what it does while it lasts: its power lies in the various ways in which it outlasts itself, encroaching and engaging into and with several agents and situations, which constitute an ongoing new ‘world’. This museum performance can be seen as an enactment of an instance of a constituent museum, or the beginning of it, the implications and effects of which will have to be lived, explored and thought through as its ongoing life evolves and unfolds.

As a secret held in common, a secret whose power is its growing secrecy, and an ability to keep a distance between it and its revelation, the constituent museum is an opportunity to embrace the encounter of becoming-with and for others, not to arrive at a higher form of self-consciousness or to get to know the other more accurately, but to engage in a practice of responsible improvisation that seeks to take part in the movement of things, proceeding to move forward and sideways, refusing not only to answer but to ask the questions regarding the essence, appearance or structure of the museum.

To refuse to accept the work of a myriad of agents that relentlessly try to not only administer the world, but, as Harney and Moten put it, ‘to administer away the world (and with it prophecy)’, the constituent museum engages fully with the world, its movement and its life.

The constituent museum is not a place of knowledge production but a place of study, a site for becoming-with others through art in motion, its architecture is not the architecture of a building or an institution, but the architecture of love, it is the architecture that holds us in the brokenness we share.

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## NEGOTIATING JEOPARDY

Towards a Constituent Architecture of Use

John Byrne

Useful Art is a way of working with aesthetic experiences that focus on the implementation of art in society where art's function is no longer to be a space for 'signalling' problems, but the place from which to create the proposal and implementation of possible solutions. We should go back to the times when art was not something to look at in awe, but something to generate from. If it is political art, it deals with the consequences, if it deals with the consequences, I think it has to be useful art.<sup>1</sup>

The gap that currently exists between art and life is a complex and intriguing one. On the one hand, the continuing erosion of our political and civil liberties under the neoliberal aegis of deregulator logic has cast doubt on the very possibility, or even desirability, of the Enlightenment subject as the base unit of democracy. Under these conditions it is understandable that some see art and the aesthetic as a final fall-back position from which to contest the moral certitude of a thoroughly instrumentalized and precarized swarm. The obvious flaw in this form of resistance is, of course, its dependence on a neo-Kantian architecture of disinterested aesthetic contemplation. When aligned with the last-ditch attempt to claim that art somehow represents one of the few remaining arenas in which to play out an effective politics of resistance, the rigorous commodification of cultural alterity as fashionable lifestyle choice is never far behind. On the other hand, any attempt to move beyond our inherited templates for the production, identification and evaluation of art as art seem to somehow run the risk of disappearing altogether. After all, how on earth are we supposed to distinguish between 1:1 Scale art practices and the hubbub of everyday life if the former is not somehow, and in some way, linked to the enshrinement of artistic value and worth as represented within the cultural institutionalization of the Enlightenment dream?

The 2013 exhibition of the 'Museum of Arte Útil' at the Van Abbemuseum in the Dutch city of Eindhoven was, in part, an attempt to address some of these urgencies (Figure 1). The exhibition itself was based around the protocols and archival organizations of The Association of Arte Útil (AAÚ), an on-going online/offline



2.03.01 - 'Museum of Arte Útil', façade in daytime, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2013. Photo: Peter Cox, Eindhoven





platform initiated by the artist Tania Bruguera.<sup>2</sup> The AAÚ itself seeks to develop a theory and practice of activist art collaborations and initiatives that have a real life and real time social, political and economic affect. As Van Abbemuseum curator Nick Aikens has succinctly put it:

*Útil* in Spanish roughly translates as useful, but it goes further, implying the notion of a tool or device. The central premise of the *Arte Útil* project is to consider practices and initiatives in which artistic thinking is used as a tool to intervene in the world and bring tangible change. In this sense, it stands opposed to modernist notions of artistic autonomy.<sup>3</sup>

By undertaking the 'Museum of Arte Útil', the Van Abbemuseum knowingly set itself a currently impossible curatorial task—that of reconciling long term, collaborative and multi-purpose forms of activist practice with the existing taxonomic, objectifying and aestheticizing bureaucracies of Western museological architecture. In doing so, the Van Abbemuseum also sought to open up potentialities and possibilities for using the museum as an active vehicle for rethinking art as tactical rather than a symbolic form of resistance. In order to do this the Van Abbemuseum set in motion a range of protocols aimed at undermining the usual terms and conditions of museological display and audience experience. For example, visitors to the 'Museum of Arte Útil' were given the choice of either paying a standard entrance fee or gaining free entry by agreeing to be active 'users' of the show. Also, the Van Abbemuseum itself was proposed as a 'social power plant'—a site of interchange and co-production, where history and art could be collaboratively reused as a means to imagine new forms of civic citizenship. Finally, at the show's centre was a physical presentation of the Arte Útil online archive whilst, surrounding this, the rooms of the Van Abbemuseum were reorganized according to a series of thematics; mixing artworks, documentation and makeshift structures and carrying instructions for the visitor-user on 'what to use and how to use it'.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the success of the exhibition was its ability to highlight its own physical and ideological limitations: When the spaces were

<sup>2</sup> The Association of Arte Útil, [www.arte-util.org](http://www.arte-util.org) (accessed 12 July 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Nick Aikens, 'The Use of History and the History of Use: Museum of Arte Útil and Really Useful Knowledge', [www.internationaonline.org/research/alter\\_institutionality/14\\_the\\_use\\_of\\_history\\_and\\_the\\_histories\\_of\\_use\\_museum\\_of\\_arte\\_util\\_and\\_really\\_useful\\_knowledge](http://www.internationaonline.org/research/alter_institutionality/14_the_use_of_history_and_the_histories_of_use_museum_of_arte_util_and_really_useful_knowledge) (accessed 13 July 2017).

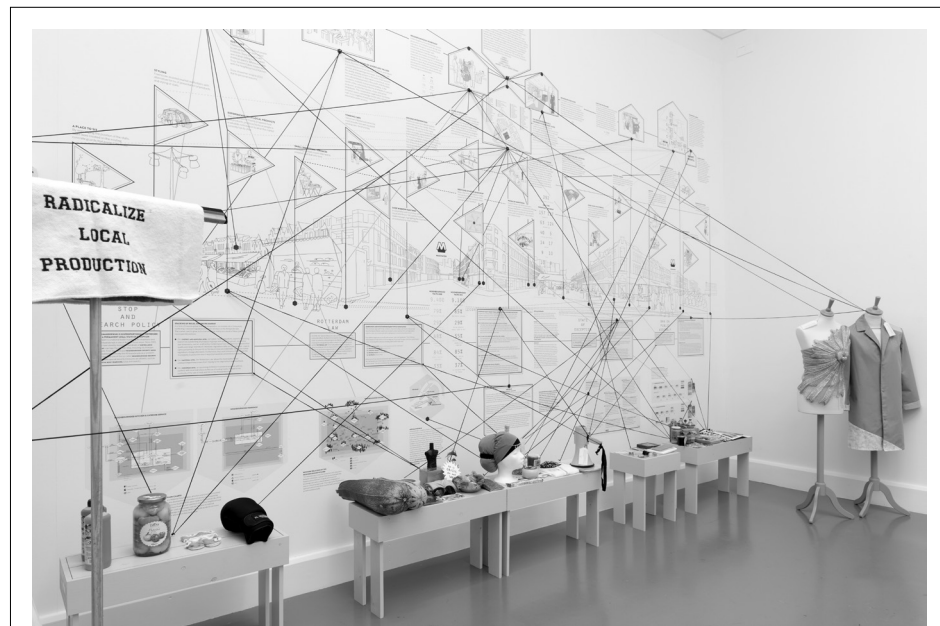
<sup>4</sup> See <http://museumarteutil.net/about/> (accessed 10 April 2017).



2.03.02 – Apolonija Šušteršič, *Light Therapy*, 2013, installation as part of the 'Museum of Arte Útil' activated by the museum's volunteers choir. Photo: Peter Cox, Eindhoven

activated—through discussions, meetings, presentations, workshops or performances—the potentialities of Arte Útil became accessible and usable (Figure 2); when they were not, the current templates we have for experiencing artworks in galleries and museum spaces—as objectifications of invested artistic labour, whose latent surplus value is waiting to be

extracted via the aesthetic experience of spectatorship—began to contradict the manifest intentions of both the AAÚ and the long-term projects whose legacies were on display (Figure 3).



2.03.03 – Jeanne van Heeswijk, installation in the 'Museum of Arte Útil', 2013. Photo: Peter Cox, Eindhoven



## I.

One of the key outcomes of the ‘Museum of Arte Útil’ was the realization that any attempt to imagine a museum of the future must begin as an act of negotiating jeopardy—as both a framing of, and an intervention within, the complex conundrum of art and life that may, inevitably, result in our current understanding of art changing forever. Consequently, if we are to begin the process of imagining a constituent museum of the future, then we must also allow ourselves to begin the process of thinking beyond the current museological paradigms of exhibition making, public display and audience consumption. Instead we must somehow begin to imagine the constituent museum of the future as a continual process of collaborative renegotiation, one that would also require and necessitate new ways of thinking through and beyond the existing physical and ideological architectures of museological use.

This, in turn, would mean a wholesale reappraisal of pre-existing relationships between art, artworks, audiences and institutions. As the privileges that have previously been accorded to the physical manifestations of the work of art begin to give way, so it becomes increasingly important to offer a truly constituent and networked conception of the work or labour of art as co-production and common ownership—one that is capable of escaping the gravity of instrumentalization through activating ground-up forms of opposition and use. Such demands would themselves entail nothing less than a radical overhaul of our currently perceived relationships between art and activism. As with Tania Bruguera’s call for a networked, fluid and self-reproducing Association of Arte Útil, such demands would also mark a shift away from our current uses of art as a tool for visually expressing transgressive intention or symbolizing possible forms of change—as either counter-propaganda interventions within the symbolic flows of semiocapital or propositional alternatives that function within the rhetorical schemas of museological and curatorial meaning-making—to the repositioning and repurposing of art as a set of useful tools for the practical, political and theoretical purposes of living otherwise. In short, a seismic shift away from our common conception of art as a tool in the realm of politically representative activism and towards new forms of non-representational activism, built through and with useful art, and evaluated in terms of their use value or purpose. And, if this is the case, then it could also be argued that the job or work of art is

no longer encapsulated within the historical over-identification of an artist’s precarious role as the enlightened harbinger of a potential future. Instead, it now lies in negotiating the very possibility of radical and alternative action in a post-monopoly landscape—a landscape that is already dominated by the terms and conditions of precarious labour on every level.

As a means to think through this complex and emerging landscape, the activist thinker George Yúdice has recently argued for a theory of art that would be capable of looking beyond our currently institutionalized, and recognizable forms of politically transformative art (Extradisciplinarity, Transversality, Research Art and Institutional Critique, etc.) and, instead, towards other possibilities, or forms of collaboration, with diverse communities and, in particular ‘those at a remove from hegemonic Western cosmology’.<sup>5</sup>

For Yúdice, this would necessitate re-thinking the outside/inside conundrum of art institutionality by accepting that art already functions within and across a range of disciplines that are not confined by the closed conception of existing gallery, magazine, museum, collection and art market circuits. In turn, such new forms of re-thinking would also necessitate the tacit acceptance that art already functions within and across a range of disciplines that are no longer confined by the current art world circuits of production, distribution, evaluation and worth. For Yúdice, such a radical approach is now required simply because, as he puts it, ‘art is no longer only in museums and galleries but has migrated to other areas (media, fashion, social action, investment funds, urban revitalization, new technologies, security, recovery programs for at-risk youth, etc.)’.<sup>6</sup> What Yúdice is interested in opening up here is a shift away from existing forms of institutional critique and, instead, a heuristic of the work or labour of art in which:

<sup>5</sup> George Yúdice, ‘Static Gallery’s Architecture of Flows as Extradisciplinary Investigation’, in Nick Aikens et al., eds., *What’s the Use: Constellations of Art, History and Knowledge: A Critical Reader* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2016), p. 283. In his book publication *The Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), Yúdice argued coherently for a new theory of Culture that was capable of seeing culture as the co-production of multiple (and often incompatible and sometimes hostile) social, political and economic positions and interests. This article both builds on Yúdice’s earlier work on culture and, also, begins to deploy Yúdice’s interest in the work of Néstor García Canclini which, Yúdice argues, has the capacity to help us rethink art’s journey into and across new spheres of cultural production: See Néstor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), and *Art Beyond Itself: Anthropology for a Society without a Storyline* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 280.

... the frame is more ambiguous and there is no finger pointing; that is, the effectiveness of the project is not based on the smug disclosure of the dubious if not deplorable underpinnings of the art institution (museum, gallery, biennial, etc.) while nevertheless living off and gaining cultural capital in that institution.<sup>7</sup>

By developing new uses of art that can adopt, repurpose and reuse the flows of semicapital against themselves—as forms of real world interruption and alternative proposition—Yúdice argues for a theory and practice of art that would be capable of transgressing the current poetics and possibilities of institutional critique. Instead, Yúdice points towards what he terms as a possible ‘politics of intermediation’ that:

... reproduces neither the hegemonic control by governments, large business enterprises or large NGOs, nor the Deleuzian option for a nomadism that eludes control, not to speak of the naiveté of Internet enthusiasts who believe that the distributed networks of the web have eliminated intermediaries simply because people get to upload their own contents, or that the conceptual harnessing of these networks ushers in the rather vague and wistful ‘communism to-come’ of Antonio Negri.<sup>8</sup>

In turn, what Yúdice is arguing for here is nothing less than a theory and practice of useful art, one that would be capable of providing strategies for simply ‘remaining relevant in the era of globalization’. Furthermore, such a practice and theory would demand, for Yúdice, the ‘capacity to mediate a range of concerns’ rather than simply positing the possibility of an autonomous alternative within the existing frameworks of art.

## II.

But, in the light of this, what would a truly constituent museum or gallery look like? A museum or gallery that had, at the core of its operations, the commitment to see itself as being one constituency

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 271.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 283.



amongst others? That contained, at the very core of its own operating systems, a willingness to grow, learn, reform and re-engage through a constituent process of co-production, co-authorship and constituent use? Would such a constituent art institution, if it were to exist, become fluid and porous enough to engage in the continual reproduction of a work or labour of art that was, in turn, capable of moving across, through and between the existing flows of semicapital? In effect, would such institutions themselves become un-institutions, working towards the amelioration of the very institutional/alter-institutional bifurcations that plague us? And, if so, how would we begin to think through such a situation?

This also becomes interesting when we begin to realize that the dominant art world, as we know it, has still not experienced anything like the seismic rupture that peer-to-peer internet protocols, such as Napster,<sup>9</sup> forced upon the music industry nearly twenty years ago. Museums and galleries, for the large part, are still based around the model that art is made by artists for use by a willing public (in whatever myriad of forms ensue from that simple equation). To move beyond this impasse would necessitate far more than a shift towards horizontal, as opposed to hierarchical and top down, organizational structures (however helpful these may seem to be). In short, such a transition would require that museums and galleries begin to open up our existing source codes and templates for understanding art to a constituent process of renegotiation—one that would require a fundamental revaluation of the collaborative and constitutive work or labour of art in terms of its use and use value.

Further to this, I would argue that such a conceptual leap would also necessitate the tacit acceptance that art, as we know it or knew it to be, no longer happens in ways that the existing physical and conceptual architectures of aesthetic contemplation would allow us to understand or even to see. And, if this is the case, then the challenge facing museums and galleries is not

<sup>9</sup> Napster was a peer-to-peer (P2P) online platform that allowed any users, who downloaded simple software, to share MP3 files of music. The initial deal was simple, have access to a global online resource of MP3 files by allowing your own MP3 files of music to be accessed in return (Napster operated free online in this way from June 1999 to July 2001). This had a profound impact on the music industry and its sedimented and hierarchical commercial logics. My point here is that art institutions—however proud they may be in their rhetorical support for all things ground-up, user based, publically accessible and horizontally shared—remain, for the most part, both hierarchical and pyramidal in their organizational structures. What is more, I would also argue that this lingering hierarchical structural organization is also largely responsible for many of the outmoded ways that we currently access and use art. As such, Art institutions may need to adapt to a possible future in which their dreams of hierarchical dispersal and horizontal sharing platforms may become a reality.

simply one of documenting or pointing towards these new practices as they hybridize and mutate across non-institutional fields. Nor is it the task of simply ‘keeping up’ with such practices as they flow across, through and between the cracks and fissures of neoliberal semicapital. Instead, it must be one of complicity, of museums and galleries becoming social and political hubs of the commons, through which these new forms of constituent activism can be used, re-used and developed. This is especially crucial, I would argue, as the growing global divide between rich and poor is accompanied by new forms of information feudalism—as knowledge, and its production, becomes the consolidation of power amongst the privileged few.

### III.

By flipping the usual art world anxiety—that non-institutional forms of activist practices might somehow herald the loss of art’s critical and political function within the global matrix of the infotainment sphere—we can begin to think of the challenge facing museums and galleries as one of constituent collaboration and participation, of actively engaging in the development of use-based tools for thinking through the work or labour of art as collaborative and constituent forms of coproduction. As a step towards this goal, the Van Abbemuseum will begin to undertake a new constituent form of programming in September 2017 that invites groups to work with the museum as a means to develop forms of constituent analysis and representation. The ambition of the Van Abbemuseum here is to experiment with methods that will allow the museum to become a useful site—one that actively supports communities in their need for reflection and visibility. Concomitantly, the aim of the Van Abbemuseum is to negotiate jeopardy, to depart from a common understanding of arts intrinsic value and, instead, to see how these values may be modified if they are brought into constituent relation with real social and political urgencies and demands.

To facilitate this, the Van Abbemuseum hopes to match up members of their curatorial team with a range of communities already in the Van Abbemuseum’s network—queer, refugee, expat, green-entrepreneurs and black Dutch—and to co-produce a range of research and exhibition programmes based upon the museum’s collection. The Van Abbemuseum will provide workshop spaces



with the Arte Útil Archive (Figure 4), a banner-making workshop for constructing banners (which will subsequently be displayed in the museum) and a pod-cast studio. According to Steven ten Thije:



2.03.04 – Arte Útil Archive, installation at the ‘Museum of Arte Útil’, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2013. Photo: Peter Cox, Eindhoven

What we hope to achieve with this new programme is that the museum will find methods by which it can move beyond programming ‘for’ a community and become a tool for communities to publish themselves. The motivation is not only to give a platform to different voices, but also to actively embrace the fact that we live in a time where multiple histories

related to different communities require reflection, recognition and negotiation simultaneously. We no longer need to account for the best, nor are we a site for an avant-garde. We need to be a space that can be occupied when the need arises, with an organizational structure that can allow multiple and even competing occupations at the same time, allowing conflict and difference to be negotiated with the help of publicly funded art.<sup>10</sup>

As Ten Thije also points out, this process of negotiating jeopardy is, in turn, based on the Rancièrian idea that politics is something that happens when the overlooked, underrepresented and unheard gather together to make their voices heard—and which, in turn, brings about a redistribution of the organizational structures that underpin the ‘sensible’ public sphere (Figure 5).

Instead of acting as a tool by which the logics of deregulatory neoliberalism can be propagated, I would argue that projects such as the Association of Arte Útil and the ‘Museum of Arte Útil’, as well as the new forms of constituent programming about to be undertaken by the Van Abbemuseum, offer a means by which the instrumentalization of culture can be resisted on its own terms and on its own levels. As art—as we know it or knew it—continues to go undercover, slipping through and between the cracks and fissures of





neoliberalism, identifying and disrupting the smooth flows of semi-capital, it will mutate, change and grow. Simultaneously, museums and galleries will need to continue the task and struggle of developing new ways of following, supporting, growing with and responding to these new, fluid and emerging forms of activist art. This task, or struggle, as we have already seen, will be one of negotiating jeopardy. If a constituent museum of the future is to achieve anything more than the simple, and duplicitous re-framing or rebranding of audiences as constituencies, then they need to become one constituency amongst many—open to negation, change, drift, dream and collaborative re-negotiation. Only in this way will the Western hegemonic cycle of the privileged objectification of knowledge in autonomous art, and its concomitant broadcast to the uninitiated and unentitled, be broken and transgressed. Finally, I would argue that if we do not act upon this imperative, then art, as we know it or knew it, will simply run the risk of disappearing from our view. We simply cannot continue to look for the critical and political emancipatory value of art, or even hope to recognize it, by using outmoded and out-dated mechanisms of identification, evaluation and worth.



2.03.05 - Laurie Jo Reynolds ('Museum of Arte Útil' resident artist), active installation, Reynolds organizing her archive in the gallery space on her long-term activist project against Tam's maximum security prison. Photo: Perry van Duijnhoven

WHAT WOULD  
HAPPEN IF  
MUSEUMS

Editors  
0.01

PUT  
RELATIONSHIPS  
AT THE CENTRE  
OF THEIR  
OPERATION?



We shared the basic idea of the project, our motivations, and asked, simply, what would be useful for the people around us. Some responses were practical: 'The computers in the public library are oversubscribed; could there be internet access in the exhibition?' Others were about representation: 'There are artists living in the region who have experienced displacement; can they show their work?'; 'People do not understand the realities faced by people living around them who have experienced persecution and are now marginalized.'



Community garden at Middlesbrough  
Institute of Modern Art, 2017

Elinor Morgan  
1.04

'Hospitality'—through which SALT opens its spaces to individuals, initiatives and institutions from outside, to meet, rehearse and organise events; and 'Collaboration'—by which SALT co-produces content with actors from outside the institution, are two existing ways of working with users.

Onur Yıldız  
5.09

HOSPITALITY



Centro Sociale Autogestito: Officina 99, Naples, 2012. Photo: Cristianrodenas, [this photo is Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Officina\\_99.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Officina_99.JPG)]

‘Holding in common’ is a relational practice of distribution that requires degrees of negotiation, reliance and dependency. Yet those relations of labour are constantly in flux, at times unstable, difficult, uncomfortable. The core of the commons might be the production of a narrative about the difficulty of dependency and reliance that feels normalized, that fights against the ableist tendencies in notions of distribution.



If All Relations Were to Reach Equilibrium, Then This Building Would Dissolve, 2016. installation view. Courtesy of Jason Hynes. Hynes Photography



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Maria Lind  
2.04

Thanks to the initiative of the Local School of Swedish for Migrants, who asked if they could use the art centre as a venue for their summer courses, the museum has included a classroom. Once the classroom was asked to use other local groups and associations in the same way for their own activities, thereby allowing to use it for their art to co-exist. Literally assist in the space as for example homework assist in the same and save the children's parent's forum, bi-weekly Language café as part of artist Ahmet Ögüt's café. The Silent University, and a women's regular meetings around handicraft, as well as regular meetings of the local city administration.

TENSTA MUSEUM  
L'INTERNATIONALE

Maria Lind

# TENSTA MUSEUM L'INTERNATIONALE



What is the most 'museumy' about a museum? Is it the collection? The focus on the past? Or perhaps the continuity that is associated with museums—they are rarely shut down, unless there is severe destruction as in a war? Maybe it is the authority with which they tell their story, or even having museum branches?

As a self-institutionalizing temporary exhibition that grew into a programme line, Tensta konsthall's 'Tensta Museum: Reports from New Sweden' is all of the above, but not in your usual 'museumy' way.<sup>1</sup>

Tensta Museum started in 2013 as an eclectic group exhibition about history and memory in the late modernist Stockholm suburb of Tensta, located twenty-five minutes on the subway north-west of the city centre. It emerged out of more than one year of regular seminars with artists, architects, local associations, researchers, and others.<sup>2</sup> A specially invited 'project philosopher', Boris Buden, acted as a fellow traveller, providing input on historiography in general and the trend since the seventies towards 'cultural heritage'

<sup>1</sup> The project used history as a springboard to simultaneously report on the condition of Tensta today as a concrete image of what can be described as the New Sweden—a Sweden that must be understood very differently from how it was several decades ago. This is a Sweden containing people of vastly different backgrounds, where economic and social divides are intensifying. According to a recent report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, of all of the thirty-four member states of the OECD, income gaps in Sweden are increasing the most rapidly. In their contributions to 'Tensta Museum', some of the invited participants, for example STEALTH.unlimited, Peter Lang and Adam Tensta, also looked ahead and proposed future scenarios.

<sup>2</sup> A group consisting of artists, architects, researchers, members of local organizations and others met approximately once every three months during the 18 months leading up to the opening. The preparatory seminars included lectures, discussions and artists' presentations, all pertaining to the history and memory of Tensta, its current conditions and future prospects. In addition to the team at Tensta konsthall (Emily Fahlén, Ulrika Flink, Maria Lind, Hedvig Wiezell, and Giorgiana Zachia) the participants were Ricardo-Osvaldo Alvarado, Petra Bauer, Boris Buden, Thomas Elovsson, Barakat Gebrehawariat, Peter Geschwind, Järvaprojektet (Fredrik Ehlin, Patrik Kretschek and Erik Rosshagen), Bernd Krauss, Katarina Lundgren, Helena Mattsson, Meike Schalk, Nina Svensson and Sofia Wiberg.





in particular.<sup>3</sup> The participants in the preparatory seminars then contributed to the exhibition, mostly with new works and new research put on display but equally with workshops, lectures, discussions and screenings.<sup>4</sup>

The location of Tensta, and the people living and working there, were the starting point. Tensta is the single biggest housing estate within the ambitious state-run and nation-wide initiative 'the million dwelling programme' with 5,600 dwellings

**3** A preoccupation with the past is fundamentally ambivalent. And yet it is impossible to deny the close bonds between a new 'respect' for history—both real and imaginary—and the sense of belonging, collective consciousness, memory, and identity promised by shared memory. With the concept of 'cultural heritage' as a thematic point of departure, 'Tensta Museum: Reports from New Sweden' examined what it actually means when the public debate concerning memory and history is replaced by a preoccupation with memory and 'heritage'. This is also a question of what it means for extreme right-wing organizations and parties—and fascists in particular—to claim rights of interpretation over the idea of national heritage. The symposium 'Cultural Heritage: A Treasure That Is Seeking Its Price' addressed this question. It took place at Tensta konsthall on 7 March 2013, in cooperation with Stockholm City Museum, as a part of 'Tensta Museum'. The symposium was curated by the philosopher Boris Buden and included talks by Françoise Vergès, Professor at the Centre for Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths College, London, on the purpose of cultural heritage from a postcolonial perspective; Owe Ronström, Professor of Ethnology at the University College of Gotland, on the cultural-heritage situation in Sweden; and Eszter Babarczy, Associate Professor at Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, Budapest, on the cultural strategies of the right wing in Hungary. See also Boris Buden, 'Cultural Heritage: The Context of an Obsession in Art and the F Word: Reflections on the Browning of Europe', in *What, How and for Whom/WHW*, ed. Maria Lind (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014).

**4** See for example Maria Lind, 'Tensta Museum: Reports from New Sweden', *Crafting Exhibitions (Documents on Contemporary Crafts* no. 3), 2015, pp. 83–103 and Maria Lind and 'Tensta konsthall Tensta Museum: Reports from New Sweden in Art and the F Word: Reflections on the Browning of Europe', in *What How and for Whom/WHW*, ed. Maria Lind (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014).

built from 1965–1974. The former farm land has left traces in the suburban setting in the form of some wooden houses strewn among the blocks of flats. Spånga church, with parts from the early twelfth century, is the oldest building in Stockholm and sits in the middle of the neighbourhood. Today, about 20,000 people live here and approximately 90% of them have a trans-local background, many coming from the Middle East and East Africa. In the segregated capital of Sweden, this is an area with features usually found in the countryside: low average income, high unemployment, and services—both public and private—such as schools, banks, and shops—being closed.<sup>5</sup>

An art-centric organization, Tensta konsthall is a fragile private foundation struggling to survive year by year. Founded in 1998, thanks to a grassroots initiative and support from the municipality, its mission is to work with high-level contemporary art and to simultaneously be palpably present in the area. Typical of the neo-liberal cultural economy with general 'projection' and demands to self-generate funds, Tensta konsthall is forced to be a project rather than an institution. While a project has a clear beginning and end, a museum simply goes on enduring many a calamity.

**5** Two texts about the history of Tensta konsthall and the area, specially written for Tensta Museum, can be found at [www.tenstakonsthall.se/bag](http://www.tenstakonsthall.se/bag): 'Historien om Tensta konsthall' (The Story of Tensta konsthall) by Jan Ekman, and 'Tensta-en plats som ständigt ska bli bättre' (Tensta—A Place That Is Constantly Going to Be Better) by Emma Holmqvist.

Manifesting and discussing this brittle condition by 'playing' museum, by performatively taking on some of the characteristics of museums, Tensta konsthall has used Tensta Museum to self-institutionalize, tongue in cheek, signalling a desire to become more stable. Doing so places the art centre in a tradition where artists such as Marcel Duchamp and Marcel Broodthaers belong, but also organizations such as Gdansk's Wyspa Institute of Art and the Artists' Institute in New York.<sup>6</sup>

Tensta Museum The Exhibition held art works and other contributions by more than forty people and associations, becoming a sort of quilt with many radically different patches. In the middle of the seven-month exhibition period, the Fall Department<sup>7</sup> turned into the

**6** See for example Maria Lind, *Tensta Museum: Still Alive and Morphing in Curatorial Things*, ed. Beatrice von Bismarck, upcoming.

**7** The exhibition was divided into a fall department and a spring department, with around half of the exhibits remaining throughout the exhibition period. 'Tensta Museum: Reports from New Sweden', Fall Department was up from 26 October 2013 to 18 May 2014. The participants were Amin Amir, Marwa Arsanios, Tarek Atoui, Petra Bauer & Sofia in collaboration with Tensta Hjulsta Women Centre & Filippa Stålhane, Sabine Bitter & Helmut Weber, Boris Buden, Hans Carlsson, Thomas Elovsson & Peter Geschwind, Barakat Ghebrehawariat with Revolution Poetry: Yodit Girmay-Abraha, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Terence Gower, Heidrun Holzfeind, The Järva Project, Mila Ivanow, Bernd Krauss & Nina Svensson, Lisa Kings, KTH arkitektur, Ross Tensta Gymnasium, Behzad Khosravi Noori & René León Rosales, Museum of Medieval Stockholm, Minouk Lim, Katarina Lundgren, Meron Mangasha & Senay Berhe, Irene Molina, Ricardo-Osvaldo Alvarado, Viktor Rosdahl, Pia Rönicke, Solmaz Shahbazi & Tirdad Zolghadr, Josabeth Sjöberg, Somali Parents and Home Language Association, Spånga Heritage Association, Erik Stenberg, Stockholm City Museum, Adam Tensta, Sonja Vidén, Florian Zeyfang, Lisa Schmidt-Colinet & Alexander Schmoeger, Ahmet Ögüt.

Spring Department<sup>8</sup> as half of the exhibits were exchanged. Running through the whole period was the red thread of artists from all over the world who since the nineties have been dealing with the planetary phenomenon of late modernist housing. Among them are Terence Gower, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Marwa Arsanios, Sabine Bitter & Helmut Weber, Heidrun Holzfeind, and Viktor Rosdahl who in various ways have problematized the stereotypical image of these areas as monotonous, ugly and dangerous. They have unassumingly made the understanding and reception of places like Tensta more complex and interesting.<sup>9</sup>

Instead of a classical collection, Tensta Museum housed several archives, for example architect, million-dwelling-programme specialist and former Tensta resident Erik Stenberg's private Tensta archive with original drawings by the planning architect Igor Dergalin, literature on the area, newspaper clippings and

**8** The Spring Department was up 18 January 2014–18 May 2014. The participants were Lawrence Abu Hamdan, John Akomfrah, Marwa Arsanios, Tarek Atoui, Petra Bauer & Sofia Wiberg in collaboration with Tensta Hjulsta Women Centre & Filippa Stålhane, Sabine Bitter & Helmut Weber, Boris Buden, Hans Carlsson, Thomas Elovsson & Peter Geschwind, Håkan Forsell, Fernando Garcia Dory & Erik Sjödin, Barakat Ghebrehawariat with Revolution Poetry: Yodit Girmay-Abraha, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Terence Gower, Grand Domestic Revolution with Åsa Norberg & Jennie Sundén, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Heidrun Holzfeind, The Järva Project, Mila Ivanow, Bernd Krauss & Nina Svensson, Kurdish Association Spånga, Lisa Kings, KTH arkitektur Ross Tensta Gymnasium, Behzad Khosravi Noori & René León Rosales, Konsthallsklubben with Anisa Omar & Bilan Rage, Brita Landoff, Minouk Lim, Katarina Lundgren, Meron Mangasha & Senay Berhe, Helena Mattsson, Meike Schalk & Sara Brolund de Carvalho, Museum of Medieval Stockholm, Irene Molina, Ricardo-Osvaldo Alvarado, Marion von Osten, Viktor Rosdahl, Ross Tensta Gymnasium with Axel Fahlcrantz, Carl Larsson, Veronica Nygren and Torsten Renqvist, Solmaz Shahbazi & Tirdad Zolghadr, Spånga Heritage Association, STEALTH.unlimited & Peter Lang, Stockholm City Museum, Adam Tensta, Florian Zeyfang, Lisa Schmidt-Colinet & Alexander Schmoeger, Ahmet Ögüt.

**9** See Maria Lind, 'Late-modernist housing', *ArtReview*, April 2014, p. 37.

documentary films.<sup>10</sup> The Spånga Local Heritage Association generously lent a selection of photographs from their archive, depicting the area before and during the construction of the housing estate.<sup>11</sup> The travelling Grand Domestic Revolution Library, assembled by Casco—Office for Art, Design and Theory in Utrecht (NL) extended the exploration of the sphere of domesticity and the home, from Dolores Hayden's outstanding research into largely forgotten domestic experiments in the US from 1850–1950.<sup>12</sup> The Grand Domestic Revolution involved artists, designers, domestic workers, architects, gardeners, activists and others to investigate and expand the status of the home outside the narrow lens of private concerns to accommodate interest in new designs, different

**10** A set of drawings, photographs, books, models, Järva Field, part 1–4, four documentaries from 1965–1981, produced by the Stockholm City Museum, from Erik Stenberg's archive were on display, as well as a video interview with him. In it he talks about more than 20 building companies being involved in building Tensta's 5,600 housing units. In 1969, at Uppingebränd, Ohlsson and Skarne built a number of flats using their pre-fabricated building system, S66. Together with Thomas Sandell, Stenberg re-designed one of these flats and in 1999 Stenberg himself moved into it. This is when it was discovered that from the start, the apartments were designed to be re-built and adapted to a future society. The floor plans of S66 are flexible in that, for example, the bearing unit is a pillar and the dividing walls and conduits are grouped towards the stairwell, and the inside walls are moveable. In addition, Stenberg gave a lecture about the Million Dwelling Programme and Tensta's building history and he led an architectural tour on foot of Tensta. This popular tour has been repeated twice a year since 2014.

**11** As part of Tensta Museum, Spånga Local Heritage Association organized three seminars on the pre-million dwelling programme history of Tensta at the art centre. Subsequently, the Women's Centre in Tensta Hjulsta held one of their Tea and Coffee Salons, usually taking place in the café of Tensta konsthall, at the old farmstead in Spånga run by the association. The Silent University's Language Café also visited the farmstead on one of their monthly outings.

**12** Dolores Hayden, *Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982).

ways of living and the formation of collective identities through and in the domestic sphere.<sup>13</sup>

The Grand Domestic Revolution library is a growing collection of over two hundred books, documents, and films as tools for change. The books deal with domestic labour, organizing, artistic and architectural methods of participation and cooperation, feminism, alternative economies, philosophical inquiry of ideas of community and feminist utopian sci-fi novels. The selection from the Library was shown in an installation entitled *The Usual Things* by the Gothenburg-based artist duo Åsa Norberg and Jennie Sundén, who feel drawn to the idea of the 'total work of art' and are interested in alternative lifestyles in early twentiethcentury London, for example the Bloomsbury group. Like most of the exhibits, the library was activated by a number of events.

This interest in housing and domesticity was further explored in artist Petra Bauer's commission, which ended up being a collaboration with the multi-ethnic association Tensta Hjulsta Women's Centre around the political potential of listening in the form of seven 'acts', or seminars, as well as a film.<sup>14</sup> Another side to 'the home' was manifest in the ten water colours by Josabeth Sjöberg (1812–1882), a spinster who could never afford a house of her own but instead rented more than a dozen different rooms in Södermalm in the city centre, the Tensta of nineteenth-century Stockholm. Borrowed from the Museum of the City of Stockholm, the water colours depict her modest domiciles in great detail, conveying a unique insight into the life of a single woman earning her living from giving music lessons, in an area that was then the home of the precariat.

**13** <http://casco.art/the-grand-domestic-revolution>

**14** See 'Rehearsals—On the Politics of Listening, Rehearsals' (Petra Bauer and Sofia Wiberg with Marius Dybwad Brandrud and Rebecka Thor) in *Feminist Futures of Spatial Practices: Materialisms, Activisms, Dialogues, Pedagogies, Projections* (Baunach: ADDRART Architecture Design Research/Spurbuchverlag, 2017).

Connections between the city centre and the suburbs—a clear economic, social and cultural demarcation in Stockholm—were thematized with the two Tensta Museum branches, which took place at the Museum of the City of Stockholm and the Museum of Medieval Stockholm. Like any self-confident museum, Tensta Museum opened branches and commissioned new art works for each of them. The city museum hosted Katarina Lundgren's alternative Stockholm history, namely seen through the city's rubble, both from the extensive demolitions in the city centre in the sixties and seventies and the landscaping which made Tensta possible. In both cases the rubble was used to create 'hills', or tops, which in fact were early versions of land art, instigated by a visionary landscape architect in the municipality.<sup>15</sup>

Once Tensta Museum The Exhibition was over in May 2014, it was obvious that the museum had to continue in some form. Many contacts and new ideas had emerged, prodding further elaboration. Thanks to the initiative of the local School of Swedish for Migrants, who asked if they could use the art centre as a venue for their summer courses, the museum has since included a classroom. Once the classroom was in place, other local groups and associations asked to use it for their own activities, thereby allowing contemporary art to co-exist literally in the same space as for example weekly homework assistance and Save the Children's parent's forum, bi-weekly language café as part of artist Ahmet Ögüt's *The Silent*

**15** Katarina Lundgren showed *Stockholm's Tips and Tops*, consisting of four photographs, one model, and one poster, at the City Museum of Stockholm as a branch of 'Tensta Museum: Reports from New Sweden', 15 November 2013–18 May 2014. The project tells the story of modern Stockholm's and Tensta's emergence from a forgotten perspective, namely the use of the rubble resulting from the making of new urban space. Large quantities were used to make 'peaks', a form of land art before land art.

University<sup>16</sup>, and a women's café centred around handicraft, as well as regular meetings of the local city administration. In addition to the activities in the classroom, a number of artworks on late modernist housing have been shown there, including Filipa César's video *Porto 1975*<sup>17</sup> and Jakob Kolding's constructivist-influenced collage posters.<sup>18</sup> Documentary material from the Friends of Helga Henschen about the Tensta underground station by

**16** For an insight into how The Silent University is working at Tensta konsthall, see a conversation between Fahyma Alnablsi, Emily Fahlén and Maria Lind in *The Silent University: Towards a Transversal Pedagogy*, ed. Florian Malzacher, Ahmet Ögüt, Pelin Tan (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016).

**17** In Filipa César's film *Porto 1975* the present is condensed into images through the voice of the past. In one single take we move through the late modernist social housing project Bouça—between buildings, through an apartment, past a passage of staircases, and finally to an architecture firm located in a space meant for a kindergarten. The planning of Bouça, a social housing project designed by the renowned architect Alvaro Siza in Porto, started in 1973. The project was later incorporated into the state organization SAAL, an architectural and political project set up after the Portuguese revolution, aiming to solve housing shortages and social problems through democratic methods. The project was formed as a collaboration between architects and citizens. As a result of the Portuguese coup d'état in 1975 the constructions of Bouça stopped, and the area was completed only thirty years later.

**18** Jakob Kolding's Offset posters: *Untitled (2000)*, *Untitled (2000)*, *Untitled (2001)*, *Untitled (Schlachthof/Berlin) (2004)*, *Untitled (Copenhagen) (2007)* convey his roots in experimental film and avant-garde graphics, but also in arts and crafts and advertising history. His work contradicts both the architectural styles' seemingly unquestionable ideologies and the reflexively causal explanations that dominate how to look at so-called social housing as a source of ghettoization for socially weak neighbourhoods. In Kolding's work the built room does not dominate the people—they use it in their own ways. The modern urbanism that figured in Kolding's work is not only utopian in terms of how to (mis)perceive their social plans and ideas, but also because we nowadays rarely see extensive social visions at all.

artist Helga Henschen<sup>19</sup> and the Kurdish Association<sup>20</sup> have also been shown in the classroom, in both cases instigated by the associations themselves in conjunction with their anniversaries.

On-going projects by participants of The News Agency, a long-term initiative for young people interested in journalism, have also been presented in the classroom. Growing out of Tensta Museum, and borrowing methods from art, the course enables an approach that opposes a sensationalist media logic—specially in relation to suburbs like Tensta—in favour of thought and reflection. The News Agency is taught by teachers from JMK, the Department of Media Studies at Stockholm University and from Konstfack, the Graphic Design & Illustration department at

<sup>19</sup> Tensta underground station was opened in 1975 by the king. On the same occasion, the period art piece, made by Helga Henschen (1917–2002), was unveiled. Henschen wanted the art in the underground station to celebrate the residents of Tensta—hence the theme, 'A rose to immigrants. Solidarity, sisterhood'. The walls of the station are filled with naïvistic images and quotes. Eighteen signs with the word 'Sisterhood', written in as many languages, are placed along the tracks. Henschen wanted there to always be pictures made by children displayed in the station; therefore, from 2013 to 2016 photographs taken by students at the Ross Tensta Upper Secondary School will be on view in the station. (LEO: 'have been on view'? It is now 2017 and the book will be out in 2018)

<sup>20</sup> Archive material from the Kurdish Association Spånga, the Kurdish National association and Rohat Alakom, from 1970 until today. One of Tensta's most active associations is the Kurdish Association. About two thousand Kurds live in Tensta and the association has provided a meeting place for many of them, as well as for others. The association, which was founded in 1986, is a non-political and non-religious organization and every year arranges a large Newroz bonfire at Eggeby farm at Järva Field, with up to ten thousand participants. The history of the Kurdish Association Spånga is not only about the association's own activities but also about the migration history of Kurds in Sweden. That history, in turn, reflects both Sweden's post-war migration policies and political events around the world. Among other things, the archival presentation included a lecture by Rohat Alakom: When Sweden became the land of the Kurds.

Konstfack and Street Gäris, together with guest teachers. In addition to study visits and internships at workplaces, a number of educational moments take place in the schools' workshops and studios, but most of the work is done in Tensta.

As The News Agency indicates, Tensta konsthall is increasingly becoming a site of sharing, learning and knowledge production, facilitated by Tensta Museum. This happens on various levels, from the age of school children to higher education. Parts of courses are not only happening at the art centre (even entire courses take place there) but are also developed together with invited artists and the team, as part of the programme. At the same time, art is at the core of both Tensta konsthall and Tensta Museum, the basis of the contact and conflict zones which emerge and are developed with and around them.<sup>21</sup> In these zones, material from a dominant culture is appropriated and transformed by subordinate groups, who also engage with auto-ethnographic material, often avoiding victimization and the essentializing effects of thinking and acting in terms of 'communities'. The exhibition quilt has become an organism, partly with its own life, partaking in Tensta konsthall being at one and the same time uniquely internationally connected and locally embedded.

<sup>21</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Arts of the Contact Zone, Profession* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1991), pp. 33–40. See also James Cliffords essay 'Museums as Contact Zones' in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late 20th Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997). Nora Sterfeldt's discussions around conflict zones have also been productive in relation to Tensta Museum, see *Kontaktzonen der Geschichtsvermittlung: Transnationales Lernen über den Holocaust in der postnazistischen Migrationsgesellschaft* (Vienna: Zarglossus, 2013).







2.05

Project study

# THE USES OF ART

THE USES OF ART LAB  
@ LIVERPOOL JOHN  
MOORES UNIVERSITY

John Byrne

@

LIVERPOOL  
JOHN MOORES  
UNIVERSITY



2.05.01 – View out of The Office of Useful Art, Liverpool School of Art and Design, 'Uses of Art Lab' project, 2015. Photo: Gemma Medina

The 'Uses of Art Lab' at Liverpool John Moores University's School of Art and Design is a small research hub that aims to develop and test forms of ground-up, constituent led 1:1 scale Arte Útil projects, interventions, and activism as learning resources within the University framework. The Use of Art Lab has also grown out of, and continues to contribute towards, the developing and extending meshwork that currently exists between the L'Internationale and the Association of Arte Útil (AAÚ) within the EU funded project 'The Uses of Art: The Legacy of 1848 and 1989'. As such the overall objective of the Uses of Art Lab (UoAL) is to develop Arte Útil projects and thinking amongst staff and students at Liverpool John Moores University's School of Art and Design through active forms of thinking and doing that are developed as forms of constituent led co-design and collaboration with local, regional, national and international communities. To begin making this happen, the UoAL is currently

developing a range of small-scale projects with community and constituent partners in Liverpool. Key to this will be a series of ground-up education collaborations with The Florrie, (a Grade II listed Victorian community arts and heritage venue, located in the Toxteth area of south Liverpool) that offers a range of participatory activities and facilities to its local constituents.<sup>1</sup> It is hoped that these practices will build on work already undertaken by the Uses of Art Lab at LJMU during collaborations on a range of 'Offices of Useful Art' at Tate Liverpool (2013) Liverpool John Moores University's School of Art and Design (2015) and Granby 4 Streets in Toxteth, Liverpool (2016).

For example, makers and doers from Liverpool School of Art and Design (both staff and students) are beginning to plan projects and workshops that will involve collaborations between existing community arts initiatives at the Florrie and

<sup>1</sup> [www.theflorrie.org](http://www.theflorrie.org).



2.05.02 – Students at Liverpool School of Art and Design mapping the Association of Arte Útil, Liverpool School of Art and Design, 'Uses of Art Lab' project, 2015. Photo: Gemma Medina

Liverpool School of Art and Design's 'Fab Lab'<sup>2</sup> that will give constituents of Toxteth hands-on opportunities to work with 3D modelling facilities, 3D printing and laser cutting technologies. These workshops often start as simply as using laser etching machines to cut Arte Útil logos into shortbread biscuits, or 'Localist Worker' logos into kitchen sponges or wooden 'ID' tags, or using simple 3D scanning freeware and iPads to scan and build 3D models of heads and objects. Once constituents see how simple it can be to use these facilities, more often than not they become excited about how to use them to address local urgencies and to begin developing projects together for the common good. At the same time, workshops and discussion groups will take place around examples from the AAÚ archive. In these discussions, constituents of Toxteth, in collaboration with staff and students from LJMU and partners from across the AAÚ network, will identify and activate projects from the archive that carry within them the best potential for usefully repurposing their own context. In this way, it is hoped that the AAÚ archive can be both used, and collaboratively developed, through its

activation as a constituent learning tool.

In turn, it is hoped that the development of such projects—as well as the practical, critical and activist context that will grow around them—will affect the operating systems of both University, Art and Design School, and local communities alike. For example, one of Liverpool John Moores University's current 'Mission Statements' is to become a Civic University—so by enabling staff and students to work with the AAU as a means to develop collaborative and constituent projects and initiatives with artists, activists and thinkers from local communities, it is hoped that staff and students will begin to re-think what they do, what their current roles and self-perceptions are, and how existing logics of art education could be challenged and changed. In turn, it is hoped that the changes this may affect and enact within the University—through day to day project planning and longer term curriculum and course/programme/research development—will help the University, as an institution, to re-think its current role and possibilities within the construction of a constituent civic realm.

However, it is also worth remembering at this point that the Institutional tools available to the Uses of Art Lab for implementing such change—through micro and macro networks of radical opposition and



2.05.03 – Laser-etched scrubbing sponges and localist worker wooden ID tag for Arte Útil, Liverpool School of Art and Design, 'Uses of Art Lab' project, 2015. Photo: Gemma Medina



2.05.04 – Laser-etched homebaked shortbread biscuit (Rosena Kirke) for Arte Útil, Liverpool School of Art and Design, 'Uses of Art Lab' project, 2015. Photo: Gemma Medina

ground up-alternatives for living otherwise—are still precisely those same tools that our current neoliberal hegemony has inherited and corrupted as a means to regulate, fractalize and exploit. The difference lies not in the tools we pick up and use, but in how we use the tools we pick up, for and with whom we use those tools, to what effect and why. As such it is hoped that the Uses of Art Lab at Liverpool John Moores University can play a small but useful role in effecting this change and recalibration of use and can, in turn, help to build a truly useful and constituent University of the Future through the growing networks of usership that are both the L'Internationale and the Association of Arte Útil.



2.05.05 – Meeting at 'Uses of Art Lab' broadcasting the archive at The Office of Useful Art pop-up for Arte Útil, Granby Street, Liverpool, 2016. Photo: Alessandra Saviotti



2.05.06 – Granby Street, Liverpool, 2016. Photo: Alessandra Saviotti/Gemma Medina





HONEST SHOP

Alistair Hudson

HONEST  
SHOP

THE SHOP WILL BE HONEST ABOUT  
THE PRODUCTS, PEOPLE AND PLACE.

THE PRODUCE WILL ACTUALLY BE  
LOCAL AND HOMEMADE.

BY PEOPLE LIVING HERE, USING THEIR  
FINGERS OR THE FINGERS OF FRIENDS.

THE PACKAGING WILL BE RECYCLED  
OR RECYCLABLE.

THERE WILL BE NO AIR MILES, ROAD MILES  
OR FAKE SMILES.

THE SHOP IS AN ACT OF TRUST  
AND GENEROSITY.

So says the sign hanging over the Honest Shop. This retail establishment has neither staff nor employees. Locally made and locally grown products are displayed on its shelves, forming a proud, effervescent cacophony of individual effort and collective intent: gingerbread, Eccles cakes, potatoes, crochet animals, fresh cut flowers, hand-painted postcards, carved bone brooches, turned wooden bowls. Some things are beautiful. Some things are downright ugly. Quality is not guaranteed.

On the overcrowded countertop, hemmed in by cakes of many different hands all competing for attention, is a ledger into which the consumer enters the product name (e.g. knitted wine-bottle cover), maker-code (AG01) and price paid (£4.50), as described on the price tag. The money (cash only) is inserted into an adjacent metal box and no change is given. 80% of the sale goes to the maker, 20% to community interest.

In the case of the first Honest Shop this interest was the Coniston Institute, one of the last functioning nineteenth-century Mechanics Institutes, conceived as a community education centre for this rural mining community in the English Lake District. Once a shared resource at the centre of village life, it had now fallen into disrepair and decline (nonetheless in common ownership), walled in by an oversaturated tourist economy on which the residents had become bitterly over-dependent. Gift shops selling local fudge made in Australia. Lake District souvenir minerals imported from Chile.

The Honest Shop was a fight back against this tide of falsity and self-interest, a subtle challenge to the prevailing market economics, but a challenge from 'within' using the indigenous language of the impromptu rural economy of trust and mutual benefit. It was not driven by artists but initiated by a collective of residents,



2.06.01 - 'Museum of Arte Útil', 7 December 2013-30 March 2014, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, curator exhibitions: Annie Fletcher, guest curator: Nick Aikens, project of L'Internationale, a confederation of six leading museums of modern art. Travelling exhibition: Queens Museum, New York (2013). Photo: Peter Cox

including the organization Grizedale Arts, as part of an artistic programme to reclaim the Institute for its community, as a place of education and fellowship along the lines conceived for it in 1872 by John Ruskin, an early proponent of useful art.

In this light the project is a clear case study in Arte Útil: It relinquishes authorship, challenges the field in which it operates, responds to a current urgency, shuns spectatorship in favour of use, pursues sustainability and operates on the 1:1 scale. As such it is an exemplar of double ontological status, being an artistic proposition and a fully functioning shop at the same time.

With the Shop not subject to authorial control, it is an auto-responsive system that can be implemented at will in any community at any time or in any context. This has proved the case with a network of shops emerging in locations such as London, Seoul, Hofen, Toge and the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven.



2.06.02 - 'Museum of Arte Útil', 7 December 2013-30 March 2014, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, curator exhibitions: Annie Fletcher, guest curator: Nick Aikens, project of L'Internationale, a confederation of six leading museums of modern art. Travelling exhibition: Queens Museum, New York (2013). Photo: Peter Cox

Above all it is an entity that is created, maintained and defined by its usership, by a matrix of people in an ecology of actions.



2.06.03 - 'Museum of Arte Útil', 7 December 2013-30 March 2014, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, curator exhibitions: Annie Fletcher, guest curator: Nick Aikens, project of L'Internationale, a confederation of six leading museums of modern art. Travelling exhibition: Queens Museum, New York (2013). Photo: Peter Cox



2.06.04 - 'Museum of Arte Útil', 7 December 2013-30 March 2014, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, curator exhibitions: Annie Fletcher, guest curator: Nick Aikens, project of L'Internationale, a confederation of six leading museums of modern art. Travelling exhibition: Queens Museum, New York (2013). Photo: Perry van Duijnhoven



2.07

Project study

# SEED JOURNEY

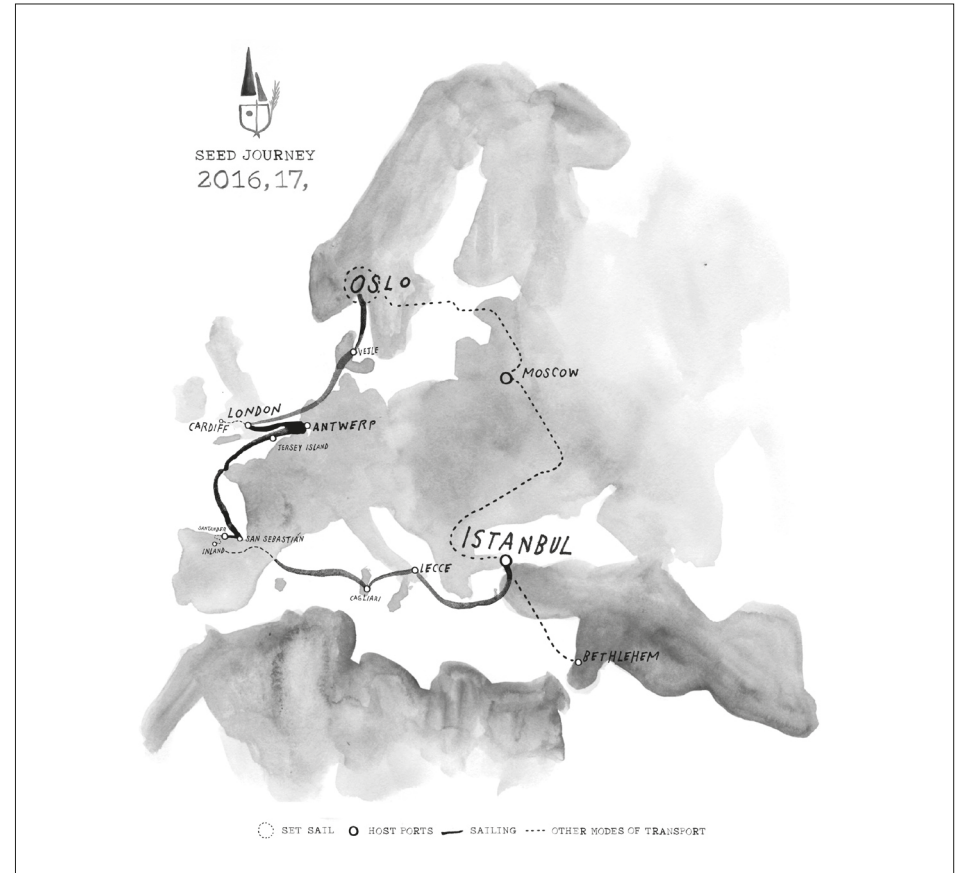
SEED JOURNEY

Futurefarmers

Amy Franceschini

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-..- / ..... / ..- / ..... / ..... / ..... / ..... / ..... / ..... /  
-..- / ..... / ..... / ..... / ..... / ..... / ..... / ..... / ..... /<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'We don't need museums to conserve varieties, what we want is to plant them', a message from farmer Johan Sward in Oslo.



2.07.01 - Futurefarmers, Seed Journey, map, Amy Franceschini

Imagine a fantastic voyage from Norway to Istanbul in an old wooden sailing boat built for Arctic voyaging. This boat is carrying an ingeniously crafted mini-boat, like a chalice, containing a mere handful of old wheat and rye seeds found in a museum in Saint Petersburg in Russia and in the roof beams of a sauna in northern Norway. These seeds are like jewels. The disproportion in size between the small chalice and the mother vessel carrying it symbolises preciousness, as does the very idea of a prolonged voyage using wind and sail as the means of propulsion.

Michael Taussig<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> From Michael Taussig, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Seeds*, commissioned for L'Internationale online platform in advance of *Seed Journey*, [www.internationaleonline.org/research/politics\\_of\\_life\\_and\\_death/72\\_let\\_us\\_now\\_praise\\_famous\\_seeds](http://www.internationaleonline.org/research/politics_of_life_and_death/72_let_us_now_praise_famous_seeds).

A very rich man needed to cross the Atlantic Ocean from New York to Liverpool as part of a wager he had set to circumnavigate the world in 80 days. He missed his sailboat in New York, but he found a steamer heading to Bordeaux. The man tried to convince the captain to take the boat to Liverpool, but the captain refused. So he bribes the crew to mutiny and make course for Liverpool. Against hurricane winds and going on full steam, the boat runs out of fuel after a few days. The man is determined to win the wager, so he buys the boat for a very high price from the captain and has the crew burn all the wooden parts to keep up the steam.

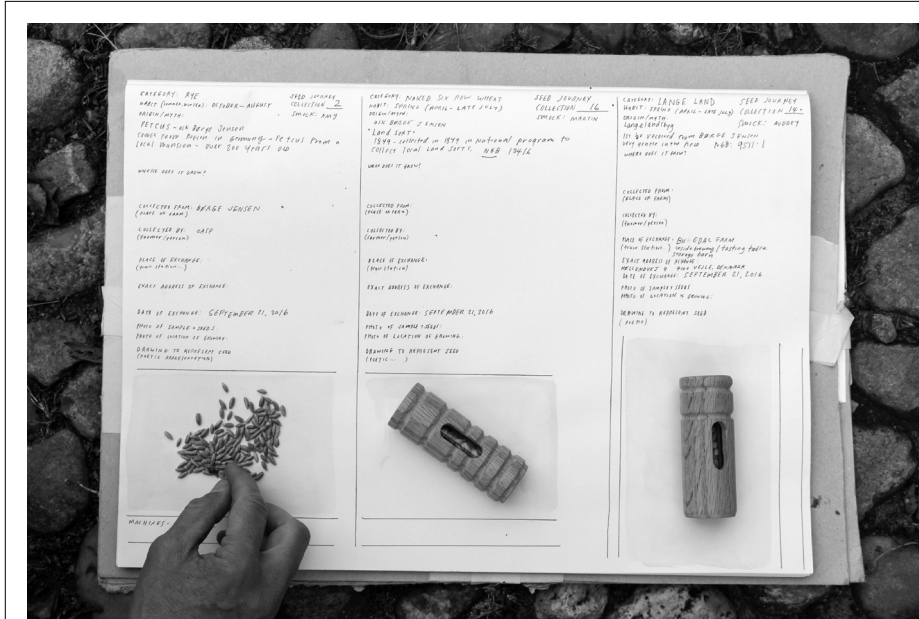
Jules Verne<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> From Jules Verne, *Twenty-thousand Leagues Around the Sea*. As Johan recalled this story, I was reminded of Simon Starling's *Autoxylopyrocycloboros*.





2.07.02 – RS-10, Christiania Courtesy, the Petersen Family, 2016



2.07.03 – Seed Inventory, and Seed Vessels at Bøgedal Farm. Securing 9 grains to travel the entire journey from Oslo to Istanbul

‘Your Bosphorus—their Bosphorus’, continued Kéraban shaking his fist towards the south. ‘Fortunately the Black Sea is there, and it has a coast line not exclusively for caravans. I will follow that road. I will circumambulate it; and you will see the faces of your officials, when I appear upon the heights of Scutari, without having thrown my paras into the box of that set of administrative mendicants.’

Jules Verne<sup>4</sup>

Seed Journey is a seafaring voyage composed by Futurefarmers that moves people, ideas and seeds through time and space. This voyage—its crew and cargo—are agents that link the commons as they relate to local networks and a more global complex of seed savers and stewards of the land, air and water. A rotating crew of artists, anthropologists, biologists, bakers, activists, sailors and farmers join the journey and share their findings at host institutions along the route, from small harbors, large ports, barns, and social centers; as well as a range of cultural spaces including museums and arts institutions. This sea-voyage can be called a museum-event, an art movement with no fixed location but instead, in the phrase of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, represents a line of flight and an inspired ‘deterritorialisation’. It is mobile and nomadic, moving from wave to wave and port to port. The point is not to oppose technology and science but to shift control and oversight of the means of production from the few to the many.

Michael Taussig<sup>5</sup>

Seed Journey has been formed by an evolving and ever growing group of constituents, as they together collect ancient grains and stories along a geographically diverse route, from farmers, bakers, seed savers, and all those who advocate the sharing of knowledge, culture for a better future.

There are too many individual constituents to list, but Seed Journey as a nomadic, roaming and thinking institution encouraged many more to enter into a multifarious conversation around history, culture and companionship; they include these evolving relationships thus far:

- Bjørvika Infrastructure, Oslo > Henie Onstad Kunstsenter
- University of Wisconsin > Arts Institute > Irwin Goldman—Plant Breeder—Horticulture Dept. > Hasan Khatib—Animal Sciences Dept.
- SALT, Istanbul > Internationaleonline > Sharjah Biennial > M HKA, Antwerp > Regionale Landscape > Le Moulin de Quetivel
- Middelheim Museum > Delfina, London > Hermitage Moorings > E5 Bakehouse
- Artes Mundi, Cardiff > Welsh Grain Forum > The Morning Boat > Jersey Heritage > Liberty Brewery
- Botín Foundation > Inland
- Utopiana Residency, Geneva
- Free Home University, Lecce
- Tabakalera, San Sebastián > Cristina Enea Foundation

<sup>4</sup> Excerpt from *Kéraban the Inflexible*, by Jules Verne.

<sup>5</sup> Selected passages from a statement on Seed Journey by Michael Taussig: <http://futurefarmers.com/seedjourney/>.



2.07.04 - 'Consortium Instabile', MAXXI, Rome, 2015. Five farmers from the mountains were invited to Rome to share their work. The radio show was a call to policy makers and consumers to support small-scale farming and the preservation of the commons as it relates to seeds and land use



2.07.05 - 'Consortium Instabile', MAXXI, Rome, 2015, Collaboration with Radio Papesse to explore metaphors of farming and broadcasting-social media as seeds



2.07.06 - Seed Journey, installation view, SALT Galata, 2017. Photo: Mustafa Hazneci





2.07.07 - Seed Procession, carrying first year harvest of grains from Oslo farm (Losøter) to send off on Seed Journey. Photo: Monica Lovdahl, 2015



2.08

Project study

# MUSEUM SOLIDARITY LOBBY

MUSEUM SOLIDARITY LOBBY

Azra Akšamija

*Museum Solidarity Lobby* (MSL) is a project giving form to a new phenomenon in East European post-socialist cultural production—a collective form of civic lobbying for the survival of state institutions. The National Museum in Sarajevo shut down its doors to the public in 2012, following long-lasting political and budgetary problems. Six other state-level cultural institutions, including the National and University Library and the National Gallery were also on the verge of shutting down for the same reasons. Reacting to this acute crisis, numerous citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina joined forces with various international organizations and activist groups to exert influence on the Bosnian government to resolve the museums' undefined legal and financial status. Their collective lobbying took shape in form of numerous protests, various cultural activities and events organized by students of universities and colleges, petitions, artistic projects of both local and global proportions, participatory exhibitions and media pressure. It was the first time since the nineties that the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina joined forces across ethno-national borders, acting in solidarity, for their state.

This lobbying phenomenon emerged in Bosnia-Herzegovina after the nineties war, prompted by the acute crisis of the state after the Dayton Peace Agreement of 1995. Despite the compromise made for the peace, Bosnia-Herzegovina today is still a divided society. The genocide and ethnic cleansing during the nineties war went hand in hand with the systematic destruction of cultural heritage, aimed

at recreating the region's cultural territories as ethnically and demographically homogenous entities, and at preventing a possibility for coexistence in the future. It is thus not surprising that the cultural institutions in charge of preserving the collective memory and the material evidence of coexistence in the region that nationalist extremists sought to erase represent a contested sphere—museums are in crisis precisely because they represent a form of state that is not suitable to the nationalists' separatist political ideals.

Working against the political gridlock, I co-founded the international platform CULTURESHUTDOWN in 2012, together with a group of international artists and academics. The lobbying work of this platform contributed to a global awareness of the problem. In 2013, for example, I initiated the Museum Solidarity Day, a global cultural awareness campaign, and produced it with CULTURESHUTDOWN. In an open



2.08.01 – Azra Akšamija, *Museum Solidarity Lobby*, 2013, wood, fluorescent paint, Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana, '1:1 Stopover' exhibition view. Photo: Dejan Habicht, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana





2.08.02 – Azra Akšamija, *Museum Solidarity Lobby*, 2013, mixed media: recycled shipping crates, textile, sound and speakers. Photo: Dejan Habicht, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana

call for participation that was virally distributed, I called on museums worldwide to cross out one work in their collection with a yellow barricade tape that I sent them. Over 390 cultural institutions from over 40 countries on five continents took part, including major international organizations such as CIMAM and ICOM. Subsequently, I produced human-sized banners featuring a selection of photographs from this global action, which were exhibited on the façades of the affected museums in Sarajevo. Although the action itself did not resolve the crisis, the impact was significant for educating both the global and local public about the importance of cultural heritage and museums in the state-building and peace-building process. Most notably, the action also prompted acts of solidarity among institutions in the neighbouring countries of Serbia and Croatia, which had been at war with Bosnia only very few years ago.

Lessons learned from this work opened up avenues for me to examine the future relevance and role of national museums in other places. This line of inquiry led me to the creation of new sculptural, video and sound installations such as *Museum Solidarity Lobby* (2013) and *Future Heritage Collection #1* (2013), which were exhibited at the Dallas Holocaust Museum, MSUM+ in Ljubljana, and at MIT. The physical installation of the MSL is both a barricade and a display system that can be

assembled in different places in site-specific ways. Exterior installations include barricade elements that are obstructing access to the museum's entrance, while emitting sound. The interior installations take form of a temporary museum lobby assembled of recycled museum shipping crates. Each shipping box can be transformed into modular furniture. One module in this system is the so-called 'sound chair' featuring interviews with various experts about the politics of cultural memory and dynamics of heritage in different contexts.

In 2014, I curated another iteration as the *Future Heritage Collection #2* in Sarajevo, BA, in the form of a participatory project showcasing different processes of collecting, cataloguing and narrating stories through contributed objects. This project was exhibited at Sarajevo's JAVA Gallery, within the International Theater Festival MESS. This show involved visitors and residents of the city, who were invited to become curators of their own heritage, as the museum was still shut down. In the Bosnian context, this work is significant in its effort to get the public interested in the museum at all, while educating citizens about culture as a critical tool to challenge the dominant nationalist narratives.

Through all these actions, MSL promoted an understanding about threatened heritage worldwide, while inquiring whether a national museum can be a vehicle to reclaim public virtue and an opportunity for cultural renewal in post-national societies. MSL links the crisis in the Balkans to other places across the world, seeking to uncover potential new roles and modalities for museums in response to contemporary and future threats to heritage. Notwithstanding the museum's inherent power structures and instrumentality in colonialist and nationalist projects, the MSL represents a new position within the discourse of the Institutional Critique, advocating for the museum as the catalyst for civic renewal.



2.08.03 – Azra Akšamija & CULTURESHUTDOWN, *Museum Solidarity Day*, Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, 2013, [www.cultureshutdown.net](http://www.cultureshutdown.net). Photo: Matija Pavlovec, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana

# PELAGOS OF ENCOUNTER

IS THIS  
EXPERIENCE  
LIMITED  
ONLY TO AN  
ART SPACE

OR CAN IT  
SPREAD  
EVERYWHERE?

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Bojana Piškur  
3.05



The constituent museum, then, does not have a department of education: it is entirely constituted as a collective learning space: rather than exhibit, it performs. It does things to its members and to the situations and places in which it operates.

Alberto Altes  
2.02

PERFORMING



RiddoDuottarMuseat and Nordnorsk Kunst Museum, *Sami Dáiddamusea*, 2017, museum performance, knife table. Photo: Marius Fiskum, 2017. Courtesy of Jeremy McGowan and Kjetil Rydland at Nordnorsk Kunst Museum

Institutions become significant sites where one can analyse and intervene in this dis-symmetric and un-reducible dialectic. The space of the institution is one where we can grasp the refusal of the normative force of citizenship-non-citizens, borrowing from Mario Tronti's reference to workers in the first place as non-capital (see agents that occupy institutions, that can invade the state, that affirm a constituent power in front of a static dialectic of exclusion.

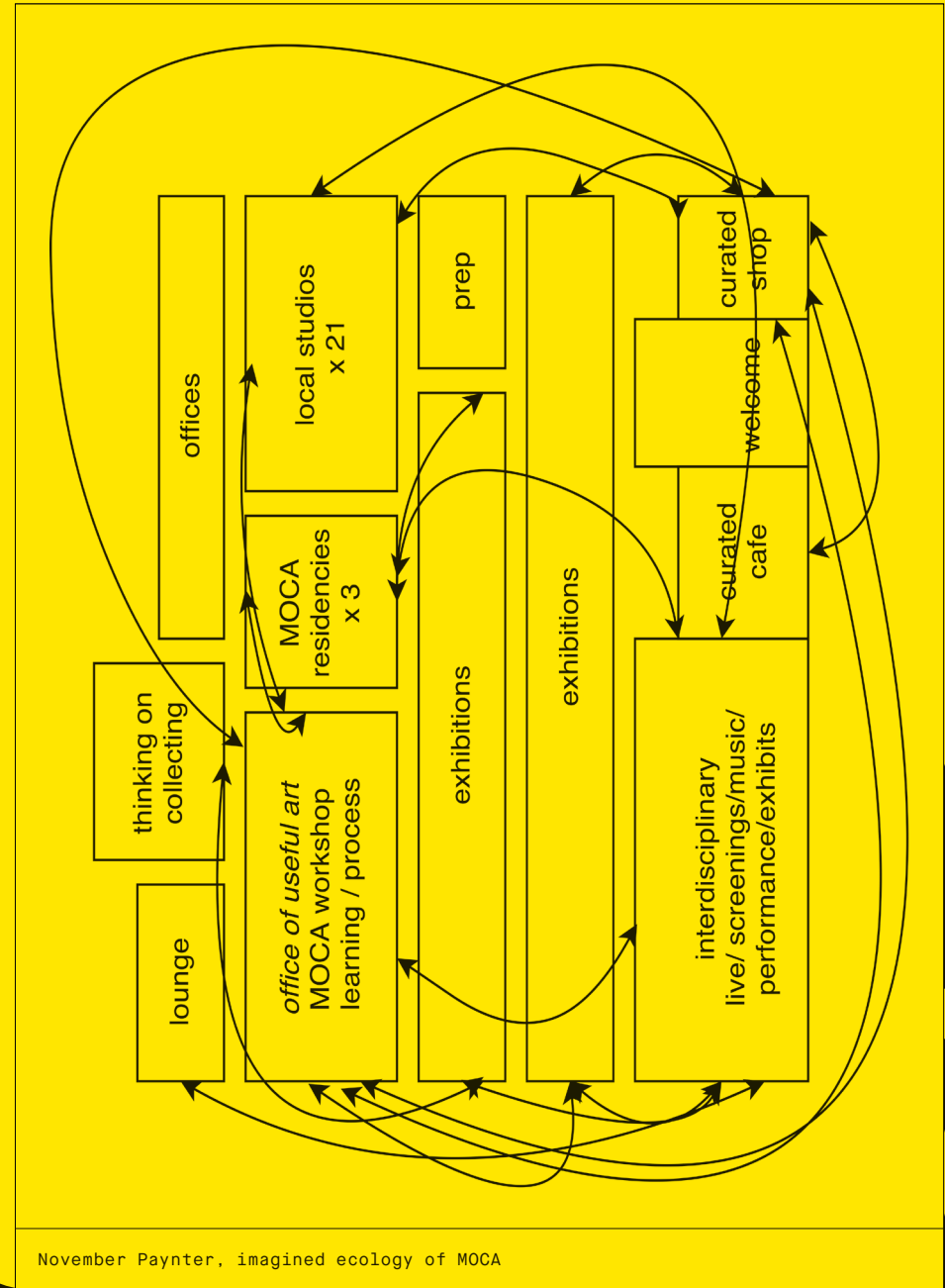
Francesco Salvini  
4.06

By revisiting  
forgotten  
networks of  
artists and  
practices, the  
research and  
the exhibition  
revives them  
while weaving  
a new inter-  
generational  
constituency  
of activists  
and artists.

Kristine Khouri and Rasha Salti  
5.02

A Constituent Curator works to develop relationships with diverse community groups, artists, organizations, and individuals, to help facilitate projects already in the making and enable those on the cusp of germination. This position strives to also expand the institution's cultural ecology beyond its walls, to keep the thinking and doing dispersed, across the site surrounding the museum and in dialogue with complementary partners and spaces across the city.

November Paynter  
4.09



November Paynter, imagined ecology of MOCA

**... A CONCEPTION  
OF THE MUSEUM  
AS A  
CONSTITUENT  
AND  
CONSTITUTED  
FORM  
OF PROCESS  
THAT OPERATES  
WITHIN  
A RHIZOMATIC  
NETWORK OF  
EXCHANGE AND  
COLLABORATIVE  
PRODUCTION**

PEDAGOGIES OF ENCOUNTER

Aida Sánchez de Serdio

# PEDAGOGIES OF ENCOUNTER



A constituent museum may be an unattainable notion, since it involves a permanent destabilization of what is constituted, but from an educational perspective, unattainability is the very impulse for learning. This does not mean that we must reach for impossible goals, but rather that in education there is no correct set of values or contents to convey and that contestation and instability are the condition of radical transformative learning processes. In this ever-becoming constituent museum, education may be better understood as a pedagogy of encounter, a space for the emergence of critical discourses and practices, for the production of difference, and for an encounter in which politics, aesthetics, knowledge, and affects intertwine in problematic ways. Here ‘encounter’ does not mean commonality or consensus, but it rather stresses the intensification of relationality and the non-coincidence (*en-counter*) that creates a potential for the emergence of something that cannot be scripted. Engaging in a pedagogy of encounter means to consider the conditions, contradictions, resistances, and failures of the relation. It also means to consider the unexpected or peripheral agents that disrupt the institutional narratives, and the daily non-glamorous chores they perform underneath the visibility of radical gestures. Considering this, a pedagogy of encounter can be conceived as a pedagogy of paradox, clash, dissent, and possibility.

There can be no one single, clear or linear history of the emergence of museums as spaces where pedagogies of encounter can take place. Furthermore, the contextual differences between their particularities and origins continue to affect a broad range of structures, and forms of governance which, in turn, frame the current limits of their relational imagination. However, as other more traditional educational contexts, such as schools and universities, are considered to be increasingly instrumentalized by neo-liberal policies, parallel spaces are emerging in or around museums that claim to offer a real alternative for an emancipatory production and circulation of knowledge—as well as for an arts practice that becomes an essential element in this emancipatory movement.

This can be perceived in recent debates that have come to be identified with an ‘educational turn’. Such approaches to education and arts practice are often based on a critique of the idea of education as one-directional knowledge transfer and the promotion of open-ended creative practices, a will to connect arts production and display with specific audiences and wider social concerns, an identification of arts practice with knowledge production and



research, and the emergence of the figures of the artist-as-researcher and the artist-as-educator. However, such approaches also present tensions and paradoxes, such as a lack of assessment of the long term institutional effects it produces, a reproduction of formats that address a homogeneous community of curators, artists and academics, few references from the field of education, and a de-valuation of the role and knowledge of educators.

In the light of this, this section asks how we can begin to imagine and implement alternative and constituency-based pedagogies of encounter beyond the dichotomy between a reproductive pedagogy and an 'educational turn'. The first article by Nora Sternfeld takes as a starting point the well-known quotation by Audre Lorde regarding the impossibility of using the master's tools to dismantle the master's house in order to argue for a relational interstitial education that can challenge the existing hegemony even when it takes place in an institution of hegemonic power (a master's house) such as the museum. Yaiza Hernández critically interrogates the idea spread by the 'educational turn' that art institutions are privileged sites for emancipatory pedagogical projects since they also work to reproduce the constituted power, thus creating a permanent tension with their institutional mechanics. Hernández asks for an exercise of radical instituting imagination that accepts the challenge of letting go of control in the relation with constituents, an exercise as much needed as un-marketable to the media, sponsors, and trustees.

After these two main articles come two project studies. The first one is by Nora Landkammer and Alejandro Cevallos, both members of the Another Roadmap School for Arts Education, a wide international network of practitioners and researchers in the field of education working in a variety of contexts (museums, cultural institutions, educational centres and grass-roots organizations), who explain how they carry out their projects on education as a terrain for social and political change while challenging the usual North-South and theory-practice asymmetries. The second project study, written by Bojana Piškur, presents 'Radical Education', a project started in 2006 by Moderna galerija Ljubljana that focused on overcoming the dichotomy between institution and social movements, and challenging the traditional notion of 'participative projects'. Piškur's account of the collaboration between the gallery and the activists at the occupied social centre Rog (a former bicycle factory)—who together organized several seminars, debates,



exhibitions, and researches about the relation between arts and politics—shows how the main outcome of the process was not the stabilization of the relation but the resulting production of a new institutionality.

The section ends with a wider polyphonic account of 'Really Useful Knowledge', the exhibition held in Museo Reina Sofía in 2014–2015 that dealt with the notion of critical pedagogy as a crucial element in collective struggles and explored the tension between individual and social emancipation through education as well as its relation to organizational forms capable of resisting the reproduction of capital. Through the voices of different agents involved in the programme of public activities linked to the exhibition it is possible to understand the political and structural complexities institutions face when they create situations aspiring to radically transform their relationship with cultural and political agents (constituencies) outside them—and with knowledge production itself—thus giving a material example of what Sternfeld and Hernández discussed in their articles.

The reflections gathered in this chapter help continue the debate about the kind of relationships we want to 'put at the centre' of the museum, who will be engaged in the discussion, what forms of knowledge will be recognized and produced, to what extent is it possible to challenge the institutional and organizational limits of the museum, how fluid and open it can be and for how long before having to deal with the demands of funding agencies and legal regulations. But also, we should ask what would be the cost of not trying.



GIVE  
HER THE  
TOOLS,

'GIVE HER THE TOOLS,  
SHE WILL KNOW WHAT  
TO DO WITH THEM!'

Some Thoughts about  
Learning Together

Nora Sternfeld

SHE WILL  
KNOW  
WHAT TO  
DO WITH  
THEM!

'Give her the tools, she will know what to do with them!' The feminist London-based femme punk band Charismatic Megafauna make this plea to educational institutes, which have not been public for a long while in many places, but have instead become private establishments. All the same, the song addresses them: despite all their entirely capitalist contradictions, they may still be able to provide the tools to transform the house of the oppressor during its occupation and/or to do something completely different with it one day.

'Give her the tools, she will know what to do with them!' At first it sounds as if the recurring rhythmic refrain—to which Jenny Moore, one of Charismatic Megafauna's singers, gives various layers of meaning on stage—contradicts Audre Lorde, when she said 'the —master's tools will never dismantle the master's house'. But Lorde didn't mean that we couldn't or shouldn't do anything with powerful knowledge. Instead, she pointed out that alliances with silenced and marginalized positions are necessary in order to overcome the existing violent power relations. Are there any tools other than those of the master, other than those of this neoliberal world that is becoming increasingly fascist, of which there is no outside? In other words: Are there already tools from a different world here and now? How are they built? And how can they be applied? So how can we learn something that doesn't yet exist? On the one hand it seems paradoxical, but on the other hand that's precisely the point of a radical approach to conveying information. Political learning always saw itself as a process in view of another possibility; political education always involved learning to understand the relations in order to change them; to learn to understand them in a way in which they could perhaps only be understood in a different world, while this world might become a bit more like it as a result. In turn, this can't be done alone and is only conceivable as a collective process of self-transformation.

Museums aren't, in principle, places of radical education; like all public, civic educational spaces they are places of maintaining existing relations, places of a history of discipline and violence. And at the same time, they are places with a history and a promise of emancipation. They bear the violent legacy of colonialism, just like that of the bourgeois revolution. As places of learning, in this sense they may have something to offer another possible world—even if that would, in principle, contradict what they mean. I approach the topic of relations and learning pre-emptively. And at the same time, I take a look back. This is because I would like to pursue the

prefiguration and processuality in the history of emancipatory education and revolutionary education, in order to ask how we can use the tools we receive, and which we adopt, together, so that we can learn something about another possible world from each other.

## 1. THE TOOLS AND THE BUILDING PLAN

This anthology poses the question: What would happen if museums were to put relations at the heart of their actions? It sounds promising. But it is certainly also part of a general post-representative shift in museum discourse from representation to presence, from originality to relationality<sup>1</sup>, which is happening in parallel with immaterial economies and associated social networks. Is the relational museum therefore the master's house? In light of this question, let us consider the point in which Audre Lorde talks of tools in more detail:

... survival is not an academic skill. It is learning how to stand alone, unpopular and sometimes reviled, and how to make common cause with those others identified as outside the structures in order to define and seek a world in which we can all flourish. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.<sup>2</sup>

It's not the case that those master's tools would serve no purpose to Audre Lorde; according to her, they simply can't be the only tools with which to build another world in which everyone will flourish. In

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Nora Sternfeld, 'Inside the Post-Representative Museum', in Carmen Mörsch, Angeli Sachs and Thomas Sieber, *Contemporary Curating and Museum Education* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2016): 'In advanced exhibition theories and curatorial practices, various turns came one after another over the past years, which expanded the exhibition space in terms of its functions. There was the turn to education, to discourse, to performativity, to dance and to activism. Often, these were also interwoven. What do all of these trends have in common?—Exhibitions are no longer understood as places to exhibit valuable objects and present objective values. Instead, the focus is much more on producing spaces of possibilities, on social and physical experiences, unexpected encounters and changing debates, in which the unpredictable seems more important than exact plans as to what is displayed where. In this way, exhibitions are becoming rooms of action. Based on this premise, it is inevitable that curating and communication intertwine. I refer to this phenomenon as post-representative curating.'

<sup>2</sup> Audre Lorde, 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House', in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 2007), pp. 110–114, p. 112.



terms of relationships, she advises not only operating in a team, but also sometimes going against the current alone and, above all, doing things together with those who are outside the structures. So what does that mean today, when we have to assume that in a world of pervasive capitalization of relationships (and the increasing isolation that goes hand in hand with this), there isn't really an inside and an outside? And what does it mean when we have to assume that we probably already end up in the master's house everywhere and the master is not only living in the institutions and on the street but also in us and our relationships? If we still want to insist on the construction of another possible world, the workshop that we imagine would also have to be everywhere. We therefore need building plans that are able to transform both the inside and outside of institutions, both the existing relationships as well as future relationships, and namely with the tools that we have or that we are able to obtain.

## 2. DISMANTLE THE HOUSE: PROCESS AND MOMENT

And what does this mean in terms of conveying information? If, alongside Antonio Gramsci, we understand hegemony as something that is only based in part on force, but much more on agreement, it soon becomes clear that power needs to materialize in people's minds in learning processes. Except it can also be questioned there... In this sense, Gramsci writes: 'Every relationship of "hegemony" is necessarily an educational relationship.'<sup>3</sup>

On the one hand, learning takes place in relationships and power structures, on the other hand it is also a preparation, as everything that we learn is full of the sediment of history, but is still learnt in the present and, above all, refers to a future in which what has been learnt comes into play. Possibly and often in a completely different way than expected. (Children learn the language that is full of relationships of subordination, but they also learn words that they will teach to their children, and who knows in which world they will be spoken.) As learning has this double potential of adaptation and revolution and because it also links together what was, is and could be, it is a practice full of binding and transformative potential. Hegemony therefore presents itself as a process that constantly needs to stabilize itself and is therefore always in danger of

<sup>3</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Derek Boothman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), p. 157.

becoming destabilized. In this context, destabilization also appears as a process.

Do we now need to give up on the idea that radical change presents a great moment for this? This would be a break with Walter Benjamin's famous depiction, which poignantly describes the momentary irreversibility of the revolution, in which the clocks stand still, after being shot at during the July Revolution of 1830 in France. In the 15th section of the theses on history he writes:

The consciousness of exploding the continuum of history is peculiar to the revolutionary classes in the moment of their action. The Great Revolution introduced a new calendar. The day on which the calendar started functioning as a historical time-lapse camera. And it is fundamentally the same day which, in the shape of holidays and memorials, always returns. The calendars do not therefore count time like clocks. They are monuments of a historical awareness, of which there has not seemed to be the slightest trace for a hundred years in Europe. However, in the July Revolution an incident took place which did justice to this consciousness. During the evening of the first skirmishes, it turned out that the clock-towers were shot at independently and simultaneously in several places in Paris.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps both are true. It's certainly something different, to learn and teach *in view of* a new frontier and to learn and teach *in* a new frontier. It was, for example, actually a completely different type learning and teaching when my seminar, which dealt with critical practices of learning and exhibiting, took place as 'squatting teaching' in the occupied auditorium of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna from 20 October 2009 until the end of the semester.<sup>5</sup> The moment of occupation changed everything: we discussed in the name of education and in the space of a different reality to the neoliberal economization of education. And nevertheless, none of the discussions that had come before lost any of their meaning. Who knows, perhaps they even had something to do with the fact that it had come to occupation.

<sup>4</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'On the Concept of History' (1940), XV, [www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm](http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm).

<sup>5</sup> <http://no-racism.net/article/3149/>.



In order to understand the simultaneity of process and moment in 'revolutionary practice' I would like to recall Marx' famous third thesis on Feuerbach, which raises the question as to who educates the educators:

The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of changed circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men who change circumstances and that the educator must himself be educated. Hence this doctrine is bound to divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society. The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-change can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionary practice.<sup>6</sup>

If we want to think of radical mediation in regard to a radical change, it is probably both process and moment.

### 3. LEARNING IN ADVANCE

If we assume that learning can serve to challenge the existing hegemony, this happens in two ways: On the one hand, the existing truths and forms of knowledge often become fragile, debatable and disputable. On the other hand, other forms of knowledge may come to light. These relate to the knowledge of fighting, but also the knowledge of another possibility. In their book *The Undercommons* Stefano Harney and Fred Moten quote C.L.R. James with the wonderful words:

I am a black man number one, because I am against what they have done and are still doing to us; and number two, I have something to say about the new society to be built because I have a tremendous part in that which they have sought to discredit. C.L.R. James, *C.L.R. James: His Life and Work*.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Karl Marx, 'Theses on Feuerbach' (1845), in *Works of Marx and Engels*, Vol. 3 (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1969), p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (Wivenhoe, New York and Port Watson: Minor Compositions, 2013), p. 25.





There is therefore a knowledge of the 'undercommons' that we can learn from each other. For this knowledge, Harney and Moten believe that there is always, in institutions, in the street, at night, context for what they call 'study': a practice of coming together and learning together. Spending time together and with the topics, without established objectives and schedules—and above all without credit points.<sup>8</sup> It is a type of learning in the interstices of institutions, in the interstices of economization. In this way, we learn another possible world from each other. And that can't be done alone, but only as a collective process.

As such a process, the anticipation of the other world seeks to achieve hegemony in the 'positional war'. But sometimes it is first and foremost about surviving—about surviving the winter of another possible future. And that takes us back to the master's house again. How can spaces be created in order to think and structures in order to survive in this neoliberal, increasingly fascist world? And does the master's house actually belong to the master? Or have we not already been occupying its interstices for a long time?

And who are we then, if we build like this? Bini Adamczak, a Berlin-based philosopher and queer communist theorist, researches 'types of relations'. She asks what would happen if we could already imagine the other society that we want to fight for, and comes to this conclusion:

In order to succeed, an emancipatory revolution must already anticipate moments of utopia that it attempts to realise, at the same time this utopia must not be purged of all moments of revolution, for the sake of which the revolution becomes sought-after and contrived. The proposal about how this historical problem could be countered, is to conceive the revolution as less of a seizure of power and more of a process of social transformation, at the centre of which isn't the destruction of the ruling society, but instead the construction of a society free of rulers.<sup>9</sup>

In her work, Adamczak focuses on relations. She recommends that 'we' no longer define ourselves through identities, but instead through relations and that these relations in turn are now being

<sup>8</sup> 'Stefano Harney on Study (Interview July 2011, Part 5)', [www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wIoBdY72do](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wIoBdY72do).

<sup>9</sup> Bini Adamczak, *Beziehungswiese Revolution: 1917, 1968 und kommende* (Berlin: unpublished manuscript, 2016), p. 178.

reconstructed with regard to a different world, and namely as relations of freedom, equality and solidarity. It is possible in neoliberal capitalism, in which the public space is gentrified and capitalized, that everything becomes interstices. In a third space of the undercommons, in which such relations have been made impossible (because we always have to compete with each other, with every open call, at every workplace and on every Facebook wall we become numbers that are compared against each other), we reinvent the relations every day with the tools that we have. And so we build—freely, equally, and learning from each other in solidarity—these relations that shouldn't actually exist, and therefore a space between us, a para-institutional space, which is taking hold in the midst of institutions in view of another world.

# A CONSTITUENT EDUCATION

A CONSTITUENT EDUCATION

Yaiza Hernández Vélazquez



It's been a while since the 'pedagogical turn' became a curatorial label and despite the variety of the practices it served to encompass, they all shared the functional premise that art institutions were adequate sites from which to launch emancipatory pedagogical projects that, while urgently needed, were not being advanced elsewhere.

As has been pointed out, this required a certain degree of institutional blindness, however strategic it was deemed to be. Hence, linking a 'pedagogy of the encounter'—described as one that 'takes into account the contradictions, resistances, failures and conditions' of the relations it establishes—to the project of a 'constituent museum'—described as one that 'puts relationships at the centre of their operation'—might provide a salutary antidote.

It is important, however, that we don't lose sight of the speculative, rather than descriptive character of this task. Existing museums are not just part of the institutional framework of a constituted power, but instituted in such a manner that they work in myriad ways to reproduce it. While normally camouflaged, this power can make itself forcibly present if this dynamic is sufficiently threatened. Those institutions whose programmes have aligned themselves with emancipatory projects (including those within L'Internationale network) have often done so in complex contradiction with their institutional mechanics. The once useful call to put 'discourse first' must now be radicalized, avoiding the thematic understanding that has been the norm and recognizing that the normativity of our institutions provides the first order of that discourse.

Hence, a constituent museum cannot be imagined as an institution that simply develops out of the gradual reform of existing ones, however well-meaning these reformist drives might be. Needless to say, it is also not to be achieved by sheer representation—a million symposia about constituent museums do not make a constituent museum. It requires instead a wholesale exercise of radical instituting imagination for which, I would like to suggest, two questions are crucial. The first

pertains the primacy of the constituents, the second the primacy of autonomy.

We can only start from the constituents, so the first task of a pedagogy of the encounter might be, indeed, to facilitate their encounter. This may sound like too literal a reading of that new institutional call to turn museums (at least partly) into 'community centres'. Not only was this call the one that new institutionalism most glaringly failed to live up to, but for those museums still in a position to do so, the task is now urgent. We cannot continue to accept the false choice between keeping it exclusive and paternalistically embracing inclusivity agendas that leave that into which one is to be included untouched. We are being bombarded with the idea that society has become polarized (with the art world finding itself on the wrong side—the metropolitan, liberal, privileged side—of 'the people'). This reductive dualism can and must be refused in both imagination and action, and creating the spaces in which to meet will require both. Paradox, clash, dissent, disagreements, the unscripted... all this will be a starting point, not be celebrated, but endlessly worked through. But alongside all this, there will also be shared desires, resentments, aspirations, and needs.

A pedagogy of the encounter might then become the collective task of committing to a constituent process without claiming any authority over it, an assembly from below that slowly undoes the one that stands above. A project that will necessarily be slow, trans-generational and liable to produce only the most underwhelming kind of press-releases. But any rhetoric that turns radical intentions into epic narratives will not just be superfluous, but counterproductive. If actually existing museums want to engage in this



project, they will need to radically let go. Quite possibly let go of their sponsors and trustees, of their simultaneous commitments to 'public service' and public relations, but also let go of their fidelity to well-laid plans and projects, of their vertical authorial and authoritative structures, of their 'missions' to preserve and display a given version of art, and certainly to let go of the idea that, somehow, they are already engaged in working towards our collective emancipation and only our willingness to take part in their programmes is still found wanting.

In other words, a pedagogy of the encounter aligned to this project must also shed the autonomy it believes it already has. As we know, the museum in its current shape emerged alongside an emancipatory project that allowed aesthetic judgement to stand as a marker of the universality and equality of all subjects, one that underwrote their ability to self-legislate. But once that autonomy was offloaded onto the artworks themselves, they quickly became a testing-ground for those who would be deemed less than equal; the museum became complicit with a civilizing project, and self-legislation turned into self-disciplining and pre-emptive subordination. If museums deserve to be salvaged at all today it is on the basis of the promises they have broken and not those they have kept. We have to learn anew how to imagine our autonomy as something more than the culmination of a project of self-cultivation. The promise of freedom achieved at an individual level has lost its credibility and much of its appeal. A pedagogy of the encounter refuses the individual epic of the *Bildung* in favour of an autonomy that works collectively to imagine its norms; the constituent museum, by refusing those norms any sovereignty might offer itself as its training ground.



3.04

Project study

ANOTHER ROAD MAP SCHOOL  
FOR ARTS EDUCATION

Alejandro Cevallos  
Narváez and  
Nora Landkammer

# ANOTHER ROAD MAP FOR SCHOOL ARTS EDUCATION



3.04.01 – Mapping alternative art education practices in Russia, a table game organized by Nastia Tarasova and Maria Sarycheva, Vienna, 2017. Archive of the School. Photo: Maja Renn

In 2006, UNESCO published the Road Map for Arts Education within the framework of the first World Conference on Arts Education: Building Creative Capacities for the twenty-first century. This document, in its aim to set up a framework to define arts education that is global in scope, did not include the main problems for thinking about art and education as practices committed to social justice, nor did it make an issue of the possible dialogue of knowledge between artists and educators, between North and South, and between social struggles and the practice of arts education.<sup>1</sup>

Within this context, Another Road Map School for Arts Education made the decision to turn its attentions towards the recognition of local histories and genealogies of critical and popular education, the analysis of the transfer of European art and education concepts to the Global South to reveal colonial continuity, and the

development of alternative practices in educational action and research.

Although each of the school's member groups has the autonomy to decide their own agenda and research methodology, the questions that pervade permanent cooperation emerge from assemblies and intensive workshops. The 'history cluster', for instance, researches the dissemination of Western concepts of art and education in a colonial context, as well as the migration of emancipatory pedagogical practices, which activate a historical perspective and contributes to today's critical practice.

Meanwhile, the 'popular education cluster' proposes a re-cognition of popular educators' theoretical and methodological genealogies and contributions in different contexts and moments throughout history, centring on their links to social movements and the resistance they have developed in the face of institutionality to bring reflections, resources and tools from these histories to bear on current practices and debates.

<sup>1</sup> See the initial critiques of the Road Map and the history of the project here: <http://colivre.net/another-roadmap/project-history>.





The shared questions in these and other clusters<sup>2</sup> demand highly specific tasks when it comes to sharing theoretical frameworks and methodologies, archives, oral history and interviews, generating a vibrant flow of ideas and information that does not conventionally run through academic mediums. Exchange also involves constantly dealing with translation; therefore, the 'Multi-Vocal Glossary' has enabled us to discuss education- and art-related terms and concepts that bear relevance to a local perspective, thereby avoiding the traditional privilege of



3.04.02 – Assembly of the Another Roadmap School, Intermediae, Madrid, 2016. Archive of the School. Photo: Lukasz Michalak

European/Western concepts and facilitating dialogue between spokespersons located in different places in a world economy of knowledge. Rather than consensus, the aim is a myriad of voices and the juxtaposition of meanings, which remain recorded in texts and video conferences and are later made public.<sup>3</sup>

The school's organizers have implemented a mode of governance by forming a committee with a rotation of members from different cities that make up the

<sup>2</sup> See all Clusters here: <http://colivre.net/another-roadmap/cluster-projects>,

<sup>3</sup> See the Multi-Vocal Glossary here: <http://colivre.net/another-roadmap/a-multivocal-glossary-of-arts-educationun-glosario-multivocal-de-educacion-artistica>.

network and who are linked to institutional or academic spaces or do freelance or activist work. This not only implies shared responsibility in decision-making, but also constitutes a space of deliberation regarding concepts, methodology and the use of the project's economic resources. This issue cannot be considered a minor one, considering the appalling socio-economic disparities that differentiate us, and the customary financing requirements for international exchange projects; therefore, we avoid two harmful images with which we are familiar in the field of research.

This first is the location of the researcher in the North and the informant in the South, the second the contemplative position from which he or she thinks and theorizes on the basis of what the other does with his or her hands.

Thus, the model of governance is not merely an ethical issue; instead it gives rise to conditions for a truly collective imagination. Although the organizational model does not resolve all the tensions and inequalities under which we operate, it has provided us with a framework for our work that is open to ongoing intervention, alteration and new questions that arise.

The school suggests that research is related to and gains relevance in local practice, from the curriculum design of a class to the design of strategies to transform cultural institutions, or the conceptualization of tools for organizing and empowering grassroots communities. Although it is too early to refer to these processes at length, the connections between problems and socially committed actions carried out by workgroups in their exchanges is generating an unexpected fabric of solidarity.



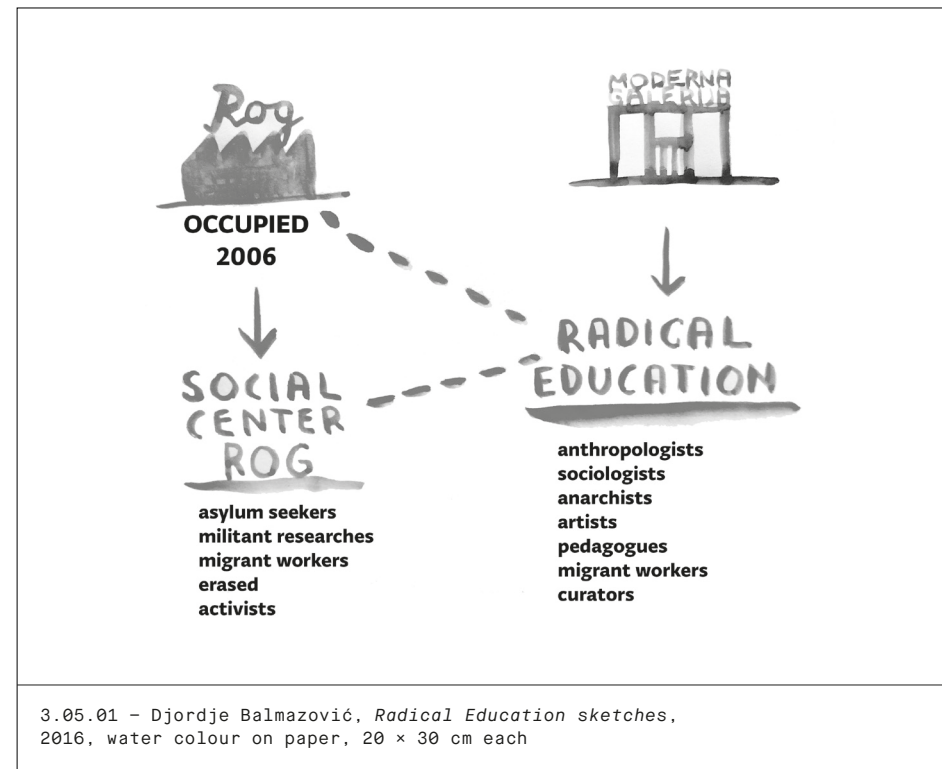
3.04.03 – Workshop 'Paulo Freire: reception and contestation in art education', Vienna, 2017. Archive of the School. Photo: Maja Renn



# POSSIBILITIES FOR EMANCIPATION

POSSIBILITIES FOR EMANCIPATION

Bojana Piškur



Radical Education (RE) was initiated as a project within a public art institution, Moderna galerija Ljubljana (MG), in 2006 in order to direct itself, through analysis of its own work, 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 the Rog bicycle factory in Ljubljana, in 2006. In RE, from the very beginning, the ways of opening the museum for various 'publics' 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, at the same time RE was also a rather heterogeneous group of people with different backgrounds and experiences of working in communities and institutions, so as a consequence, very different and sometimes rather conflictual ideas arose on what kind of space a museum actually was.

From the very beginning, RE tried to connect two institutions: the museum:

Moderna galerija, and the movement: social centre 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 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.

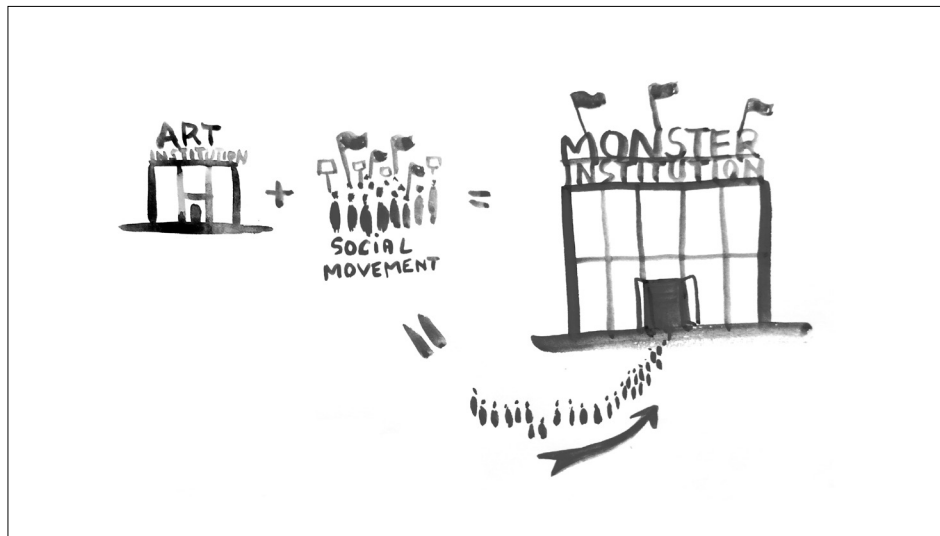
With all these considerations in mind, a series of seminars were organized jointly with the social centre Rog and Moderna galerija. One of the themes was 'Resistance as Creation', which was organized with the invisible workers of the world: asylum seekers, activists, cultural workers, artists, militant researchers. There were discussions about relationship

between social centres, artist 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 to not only 'learn from' institutions but to pass on the knowledge to movements and collectives; to invent new conceptual, expressive and organizational tools in order to empower the '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 etc., 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'. For example, a 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 in itself. Is manual labour as such an aesthetic experience? What about art that repeats labour? Is this experience limited only to 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 researches by RE was that they were also based on a re-examination of one's own position and a 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 MG, the answer would probably be that RE was in fact 'a series of failures'. This is certainly not meant in a negative way, quite the opposite. This process, project, methodology, a collective or a 'constituency' called RE, was never realized in a way for it to become the brand of an institution. It never quite lived up to the expectations of what a project, a seminar or an exhibition should achieve and in what

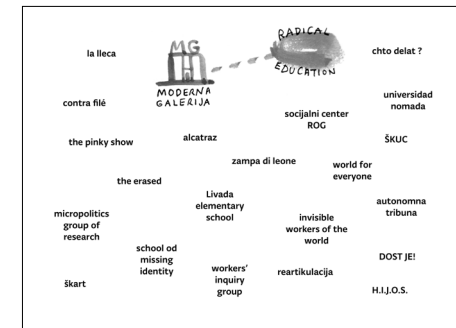


3.05.02 - Djordje Balmazović, *Radical Education sketches*, 2016, water colour on paper, 20 x 30 cm each

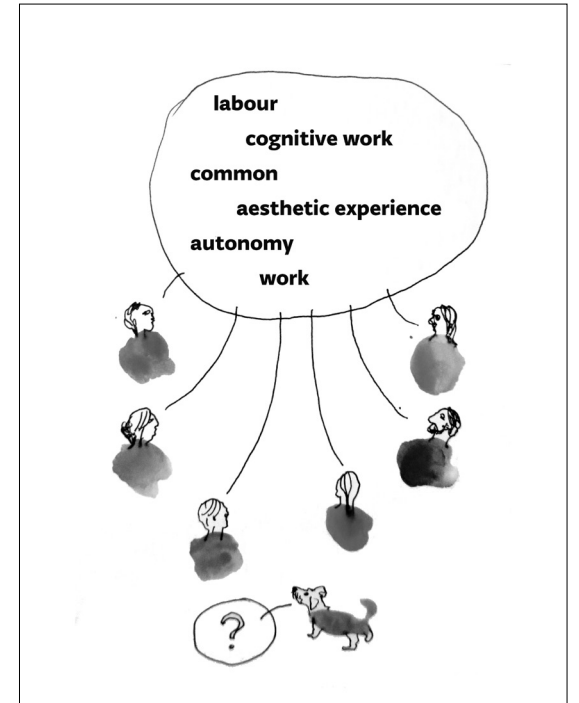


way, because with RE there always existed a space of unpredictability, an unknown domain of arts and politics. In 2014 RE came to the point where this kind of intervention in the space of an art institution became unnecessary. Certainly, not unnecessary in the sense that the museum became an ideal institution, but that the ideas of RE in a way had become embedded in debates on 'other institutionality' within the museum itself.

So, to conclude: what we learned from RE was that what art and social movements have in common is not about content, such as art views on social resistance. It is also not the assumption that the site of artistic transformation can also be the site of political transformation. What was relevant in the particular relationship between art institution and RE was the question of how to link political and artistic imagination with the production of new institutions.



3.05.03 - Djordje Balmazović, *Radical Education sketches*, 2016, water colour on paper, 20 x 30 cm each



3.05.04 - Djordje Balmazović, *Radical Education sketches*, 2016, water colour on paper, 20 x 30 cm each



# 'REALLY USEFUL

'REALLY USEFUL KNOWLEDGE'

Manuel Borja-Villel

# KNOWLEDGE'

'Really Useful Knowledge' concluded a series of shows and actions that sought to analyze the cultural implications of the 15M anti-austerity movement from inside the Museo Reina Sofía. In March 2011, *Continuará* (To Be Continued), an installation by the Bosnian artist Maja Bajevic for the Palacio de Cristal, marked the start of this strand of work, which continued in February 2014 with a major encounter bringing together activists and social movements, in collaboration with Fundación de los Comunes and entitled 'The New Abduction of Europe'. This was brought to a close with two exhibition projects: 'Playgrounds', held over the first six months of 2014, and the aforementioned 'Really Useful Knowledge', running through the autumn of that same year. Both exhibitions—in essay form—were staged in the Sabatini Building's foremost galleries, and offered a reflection on education, creative and non-normative play, the changes to public space in modern times and the different ways squares are occupied, bringing to light the devices that condition and even determine meanings and forms of agency.

Power structures work from the outside by way of statements and slogans, and from the inside through regulations that hinder or obstruct dissent. Coercion applied in museums is related to the demands imposed to respond to a prescriptive idea of exactly what the institution is, its responsibilities and to whom it must be addressed. It is aligned towards creating a programme of consensus, whereby differences are concealed or reduced to merely formal aspects. Utilitarian reasoning predominates and, under the excuse that museums must be oriented towards the public at large, significant pressure is exerted on them to prevent any upset or offence, particularly if it might damage the brand or trouble potential patrons.

This was the general background we faced in the organization of 'Really Useful Knowledge'. The 'really useful' part of the title contradicted the logic of the museum's institutional and administrative apparatus and, from the outset, it sought to ensure that the exhibition mechanism blurred the limits established between art and politics, or, as Jesús Carrillo asserts in his text published in this book, between the white cube and public space. Consequently, the need to consider structures of open mediation and negotiation was imperative, and became one of the chief aims of this project and the reason why the museum, in collaboration with the show's curators, turned to the collective Subtramas for the design and implementation of a space and programme for this mediation to unfold.





'Really Useful Knowledge' was the culmination of a process which, from a curatorial and institutional perspective, posed challenges and took substantial steps towards the museum becoming more involved in society and in the knowledge and promotion of alternative artistic practices. Yet it also substantiated the institution's struggles to redefine its own limits and reflected culture as a battlefield of political hegemony. In displaying a piece by the activist collective *Mujeres Públicas* that was critical of the Church, the museum's direction was accused of promoting hatred, and a lawsuit was filed against the museum by the Catholic organization *Hazte Oír*, first locally and later nationally. In both instances, the lawsuit was dismissed by the magistrate; however, the legal process loomed large over the team involved in the project, regretfully conditioning the normal running of activities. In the public arena, the lawsuit and ensuing controversy gave rise to the appearance of groups that were highly aggressive and intolerant towards dissident attitudes, and while 15 May 2011 denoted the dawn of one of the biggest periods of social transformation in recent decades, *Hazte Oír's* attack on the content of 'Really Useful Knowledge' signalled, on a local level, what today seems like the start of a period of global restoration. During times of great political instability power tends to close in on itself and repress any form of discordance by force, be it police force or in more subtle ways, by worsening administrative processes or inculcating adverse public opinion via carefully crafted media campaigns. The protest that met Judith Butler in Rio de Janeiro's airport just a few months earlier is symptomatic of this new spirit.

This exhibition was also valuable as a case study and model of institutional critique in the present, in clear contrast to the times that illuminated figures such as Hans Haacke and Marcel Broodthaers. These and other artists made us see that the art institution is not an autonomous space separated from society, nor is it a neutral structure where different options occupy a place that is disconnected from the outside. More precisely, it is a complex device that is part of a greater set of cogs; that is, machinery in which artworks, the narratives emerging out of them, images and opinions, artists and audiences are endlessly joined and interrelated.

The machine concept is tightly bound to capitalism, and is the form it uses to install order as it seeks to generate resources in the most efficient way possible and to guarantee that its modes of production continue. There are no dark forces that decide things, but

rather a machine structure multiplying and repressing anything that escapes from that which is established. To believe that a museum is good or bad *per se* is to simplify critique and, in turn, disconnect it and render it ineffective. In fact, one branch of contemporary art critique has frequently fallen into the trap of being too discursive, questioning aspects that refer to ideas and language, but without considering pre- and post-linguistic elements, those concerning gestures, behaviours and sensibilities. This, perhaps, is more serious in the depoliticized time in which we find ourselves, where forms of power are undefined, opaque, and where social media often deactivate the will to know, confusing it with the desire to believe or follow a news story with no regard for its veracity.

All political action in an institution must take place from self-reflection and self-critique, for questioning the museum is not enough; there is a need to democratize it. Therefore, questioning is essential and only becomes effective when it occurs inside an agorized space, in which different proposals in a system of equality are negotiated, regardless of the place occupied on an organization chart and always out of respect for the responsibilities of all. When we talk of mediation we often do so pointing in one direction—from the inside out—or it is considered merely in the link established between artists, curators, educators and the public, without additionally imagining that there are other collectives, each one with their level of autonomy and specific role, dependent upon broader structures involving the museum as well as other public authorities. The mediation work conducted by *Subtramas* highlighted the institution's resistance to doing certain things and a degree of naivety and over-evaluation of its own skills. For instance, the group of security guards at the museum refused to participate in a performance reading of complaints and suggestions, for although the mediators believed it was a critique of the museum, the security staff felt their work was being judged. Maybe they had a point.



'REALLY USEFUL  
KNOWLEDGE' AND  
INSTITUTIONAL  
LEARNING

Jesús Carrillo

The Museo Reina Sofía's Public Activities Department came into being in 2008—under the management of Berta Sureda—with the far from simple task of opening up the institution in two complementary directions: the processes and social dynamics beyond its walls, and the rigid bureaucratic compartmentalization internally structuring the museum. By the very nature of the department, bringing down the internal and external walls involved linking the near-invisible processes of research, debate, negotiation and mediation, and so it remained out of the spotlights.

Within this context, contact was initially made with the Subtramas collective as part of a research residency coordinated from the Public Activities Department since 2011.<sup>1</sup> During this residency, Subtramas materialized as a highly sophisticated negotiation device with the museum, which prompted and allowed the department to deploy—materially, specifically and continually—the premises of recognition and collaboration with the outside agents forming its mission. This collaboration also saw the museum's capacity to open the cracks in the production of knowledge put to the test through participation and collective work, a stark contrast to the institution's spaces of production.<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, the museum promoted the curatorial project 'Really Useful Knowledge' to give continuity to its reflections on the production of knowledge and critical pedagogy, thereby challenging, from its own conception, the logics and procedures that govern and define a museum. The 'real use' of knowledge it called upon contradicted, in many ways, the institution's administrative and operational reasoning and, accordingly, the exhibition device designed by the curatorial collective WHW (What, How and for Whom) sought to effectively move beyond that reasoning, which presides over the strict separation between processes and results, exhibition and action, white cube and public space, between artistic practice and public intervention.

WHW's approaches to the exhibition 'Really Useful Knowledge' granted the Public Activities Department a brighter spotlight than usually found in a conventional exhibition; even from the first preparatory meetings there was talk of the need to possess an instrument of dialogue and negotiation with the collectives and

<sup>1</sup> [www.museoreinasofia.es/pedagogias/centro-de-estudios/residencias-investigacion/2011-2012](http://www.museoreinasofia.es/pedagogias/centro-de-estudios/residencias-investigacion/2011-2012).

<sup>2</sup> It must be noted that in the same year, in conjunction with the occupy movements that emerged around the 15-M anti-austerity movement, Madrid's streets and squares were filled with anonymous citizens vindicating the capacity and power of collective organization in the face of an obsolete institutional system.

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"Really Useful Knowledge"  
and Institutional Learning'  
continues on page 194

**SHOW THEM  
HOW IT  
WORKS**  
*(it does work)*

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Janna Graham  
1.03

As artists and designers,  
as thinkers, as inhabitants  
and makers of the worlds  
we live in, we need a  
responsible practice that  
makes us aware of the things  
we care about and the ways  
in which such care matters:  
the impact it has in the  
mattering of the world.

Alberto Altes  
2.02

RESPONSIBLE

## HONEST SHOP

THE SHOP WILL BE HONEST  
ABOUT THE PRODUCTS,  
PEOPLE AND PLACE.

THE PRODUCE WILL  
ACTUALLY BE LOCAL  
AND HOMEMADE.

BY PEOPLE LIVING HERE,  
USING THEIR FINGERS OR  
THE FINGERS OF FRIENDS.

THE PACKAGING  
WILL BE RECYCLED  
OR RECYCLABLE.

THERE WILL BE NO  
AIR MILES, ROAD MILES  
OR FAKE SMILES.

THE SHOP IS AN  
ACT OF TRUST  
AND GENEROSITY.

So says the sign hanging over the Honest Shop. This retail establishment has neither staff nor employees. Locally made and locally grown products are displayed on its shelves, forming a proud, effervescent cacophony of individual effort and collective intent: gingerbread, Eccles cakes, potatoes, crochet animals, fresh cut flowers, hand-painted postcards, carved bone brooches, turned wooden bowls. Some things are beautiful. Some things are downright ugly. Quality is not guaranteed.

Alistair Hudson  
2.06



'Museum of Arte Útil', 7 December 2013–30 March 2014, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, curator exhibitions: Annie Fletcher, guest curator: Nick Aikens, project of L'Internationale, a confederation of six leading museums of modern art. Travelling exhibition: Queens Museum, New York (2013). Photo: Perry van Duijnhoven





## ¿CÓMO ACTIVAMOS LA IMAGINACIÓN PARA CREAR UNA FELICIDAD DISTINTA A LA QUE ORGANIZA EL CAPITALISMO?



Subtramas, *How could we energize our imagination to envision a form of non-capitalist managed happiness?*, banner 2 in *Four Questions for a Usefulness to Come*, part of 'Really Useful Knowledge', Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2014. Courtesy of the artists

'Really Useful Knowledge' was the culmination of a process which, from a curatorial and institutional perspective, posed challenges and took substantial steps towards the museum becoming more involved in society and in the knowledge and promotion of alternative artistic practices. Yet it also substantiated its own limits and struggles to redefine a battlefield of political hegemony.

Manuel Borja-Villel  
3.06

But if we  
are indeed  
at war, the  
first thing  
we must do  
is to reject  
a battleground  
someone  
else has  
previously  
established

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Jesús Carillo  
4.02



## ¿POR QUÉ ES ÚTIL APRENDER JUNTOS?



3.06-11.01 - Subtramas, *Why is learning together useful?*, banner 1 in *Four Questions for a Usefulness Still to Come*, part of 'Really Useful Knowledge', Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2014. Courtesy of the artists

the premises of 'Really Useful Knowledge' to Madrid in 2014, and, rather than operating inside the cracks of the institution—as with the projects previously coordinated by the Public Activities Department—it would instead hold a central space and time frame in the exhibition. The 'useful knowledge' gathered during the previous collaboration experience had formed the substrata to build a process that, for many reasons, went further than the museum's conventional channels of action. During the research residency, the Subtramas collective demonstrated a profound understanding of the institution's particular circumstances, as well as an unrelenting will to negotiate, which enabled us to face a new challenge from a fresh atmosphere of trust and recognition.

The lengthy process to establish a point of contact and dialogue with different social collectives that were to work with Subtramas required different components to join as double agents in the museum. As members of the Exhibitions and Public Activities Departments, we had the difficult task of channelling the flow and energy of social movements towards the institution, and sought to avoid that the process stumbled and broke because of mutual mistrust. We also wanted to avoid the museum's constraints and inertia smothering any flicker of disagreement or turning it into mere simulation. The participatory and non-bureaucratic modes and methods were conducive to negotiations which, at the museum, we viewed as appropriate but which the institutional machinery tended to hamper.

social movements that were highly active in Madrid at the time. Moreover, the curators did not want the said process of dialogue and negotiation to be a device that stood outside the exhibition and had to be implemented by the museum's mediation service; they wanted it to be a key component of the show.

Over the course of these meetings, proposals were made to incorporate the work of the Subtramas collective as an artistic practice that would connect

The launch of the exhibition and the mediation and activation actions designed by Subtramas tested the Exhibitions and Public Activities Department's ability to guarantee the conditions to make this possible. The lawsuit filed against the museum on the first day of the exhibition by an association of Christian lawyers over the display of a box of matches by the Mujeres Públicas collective, bearing the incendiary anarchist slogan 'The only church that illuminates is the one that burns', revealed the project's vulnerability. Nevertheless, the care taken by all, and the shared conviction with Subtramas of the value of mediation, ensured that, despite the various pitfalls, the process of real intervention with different social movements that turned the exhibition into a genuine agora would never flounder.

Inside the museum, the overhaul of the power of collectively produced knowledge had, to our understanding, also generated new and 'really useful' knowledge in the institution. Those of us in the museum who participated in the project knew that the institutional transformation we were proclaiming from a theoretical and discursive sphere would only come about through the learning that surfaced from the friction and negotiation with the outside. That is, through the acknowledgement of the instituent power of the social and the suitability of our procedures and aims to the implications in such recognition. The work carried out in collaboration with Subtramas and the collectives that participated in 'Really Useful Knowledge' proved to even the biggest pessimists that such institutional learning is really possible; however, it also taught the most naïve that this does not necessarily impact on the same institution from which it is awakened.

## ¿CÓMO ACTIVAMOS LA IMAGINACIÓN PARA CREAR UNA FELICIDAD DISTINTA A LA QUE ORGANIZA EL CAPITALISMO?



3.06-11.02 - Subtramas, *How could we energize our imagination to envision a form of non-capitalist managed happiness?*, banner 2 in *Four Questions for a Usefulness Still to Come*, part of 'Really Useful Knowledge', Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2014. Courtesy of the artists





# BETWEEN ACTS

BETWEEN ACTS: INFLUENCE,  
NEGOTIATE, ENCOUNTER,  
INSTIGATE, NARRATE

Re-writing the Relations  
Between Art and Situated  
Knowledge Found in  
Times of Crisis

Subtramas (Virginia  
Villaplana, Montse Romani  
and Diego del Pozo)

# INFLUENCE, NEGOTIATE, ENCOUNTER, INSTIGATE, NARRATE

Subtramas is an art collective that explores the intersections between audio-visuals, radical pedagogies, collaborative practices and social activism through research and production. When the Museo Reina Sofía invited us to produce an installation and programme of public actions inside the framework of the exhibition 'Really Useful Knowledge' we saw it as an opportunity to transfer the collaborative learning and common knowledge from the local social sphere to the museum sphere, and to set up dynamics of interdependency between both in order to foster narratives, gazes, frictions and shared places.

With this objective in mind, we produced an installation entitled *Four Questions for a Usefulness Still to Come*, which put forward a broad programme of public activities and art events based on modes of performative mediation,<sup>1</sup> and we drew from different intersections between art and activism involved in the terrain of queer radical feminist pedagogy, popular education, participative research and other movements that opposed the notion of culture, health, and education as merchandise in a neoliberal context.

The government policies creating precarity, vulnerability and the 'austericide' during the financial crisis in Spain led us to wonder how they affect forms of cultural production and the role of the museum as a public institution. In what way can the museum, having already integrated new institutionality, strengthen a type of institution in tune with the debates arising on the streets since the 15M anti-austerity movement in 2011, with the drive of social movements such as Marea Verde (Green Tide, in defence of education) and Marea Blanca (White Tide, in defence of health-care), among others? To what extent can an exhibition like 'Really Useful Knowledge' assimilate collaborative learning and common knowledge at the heart of its arrangement and place them in dialogue-circulation with museum visitors?

Agency, precariousness, vulnerability, another affectivity, process and resistance are the key concepts we relate to these questions, since they entail the power of transformation into collectivity through processes of social re-presentation, which in turn politically bolster collective practices as political practices. Therefore, we invited various cultural groups and autonomous

<sup>1</sup> See full programme of public actions:  
[www.museoreinasofia.es/en/activities/actions-really-useful-knowledge](http://www.museoreinasofia.es/en/activities/actions-really-useful-knowledge)  
[www.museoreinasofia.es/multimedia/acciones-publicas-saberes-realmente-utiles](http://www.museoreinasofia.es/multimedia/acciones-publicas-saberes-realmente-utiles)  
See tours around 'Really Useful Knowledge' in the form of moving assemblies:  
[www.museoreinasofia.es/visita/tipos-visita/visita-comentada/recorridos-saber-realmente-util](http://www.museoreinasofia.es/visita/tipos-visita/visita-comentada/recorridos-saber-realmente-util) (accessed 20 February 2017).



groups from Spain—some of which were linked to the mobilizations against the austerity policies initiated by the Spanish government with the consent of the IMF, OECD and the EU<sup>2</sup>—to intervene inside the Subtramas installation in the exhibition spaces.

The programmes we set forth during the show included artistic routes of co-learning as well as actions and narratives performed in collaboration with the aforementioned groups. Among other uses, these public actions sought to experiment with the time and knowledge that do not come from authorized spaces, and which, by their very nature, constitute an essential political value. We viewed them as a kind of intermissions, which, in the case of the Mareas (Tides), were located in a symbolic and politically off-centre place as actions of street protest. These actions took on the form of ‘situated’ devices (the assembly circle, the walking assemblies around the exhibition and in the street, the group performance actions) to



3.06-11.03 - Subtramas, overview of *Four Questions for a Usefulness Still to Come*, installation, part of 'Really Useful Knowledge', Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2014. Courtesy of the artists

<sup>2</sup> The invited groups were: Contrabandos; Bookcamping; ¡Esta es una plaza!; El Patio Maravillas; La casa invisible; Observatorio Metropolitano de Barcelona; Las Lindes; Cine Sin Autor; the Museo Reina Sofía's Education Department; Declinación Magnética; somateca; different feminist and queer groups coordinated by Fefa Vila; anonymous people who read out a selection from a book containing complaints, suggestions and feedback written by Museo Reina Sofía visitors; member groups of the Marea Verde movement for public education; Yo Sí Sanidad Universal; Marea Blanca, in defence of public healthcare; Senda de Cuidados; Territorio Doméstico and Península.

foster processes of estrangement and subjectivation, the agency between people and/or collectives—sometimes pre-meditated, often unforeseen—and states of co-existence, where knowledge and learning were produced through a relationship of non-hierarchical exchange.

Taking the results of the group interventions we made two films: *Me acuerdo* (I Remember),<sup>3</sup> in which different queer feminist groups narrate the conquests of sexual diversity rights and their political processes of collective learning over recent decades in Spain. And *Marea Blanca. Instigando Salud* (White Tide, Instigating Health), a performance structured around a ‘Greek choir’ comprising doctors, nurses, patients and hospital attendants, with the chorus of ‘public healthcare is in danger. Defend it. Defend it. Defend it’ sung in unison and alternated with first-person statements of people affected by the Madrid Community’s government’s attempt to privatize public healthcare.

To develop what we called performative mediation we used the artist’s autonomy,<sup>4</sup> activating a set of practices, knowledge and tools which were turned into art to produce actions in the exhibition space. We placed these artistic practices, which today embody renewed expressions of the political, in a redefinition of this autonomy. Moreover, it is worth noting that the exhibition spaces in Museo Reina Sofía had not previously hosted anything similar and contrasted with the usual contemplative wanderings of its visitors.

We wanted to rethink the political and aesthetic potential of the exhibition, understood as a hegemonic device in the museum, to integrate a performative element into the cultural programmes it had organized in the auditoriums as an activity running parallel to the exhibitions. Therefore, we provided a counterpoint to the exhibitions that the museum devoted to the ruptures of modernity, confronting the strategic fissures that contemporary art can produce today. We were looking to guarantee that the political stance of our project was not questioned by the processes demanded by the production of the exhibition, the institution’s protocols or, worse

<sup>3</sup> The two films were later included in the installation *A Political Reenactment*, produced by Subtramas for the collective exhibition 'Politics of Affinities', curated by Silvia Franceschini (1 July–31 December 2016, Cittadellarte-Fondazione Michelangelo Pistoletto). The exhibition also featured the participation of: La Iván Illich de Beta Local (Puerto Rico), The School of Image and Evidence (Kiev), Chto Delat School of Engaged Art (Saint Petersburg), SPEAP, Sciences Po Experimentation in Arts and Politics (Paris).

<sup>4</sup> Meredith Malone, 'Andrea Fraser: What do I, as an artist, provide?', 2005, [www.kemperartmuseum.wustl.edu/files/AndreaFraser.pdf](http://www.kemperartmuseum.wustl.edu/files/AndreaFraser.pdf) (accessed 19 July 2017). Here we recover Andrea Fraser's notion of art's autonomy regarding the power of place as resistance.



still, was not co-opted or instrumentalized by the institution. As a collective, this situation put us in an at once conflicting and highly precarious position, and we took on a huge task that was only possible through fully committed involvement and effort, and with a slower and more specific time frame.

The involvement and collaboration of many of the institution's workers undoubtedly played a part in producing our work, yet it is also worth noting that the enormous amount of time, work, and affects invested in producing and negotiating the whole process was also paramount. For instance, the work with the associations, collectives and organizations to ensure they were involved in the project, particularly given that some did not have a direct relationship with cultural and artistic production. The artistic performative mediation proved to be useful throughout the process because it urged the institution to start up new systems of collaborative work between some of its departments (Exhibitions, Public Activities, Cultural Programmes, and Education), calling into question a certain hierarchical tendency of its working systems. Moreover, we discovered that the museum's departments worked inorganically owing to inertia regarding the organization of previous exhibitions. The specific nature of each department also meant they barely worked together in a way that allowed for knowledge and other potential to be shared and valued through horizontal work.

At Subtramas we look to create an environment and spaces of encounter that give rise to other contacts, affects and influences, whereby information is divulged from social movements and cultural agents, learning processes become performative mediation and exhibition becomes a place in which many citizens operate. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the emergence of conflict; for instance, the conflict that arose with the collective of security guards when we proposed a reading of the museum's book of complaints and suggestions, or with the museum's communications team with regard to the dissemination of Marea Blanca's performance (see the text included in this book).

The museum cannot bleed dry what happens in the street. There is another way of making a museum. The challenge is not so much to create constituent museums but constituent and institution relations and projects inside/outside the public institution.



3.06-11.04 – Performance by Marea Blanca (White Tide), within Subtramas, *Four Questions for a Usefulness Still to Come* installation, part of 'Really Useful Knowledge', Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, 2014. Courtesy of the artists



3.06-11.05 – Performance by Marea Blanca (White Tide), within Subtramas, *Four Questions for a Usefulness Still to Come* installation, part of 'Really Useful Knowledge', Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, 2014. Photo: Juanjo Delapeña





# TOWARDS A COORDINATION ETHIC

TOWARDS A COORDINATION  
ETHIC

Sara Buraya, Paula Moliner  
and Manuela Pedrón Nicolau

In an article entitled 'The Loneliness of the Project', Boris Groys<sup>1</sup> explains how there is a temporary interlude between the formulation and resolution of a project—the dominant paradigm in contemporary creation—whereby social life is de-synchronized and must be re-synchronized according to the forecast at the time of the project's conclusion. This interval in the production, management and development of a project corresponds to coordination work, and formed the framework of our work as the coordination team for 'Public Action for Really Useful Knowledge', a programme by the Subtramas collective that sought to connect the exhibition 'Really Useful Knowledge' to a local context by activating the approaches of the show. In the months leading up to the opening of the exhibition, the coordination team was put together on the basis of our own interests and the needs of the Museo Reina Sofía's Public Activities Department, where all three of us worked as interns from different programmes. Therefore, we each worked under certain financial and temporary conditions and with different responsibilities in the museum, and as a group we reflected the validity of 'precarious collective intelligence',<sup>2</sup> as Raúl Sánchez Cedillo described in 2008.

Inside the 'Public Action for Really Useful Knowledge' programme's commitment as a catalysing framework for thought and public debate, we felt there was a need to highlight the gaps, contradictions and tensions that arose during the project, in addition to the capacity of both the exhibition and the programme to truly ensure that discourses flowed reciprocally between participants and the institution. Subtramas' work addressed the participation of diverse collectives—without aligning with the figure of the artist-curator-researcher, and generally operating outside the academic sphere—inviting them to put forward the content and format of the activity they were going to carry out.

One of the tensions to clearly manifest itself in the programme was through the collectives occupying that same space of

<sup>1</sup> Boris Groys, 'The Loneliness of the Project', in *Volverse público: Las transformaciones del arte en el ágora contemporánea* (Buenos Aires: Caja Negra, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> This precarious collective intelligence is illustrated in 'the figures of the curator, the intern, the researcher in unrestrained competition to gain their place or project, the precarious person(s) working intermittently in museums and cultural institutions under the same conditions as any cheap labour company, and some months later possibly collaborating again with the same museum or institution, but this time with the status of an 'artist' or 'creative artist' and with very different, and improved, conditions, etc.' Raúl Sánchez Cedillo, 'Towards New Political Institutions: Movements, Institutions, New Militancy', in *Producción cultural y prácticas instituyentes: Líneas de ruptura en la crítica institucional*, ed. Transform (Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños, 2008), p. 241.





'precarious collective intelligence' inside an institutional structure, which meant accepting limited mediums and salaries to implement an ambitious programme of participatory activities. The material resources designated for production also contrasted with those intended for the exhibition, laying bare the implicit hierarchy in the internal running of the museum, revealed in its budgets and inter-departmental relations.

By the same token, ongoing complications arose regarding the formats, communication processes and dissemination of the activities, with collectives' visibility and languages coming into conflict with the institution's. These imbalances, caused by a bigger gap, arose from the museum's financial restrictions and the different rhythms and languages between social collectives and the institution, demonstrating the difficulties in harmonizing both realities. Bureaucratic unease and the de-synchronization caused by these activities' intrusion inside the museum space were manifested more clearly in the actions carried out by the 'Instigators', whose proposals reflected their strategies for citizen mobilization and experiences in the exhibition space, stressing the challenge for a cultural institution to present a part of social reality that stretches beyond its exhibition spaces. Therefore, our work chiefly involved providing collectives with support and facilitating dialogue between their desires and methods and the reality in the museum to ensure the different rhythms, limits and needs were considered and respected by the complex institutional machinery.

Coordination is often seen as a merely bureaucratic task, yet it goes beyond the management of temporalities and resources to connect with affection and care.<sup>3</sup> The way in which exchanges are produced between different agents and how to respond to the interlocutor's proposals and expectations often determines the experience of collaborating with an institution, thus placing those responsible for these tasks as instrumental figures for establishing fair and respectful relations. Time and again, adopting a particular attitude from this position seems to depend solely on good individual practices, given the absence of 'coordination ethics' established within cultural institutions. Throughout the programme, we found

<sup>3</sup> Here care is understood as: 'The traditional capacity of the home-maker—harmonising competing interests, intuiting desires, tending to different needs, resolving others' problems...—which is transferred over to the company and deploys its virtuosity to make it seem natural and fluid in its environment, increasingly becoming a network, to avoid falling apart or exploding.' 'Drifting precariousness: A Strike with Great Care: Four Hypotheses', *Transversal* February 2005, <http://transversal.at/transversal/0704/precarias2/es> (accessed 12 February 2017).

ourselves in situations that forced us to question the usual roles of coordination, and, intuitively, generate others that advocated the creation of balanced affective and political relations—key to the collaboration between the institution and other external agents.<sup>4</sup>

In this project, the affective side of coordination work was a large part of what made it effective<sup>5</sup> and enabled bridges of communication to be created, thereby reflecting some of the values and main theories behind the programme and, therefore, contributing to 'forming communities and collective subjectivities'.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, these processes and methods were not part of the cultural institutions' protocols as such, but were built *ad hoc* to respond to extraordinary exchanges. We hope that this text can contribute to the said coordination work moving on to become part of the 'archive of past forms of life' which, returning to Groys' considerations, 'could become a map of the future at any time'.

<sup>4</sup> For further information on how to put affection at the centre of cultural practices, see: '8. AFECTOS: Ética de los cuidados: Poner la vida en el centro', *Decálogo de prácticas culturales de código abierto*, <https://fr.flossmanuals.net/decalogo-de-practicas-culturales-de-codigo-abierto/afectos-etica-de-los-cuidados-poner-la-vida-en-el-centro/> (accessed 17 February 2017).

<sup>5</sup> 'Affective virtuosity is related to empathy, to intersubjectivity, and is essentially creative, constituting life and part of work (waged and non-waged) that cannot be encoded ... There is a need for us to take into account this affective component to get to the bottom of the radically political nature of care, for we know—this time without doubt—that the affective is the effective.' Precarias a la deriva, 'A Very Careful Strike (Four Hypotheses)', op. cit.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Hardt, 'Affective Labour', 2006, [www.dooos.org/articulos/otros/M\\_Hardt.htm](http://www.dooos.org/articulos/otros/M_Hardt.htm) (accessed 2 February 2017).

# CLOSE THE FOLDING SCREEN BEFORE LENIN ESCAPES

CLOSE THE FOLDING SCREEN  
BEFORE LENIN ESCAPES

Somateca and the Closet

Bárbara G.F. Muriel, Sara Buraya, Loreto Ares and Diana Vázquez, somateca



'Access is not allowed.' Sabatini Building, Floor 1, entrance hall to the exhibition 'Really Useful Knowledge'. 'Yeah, we know the exhibition is still closed to the public. We're somateca', we say as we brandish our green ID cards.<sup>1</sup> 'We're working on the activities programmed in this space. It opens on Wednesday and we need to take a look at the room to coordinate our intervention.' 'Sorry, I can't let you through.' The security guard speaks into his walkie-talkie. Murmurs can be heard crackling through from the other end. 'As I said, it's not possible.'

A fence of high folding screens placed tightly together visually blocks the entry point to the show 'Really Useful Knowledge'. 'Is S in the museum?', a WhatsApp message. S resolutely arrives from one of the upper floors holding a bright red card. Another check at the threshold. Access denied. The mobile comes out once more,

scrolling down the list. F won't be long. He has a white card. After mediation comes confirmation: He is allowed through.

F nudges the panels to move between them and takes photos with his mobile, which he sends on to us. 'At least to get some idea.' We make the most of the technological safe conduct. Eyes and heads come together, one on top of the other, and, as in a digital rear-



3.06-11.06 – Somateca, *Actos improprios*, performance within Subtramas, *Four Questions for a Usefulness Still to Come* installation, part of 'Really Useful Knowledge', Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2015. Photo: Sara G.F. Muriel

view mirror, we begin to piece together parts of the room staging the Chto Delat installation we have been invited to activate: *Study, Study and Act Again*, a title taken from a Marx quote. After the card game, and with the crack sealed, we head back to the workshop room to prepare the opening polyphonic reading. 'Close the folding screen before Lenin escapes!', M concludes.

As a research and production group working from a feminist critique and crip-queer approach, somateca was invited that summer by Subtramas to participate in the programme 'Public Action for Really Useful Knowledge'. We responded by putting forward three ideas developed inside the exhibition space: *Jam*

<sup>1</sup> People linked to the Museo are identified with different-coloured cards, depending on their status: green for students, red for interns, external or outsourced staff, white for civil servants or contracted staff. Each connection determines the movement inside the museum.



3.06-11.07 - Somateca, *Actos impropios*, performance within Subtramas, *Four Questions for a Usefulness Still to Come* installation, part of 'Really Useful Knowledge', Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2015. Photo: Sara G.F. Muriel





*Session: Body-to-Body Readings*, inside the Chto Delat space (an action with interlocked and polyphonic readings based on the body, and with a score open to guest participation); *Improper Acts* (a choreography of actions through gestures and sounds that question the Museo Reina Sofía's genealogy as disciplinary architecture, inappropriately evoking acts and appearances that are alien to the museum's current use as an art centre but which are, nevertheless, part of the building's structure and memory); and the Workshop on the Manufacturing of DIY Happiness, a space devoted

to the Subtramas collective (a workshop manufacturing devices and prostheses to facilitate happiness, which appeals to creative thought).

Over time, somateca's relationship with the museum has varied—we came together out of one of the institution's programmes<sup>2</sup> and therefore have certain privileges, for instance the green card enabling us to make use of spaces for meetings, priority access to the library, free access to the museum, the



3.06-11.08 - Somateca, *Actos improprios*, performance within Subtramas, *Four Questions for a Usefulness Still to Come* installation, part of 'Really Useful Knowledge', Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2015. Photo: Sara G.F. Muriel

programming of activities geared towards viewers and audiences that are customarily overlooked by the institution.<sup>3</sup> However, the collaboration has also been beset by friction and disagreements arising over the unsteady balance between the visibility, recognition and precarious nature of our work. The conditions recreated by the museum in relation to us—non-legitimate agents, recognized neither as artists nor as curators—has repeatedly made us question our position in a relationship that is intrinsically asymmetrical.

An example of this dynamic is the invisibility somateca intermittently experiences. A case in point was the library in Chto Delat's work, which set up a reading space inside the exhibition. The books were selected by another collective listed as artists, both in the

<sup>2</sup> 'Somateque: Biopolitical Production, Feminisms, Queer and Trans Practices', was an advanced study programme on critical practices by Paul B. Preciado. It comprised two editions, in 2012 and 2013, with some of the participants in the programme forming the somateca collective in 2014.

<sup>3</sup> One of these activities was 'Abject Bodies Interweaving Lives: The Crip-Queer Conferences' in 2014, [www.museoreinasofia.es/actividades/cuerpos-abyectos-entrelazando-vidas](http://www.museoreinasofia.es/actividades/cuerpos-abyectos-entrelazando-vidas).

exhibition catalogue and on the gallery labels, and somateca was invited to analyse this list and suggest new additions, ultimately broadening the selection by integrating a critical feminist, crip-queer and ecological perspective. Chto Delat also invited us to activate the space on the day of the exhibition's opening, for which we drew up a polyphonic and non-hierarchical reading of some of the texts through the collaboration of kindred individuals and collectives. This work was never publicly acknowledged.<sup>4</sup> Reflecting from the present, we have noticed that it was not only the institution that made collaboration precarious; Subtramas did the same in inviting the participation of a significant number of collectives with modest resources, and we also ended up reproducing this dynamic with those we asked to participate. One way to relate to that which is not exempt from feminist activism: when the personal is political, we ultimately work, create and propose out of a 'love of the political'.

For us, these situations are indicative of the difficulty the institution has in working with other times and other systems of recognition that differ from their own, and this has led us to imagine our situation in the museum as 'being in the closet', somateca *in the closet*: you're inside but nobody sees you. This invisibility is not permanent, which makes us also reflect on the instrumentalization of the feminist and crip-queer token in a complex relationship with the museum *and* the closet. To keep on dancing, the institution, somateca and, in general, all active agents in this state inside-outside the museum will have to take these folding screens and turn their mobile capacity into structures with an image of the shared desire for change and displacement, thereby generating new spaces of production and encounter.

<sup>4</sup> As corroborated by the press reports on the exhibition: 'The installation "Study, Study and Act Again" by Russian collective Chto Delat? engulfs a library-esque gallery with colour, a room full of books with marked political tendencies, some of which are published by Traficantes de sueños, and proclaim free education, art and sexuality.' *AHmagazine*, [www.ahmagazine.es/un-arte-realmente-util/](http://www.ahmagazine.es/un-arte-realmente-util/) (accessed 20 January 2016).





# A GREEK

# CHOIR

# TEARING

# THE

# CANVAS

# OF

# PUBLIC

# HEALTHCARE

A GREEK CHOIR TEARING  
THE CANVAS OF PUBLIC  
HEALTHCARE

Carmen Esbri

In July 2014, we, as the Madrid Table in Defence of Public Healthcare, MEDSAP–Marea Blanca (a platform made up of neighbourhood collectives, professionals, unions, civil and citizen associations defending one hundred percent public, universal and quality healthcare), had spent two years organizing Mareas Blancas (White Tides) on every third Sunday of the month under a citizen initiative. We are united by the defence of indisputable human rights—health and life—through permanent action that exposes the fraudulent sides of the neoliberal system.

Around that time we received a message from the Museo Reina Sofía in Madrid, and we were keen to hear the reasons for them to contact us: what did they want from MEDSAP–Marea Blanca? Therefore, at a first meeting I attended I met Subtramas and knew that they had come up with the idea of including Marea Blanca in an art project they were going to exhibit at the museum inside the framework of the exhibition ‘Really Useful Knowledge’. They wanted us to contribute the useful knowledge we had gathered as

a collective and weave it into the exhibition. I left the meeting, committed to taking the idea forward inside a space that binds the past and present as it projects the future. It was undoubtedly going to be an enriching event, for it was part of the idea of a living museum that I myself uphold from my perspective as an art historian.

At the beginning of September we had another meeting with the people in charge of the museum’s Public Activities Department and the Subtramas collective, and we were given a detailed explanation of the proposal and the freedom we had to develop our contribution. I understood that the idea was to mix activism and art. How could we display what we had learned and convey its use in a format that differed from activism, with something more creative than we had already done in other acts? It called for something different, which had to be unique but without veering from either the objective of the denouncement or the imprint MEDSAP–Marea Blanca had been developing since 2012, a pivotal year in the destruction of healthcare by government policies.



3.06-11.09 - Demonstration by  
MEDSAP–Marea Blanca (White Tide)  
in Madrid. Photo: Juanjo Delapeña



Part of our dissemination activities, developed over a two-year period and 26 Mareas Blancas, could be utilized as they were gathered in the manifestos that built up our progressive construction of knowledge. We had to demonstrate how public healthcare was being stripped of funding, and was, according to the government and those with particular interests, apparently very expensive in such a serious crisis. However, the entirety of our findings led us to conclude that crisis and fraud were synonyms, and they wanted to pay for a crisis caused by speculation and the manipulation of democracy by using our taxes.

This meeting in September was also attended by Yo Sí Sanidad Universal (I'm For Universal Healthcare)], who work specifically to give support to and accompany migrants dispossessed of their medical card, despite paying taxes. We share the same perspective with Yo Sí on the lack of equity and the fraud implicit in the Royal Decree Law 16/2012, according to which healthcare stops constituting a universal public service and becomes an insurance model, pretending that it is reliant upon the tax contributions from employment—simply not true in Spain. How could we convey this situation in the framework of an art exhibition with us as the main activists?

MEDSAP—Marea Blanca's contribution to the project laid out by Subtramas sought to combine everything involved in the defence of universal and quality public healthcare, including the agents and victims of a public service that attempts to ensure health, well-being and life. Therefore, we reflected the key elements in our fight whilst also demonstrating the existence of certain malignant aspects in a system that damage health, cause illness and have an impact on life itself.

Our performance, requiring a group of 'actors and actresses' to be formed, is contextualized within a neoliberal system that generates poor, or worse, living conditions and early death. Consequently, we gave form to a faithful reflection of the situation with a dramatized reading performed by a Greek choir, who tore the canvas of the healthcare situation we were painting; the action, with a choral voice, highlighted the frailties of the healthcare model and the consequences of 'austericide' for healthcare, which is no longer universal and increasingly lacking in quality, according to the evaluations of the international agents that were previously advocates.

The results of this unique action granted us impetus and strength, not to mention emotional and spiritual nourishment, to

push on with our denouncement as a group that is still active today. Furthermore, it must have been relevant to the museum because I had a feeling of control in the days leading up to it, although we did sense that maybe there were external pressures. They were not keen on how we disseminated the action on our blog, citing that it was misleading and did not respect the artist behind the work—the Subtramas collective—after we used one of their pieces with their permission. There was also the fear that the museum could get crowded, and we were asked not to publicize the action on our blog or in any of our networks.

We replied by expressing our surprise, given that we had agreed on everything beforehand and nobody had rejected the poster, which was reviewed by the Reina Sofía Public Activities Department and Subtramas, leading us to believe that the pressure was either because they did not know what we were going to do, or our denouncements reached the powers that be. They called me from the museum on numerous occasions asking me to send a script beforehand, even though it was unfinished, and it was to be a surprise the day it would be staged. This underlying feeling of censorship had an effect on me, particularly the night before the action. Nevertheless, we are really pleased we were finally able to carry out what we set out to do with freedom and with the drama and emotion exuded by the choir.

Some days later, we held our 27th Marea Blanca—we are about to hold the 65th one now—and we have set in motion the Marea Blanca Estatal (State White Tide), which is growing by the day, and we are participating in other World Tides in Brussels. On 7 April 2016, the first European Action Day Against the Commercialization, Marketization and Privatization of Healthcare, we decided to repeat an updated version of the performance we did in the square outside the Museo Reina Sofía. In 2017, we also staged a similar act in a cultural hall in the middle of Madrid's Retiro Park. The outlook, however, looks bleaker than ever, and we will not rest in our defence of an exemplary public healthcare, which today remains the victim of speculation in a world that is hostile and insensitive to humanity, art and nature.





3.06-11.10 - Demonstration by MEDSAP-Marea Blanca (White Tide) in Madrid. Photo: Juanjo Delapeña

# DISTRIBUTING OWNERSHIP



# DISTRIBUTING OWNERSHIP

DISTRIBUTING OWNERSHIP

Elinor Morgan



In order to develop constituent relationships, museums must give away a certain amount of power and develop structures and approaches that distribute ownership. This statement presents an obvious tension: ultimately it is those who lead the institution and work within it who decide whether they want to pursue this way of working, who they wish to work with, and how this might be approached. Whose ownership is this to distribute? And who has the right to distribute it? This, of course, depends on the context and on the economic, legal and political frame of the institution. It also depends on existing relationships, as the majority of art institutions are already enmeshed in complex networks of relationships. Perhaps a more interesting phrase is 'shared ownership', but this fails to recognize the power relations that are (generally speaking) already at play between a museum or art institution and its publics.

While the institution must be open to a range of voices, and to antagonism, in order to avoid endlessly reproducing and representing its own belief systems, the question remains: how open *can* or *should* it be? If it opens up to those who are interested and willing to work with it and to challenge it, are those constituents able to form powerful and critical voices and roles that genuinely affect change? Do those individuals and groups in time become part of the institutional framework? And then how are others encouraged to develop strong positions? If the museum is understood as a set of constituent relationships, it must also acknowledge the conversations and relations that have not been formed, along with those that will never be made, and those that have been broken. Rather than speaking on behalf of others, in an attempt to imagine positions different from its own, the museum must involve a breadth of people in dialogue, but without absorbing, assimilating or owning their voices.

At the heart of this conversation sit questions of economies of exchange, ethics of cooperation, and issues of consent and permission. Discussion of power are inherent within the following texts, and conversations on care weave through each one. This section explores the potential of a fluid and active scale of consensus and dissensus, which allows constituent behaviours to develop. As highlighted elsewhere in the book, a useful way of thinking about the role and power of the constituent might be in an active and present-focused attempt at instituting or always becoming. Inhabiting this state may enable us to move away from the one-way power dynamic of the invitation for involvement from institution to



external other, towards a more dynamic set of exchanges.

The opening text in this section is by Jesús Carrillo, one of the early initiators of the language, thinking, and action that subsequently developed around the notion of the ‘constituent’ within the L’Internationale network. Through a discussion of hostility towards and censorship of cultural projects that challenge hierarchical and neoliberal sensibilities in Spain, he arrives at the conclusion that cultural workers must develop a new political and conceptual territory from which they can disrupt and alter dominant narratives and behaviours that have become the norm.

Isabel Lorey’s essay discusses the problems of a society whose workforce is increasingly made precarious by high workloads, decreasing wages, and systems that do not respect and remunerate the sprawling demands of jobs that require constant communication and the development of knowledge. She describes how the de-collectivization of social security and social reproduction results in more people finding themselves on a scale of precarity, with the most vulnerable taking on the greatest risk. Lorey calls for us to collectively enter the present-focused state of ‘becoming-precarious’ as a way of refusing the systems of debt and guilt placed on us by political and economic systems. Focused pieces by Céline Condorelli, Igor Španjol, Pantxo Ramas, and Tjaša Pogačar Podgornik take these points into specific projects and contexts. Condorelli’s contribution situates a conversation about care and friendship within her own artistic practice. Through a short introduction and a series of photograms, she notes the importance and political resonance of friendship as one way in which we might make changes in the world. She conjures a sense of proximity and connectivity between objects, people, and ideas, which she posits as a form of friendship.

Španjol’s entry highlights the solidarity found among artists and curators, who, in a moment of crisis following the war in Yugoslavia, began collecting artworks for a future museum in Sarajevo. This imaginative and urgent action demonstrates a belief in the importance and power of art in rebuilding societies. The generosity of those artists who donated work shows a sense of solidarity not only with peers, but with the people of BosniaHerzegovina, for whom the collection was amassed. This project is seen against a backdrop of seeming indifference—and certainly inaction—from the international art world to the war in Yugoslavia, and its aftermath. After Condorelli’s affirmative positioning of friendship, and

Španjol’s demonstration of a highly context-specific form of solidarity, Ramas proposes antagonism as a space for institutional change and a ‘radical inhabitation of the social contract of citizenship’. He uses a theoretical discussion of the institutions of mental health care and their relationships with residents, as a way of analyzing the potential space of a broader set of institutions. Ramas discusses antagonis—often articulated in this instance by refusal—as an important space in which re-subjectivation of the subaltern is possible.

Pogačar Podgornik’s text is a description of the project ‘Every Man is a Curator’, an exhibition at Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, Slovenia, in 2007. As a response to a shortage in funding, and as a strategy of engaging those who were interested in the future of the institution at a moment of change as it developed a new building, Moderna galerija invited all to participate in an open exhibition with no selection criteria and no curatorial staff. The piece references precarity as a tool used by cultural policy makers to destabilize the field, and Pogačar Podgornik demonstrates the complexities of co-production as an outcome of and contributor to neoliberal methods of working. This section’s Project Studies highlight different models of sharing institutional space, opening up working methods and allowing museums to be shaped by those constituents who are actively using them. They offer examples from M KHA in Antwerp, Belgium; SALT in Istanbul, Turkey and MIMA in Middlesbrough, UK.

EXCHANGE  
ALSO  
INVOLVES  
CONSTANTLY  
DEALING  
WITH  
TRANSLATION

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Alejandro Cevallos and  
Nora Landkammer  
3.04

One of the tensions to clearly manifest itself in the programme was through the collectives occupying that same space of 'precarious collective intelligence' inside an institutional structure, which meant accepting limited mediums and salaries to implement an ambitious programme of participatory activities.

Sara Buraya, Paula Moliner  
and Manuela Pedrón Nicolau  
3.09

In recent years, mounting clamour, xenophobia, and debate swelled around the supposedly large numbers of people arriving in Europe from around the world. Dubbed either 'migrant crisis' or 'refugee crisis' (depending on where you looked), news outlets, discussions on online platforms, and conversations in the pubs around us circulated around many myths, half-truths and outright lies.

Elinor Morgan  
1.04

MIGRA  
REFUG





*If All Relations Were to Reach Equilibrium. Then This Building Would Dissolve.*  
 2016, installation view. Courtesy of Jason Hynes, Hynes Photography

When work becomes increasingly precarious, there is a tendency for the whole person to become labour power, body and intellectual capabilities included. The productivity of this form of work consists in the making of subjectivities and social relationships. Subjects and their capacities to socially interact become both the resource and product of the new paradigm of political economy. Subjectivation and social relationships are made valuable in and through communication.

AS WE KNOW, THE NOTION OF CONSTITUENT POWER HAUNTS THE HISTORY OF MODERN REVOLUTIONS, FROM THE LEVELLERS, HOBBS AND THEN BURKE TO THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND LENIN, LUXEMBURG, SCHMITT AND KELSEN.

SINCE THEN, IT IS INEXTRICABLY LINKED TO THE 'DANGERS OF DEMOCRACY', NAMELY, TO THE EVER HAUNTING DEMOCRATIC EXCESS.

A CONSTITUENT PROCESS TODAY BELONGS TO NOBODY.

Fatou lifted a square of blue linen in the air and let it drop. When it hit the ground the roamers started. Each whirled in front of their opponent and thrust themselves forward and into their eyes. Each produced a string of beads that they coiled around their left arm and then let loose towards their opponent, pulling it back and starting all over again. All the time they flung a tirade of arguments into the air with only fragments reaching the surrounding audience—'elite...!', 'fetishizing things....!' and 'for who?'.  

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Francis McKee

0.02

Quickly this rose to a torrent and began to synchronize across the lines of roamers as they repeated: 'what does this have to do with our everyday? why is there a hierarchy? what is art—why do we need it?'



# DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

# VERSUS

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS  
VERSUS CULTURE WARS

Jesús Carrillo

# CULTURE WARS

In the aftermath of the attack on *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2015, the online journal of the European network of contemporary art institutions L'Internationale, for which I was one of the editors at the time, decided to publish a debate on what we saw as a growing assault on freedom of speech within the institutional spheres of art and culture.

However, the resulting texts did not close ranks around the ubiquitous 'we are all Charlie Hebdo' that European heads of state had rushed to intonate. Both the editorial team and the contributors to that issue—André Lepecki and Anej Korsika among others—decided to raise the terms of the debate, avoiding the familiar identification of the 'barbarian' enemy and instead using the opportunity to point to the structural limits of the old bourgeois public sphere within contemporary neoliberal regimes.<sup>1</sup>

I remember that at the time I alerted our Northern European colleagues to the paranoid control that museums in the South were being forced to exert on any politically overt content in order to assuage the suspicions of the self-appointed guardians of good morals and 'democratic' decorum. This paranoia—fuelled as it was by conservative tendencies within these same institutions—was not without its ground. Just a few months earlier, the exhibition 'Really Useful Knowledge', held at the Museo Reina Sofía within the context of L'Internationale had been threatened with legal action (a threat that was made good on) unless it withdrew the artwork *Cajita de fósforos* (Matchbox) by the Argentinian feminist collective Mujeres Públicas.<sup>2</sup>

The museum dealt with this crisis by clinging on to the 'sacred values' of artistic exceptionality that provided a protective shelter for the 'incendiary' statements made by the work, a response that was universally praised as exemplary. Those who had raised the complaint claimed the work was inciting a return to the same hatred and violence that had split Spain in two during the Civil War. How could the museum reopen those wounds when it had been created precisely in order to heal them? The museum's answer was that any interpretation of the artwork that overlooked the specific context and rituals of the art institution was irrelevant.

During the months that led up to the opening of 'Really Useful Knowledge', the Reina Sofía had indeed woven a dense protective

<sup>1</sup> [www.internationaleonline.org/research/](http://www.internationaleonline.org/research/).

<sup>2</sup> The work was a series of printed matchboxes bearing the inscription 'The only church that illuminates is a burning church' a famous quote by Piotr Kropotkin popularized in Spanish by the anarchist Buenaventura Durruti. Translator's note.





net over the project. This allowed for the appearance on its walls of some ‘really useful knowledges’ countering those other violent, corrupt and instrumental knowledges that have become the norm in our system. In this way, for example, the artist Daniela Ortiz’ explicit condemnation of the immigration policies of the Spanish state occupied only a discreet corner within a vast exhibition space, a video monitor identified by a small wall label.<sup>3</sup> Núria Güell and Levi Orta’s work *Degenerate Political Art. Ethical Protocol*, a practical lesson in how the capitalist system breaks its own rules through the use of tax havens was strategically deprived of its artistic status as the museum could not legally produce it as an artwork.<sup>4</sup> The work became a public lecture to which Yanis Varoufakis, Greek economist who served as Greek Minister of Finance from January to June 2015, kindly rejected an invitation. In a miracle of transubstantiation, it became an object again a few months later when Núria Güell exhibited it at ARCO 2015 in the form of a briefcase—of the kind that might be used to carry currency across borders—containing a sound recording.

The events organized by the collective Subtramas during the show, who invited groups of activists, including the 15M Mareas, to address the museum’s public, were again dealt with by treating them as part of the fictions and rituals of contemporary art.<sup>5</sup> This forced the limits of what is conventionally found within the white cube, but it also allowed the museum to escape identification with the explicitly political discourses put forward by Subtramas’ guests. Their views, like the works by Mujeres Públicas and Daniela Ortiz had to be read strictly within the interpretative framework of the ‘artistic’. In this way the Reina Sofía deployed the skills learnt over so many decades of institutional critique in order to avoid discursive spontaneity undermining its delicate institutional stability while refraining institutional caution from drowning any trace of autonomy.

Just three months after the attack on *Charlie Hebdo*, one of the members of the L’Internationale editorial committee, Paul B. Preciado, was abruptly dismissed from his job as Head of Public

<sup>3</sup> Daniela Ortiz, *Proyecto Estado nación (Parte II)*, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Among other things, the work involved the establishment of a company in a tax haven. See [www.nuriaguell.net/projects/36.html](http://www.nuriaguell.net/projects/36.html).

<sup>5</sup> The 15M is the preferred name in Spain for the widespread cycle of protests that took place all over the country in 2011 and their reverberations. This was part of the global cycle of protests that would be known as Occupy in English-speaking countries. The Mareas (or Tides) were subgroups fighting for specific issues, such as education, health or social services (translator’s note).

Programmes at MACBA (Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona) together with the head curator Valentín Roma. Their crime was to have contravened the symbolic order within the exhibition ‘The Beast and the Sovereign’. To quote the—until then—director of the museum Bartomeu Mari, the supposedly obscene representation of the recently abdicated King of Spain in Inés Doujak’s work *Not Dressed for Conquering* went beyond what could be ‘responsibly’ shown by a public institution. In this case the artistic exceptionality that had protected the work of Mujeres Públicas was not effective enough. In the context of the generalized discredit of both the art institutions that had emerged in the Spanish *transición* and the Spanish monarchy, the question of exactly whose principles were being violated was widely debated.

Museum professionals, in a state of shock, chose to understand the event as a case of ‘bad management’, but while the broken pieces of the museum were quickly recomposed it was now evident how fragile the institution was as a space of public enunciation. The show must go on, once the curators have been sacked and the director has resigned. Exactly what kind of content institutions had to ‘responsibly’ keep out of view was a question that would occupy the minds of cultural workers with increasing force, making them shy away from the responsibility of guaranteeing the autonomy of culture.

The heated political situation in Catalonia and Spain in the months that followed the victory of the Catalan independentist faction, the victories of the municipalist platforms and the interim acting government, was going to subject the order of the visible and the sayable to a veritable state of exception. In this situation the events at MACBA were going to be turned into a mere anecdote of the ‘salon culture’ of contemporary art without significant effects on the public sphere.

Within the logic of the ‘culture wars’ diagnosed after the Christmas and carnival celebrations of 2016 in Madrid, the battlefront was going to expand from the white cube to the street, with a violence against which the sophisticated rhetoric of the art institution could not offer any resistance. Pointing out that the costumes worn by the Three Wise Men were inspired by contemporary children’s illustrators with echoes of Matisse and Chagall, or that the irreverence of the puppet show was informed by one of the oldest traditions of subversive fiction in European popular culture was useless.

The conservative media's response to the outfits of the Three Wise Men during the Madrid Christmas Parade organized by the new city government was enormous. They described them as an offense to the values of childhood and tradition. It was widely covered on national radio and TV and became a trending topic in social media. One month later, in Carnival, the puppeteers Títeres desde abajo were arrested during their play, accused of terrorist propaganda. Both the Mayor, Manuela Carmena, and the Culture Councillor were denounced by associations of victims of terrorists.

The powers that be, old and new had imposed a *tabula rasa* in which culture was no longer a 'sacred space', nor the open space of agonistic relations among different worldviews we aimed at. They intended to make culture a battle field, filled with mines and friendly fire, that may easily become a wasteland or a cemetery.

The accusations continuously bandied about in the media were aimed at foreclosing any critical view as an 'incitement to hatred' promoting its exclusion from public space and weakening the position of those who found in their critical ability their intelligence of the world.

But if we are indeed at war, the first thing we must do is to reject a battleground someone else has previously established. The violence exerted by those who attempt to defend their monopoly on the symbolic order can only be countered if we use methods and logics that are radically different from theirs. Indeed, our first task should be to undo the general design of their field of operations in such a way that public opinion no longer reduces the assessment of cultural acts to establishing whether they are 'normal' or 'radical', identifying the latter with everything that does not correspond to a sanctioned notion of culture. If we accept this dichotomy we might be condemned to reproducing 'normality' against 'radicalism' thus annihilating any possibility of a different opening.

The second thing we should do is to propose a new field of operations, a new common sense that is not synonymous with the 'normality' that has hitherto organized our cultural space. The biggest triumph of the new movements was its appeal to this new common sense. They uncovered the misalignment between life and those institutions that attempt to regulate it, not just because they are spurious, but most of all, because they are obsolete.

Laying bare the obsolescence of the system has a transformative potential, an ability to unite wills that is more powerful than the one achieved by laying bare oppression and injustice, even if in



itself it is not a guarantee of change. In a world in which injustice tends to be justified on the basis of efficiency and profit, revealing that unjust structures also happen to be both obsolete and dysfunctional is an extremely powerful gesture. Certainly, replacing the rooted common sense—'that's how things are'—which the status quo has installed in our imaginations with a different one that unveils its artificial, unfair and obsolete nature, will not be an easy task. But we should not give up that vision, we should not step back to the heroic exceptionality of pioneers whose place is either the future or the bonfire.

The most difficult challenge remains: How to apply such a common sense to the operations of our institutions; how to go beyond the unbearable dislocation of functions and structures we are living with every day. We should start with recognizing this common sense in the vocation to public service, which grounds their structures, as detached from those other structures whose main function is either to reproduce themselves or to pervert themselves on behalf of spurious interests.

Public institutions are usually organized as a rigid pyramid, having different bureaucratic mechanisms to guarantee the legal status of the vertical use of power. There is no 'earth wire' within such a closed circuit, being the logics of reality distorted by the logics of the administration procedure (this is particularly evident in education projects based on a permanent negotiation with society).

We see every day how projects are shaped according to the bureaucratic requirements of the institution and not the other way around. The intervention of politicians, both direct and indirect, involves an additional level of arbitrariness, since they arrogantly 'ride' the institution, taking or promoting decisions based on power strategies, paying no attention to either the experience and 'know-how' of the cultural workers or the expectations and specific demands of communities.

'Common sense' should prevail by the implementation of decision-making procedures comprising the different stages of management, and involving social agents as an integral part of the institution. Such procedures should be both flexible and intelligible, being operational tools instead of fixed patterns according to which reality is shaped. Simply said: Common sense should prevail by making communities and public institutions commensurable and mutually permeable.

Common sense will only prevail in our institutions if they are truly 'common'; if they are not the vehicle of private interests, or an instrument in the preservation and reinforcement of structures that are anything but 'common'. There is no magic rule to apply, just an ethics of co-responsibility in the management of public affairs.

The responsibility of cultural institutions for the contents which may or may not be delivered in the public domain should be measured according to this new common sense. Public institutions, which used to monopolize the cultural discourse for decades in my country [Spain], should not behave today as 'police' and 'judge' of a cultural space that is not anymore under their control. Rather, their main responsibility should be to provide the conditions and resources that may ease cultural enunciation from within the social body—professional culture included—and not as external to it, facilitating a cultural space for negotiating the differences and disagreements typical of open societies. Only in this way we shall scape our current paranoia, and stop the increase of prophylaxis, self-censorship and preventive war status that is mining our institutions.

## CONCLUSIONS

What is at stake today is not only the efficiency of our cultural institutions in their dealings with local communities. The very concept of the public institution is under siege both by corporations that seek to overtake it and use its prestige for their own interests, and by reactionary powers who have established culture as a battlefield on which to fight their 'culture wars' against the coming of 'barbarians', those being either 'radicals' or, simply, 'common people'.

The democratization of our cultural institutions is the only vaccine against this state of affairs. It should affect its different stages: management structures, labour organization, decision-making methods, programming, budget, and the very definition of the architecture and the circulation of people.



It is good news that our institutions in L'Internationale are able to recognize individuals and collectives as constituencies, moving beyond traditional notions of audience or costumer. It is good news and an important step forward that there are individuals and collectives out there who are claiming an active role as instituent members of our museums. Only by re-addressing the social contract of culture, will our institutions be able to provide alternatives to the current situation of polarization and violence, and, by doing so, be socially useful.



PRESERVING PRECARIOUSNESS, QUEERING DEBT

PRESERVING  
PRECARIOUSNESS,  
QUEERING DEBT

Isabell Lorey

## SUBJECTIVATING PRECARIZATION AND PRODUCTION WITHOUT WAGE

In neoliberal global capitalism not only the relation between capital and work is of central importance, but also that of time, flexibility, and measurability. Wages are sinking, while workload, and hours spent working are on the rise.

Working time no longer covers only tasks that are paid, but tends to encompass all social doing.<sup>1</sup> Work is becoming excessive and simultaneously negated as work that should be paid, especially when it comes to creative and cognitive work. The neoliberal ideology of 'life-long learning', with its activating force, has extended the time of education beyond school and university degrees. The promise of learning something while at work, of gaining further qualifications, legitimizes the non-payment or the extremely low payment of that work not only for the institution in which it is performed. It has become normal for those who seek further qualification, too, to become more and more financially indebted. The interlacing of knowledge and debt characterizes central aspects of contemporary modes of production.

Knowledge, communication, and creativity were only able to become productive thanks to a fundamental change in modes of production, that is, in how commodities and services are made, how work is organized, and how capital accumulation occurs. This transformation can be observed from the seventies. With the crisis of Fordism, activities that were not traditionally understood as work, and were therefore not considered in terms of economic rationality, became increasingly relevant for the composition of the labour force. Forms of knowledge and activity

have gained significance that previously were allocated not only to the cultural field, but above all to women in the reproductive sphere, such as affective and emotional labour.<sup>2</sup> These are activities that are in demand today primarily in the service sector: creative, affective, and communicative activities, performed largely in precarious labour conditions: with temporary contracts, in part-time jobs.

When work becomes increasingly precarious, there is a tendency for the whole person to become labour power, body and intellectual capabilities included. The productivity of this form of work consists in the making of subjectivities and social relationships. Subjects and their capacities to socially interact become both the resource and product of the new paradigm of political economy. Subjectivation and social relationships are made valuable in and through communication.<sup>3</sup> Connectedness with others is turned into economically exploitable relations of exchange. With this, both the strategic meaning of traditionally material and machinic means of production and the classic logic of investment in industrial capitalism lose significance. An array of their productive functions gets

<sup>1</sup> Isabell Lorey, *State of Insecurity: Government of the Precarious*, trans. Aileen Derieg, preface by Judith Butler (London and New York: Verso, 2015); Isabell Lorey and Klaus Neundlinger, 'Kognitiver Kapitalismus: Von der Ökonomie zur Ökonomik des Wissens: Einleitung', in *Kognitiver Kapitalismus*, ed. Isabell Lorey and Klaus Neundlinger (Vienna and Berlin: Turia + Kant), pp. 7–55.

<sup>2</sup> Precarias a la deriva, *Was ist dein Streik? Militante Streifzüge durch die Kreisläufe der Prekarität*, trans. Birgit Menzel (Vienna etc.: transversal texts, 2014); Precarias a la deriva, 'Adrift through the circuits of feminized precarious work', *transversal: 'precariat'*, April 2004, <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0704/precarias1/en>; Emma Dowling, 'Love's Labour's Cost: The Political Economy of Intimacy', February 2016, [www.versobooks.com/blogs/2499-love-s-labour-s-cost-the-political-economy-of-intimacy](http://www.versobooks.com/blogs/2499-love-s-labour-s-cost-the-political-economy-of-intimacy).

<sup>3</sup> Gerald Raunig, *Dividuum: Machinic Capitalism and Molecular Revolution*, Vol. 1, trans. Aileen Derieg (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2016).





transferred onto the living, the social bodies of the labour force.<sup>4</sup> In cognitive and communicative capitalism, these new means of production of machine-bodies are central cruxes for a specific dynamic of scarcity: rather than products, secure employment contracts are in limited supply; precarization is becoming the motor of productivity.<sup>5</sup> Investments are made less in job creation and more in the expansion of digitalization and increasing share value. More and more, new service-based production takes place without wage or social security. The creative, communicative, and affective capacities of workers, which tend to be formed outside of paid employment settings, get appropriated in companies and institutions as work that is usually unpaid.<sup>6</sup>

Another important aspect of this scarcity is time. With the excessive extension of working time, the potential wealth of non-waged working time appears only as lack. When one's own personality and social relationships are made productive, it becomes more and more difficult to interrupt work as a refusal or strike. Individuals find themselves in a dynamic of disciplinary self-governing, which secures not only productivity, but also obedience.

When sociality is made productive, it is not easy to grasp everyday social activity as work that must be paid. This contributes to the widespread belief that what is fun need not be paid. More and more people do not consider communication and the exchange of knowledge to be work. Self-precarization is spreading like a virus.<sup>7</sup>

**GOVERNING THROUGH PRECARIZATION**  
With the expansion of this increasingly de-waged mode of production based on communication, knowledge, and affect, a form of governing has been established, now in Europe for over two decades, that does not legitimize itself by guaranteeing social protection and security for the majority of citizens, but is rather characterized by social insecurity and precarization.

In my book *State of Insecurity*, I draw distinctions between three dimensions of the precarious.<sup>8</sup> The first dimension, *precariousness*, denotes the dependence of every form of life on the care of and reproduction through others; on connectedness with others, which cannot be shaken off. Bodies remain precarious and need environments and institutions that provide security and support. The second dimension corresponds to the hierarchization of this necessity. I call historically specific forms of insecurity—which are politically, economically, legally, and socially induced—*precarity*. These forms of insecurity are upheld by modes of governing, relations to the self, and societal positionings that in turn shape the third dimension of the precarious, which, drawing on Michel Foucault, I call *governmental precarization*.

Governing through precarization means that the precarious are no longer solely those who can be marginalized to

the peripheries of society. Due to the individualizing restructuring of the social welfare state, the deregulation of the labour market, and the expansion of precarious employment conditions, we currently find ourselves in a process of the normalization of precarization, which also affects larger portions of the middle class. In this normalization process, precarization has become a political and economic instrument of governing. At the same time, people continue to be legally, economically, and socially marginalized and excluded through structural inequality, through precarity, which means that they are less protected than others or that protection is altogether denied them.<sup>9</sup> This becomes apparent in the various Western democracies with simultaneously occurring processes of economic and financial border elimination on the one hand, and border creation to ward off global migration on the other. Legal status and mobility are being hierarchized in order to facilitate extreme forms of exploitation. Through the dismantling and restructuring of collective security systems, individualized risk management is demanded according to societal positioning along the scale of precarity, yet this takes shape in very different ways—depending on gender, class, 'race', origin, or legal status.

Social security and therefore also social reproduction are being increasingly de-collectivized; they are again being privatized, but this time handed over to the self-responsibility of the individual and capitalized. As a result, more and more people are only able to fund retirement provisions, healthcare, and education by taking on debts. At the same time, the productivity of the self and of sociality in low-wage or unpaid positions leads directly to indebtedness. De-collectivization and its accompanying individualization of risk, self-management, and self-responsibility, as well as the capitalization of reproduction, are the central anchoring points in

the neoliberal regime of precarization for an economy of guilt and debt.

#### GUILT AND DEBT

Precarious living and working conditions and the privatization of protection against precariousness are conditions of both a prospering financial capitalism and its concomitant debt economy. This economy is based on the expansion of productivity that involves less work in the traditional sense than subjectivation.<sup>10</sup> A subjective figure is needed to assume responsibility, to take on debt, and to internalize the risks both as guilt and as debt: a personality that is doubly indebted and responsible for oneself. This personality plays a decisive role in enabling and stabilizing neoliberal governing through precarization and insecurity, for there is no longer an outside of debt. Everybody is indebted in one or another way: 'If it is not individual debt, it is public debt that weighs, literally, on every individual's life, since every individual must take responsibility for it.'<sup>11</sup> As Maurizio Lazzarato reminds us, Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx, and also Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari have expressly linked the debt economy with morality, that is, with specific modes of subjectivation. In the Christian genealogy, becoming indebted cannot be separated from burdening oneself with guilt. According to Nietzsche, incurring debt results in guilt through the promise to repay creditors. The indebted person promises to continuously behave in such a way that they are able to give back what was given to them, so that they can pay back their debts.<sup>12</sup> In the debt economy, this financial exchange constitutes subjectivation. The obligation to pay back debt corresponds to that disciplinary self-governing that ensures not only subjectivizing and social productivity, but also compliance. To place one's behaviour at the service of repaying debt

<sup>4</sup> Christian Marazzi, *The Violence of Finance Capitalism*, trans. Kristina Lebedeva, Jason Francis Mc Gimsey (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Isabell Lorey, 'Autonomy and Precarization', in *Mobile Autonomy: Exercises in Artists' Self-Organisation*, ed. Nico Dockx and Pascal Gielen, trans. Aileen Derieg, (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2015), pp 39–52.

<sup>6</sup> Lorey, *State of Insecurity*, pp. 73–90.

<sup>7</sup> Isabell Lorey, 'Governmentality and Self-Precarization: On the Normalization of Culture Producers', *transversal: 'Machines and Subjectivation'*, trans. Dagmar Fink and Lisa Rosenblatt, November 2006, <http://transversal.at/transversal/1106/lorey/en>

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Lorey, *State of Insecurity*.

<sup>9</sup> Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London and New York: Verso, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Maurizio Lazzarato, *The Making of the Indebted Man: An Essay of the Neoliberal Condition* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2012).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

means to place life and sociality at the service of debt and to make oneself even more governable.

To understand the governmental intertwining of time, precarization, and debt, it is important to bear in mind that precarization means dealing with the unforeseeable, with contingency, acting without being able to predict what the near or distant future will bring. It is precisely this ability to deal with contingency that is exploited by the loan contract, preventing agency that might start something new or refuse to work under the given conditions. The financial promise of the repayment of debt must go on, even if it requires something decidedly paradoxical of the indebted person: in their precarization they must estimate something inestimable, namely, the future. '[T]o view the future as the present and anticipate it',<sup>13</sup> as Nietzsche formulates, means not only controlling the future in the present, but also through self-governing to make precarization and the precarized person calculable in the incalculability of their life and to hold them under control—yet doing so primarily on behalf of the creditor.

In self-precarization, however, this paradox of calculating the incalculable is reversed, the temporality of debt is fantastically inverted: by investing the self in what is supposedly one's 'own' future, the doubly indebted personality consciously accepts precarization in the present. The fantasy of shaping the future means accepting precarization in the present. For the illusion of a predictable and better time-to-come, self-precarization appears to be a necessary investment above all amongst the northwestern European middle classes. What is abandoned in this projection of a future is the agency that might start something new in the present.

Starting something new, taking action, as Marx already pointed out, requires forces that emerge from sociality,

<sup>13</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality and Other Writings*, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 36.

from relatedness with others, from precariousness: trust in oneself, in others, and thus in the world.<sup>14</sup> And it is precisely this trust—this ethical relationship—that gets exploited by credit and indebtedness.

#### INSTITUTIONS THAT SPREAD

As the figure of the indebted person spreads, public spending for art and education institutions is increasingly reduced, making their funding more and more dependent on private donors and fundraising. The exchange relation that comes with this manifests itself in the 'modulation of creativity',<sup>15</sup> the framework in which all areas of the institution are evaluated: from attendance numbers to publication rankings and online clicks. When productivity develops primarily through communication and the making and maintaining of relationships, this productivity must be not only constantly on display, but also counted and thereby made measurable. In this way, a supposed equivalent is constructed against which funding can be assessed, and which must be permanently produced and productive. Individuals become subservient to this end, including their relational capacities. In this logic of exchange, the production of the social extends the concrete place of the institution and thus the place of work.

It encompasses not only the social relationships to donors, but also to artists, neighbours, and between members of the staff. This capitalization of sociality also encompasses the countless places and networks that extend beyond the institutional space. The institution spreads in the socialities of those working. Future donors, artists, attendees could be found anywhere. In line with the capitalization of knowledge, affect, and communication as

<sup>14</sup> Lazzarato, *The Making of the Indebted Man*, p. 56–57. Marx argues this in his essay, 'Comments on James Mill', [www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/james-mill/](http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/james-mill/).

<sup>15</sup> Gerald Raunig, *Factories of Knowledge: Industries of Creativity*, trans. Aileen Derieg (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2013), p. 109.

well as of the whole person and social relationships, the individuals constantly make the institution: at every exhibition launch, at every party, in many 'private', everyday situations, through electronic communication from home. The socialities of the whole staff become part of institutionalization; the institution is lived such that it can be capitalized, each employee is, with all of their social capacities, responsible for the perpetual process of institutionalization, which does not escape the logic of repaying the loan.<sup>16</sup> Working time becomes living time, each worker, with their affects and communicative capacities, remains permanently indebted to the donors. Along with this comes the constantly increasing acceleration of production, the calculation of sociality according to efficiency criteria, the lack of time to do something other than produce countable sums of loan repayment.

If capital exploits social activities and therefore life itself, however, this does not mean that, in turn, resistance is no longer possible, no other living practices, no other modes of passing time. As the debt and finance economy increasingly enjoys access to social activities through measuring and evaluation, a break with the concomitant partitioning of time becomes necessary. We need time, a time of break, one in which the general mobilization can be stalled, a time that suspends the time of debt and exploitation. An idle time.<sup>17</sup> This break in time would need to be more than the subjective refusal of work. Another mode of living time is required, one that takes back the social wealth that is commonly produced. 'To re-transform money into available time', as Lazzarato writes, 'to transform wealth into possibility, not only struggle but also new

<sup>16</sup> See also Isabell Lorey, 'Presentist Democracy: Destituent Breaks, Institutent Practices, Constituent Process', in *Institute for the Contemporary*, ed. Maria Hlavajova, trans. Aileen Derieg and Kelly Mulvaney (Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 2017) (forthcoming).

<sup>17</sup> Maurizio Lazzarato, *Governing by Debt*, trans. Joshua David Jordan (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2015), p. 246.

processes of subjectivation are needed.<sup>18</sup> A common exodus; a common refusal to be governed in this way and simultaneously subjectivized as capitalizable; a refusal to economically instrumentalize affects and relationships. This would also be an exodus from all forms of masculinist economy.

#### PRESERVING PRECARIOUSNESS, QUEERING DEBT

In his considerations on debt, gift, and credit, Jacques Derrida points out that there are phenomena that remove themselves from exchange, from the dynamic of giving and taking, and therefore from the debt economy, which can neither be possessed nor repaid, and which also cannot be remitted. 'To give time, the day, or life is to give nothing, nothing determinate, even if it is to give the giving of any possible giving, even if it gives the condition of giving.'<sup>19</sup> Infinite debts for which no forgiveness is possible. Care and protection that make survival/life possible can be excessive gifts that suspend the economic calculus of debt, depart from the economy of debts, and let the impossible begin.<sup>20</sup>

In a similar way, in the seventies Hélène Cixous already proposed to break through the masculinist gift economy and the asymmetry of the debt relation. To give a gift that expects no return, and which cannot be given back, means for Cixous, 'making a gift of departure', departing, taking off, leaving. Such a gift without return allows 'breaks, "parts," partings, separations... from this we break with the return-to-self, with the specular relations ruling the coherence, the identification, of

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 251.

<sup>19</sup> Jacques Derrida, 'The Madness of Economic Reason: A Gift without Present', in *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 34–70, p. 54.

<sup>20</sup> See Jacques Derrida, 'The Time of the King', in *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 1–33.

the individual'.<sup>21</sup> To suspend identity, return, and thus also the indebted autonomy allows for leaps in time, writes Cixous: Giving up self-referentiality, the reference back to oneself, and instead: 'departing', beginning without origin. This corresponds to the capacity to lose control and let go: to wander around, to risk the incalculable, unforeseeable, that which cannot be anticipated. The gift that breaks with the debt economy makes possible a becoming-precarious in the present, without credit into and for the future; that which credit does not allow: To begin something new.

Giving without return, without credit, without future, necessitates another understanding of the present: Away from the moment, which linearly moors past and future, a moment that is only ever rushed through, which is imagined without duration, on the way to the process, to the expansion, to an expanded present as a temporality of becoming. In the normalization of precarization it becomes apparent precisely in the crisis of the debt economy that there is no future, and at the same time a new present simultaneously opens through this in which people care about how they want to live *now*.<sup>22</sup>

Becoming-precarious in the present, without credit on the future, is no individual undertaking. It is always a becoming-precarious together with others. A common capacity to depart in the present and begin something new. This implies an understanding of the present that

<sup>21</sup> Hélène Cixous, 'Castration or Decapitation?', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 7, no. 1 (1981), pp. 41-55, p. 53.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Valentina Desideri and Stefano Harney, 'Fate Work: A Conversation', in *ephemera: theory and politics in organisation* 13, no. 1 (2013), pp. 159-176, p. 168.

I call 'presentist'.<sup>23</sup> To become-precarious in the now, to take off in a leap of time. Benjamin says, to prepare for the leap into the open sky:<sup>24</sup> presentist becoming-precarious. Coming from the precarious, the presentist does not devalue or defend commonly shared precariousness and the connectedness with others resulting from it. The presentist-precarious *preserves* precariousness, actualizes it in the expanded present.

'Credit is a means of privatization and debts a means of socialisation', write Stefano Harney and Fred Moten. 'And credit can only expand by means of debt. But debt is social and credit is asocial. Debt is mutual. Credit runs only one way. But debt runs in every direction, scatters, escapes, seeks refuge.'<sup>25</sup> These bad debts are endlessly distributed debts, which for social reasons, for reasons of *being with* and not for economic or moral reasons, cannot be repaid: 'debt without creditor, the black debt, the queer debt', write Harney and Moten,<sup>26</sup> because they flee identity, are without referencing, without autonomy, full of affections. To practice bad debts corresponds to the capacity to be affected by others, by people and things: to be open, vulnerable,

<sup>23</sup> The presentist is the temporality of expanded becoming and bad debts, of socialities that preserve the past and tell it anew. Cf. Isabell Lorey, 'Presentist Democracy. Reconceptualizing the Present', in *documenta 14 Reader*, ed. Quinn Latimer and Adam Szymczyk, trans. Aileen Derieg (Munich: Prestel, 2017), pp. 169-202; Isabell Lorey, 'Presentist Democracy: Exodus and Tiger's Leap', *transversal* June 2014, <http://transversal.at/blog/Presentist-Democracy>.

<sup>24</sup> See Benjamin, 'On the Concept of History', [www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm](http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm).

<sup>25</sup> Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (Wivenhoe, New York and Port Watson: Minor Compositions, 2013), p. 61.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.



precarious.<sup>27</sup> Becoming-precarious as the capacity of becoming affected.

These bad debts are not based on the idea of the autonomous, legally capable individual and the predetermination of the future. They break through the white, masculinist logic of debts and of the identity of debtors, they move as they expand differences, for everyone owes something else.<sup>28</sup> Taking bad, social debts as the point of departure leads to a complicity without borders of belonging, to the principle of association. Not to scarcity and lack, for the elimination of which debts are accumulated and things must be made better in the future, but rather to the abundance of social wealth, to excess in the now.

To do something other than work, other than extending financialization into socialities, other than amortizing and repaying debt or having one's debt forgiven, it is necessary to transgress the economic measure of equivalence, the paradigm of calculation, measurement, counting, ranking, appraisal. To (once again) realize the incalculability of a social economy of existence is a prerequisite to an exuberant giving without caring about measurability. Becoming-precarious means being open for an organization in/of the present that disobeys the linear relation to the future and of which it is not yet known to where it leads and what it brings, an organization in the present for which it is necessary to now take the time.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. also Isabell Lorey, 'The Power of the Presentist-Performative: On Current Democracy Movements', in *A Live Gathering: Performance and Politics*, ed. Ana Vujanovic and Livia Andrea Piazza, trans. Kelly Mulvaney (Ljubljana: Bunker, 2018) (forthcoming).

<sup>28</sup> Desideri and Harney, 'Fate Work', p. 169.

## NOTES ON FRIENDSHIP

Céline Condorelli



The practice of friendship is a specific entry in relation to the larger question of how to live and work together towards change; it is chosen as a way of acting in and with the world. Being a friend entails a commitment, a decision, and encompasses the implied positioning that any cultural activity requires. In this context, friendship is perhaps at its most evident in relation to a labour process, in how we work together: friends in action.

I consider friendship as an essentially political relationship, one of allegiance and responsibility. Perhaps one of my favourite definitions of cultural production, and especially of making exhibitions is that of 'making things public': the process of connecting things, establishing relationships, which in many ways means befriending issues, people, contexts. Friendship in this sense is both a set-up for working and a dimension of production. Working together can both start from and create forms of solidarity and friendship, which are then pursued as both condition and intent, motivating actions taken and work undertaken.

There are many ways of working together, and it seems important to put one's own practice in a constant relation to acting in public in the world at large. My practice, like that of many others, often involves putting fragments in relationship with each other, so that the cumulative sum of these things—words, ideas, conversations—somehow proposes something that each part alone could not. In this way I speak, not so much through an individual authorial voice but through a multiplicity of voices. I find my position by collecting and navigating through material, and I try to make work that speaks in the same way, that works by articulating a complexity of material, explicitly in both form and content.

Perhaps this is a way of working that creates close ties and connections between things, people and myself, and more often than not this feels like a friendship of sorts. I work by spending time with things I have collected, with the references that I carry along, with the numerous voices—of friends, acquaintances and peers—that are part of the process of

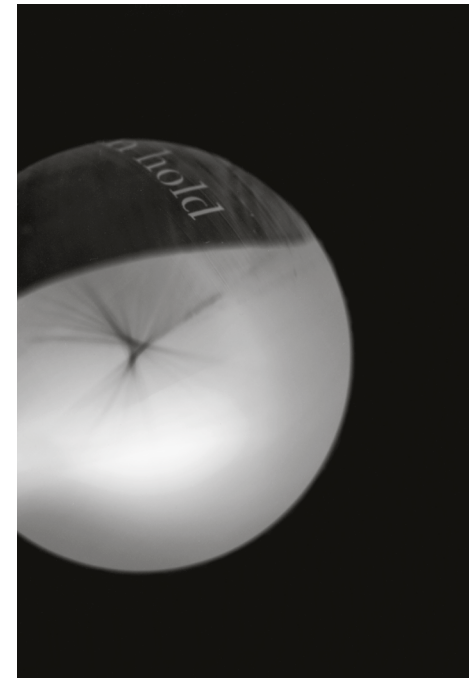
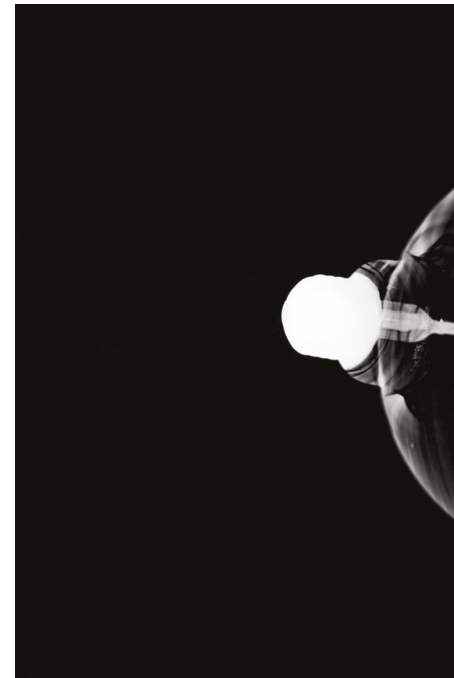
developing work, which also include the essential voices of inspirational thinkers from the past that populate our thoughts and conversations and are thus also present. Friendship, then, is perhaps a condition of work. It might never be the actual subject of the work—however close it is to support as a long-term object of my practice—but it is a formative, operational condition that works on multiple, simultaneous levels.

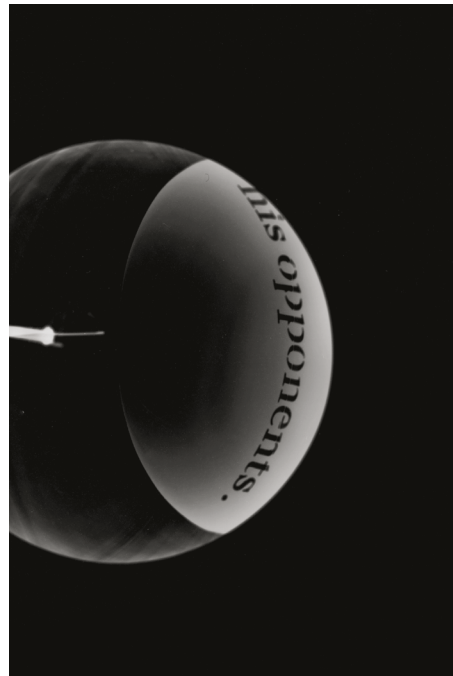
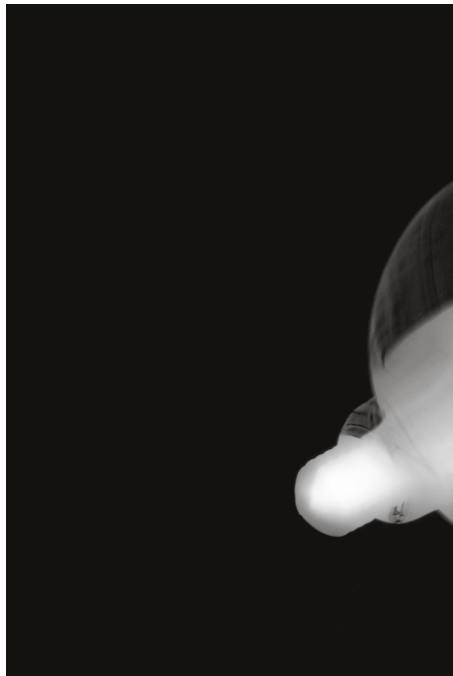
The following pages articulate parts of a sentence on friendship, through the shadows cast from a series of engraved lightbulbs, which were installed throughout a public building, then collected when blown, and used to produce photograms—shadows on photographic paper.

I refuse—to be coerced—even by truth—even by beauty—and would rather—go astray—with my friend—than hold—the truth with—his opponents—She knows—how to—choose—her company—among people—among things—among thoughts—in the present—as well as—in the past.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For this text in particular and my practice in general I am indebted to the writing and thinking of Hannah Arendt, with a special mention of 'The Crisis in Culture: Its Social and Its Political Significance', in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (London: Faber and Faber, 1961).









# SOLIDARITY

SOLIDARITY

Igor Španjol

The experience of the war in the former Yugoslavia confronted us with the question of how to react. It is obvious that the contemporary art scene has hardly reacted at all to the war and violence in Bosnia-Herzegovina, or that its reaction has been either inappropriate or ineffective. This is all the more surprising since the conviction still holds that it is in fact art that represents the humanist position, and it may hence be expected that such a reaction would be something axiomatic.

In 1994, following a suggestion from the Sarajevo-born artist Jadran Adamović and the group Irwin, representatives of the Moderna galerija in Ljubljana, Slovenia, began to collect works by important artists for a future museum of contemporary art in Sarajevo. The basic proposition was that several international institutions should each collect ten works by internationally renowned artists. They were aware that it was not enough merely to condemn the war on some kind of general declarative level, but that they had to give the people of Bosnia something concrete. Within the exhibition 'For the Museum of Contemporary Art Sarajevo 2000',<sup>1</sup> the curators collected works by artists who not only enjoyed exceptional reputations, but whose works

generally commanded extremely high prices on the international art market. The artists who were invited to collaborate with the Moderna galerija were asked to donate works of the highest possible quality. They extended invitations to those international artists with whom the Moderna galerija had already worked,<sup>2</sup> certain of whom had already asked them how they

could help Sarajevo. The idea that an artist donates a piece was a redemptive gesture from which Bosnia could truly benefit. But at the same time, the value of the gift actually represented—if correctly managed—real capital.

In 1995 Zdenka Badovinac and Igor Zabel, as representatives of the Moderna galerija, left for Sarajevo together with members of the Irwin group. At that time

it was impossible in Sarajevo to plan even far less demanding projects than, say, a museum of contemporary art. In the same year the international project 'Sarajevo 2000' was presented at the opening of the Venice Biennale. Following this presentation, Moderna galerija received a visit from the director and initiator of the project,

Enver Hadžiomerspahić, from Sarajevo. He convinced them that his project offered the most suitable conditions and assurances that the collection would eventually be situated within its own institution in Sarajevo. The basic idea of the project was that several international institutions would collect ten works by artists, through individual exhibitions, for a future museum of contemporary art in Sarajevo.<sup>3</sup>

The decision to start a museum



4.05.01 - 'Living with Genocide—the War in Bosnia—Political Theory and Art', symposium at the Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, 1996. Photo: Božidar Dolenc

<sup>1</sup> Concept of the project: Zdenka Badovinac, Igor Zabel, Irwin, Jadran Adamović.

<sup>2</sup> Marina Abramović, Mirosław Bałka, Gunter Brus, Sophie Calle, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Andres Serrano, Thomas Schutte, Bill Viola, artists from the Russian pavilion at the 1995 Venice Biennale and Marjetica Potrč, Irwin and the V.S.S.D. group.

<sup>3</sup> The greatest support for this idea came from the Luigi Pecci Centre for Modern Art in Prato. The project was subsequently joined by the Spazio Umano Centre of Contemporary Art in Milan, the Moderna galerija and the Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation.



collection for Sarajevo was the result of long discussions, the questioning of our own position, of possibilities and of various dangers. An important starting point was a feeling of powerlessness, of impossibility to affect the situation in Bosnia in any essential way. We felt that art had no real power and could not influence reality outside of itself. The question on our minds was, who should react? Beyond individual artists, we felt that the larger art system had a role to play. We agreed that a reaction was appropriate, i.e. it could compensate for the feeling of helplessness and for doubts about one's own position, only if it represented a very real (and not only symbolic) contribution.

Because the project was intended to outline answers to certain dilemmas that appear when art and the art system are confronted with the reality of war, Moderna galerija organized a symposium in May 1996, at the suggestion of Marina Abramović. This helped them to augment plans with the contributions of invited artists, curators, philosophers and sociol-



4.05.03 – Richard Deacon, work displayed at the 'For the Museum of Contemporary Art Sarajevo 2000' exhibition, 1996, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana. Photo: Lado Mlekuž and Matija Pavlovec, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana

The part of the symposium to which they gave the title, 'Modern Art and the War in Bosnia', dealt with the relationship of the art system as a whole with the war in Bosnia.<sup>4</sup> A question central to the inability of political theory to comprehend the war against Bosnia was, in their view, the destruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a sovereign state, recognized by the United Nations. They came to the conclusion that the reaction of the art establishment was unclear and contradictory.

Today, more than twenty years later, it is still true that the power of the global art system is its economic power. The indifference of the art system to the war in Sarajevo was the indifference of capital. We wanted to draw attention to precisely this dimension, and therefore used the logic of capital when collecting works of art for Sarajevo: we were mindful of the works' market value and therefore were led by the notion of the good investment. The question that presents itself today is: how has this investment paid off for Sarajevo and what is its importance for the reality of this forgotten city today, in the

<sup>4</sup> Speakers: Marina Abramović, Zdenka Badovinac, Dunja Blažević, David Elliot, Jürgen Harten, Irwin, Tomaž Mastnak, Alexandre Melo, Silva Mežnarić, Viktor Misiano, Edin Numankadić, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Peter Weibel, Igor Zabel and Denys Zacharopoulos.

context of the global economic crisis?

War in Yugoslavia was a time of interruption that brought contemporaneity. When the barracks of the Yugoslav People's Army were vacated after the army's departure from Slovenia, space was freed up for a museum of contemporary art. War in the Balkans marked the beginning of our contemporaneity. In today's world, war is happening somewhere every second, and it indirectly affects other places as well; contemporary time is always war time. How to react to war is a constant question for contemporary art.

The museum in Sarajevo was expected to open by 2000, but unfortunately there is no telling, even today, when this might actually happen. Today Sarajevo is a town of floundering or closed cultural institutions. Local authorities are unable to come to an agreement as to whose responsibility the museums and their collections are. National and international heritage is deteriorating. As during the war in Bosnia, nobody seems to be able to help. Still dedicated to the values of difference and commonality, Moderna galerija is conceived as a platform for horizontal collaboration with different social agents defending the concepts of solidarity and common heritage.



4.05.04 – Marina Abramović, *Cleaning the Mirror*, 1995, five-channel video installation, displayed within The Bosna Archive at the exhibition 'The Present and Presence', Repetition 1. A selection of works from the Artestart 2000+ collection and the national collection of Moderna galerija, Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana, 2012. Photo: Dejan Habicht, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana



4.05.02 – 'Living with Genocide—the War in Bosnia—Political Theory and Art', symposium at the Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, 1996. Photo: Lado Mlekuž

ogists. They enlisted the help of Slovene political theory expert Tomaž Mastnak and called the symposium 'Living with Genocide—the War in Bosnia—Political Theory and Art', in order to emphasize the dual structure of the symposium.



# ANTAGONISM

# GO

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ANTAGONISM

Francesco Salvini



I want to address antagonism as a practice of institutional change, and therefore as a radical inhabitation of the social contract of citizenship. Beyond the sociological definition of citizenship as a relationship between the individual and the state, ‘citizenship’ is an ideological organization of social tensions that allows for managing the organization of social production as well as the social distribution of wealth.

In the words of the philosopher Judith Revel (2011), citizenship allows for governing the dis-symmetric dialectic between genesis and management. The citizen acts as a formal mediation in the antagonism of labour; that is, citizenship serves to govern the driving force of social production in capitalism.

However, this antagonism between genesis and management, between activity and commodities, between labour and capital is at the same time governed by, but also always irreducible to the logic of capitalistic production (Tronti 1972). The normalization of this conflict is always formal but not substantial, because the government of production is always partial and singularities exceed the norm.

Institutions become significant sites where one can analyse and intervene in this dis-symmetric and un-reducible dialectic. The space of the institution is one where we can grasp the refusal of the normative force of citizenship—non-citizens, borrowing from Mario Tronti’s reference to workers in the first place as non-capital (see also Negri, 1991)—and at the same time the affirmative force of those agents that occupy institutions, that can invade the state, that affirm a constituent power in front of a static dialectic of exclusion.

This tendency of exclusion and invasion takes me to Franco Basaglia, an important but lesser-known Italian thinker and radical psychiatrist in the seventies, who led the social movements for the closure of mental asylums in Italy. The affirmation of the ‘loon’ (as provocatively named by Basaglia 1964) as (non)citizen, indeed, affirms a claim for rights without assuming a normalized citizenship, in the same way in which the worker claims for

participating in production trying to avoid being abstracted as capital.

Following Basaglia, this dissymmetric dialectic is articulated on the limit of violence, on the limit where the outcome of the institutional mediation is uncertain. In the closed institution (the ‘institution of violence’), the responsibility of the incident is reversed upon the ab/normality of the patient. The ‘loon’ is not capable of participating in the social contract of citizenship. The ‘loon’s antagonism is expressed through refusal: ‘The choice of death, as refusal of an unliveable life, as a protest against the objectification that affects one’s own body, as the only possible illusion of freedom, as the only possible project’ (2005, p. 72; my translation). Paradoxically, Franco Basaglia affirms, the institution only recognizes the patient’s responsibility for the incident, i.e. the act in which the denial of one’s own life is stronger. Therefore, this threshold where the subaltern can express their agency, needs to be inhabited in order to transform the institution.

Against the objectification of this agency, in this refusal of being abstracted as a normal citizen, the possibility of freedom for the internal outsider rests only on the limit of the incident. Opening the institution involves taking a collective responsibility for the antagonism that freedom involves. It is not about the doctor becoming the saviour of a patient and making the asylum ‘a garden of grateful servants’ (2005, p. 25; my translation). The disarticulation of objectification and the moment of re-subjectivation happens through the violence against the doctors and literally the destruction of the institutional form, the institutional procedure, the



institutional site. It is not about abolishing a fence, it is about destroying it.

The destruction of the institution, though, resides along an ambivalent limit, on the one hand continuously guaranteeing the right of asylum and, on the other, contrasting the neoliberal logic of freedom that translates deinstitutionalization into 'abandonment and misery' (Basaglia 2005; in his letters from New York). At stake in the invention of new institutional practices is the recognition of antagonism and freedom, but also the guarantee of refuge and asylum as rights of fragility and vulnerability, as Assunta Signorelli, the former Director of the Women Centre and later Director of the Mental Health Department of Trieste, affirms (1999).

The significance of this ambivalence goes beyond the space of mental health-care and applies to matters of citizenship, whenever the latter is understood as a common practice of care in the permanent and asymmetric dialectic between genesis and government, between invention and management.

In the instituent practice, the question would be: How to manage an institution—the asylum but also citizenship in itself—that we deny? In a 'silent' conversation between Franco Basaglia and the writing of Frantz Fanon, Basaglia asks himself this impossible question. Fanon, in his 1954 resignation letter from the Psychiatric Hospital of Blida-Joinville, writes 'It was an absurd gamble to undertake, at whatever cost, to bring into existence a certain number of values, when the lawlessness, the inequality, the multi-daily murders of men were raised to the status of legislative principles.' (1964, p. 53) Facing the same 'systematized de-humanization' that Frantz Fanon recognizes in the asylum and generally in the colony, Franco Basaglia deals with a different scenario.

For Basaglia, the revolution in Italy is not only necessary, but also impossible. The denial of the institution is at the same time the responsibility and the contradiction involved in the dismantlement of the

asylum. The asylum—as an institution of violence—can be destroyed, but the practice of care has to persist in order to untangle the role of oppression played by its operators. Manage and deny. Inhabit ambivalences: Destroy the asylum and madness as institutions, but also find ways of preserving a series of capabilities of the institution.

How can we dislodge the operator from the role assigned to his or her knowledge in the capitalistic production? How can we disarticulate the power of the doctor in dividing the sane and the insane, or the productive and the unproductive? But at the same time, how can we invent a new space where an alliance of subjectivation is possible among the multiple agencies that constitute the project of care? Can the instituent practice disarticulate institutional stability and yet maintain the institution as a space where experimentation can happen?

At stake is not the capacity of the critical institution for producing autonomous experimentation, but of preserving a space where experimentation can happen beyond and against the rule of management. This is the question that Basaglia poses. It inherently affirms antagonism as a practice that should push the contradiction and inhabit the ambivalence of change: a practice that dismantles the institution, and opens the space to invent it again every day.

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WE OPENLY  
USE ART TO  
RE-EVALUATE  
EXISTING

IDEAS  
/ VALUES  
/ BELIEFS

BY CREATING  
A POLITICALLY  
SECULAR  
SPACE.

Michael Taussig  
2.07

The point is  
not to oppose  
technology and  
science  
but to shift  
control  
and oversight  
of the means  
of production  
from the few  
to the many.



'Consortium Instabile', MAXXI, Rome, 2015. Five farmers from the mountains were invited to Rome to share their work. The radio show was a call to policy makers and consumers to support small-scale farming and the preservation of the commons as it relates to seeds and land use.

While 'the museum is not what it used to be', a building is still the standard frame. Even so, the approach can be holistic and space fluid, so that the entire museum functions as a programmed entity and different speeds and types of activity and production can co-exist, influencing one another to create a cultural ecology.

November Paynter  
4.09



Museums and galleries, for the large part, are still based around the model that art is made by artists for use by a willing public (in whatever myriad of forms ensue from that simple equation). To move beyond this impasse would necessitate far more than a shift towards horizontal, as opposed to hierarchical and top down, organizational structures (however helpful these may seem to be). In short, such a transition would require that museums and galleries begin to open up our existing source codes and templates for understanding art to a constituent process of renegotiation—one that would require a fundamental reevaluation of the collaborative and constitutive work or labour of art in terms of its use and use value.

John Byrne  
2.03

Sean Dockray  
5.04

The tentative  
discontinuity  
between the space  
of a project, or  
organization, or  
platform and the  
surrounding world  
is an important  
dimension because  
it's provisional  
is the site of  
provisionality  
creation.

ORGANIZ



Apolonija Šušteršič, *Light Therapy*, 2013, installation as part of the 'Museum of Arte Útil' activated by the museum's volunteers choir. Photo: Peter Cox, Eindhoven

In these times of despair, and downward spiralling darkness, of increasing social asymmetries and inequalities, of planetary trouble and fear, and of overpopulation and disorientation, we cannot fall in the trap of believing that technology will solve our problems, nor should we concede to temptations of nihilist, opportunistic or apocalyptical cynicism or indifference. If spatial practices are to become socially (and intellectually) relevant again, it must be through a turn towards more 'responsible' modalities of practice.

In a world in which  
injustice tends to  
be justified on the  
basis of efficiency  
and profit,  
revealing that  
unjust structures  
also happen to  
be both obsolete  
and dysfunctional  
is an extremely  
powerful gesture.

# ‘VSAK ČLOVEK JE KUSTOS ! / JEDER MENSCH IST EIN KURATOR!’

‘VSAK ČLOVEK JE  
KUSTOS! / JEDER MENSCH  
IST EIN KURATOR!’

Moderna galerija,  
Ljubljana, 16 June  
– 30 September 2007

Tjaša Pogačar Podgornik



4.07.I.01 – ‘Every Man Is a Curator/Jeder Mensch ist ein Kurator’,  
2007, exhibition view, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana

The exhibition project ‘Every Man Is a Curator/Jeder Mensch ist ein Kurator!’ was organized by the Moderna galerija right before the planned renovation of its main building was to take place. In a public call, the institution appealed to ‘all who are in any way interested in the future of the Moderna galerija’ to contribute their ‘own suggestions, ideas, plans, comments, actions, discussions, artworks’ and thereby participate in its renovation and reorganization. Although there was no fixed theme to the exhibition, in which anyone was welcome to participate, the public call in the very beginning set forth a cultural and political problem to which the project was replying and, by doing so, unveiling the part played in this context by the exhibition itself and by the exhibitors’ participation. The project ‘Every Man Is a Curator’ was conceived as an answer to the question of how to organize an exhibition without any funds, and also how to use the exhibition as a tool to raise questions regarding the social role and the future of the Moderna galerija. Such use of the institution’s exhibition activities is part of the longterm efforts of the Moderna galerija to develop

the concept of the museum as a tool for intervening in the local conditions of cultural production and exceeding geopolitical limitations.

The decision for a nonselective exhibition was brought about by the situation in which the Moderna galerija found itself when the Ministry of Culture granted funds to renovate the building, but did not provide any temporary facilities or means to carry out its programme while renovation was underway. Furthermore, it was no longer clear whether it would be possible to realize the plan to establish the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, which would host Moderna galerija’s collection of Eastern European avantgarde and neo-avantgarde art (Arteast2000+). As it had no funds, the institution was not able to provide customary working conditions for the participants in the exhibition ‘Every Man Is a Curator’. Consequently, it suspended the selection criteria and left the curator’s work to the exhibitors, who also covered all the expenses of production and technical realization. For the duration of the exhibition, the empty spaces of the Moderna galerija were filled up by works,





interventions, performances, discussions, et cetera of over 100 participants, including artists of different generations, designers, architects, philosophers, a group of schoolchildren and other individuals, and sufficient donations were collected to even publish a catalogue, the production of which was overseen by two participating designers. Several participants' contributions directly responded to the problem of the Moderna galerija and inadequate working conditions in the local cultural field, some works and interventions offered a critical approach to the questions of power and authority of the institution and the relation between the artist and the curator, while some artists paid no attention to the context and simply took advantage of the exhibition to promote their own work.



4.07.I.02 – 'Every Man Is a Curator/Jeder Mensch ist ein Kurator', 2007, exhibition view, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana

The title 'Every Man Is a Curator/Jeder Mensch ist ein Kurator!' is a paraphrase of Joseph Beuys' motto 'Every man is an artist'. By replacing the word 'artist' with 'curator', Beuys' vision of democratization of art and its implementation in everyday life is connected to Marcel Duchamp's legacy of dissolving dichotomies between the artist and the curator, artistic work and its context. What is more, it is through the non-selective approach and the public call, by which the Moderna galerija called upon all those interested to become

members of the 'association of independent curators', that the project entered into dialogue with the Exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists (New York, 1917), where in spite of the principle of nonselection, Duchamp's famous *Fountain* was not shown.

In the postsocialist space, the vision of a society where every man is an artist and every artist a curator was, in its perverted form, becoming a reality from the nineties onwards as a consequence of the implementation of neoliberal politics—that is, in the field of culture, of a shift from the national social-democratic cultural model to the introduction of the 'entrepreneurial spirit', meaning that the state gradually withdrew its support to institutions of art. The model of financing through calls for proposals was introduced on the local level in the nineties by private foundations, but was in time adopted by the state as well—and in the inadequately developed local art market it is the state that has to this very day remained the primary source of funds for production of art.

The project 'Every Man Is a Curator' draws from the local tradition of critical art practices that used the field of culture as a tool for a critique of the political system and society. In the socialist context, where art institutions and state politics were so closely interwoven, a sharp division between the official (institutional) and independent culture existed, since state institutions did not include the latter in their programmes.

In this situation, artists' self-organization and strategies of bringing the context of production into the very aesthetics of production through tactics of self-historicization, establishment of parallel spaces and alternative economies of art thus worked both as a mitigation of the consequences of marginalization of alternative art and a form of countercultural activity. Since the nineties, the opening up of institutions to critical practices and to a greater participation of the public on the one hand and strategies of selforganization by noninstitutional cultural actors on



4.07.I.03 – 'Every Man Is a Curator/Jeder Mensch ist ein Kurator', 2007, exhibition view, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana

the other, have coincided with the degradation of state support structures and the already mentioned entrepreneurialization of culture. The latter institutionalizes self-organized activity of independent cultural workers who, in order to compete on the market of public funds for production of art, must become institutionalized either as nongovernmental organizations or as the selfemployed.

In the case of the project 'Every Man Is a Curator', the participants' selforganization and the tasks they completed in place of the institution can therefore no longer be seen as a critique of the institution's cultural authority and position of power—it is noteworthy that in the second half of the nineties, the Moderna galerija placed artistic practices of the independent scene in the centre of its activity—but rather as a compensation for the consequences of the breakup between the institution and the state, a form of support to and solidarity with an institution in crisis. However, as we have already pointed out, increasingly precarious working conditions in the field of culture are not a consequence of the mistakes in cultural policy, but are its tool for flexibilization of the local cultural field which has resulted in the ever more frequent model of (co)production, where expenses and responsibility are borne jointly by public institutions and the selforganized art community.

In the project 'Every Man Is a Curator', the relation between the institution and its constituents is delineated in the double

meaning of this encounter: participation is enforced by aggravated conditions of production and simultaneously mobilized as a gesture of solidarity and support. In fact, the exhibition functioned also as a public forum that made the problem of the Moderna galerija, the problem of degrading working conditions in the field of culture and common interests of the contemporary art community much more visible in the public space. If every exhibition is foremost based on the decision to cooperate (with the artist, curator, institution etc.) and thereby participate (in the system of art, culture and politics, economy etc.), in this case the implicit complicity is explicitly mobilized to form alliances on the basis of common urgencies. After all, it was the actors of nongovernmental organizations who after the exhibition 'Every Man Is a Curator' launched the initiative for the project 'Hosting Moderna galerija', in which approximately twenty cultural producers offered their own spaces to the Moderna galerija so that it could carry out its programme during the renovation. When the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova was opened, the Moderna galerija found itself in a similar situation as in 2007, for it once again received no funds for the administration of the new unit. That is why one year after reopening its doors, the Moderna galerija actualized the project 'Every Man Is a Curator' in the context of the exhibition 'Dear Art' by inviting 'all interested parties to comment in writing on the role of the museum in the current situation of economic crisis and suggest how the new museum can operate with no financial funds.'



# LODGERS AT M HKA

LODGERS AT M HKA

Nav Haq and  
Alan Quireyns



4.08.01 – LODGERS #2 bolwerK: *Daemons & Shell Scripts*, 2015, installation view, M HKA, Antwerp. Photo: M HKA

The LODGERS programme, which began in January 2015, was developed as a collaboration between M HKA and AIR Antwerpen residency. The principal idea was based on a broad observation on the ecology of visual art, and the understanding that there were many organizations and initiatives doing important work in supporting artistic practice, but which were somehow beyond clear institutional definition in rather interesting ways. Public institutions are typically expected to give clear definitions of who they are, together with their remit. Yet many initiatives, which are often smaller in scale, clearly do not carry this burden of expectation, and work in more open and dynamic ways. The LODGERS programme was set up in recognition of the important work of these initiatives, and to provide a moment for collaboration and reflection.

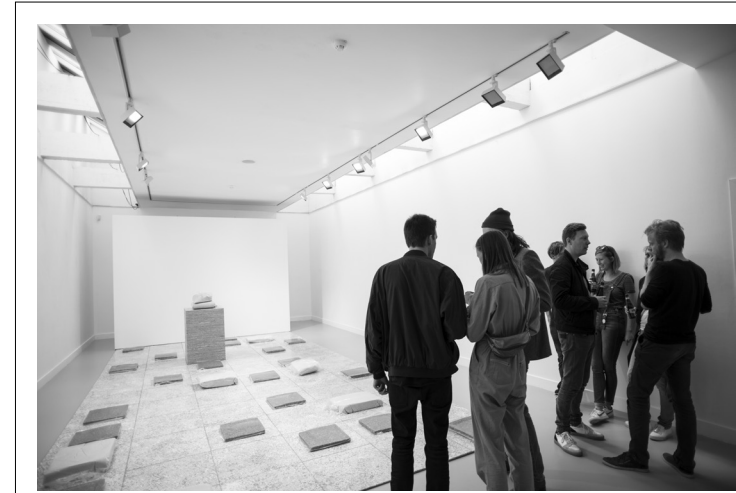
The LODGERS programme has provided an opportunity for public interface to organizations and initiatives that focus specifically on producing and commissioning, and do not have their own public space. The kind of artistic organizations we invited included publishers,

commissioning agencies, research initiatives, record labels, discussion platforms and other initiatives experimenting with artistic production. It included, for example, MER Paper Kunsthal based in Ghent, Apparent Extent based in Cologne, *Pages* magazine based in Rotterdam, Hotel Charleroi based in Charleroi and bolwerK based largely in Antwerp. Yet none of these organizations could be described quite clearly as a ‘publisher’ or ‘commissioning agency’. Apparent Extent, run by Volker Zander since 2006, for example, publishes new music, yet sits at the intersection of visual art by publishing records of audio work by visual artists and organizing many events and activities. Whereas the activities of bolwerK take place, at various times, on the intersection of art, gender theory, music, food, broadcasting, and hacking.

A geographical parameter was also set, in order to consider such activity in our region, and thus we invited initiatives based in the area known as ‘Eurocore’—the term coined by architect Rem Koolhaas to describe the dense region comprised primarily of Benelux and the Rhineland,



4.08.02 – LODGERS #3: *Apparent Extent*, 2015, installation view, M HKA, Antwerp. Photo: M HKA



4.08.04 – LODGERS #10: *Jubilee*, 2017, installation view, M HKA, Antwerp. Photo: M HKA



4.08.03 – LODGERS #6: *Ultra Eczema*, 2016, installation view, M HKA, Antwerp. Photo: M HKA

skirting the Northern tip of France, that was a historically significant region for the post-War avant-garde. AIR Antwerpen provides the living space, and the 6th floor at M HKA is the working space. The 16 LODGERS we have hosted have used the space in very diverse and dynamic ways, ranging from being a space for re-enactments, workshops and experiments, as well as for publishing, as a party venue, an exhibition space and a meeting point. It has asked something different from our typical visitor, leading to some interesting reactions after visiting the larger, more typical exhibitions before eventually working their way up to the 6th floor and experiencing the more ‘freeform’ activities of the LODGERS. The openness of the LODGERS workspace has in turn challenged the different invited initiatives to relate to this audience that is normally less niche than the typical constituencies they may usually associate with.

Last but not least, it has been, informally-speaking, a means of researching initiatives that have a strong degree of autonomy, and with imminent connections to artistic practice. The LODGERS programme initiated much reflection, both for the museum of contemporary art, the AIR Antwerpen residency, and each invited lodger. As each partner has been so very different from the others, it has led each time to new three-way exchanges, where on each occasion the three partners have had to consider how exactly to form a collaboration, to which purpose, and what potential value it has for the public. It has led to many projects and activities that would not be possible or conceivable for each organization outside of such a collaboration, and offered insight for visitors into how these organizations do their work.



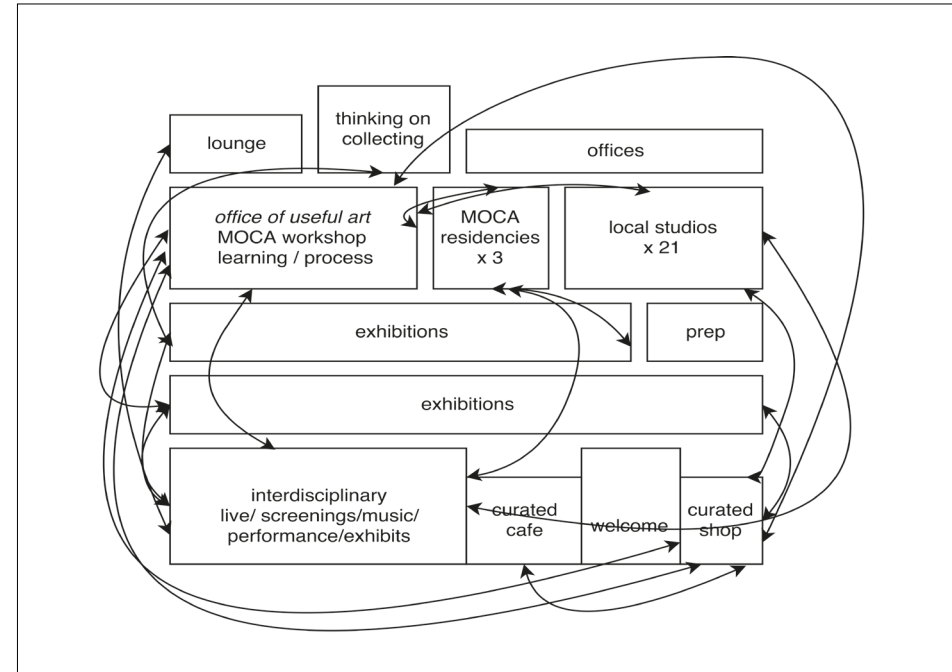


# MODEL FOR A CONSTITUENT MUSEUM

A MODEL FOR A  
CONSTITUENT MUSEUM  
MOCA TORONTO CANADA

November Paynter

# MOCA TORONTO CANADA



4.09.01 - November Paynter, imagined ecology of MOCA

A constituent museum, a community-oriented organization, a site of exchange and debate, responsive to the issues and concerns that surround us: These are just some of the aspirations of MOCA, Toronto, a museum that opens in a new venue, with a revitalized mission, as this book is published. Are these intentions possible to quantify until the place of the museum lives and is lived? Can communities begin to be nourished and engaged before the museum cements itself as a physical entity and is a literal, tangible, structural part of the community? At this moment, it is exactly this potential of what a museum can be, or rather how a set of evolving ideas can develop, that allow MOCA to exist as a partner in the vision. It is this position of reciprocity that we aim to hold on to. Collective imagination, a structure of ideas, thought and exchange, allow for a museum to be conceived of and exist. Before the stuff of architecture and art come into play, a museum is a depository for multifarious hopes, possibilities and desires, formed of and by, known and as yet unknown, future constituents, users, and society.

While 'the museum is not what it used to be',<sup>1</sup> a building is still the standard frame. Even so, the approach can be holistic and space fluid, so that the entire museum functions as a programmed entity and different speeds and types of activity and production can co-exist, influencing one another to create a cultural ecology. At MOCA the entry space is designed to be responsive and malleable—giving opportunities through form and function to distribute ownership. On other floors, over twenty studios will accommodate and establish a producing community at the heart of the institution. Other assemblies will ebb and flow around strands of research, including those on 'Use and Cultivation', where it is hoped synergies, alliances, as well as healthy antagonism will feed into new expressions of creativity and unexpected collaborations.

<sup>1</sup> Taken from Vasif Kortun's 2017 paper *Questions on Institutions* and used as the title of MOCA's first pre-opening programme, which initiates a conversation around how to create a museum that answers to the pressures of our extreme present, while at the same time establishing a meaningful and enduring agenda.





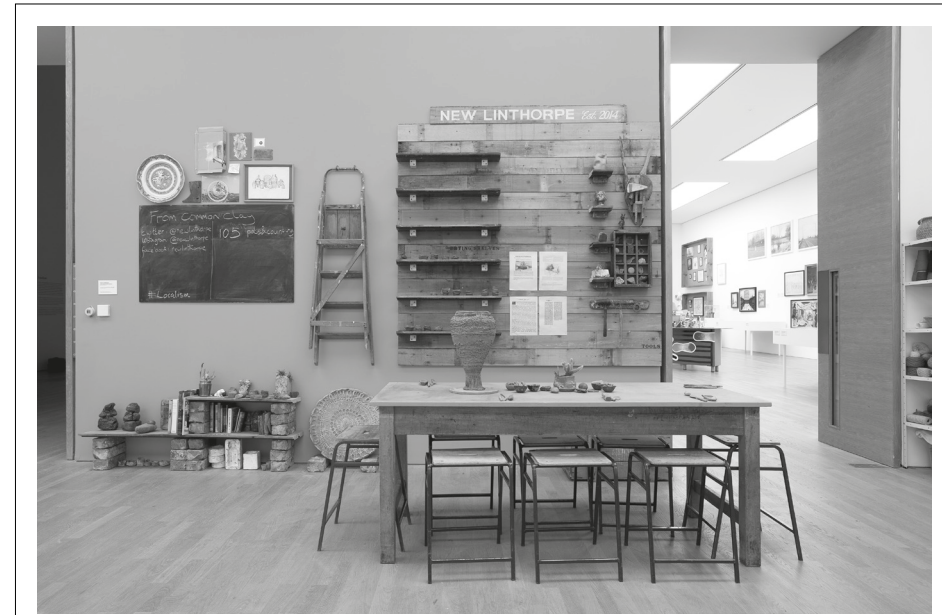
An Office of Useful Art provides space to share process and socially engaged practice, bridging interior activity out into the urban context and beyond. A Constituent Curator works to develop relationships with diverse community groups, artists, organizations, and individuals, to help facilitate projects already in the making and enable those on the cusp of germination. This position strives to also expand the institution's cultural ecology beyond its walls, to keep the thinking and doing dispersed, across the site surrounding the museum and in dialogue with complementary partners and spaces across the city. Collaborations with neighbours, those in Toronto, Canada, and internationally, will keep the discussion locally rooted and globally relevant. All the time, at the core, is a focus on fostering long-term engagements with as many as possible of those involved in the constitution of the museum, and most importantly, with foresight, to cooperate with those who will make the museum theirs by using it.

We strive for a model that does not rely on things to be resolved to move forward, but rather is energized by possibilities, production, and learning. We hope that these aims can be realized by encouraging a shared sense of ongoing care and mutual ownership in the formative stages of this project, as meaning and notions of use are built into the fabric of the museum. If MOCA can evolve with the involvement of those who imagined it before it had doors, and with those who will give it value once they are open, there is the potential to together build a new model, perhaps one that will be termed a constituent museum.



NEW LINTHORPE

Elinor Morgan



4.10.01 – New Linthorpe, *Common Ground*, 2015, installation view within 'Localism'. Courtesy of the artists and Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. Photo: Jason Hynes, 2015

In 1879, brick manufacturer John Harrison and British designer Christopher Dresser launched Linthorpe Art Pottery in Middlesbrough, UK. They employed local people to make decorative and functional items in clay from the area. Dresser brought influences from ceramic production in Japan and developed distinctive designs, with dribbled and bright glazes that often reacted with the rich iron content of the clay to produce unusual surface pattern and texture.

This enterprise attempted to tackle the area's unemployment, and was in many ways a modern and ethical employer: the business focused on education and training; they employed women; workers were paid relatively well; and by using the country's first gas kilns, they ensured that the factory was a comparatively clean environment. In part due to these principled approaches, the Linthorpe Art Pottery did not last more than ten years. During its short life, though, it sent works around the globe, with presentations in Calcutta in 1884 and at New Orleans World Cotton Centennial 1884–1885, and London International Exhibition 1885.

New Linthorpe was a project by artist and activist Emily Hesse and curator James Beighton that revisited the designs and ethos of Linthorpe Art Pottery. They worked with local people through creative sessions and conversations, to make ceramic pieces and new narratives for the area. Taking the town's ceramic heritage as a precedent, the duo shared an account of creative production in a region dominated by depictions of heavy industry and decline.

The pair worked with matter from Middlesbrough's clay seam, digging the ground in Gresham, an area close to the civic and commercial centre of town, where many houses have been demolished and plots have been empty for a number of years, and on the banks of the river Tees, historically an artery of manufacturing and exchange. After mining, they undertook the arduous process of filtering and refining the clay so that it could be worked and fired. By reclaiming discarded land in an area known for its dereliction, and communally using the material sitting dormant within it, New Linthorpe made a simple, effective metaphor and a series of political actions.



New Linthorpe made their first public presentation in 'Localism' (2015–2016), an exhibition of social and art histories on the Tees Valley at Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. This comprised two elements in connected galleries: the display of works from the nineteenth-century Linthorpe Art Pottery, on loan from the Dorman Museum, and the duo's own collection; and a workspace designed to host the institution's publics in making sessions. Throughout the exhibition, in two workshops each week, New Linthorpe worked with hundreds of people, to teach hand-building techniques and develop conversations around the ownership and use of local land, and the possibilities of working with clay.

After firing, all pieces were either inserted back into the displays, or sold in the museum shop, according to the desire of the maker. At the end of the exhibition, unclaimed works were painted with enamel paint (a reference to the closing down sale of the original Linthorpe Art Pottery) and 150 items were acquired for the Middlesbrough Collection held at Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. During workshops in 'Localism', people living in the Tees Valley who originated from places as dispersed as Eritrea, Ethiopia and the Middle East, expressed frustrations that they were unable to source cooking receptacles needed for preparing and sharing culinary traditions from international cultures.

The next New Linthorpe project 'The Coffee House' was led by this articulation of a desire to use the clay to produce items not widely available in the region. With Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art and Tees Valley Arts, New Linthorpe next worked with constituents who were engaging in English classes at a local education facility. Together they made every element of an Eritrean style coffee service, with the *jabena*, a jug-like vessel used to make coffee on an open fire, as the central piece. Forty-eight people turned up to the first workshop. After designing each component, they used hand-building



4.10.02 – New Linthorpe, *Common Ground*, 2015, documentation within 'Localism'. Courtesy of the artists and Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. Photo: Judy Hume, 2015

techniques, wheel throwing, and finally glazed the items in a range of decorative styles. In the summer of 2016, the group performed the ceremony twice in the museum's garden. This collection of ceramics is held in the Middlesbrough Collection, with the understanding that there will be a public coffee ceremony each summer in the future.

After undertaking several projects of different scales as New Linthorpe, in mid-2017 Beighton and Hesse moved into separate roles that continue to build on the work initiated under the project. The research, ideas and skills developed by them and many others during the life of New Linthorpe continue in diverse spaces and programmes around the Tees Valley and further afield.

(Written with James Beighton and Emily Hesse)



4.10.03 – New Linthorpe, *Common Ground*, 2015, installation view within 'Localism'. Courtesy of the artists and Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. Photo: Jason Hynes, 2015



4.10.04 – New Linthorpe, *Coffee House*, 2016, documentation. Courtesy of the artists and Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. Photo: Judy Hume, 2015



4.10.05 – New Linthorpe, *Coffee House*, 2016, documentation. Courtesy of the artists and Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. Photo: Judy Hume, 2015

PART 5

Archiving and Collecting Relationships

ARCHIVING  
AND COLLECTING  
RELATIONSHIPS





# ARCHIVING AND COLLECTING RELATIONSHIPS

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COLLECTING  
RELATIONSHIPS

Aida Sánchez de Serdio

The archive has a central role in all institutions as a base, instrument, and product of the power/knowledge regime those institutions embody. Museums are not different in this respect even if the nature of their archives, regarding content and organization, is quite specific (i.e. related to art and cultural practices). The archive is often invisible or at least less visible than the other dimensions of the museum, which is an institution dedicated to developing certain regimes of visibility and display. But this very invisibility is also at the core of the museum's role as an instance of information based on power and control. Therefore, bringing the archive under scrutiny and challenging its principles (both conceptual and technical) is another way of renegotiating the boundaries of the museum beyond a critical macro-analysis of its genealogies by intervening in the less visible micro-gears of the institutional machinery.

Another challenge in relation to the archive has to do with the ways in which the museum archives its future, especially when faced with fluid and ephemeral relational processes—like education, but also the arts that are based on collaboration—whose complexity and interpersonal quality require special care in the way they are recorded and treated. How can relations be archived? It has been argued that in these cases invisibility should be preserved to avoid their 'spectacularization', but this strategy, which is certainly necessary in many occasions, also runs the risk of depriving such relational and durational projects of a narrative, a visibility and accessibility that would render them useful to others. Taking this dilemma as a starting point, this section asks how it might be possible to archive and account for artistic processes in a careful, complex, fragile, and partial, yet productive way. Also, it imagines the constituent relational museum by looking at a range of projects, processes and activities that challenge the fundamental principles of objecthood, collection, and physical proximity that have, so far, underpinned the very understanding of what it is for an institution to be or become a museum.

Kristine Khouri and Rasha Salti show how elusive the history of artistic and museographic practices outside the European canon can be through their first-person account of the research they carried out to understand the origins and implications of the 'International Art Exhibition for Palestine' held in Beirut in 1978, an apparently forgotten key moment in the genealogy of Arab modernity. Since most of the archives regarding the exhibition had been destroyed during the 1982 Israeli siege of Beirut, the authors set out to reconstruct a living archive through the network of artists and militants involved



in the organization and their international connections and inspirations (such as the Musée International de la Résistance Salvador Allende in Chile, or the Art Against/Contre Apartheid collection, among others). Coherently, the exhibition of the research takes into account the location and the networks of solidarity already existing in each context, as a way of ‘weaving a new inter-generational constituency of activists and artists’.

Furthering this debate, the Southern Conceptualisms Network present their node Archivos en Uso and its strategy regarding the preservation and socialization of Latin American critical artistic practices from the sixties. Taking as an example the Art Actions Collective CADA, they explain how for them it is key to preserve and secure access to the archives in their places of origin, but also to resist the processes of fetishization and neutralization of the past as well as researching and creating classifying categories that challenge universalist notions. Shifting a bit from these issues, the conversation John Hill holds with Tiziana Terranova, Sean Dockray, and Adelita Husni-Bey revolves around another relevant question for the archiving of relationships, namely the inherent mutability of collective projects and organizations. When cultural and political experiences become common, unified positions are not possible and there is a permanent struggle to de-programme normalized relations of oppression, in ‘a relational practice of distribution that requires degrees of negotiation, reliance, and dependency’. Therefore, the question about permanence or how to pass ownership to a next generation is more problematic than ever, opening debates about use-value, intergenerational cooperation and transformation by exclusion and renewal. Özge Ersoy explores the role of arts and archival institutions as places that create, preserve, mediate, and disseminate knowledge. If institutions are alive only inasmuch as they are used and transformed by their publics, their survival is based precisely on the values of citizenship, namely participation and debate, providing at the same time a safe and often invisible space for dialogue. This is particularly difficult—and needed—in a moment of rising authoritarianism, right-wing populism and censorship. Completing this set of discussions, Burak Arikan goes beyond physical archive and discusses the data-network effects produced by the accumulation of data from individual users, allowing monopolies to capture and monetarize people’s behaviour. He calls for a collective action in front of the dominance of a connectivity that we no longer control.

Three project-studies close this section, showing some examples of archive-based institutional practices. Open Source Prototypes in the Fundació Antoni Tàpies in Barcelona started as a way of critically activating the institutional archive through a network of external collaborators that conducted research, curatorial or educational projects from 2011 to 2016, thus opening to public debate the internal procedures of the museum. The Office of Useful Art established in SALT Istanbul for a two-year period (2017–2019) is contributing to the online Arte Útil Archive with examples from Turkey and the surrounding regions, as part of the more general aim of the institution to share and use resources openly and promote a culture of collaboration and co-learning between itself and its users. Finally, Graph Commons refers again to the technological dimension of data offering a collaborative platform for mapping data networks that can be used by very diverse projects (activist, curatorial, organizational, journalistic) that in one way or another resist corporate global control of data. Through this variety of debates and examples, the many implications not only of archives and heritage institutions but also of online data are problematized as a key element of a museum that wants to question its role in relation to its constituencies, now and in the future.



# REVISITING AND RECONSTITUTING NETWORKS

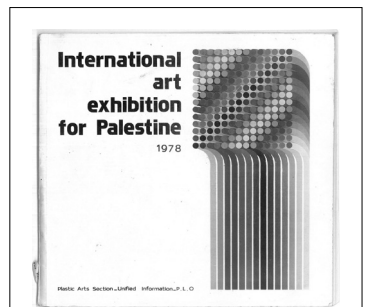
REVISITING AND  
RECONSTITUTING  
NETWORKS FROM JAPAN  
TO BEIRUT TO CHILE

Kristine Khouri  
and Rasha Salti

# FROM JAPAN TO BEIRUT TO CHILE

In 2009, we, Kristine Khouri and Rasha Salti, decided to start a 'study group' to undertake research into the history of modernity in the Arab arts. We were witnessing the rising interest by the market (and collectors) in 'modern' Arab art, but due to the paucity of scholarship and information, auction houses and art dealers seemed to be writing the history of that modernity. The narratives were unconvincing, riddled with blanks, based on unchecked facts and indifferent to a complex view of society, politics, and the larger cultural context. We soon realized that the most basic questions, like 'when was modern art first exhibited to a public in Beirut?', or 'when did the Lebanese begin to collect art?', opened interesting pathways to reconfiguring the social, economic, political and cultural matrix in which modern art existed. That was the mission of our study group and we aspired to rally emerging art historians, cultural historians, visual anthropologists and cultural sociologists around it.

While waiting in the office of a gallerist in Beirut, we found, by coincidence, the catalogue for the 'International Art Exhibition for Palestine' in his library. The exhibition had taken place in Beirut in 1978 and its scale and scope were astounding: approximately two-hundred works, donated by almost two-hundred artists hailing from thirty countries. Leafing through the catalogue's pages, we found artists who were very well known internationally: Joan Miró (Spain), Roberto Matta (Chile), and Antoni Tàpies (Spain), in addition to very well-known Arab artists like Dia al-Azzawi (Iraq) and Mohamed Melehi (Morocco). There were also artists who were entirely unknown to us. As we began to probe in our small circles in Beirut, we realized that although only a handful people recalled the exhibition, it seems to have eluded most art historical accounts on the region. We were furthermore intrigued because we learned that the exhibition was the seed for a collection for a future museum for Palestine, and that the artworks were donated by the artists. The paper trail for the collection and the exhibition was destroyed during the 1982 Israeli siege of Beirut. In order to understand how such a remarkable endeavour could have taken place, we had to conduct our own inquest and unearth the networks that lay in the pages of the catalogue.



5.02.01 - English cover of the bilingual catalogue (Arabic/English) for the 'International Art Exhibition for Palestine', Beirut, 1978, organized by the Plastic Arts Section, Unified Information Office, Palestine Liberation Organization



The 'International Art Exhibition for Palestine' was organized by the Plastic Arts Section of the PLO—Palestine Liberation Organisation's Unified Information Office at the basement of the Beirut Arab University from March 21 to April 5. We later found out that the exhibition had been extended by a few weeks. We began with interviewing artists, intellectuals, and cultural actors in Beirut who were connected to the PLO, who were active in the seventies and now lived in Beirut, Amman, or Damascus. Slowly pieces of the large puzzle emerged. We gathered press articles, documents and testimonies, but the more we learned, the more questions we had. The progress of our research changed dramatically when we met Claude Lazar, a French artist who lives in Paris, and who had been

close to Palestinian militants in Paris during the seventies. He was an important protagonist in imagining and organizing the exhibition as the foundational step for a 'museum in exile'. Lazar had actively mobilized a significant number of artists to donate work. In May of 2011, when we visited his studio, he had pulled out three boxes from his personal archives, containing photographs, newspaper and magazine clippings, and facsimiles and papers. He welcomed us enthusiastically and said: 'I have been waiting for you for thirty years.'

From that first interaction, Lazar revealed and made accessible to us a network of artists and militants we did not even think we could ever meet. We realized that the Palestine exhibition and museum were directly inspired from the Musée International de la Résistance Salvador Allende (MIRSA), a brilliant initiative by Chilean artists living in exile in France, after the Pinochet coup d'état. They imagined

a 'museum in exile' made of artworks donated by artists from all over the world to incarnate their solidarity with Salvador Allende and what he represented as a political figure. Lazar knew some of the exiled Chilean artists living in Paris and had himself donated a painting dedicated to the Palestinian struggle to that resistance museum. It was clear that we had to understand the mechanics and dynamics of networks behind both these museum initiatives.



5.02.02/03 – Video still from an interview with Claude Lazar showing photos from his visit to Lebanon in 1978, featured in 'Past Disquiet: Narratives and Ghosts from the International Art Exhibition for Palestine'. Courtesy: Kristine Khouri and Rasha Salti

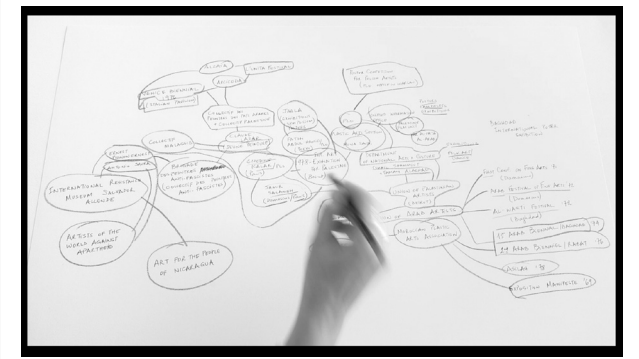
When we looked at the list of artists that gave work to the Palestinian initiative we noted that a remarkable number had also given work to the MIRSA a few years earlier.

As we revisited this history, an international solidarity network of collectives, artists, public actions and exhibitions emerged. One name led to another and we tracked down as many people as we could. Considering how few books and resources on these

(very recent) histories and questions there were, we tried to meet as many people as possible and recorded their testimony. Often the accounts we collected contradicted one another, or had large blanks. The act of remembering being so embedded in affect, we seemed to awaken old vicissitudes, wounds, loyalties, and affinities. We relied on how they wanted to recount this history, sometimes we used prompts (images and documents we compiled over the years of research). We also revisited sites where events had taken place, looking for traces of what could have remained from an exhibition, a meeting place, or an assassination.

Two other itinerant international solidarity collections (or 'museums in exile') surfaced in the mesh of networks we were unearthing, the 'Art Against/Contre Apartheid' collection, and the Museum in Solidarity with Nicaragua. Both were initiated in Europe. These different instances of a 'museum in exile' present an alternate history of museographic practices from the seventies, mobilized around political causes: the struggle against the dictatorship in Chile, the struggle against Apartheid, the struggle for a free Palestine, and in solidarity with the people of Nicaragua. The individuals involved in each one string together networks of cooperation, collaboration, exchange of resources, knowledge and access. They were artists committed to political struggles and militants who could not imagine conducting their struggles without artists.

The kind of forensic exhibition history inquest we have undertaken seldom took place in libraries or institutional archives. The



5.02.04 – Video still from a video document of Rasha Salti and Kristine Khouri mapping artistic and exhibition networks, featured in 'Past Disquiet: Narratives and Ghosts from the International Art Exhibition for Palestine'. Courtesy: Kristine Khouri and Rasha Salti





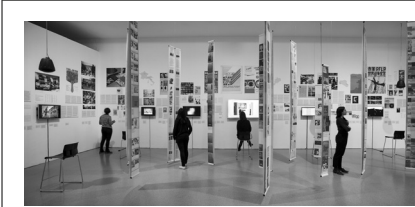
bulk of information we collected was from people's testimonials, to whom we are immensely indebted for their generosity, openness, and trust. They included artists who donated works to these museums, or even organized the collection of artworks and administered its international tour, but also militants, scholars, researchers, curators, and art critics. The pathways of the research were fraught with coincidences and felicitous accidents; we have been fortunate to have had dozens avail themselves to us, share their time, memories, and personal archives and receive us in their homes. Even though the mobilizations had lost their magnetic power, some of the chains in the networks were 're-activated', because some individuals had forged life-long friendships and were re-connected.

We often felt like detectives tracking clues, without a real sense of the whole plot or picture. The catalogue was like our treasure map, and every time we found something or hit a dead end, we went back to the names listed in it. Some threads that we followed assiduously, we had to give up pursuing after a while because they led nowhere. Dead ends. At the same time, a lot of our findings were totally unexpected fortuitous surprises.

## PAST DISQUIET

When we were invited to present our research in an exhibition, we were compelled to take a step back and reflect critically on the significance of these histories we were unearthing. The first obvious conclusion was that we were threading a history of artistic, exhibition and museographic practices that were outside the canon. We chose to tell the stories of the networks as we mapped them because they were at the core of the research. We used wall texts, facsimiles of documents, images, catalogues and books, but we also presented 'video-documents', or montages of interviews we had filmed with images, text as well as archival footage that we found. The exhibition tries to reconstruct this world, in its rich complexity, and acknowledges the trappings of remembering, as well as the contradicting versions for an event or action. 'Past Disquiet' proposed a speculative version of history that we author subjectively.

The first iteration of 'Past Disquiet' was commissioned by the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) in 2015, and the second, in 2016, by the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin. Both iterations were presented, respectively, in the context of



5.02.05/06 - 'Past Disquiet: Narratives and Ghosts from the International Art Exhibition for Palestine, 1978', installation view, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), 2015. Photo: La Fotogràfica

larger programmatic or curatorial questions. The MACBA had launched a set of programmes around the question of decolonizing the museum, with a keen focus on exhibition histories, while the HKW launched a programme around interrogating the art historical canon with 'Past Disquiet'.

The HKW enabled us to continue our research in Germany. With the collaboration of Emily Dische-Becker, we met the only non-Palestinian political figure to appear in the photographs documenting the

opening of the 'International Art Exhibition for Palestine' in Beirut, namely Achim Reichart (born 1929), who was the ambassador for the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in Lebanon from February 1978 until August 1981. When we visited him in the winter of 2016, Reichart had long since retired and lived with his spouse at the outskirts of Berlin. They recalled attending the exhibition, but also receiving the five East German artists and curator who were invited by the PLO and the Union of Palestinian Artists to visit the Palestinian refugee camps and PLO offices. We were also able to meet a few of the German artists who travelled to Beirut and recorded their recollections, photographed the sketches they did while visiting camps and meeting artists in Lebanon.

In February 2017, we presented our research as a long two-day seminar at the Tensta konsthall in Stockholm to art history and cinema students, and a witness seminar explored the Swedish context of solidarity networks and artistic practices around the anti-Pinochet struggle and Palestinian struggle during the seventies. These witness seminars produce and record testimonies by key protagonists, which are later made accessible at Södertörn University. The election of Salvador Allende and the experience of a democratic socialism that he incarnated captivated the Swedish left in the sixties and seventies. After the coup in Chile, a committee was formed to collect art works to be donated to the Resistance Museum (MIRSA) and the collection was exhibited at the Moderna



5.02.07 - 'Past Disquiet: Narratives and Ghosts from the International Art Exhibition for Palestine, 1978', installation view, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), 2015. Photo: La Fotogràfica

Museet in 1978. We invited two individuals who had been members of the Stockholm committee that had organized the show and a former ambassador to Chile. In addition, there were three members or artists from the Palestinian solidarity movement, two of whom are still active today. In the case of the Palestinian struggle, Sweden was a country where solidarity with the Palestinian people had a wide base, however there

were no Swedish artists who donated works to the 'International Art Exhibition'. We were obviously intrigued to understand why.

These witness seminars have a specific format, and the individuals were invited to reflect on their practice then and today, and on the effectiveness of strategies and actions, with people engaged with Palestine and Chile sitting across from one another. The stories of solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinians and against Pinochet unfolded an untold history of Sweden. The audience was not only university students, but also a cross-generational wider public. Some intervened to contribute their own testimonies of engagement with solidarity movements, including younger people in their early twenties, who were Swedish or Chilean origin who had never heard these stories before.

In April of 2017, we travelled to Japan to conclude the research we had initiated there a few years earlier. We interviewed Vladimir Tamari, a Palestinian artist who had been in Japan since 1970. We also met with Misako Nagasawa, a pro-Palestinian activist who acts as a bridge between generations of scholars, artists, filmmakers and writers, in the network of solidarity with the Palestinian struggle. With her help, we were able to meet Japanese activists, such as Toshio Satoh, who was the graphic designer with whom she collaborated to publish *Filastin Biladi*, a monthly publication produced by the PLO office between 1977 and 1982.

## LEBANON, CHILE, PALESTINE

Today is my day off. I heard that international artists who support the revolution are here and have brought their paintings to us. I came to the exhibition that tells the world that while the Palestinian carries a gun, he also 'thinks', cares, and participates in cultural events.

Quote from a fighter visiting the exhibition in 1978.<sup>1</sup>

There are a few cities that are important for us to present our research and share the stories with a wider audience in the places where we collected them, and suture small ruptures in histories that used to be connected. In 2018, we plan to present new versions of the exhibition in Beirut, Santiago de Chile, and Birzeit, Palestine. Sharing these stories will have a different resonance in each place, awaken different connections and circuits in the networks that exist or will be formed. Beirut will be the most challenging because the original exhibition happened in the middle of the civil war. Over 40 years later, the legacy of the war, that involved the Lebanese, Palestinians and Syrians, is still present in the country and sectarianism still permeates society and imaginaries. The Palestinian struggle is not the only focus of the research; the exhibition also deals with interrogating art history, museographic practices and the engagement of artists in political causes from New York, to Paris, to Cape Town and Tokyo. We are motivated by the necessity to bring a yet unwritten history of those who are still alive, their aspirations and engagement.

The struggle for Palestine is yet unresolved, while in the case of South Africa and Chile respectively, the apartheid regime has ended and so has the military dictatorship. The questions of the transformation of solidarity throughout the years until today is significant and will be prompted by sharing the research. We hope



5.02.08 - 'Past Disquiet: Narratives and Ghosts from the International Art Exhibition for Palestine, 1978', installation view, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 2016. Photo: Laura Fiorio/Haus der Kulturen Der Welt

<sup>1</sup> From the article 'Militant artists present their works for the Palestinian Museum' by Najat Harb in the Lebanese daily *Al-Safir*, published on 28 March 1978.

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Raúl Sánchez Cedillo  
1.02

A CONSTITUENT  
PROCESS BELONGS  
TO NOBODY.  
TODAY

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'Revisiting and Reconstituting  
Networks from Japan to Beirut to  
Chile' continues on page 314



This not only implies shared responsibility in decision-making, but also constitutes a space of deliberation regarding concepts, methodology and the use of the project's economic resources.

Alejandro Cevallos and  
Nora Landkammer  
3.04

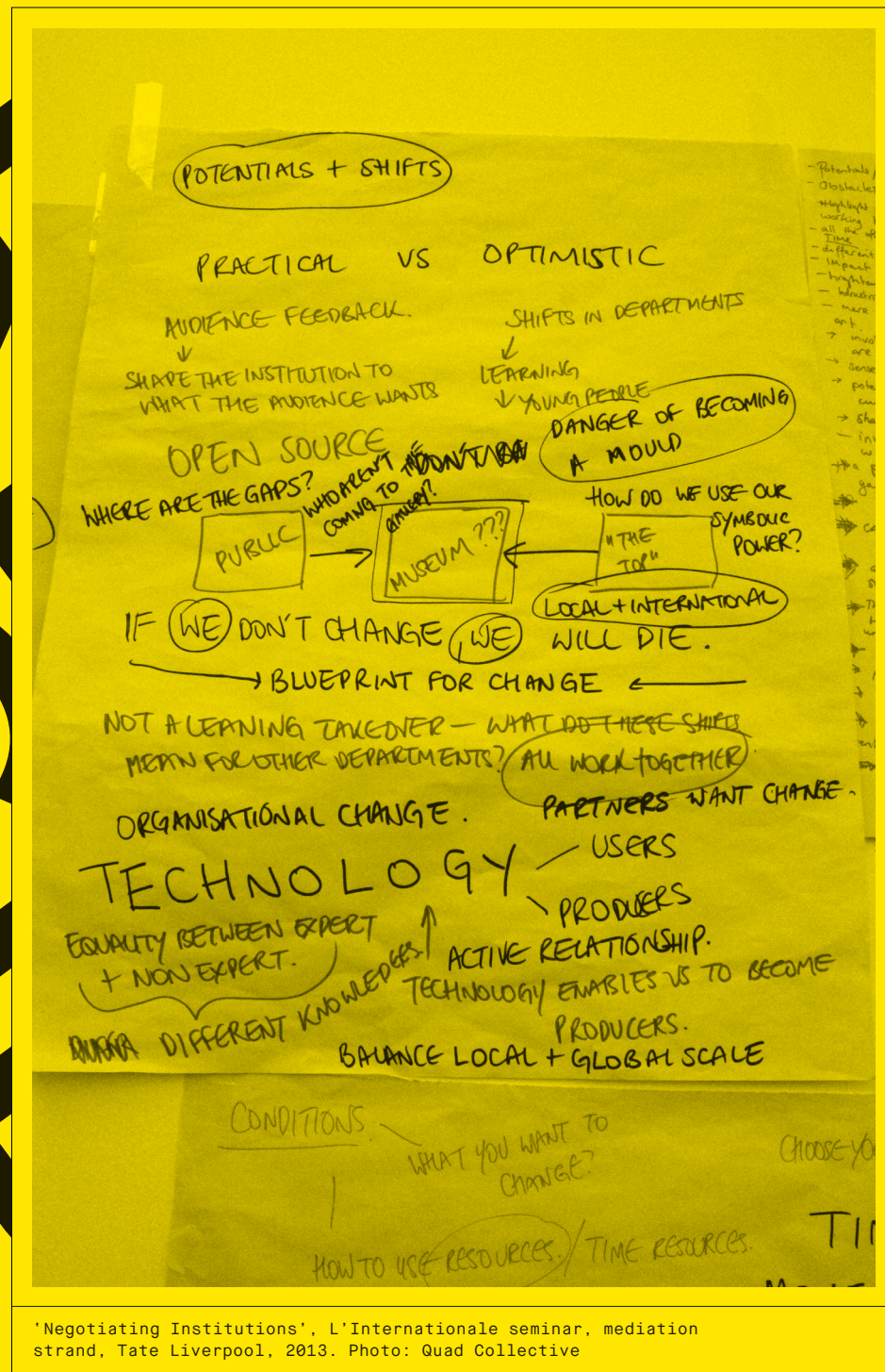
Mapping alternative art education practices in Russia, a table game organized by Nastia Tarasova and Maria Sarycheva, Vienna, 2017. Archive of the School. Photo: Maja Renn





Speaking of care and of matters of care in 'worlding' practices pushes our focus toward 'attention' as opposed to 'intention'. To care is to attend, and 'attendre' is also to wait. Waiting implies a delay, a duration. An attentional mind operates ecologically rather than cognitively: it is less about capturing, knowing, describing, than about thinking-with, becoming-with, making-with. The constituent museum emerges from and further enables an attentional ecology in which inhabitants and environments touch and feel one another intensely and carefully.

Alberto Altés Arlandis  
2.02



'Negotiating Institutions', L'Internationale seminar, mediation strand, Tate Liverpool, 2013. Photo: Quad Collective

Develop direct bottom-up relationships with those with most power (e.g. trustees) via workshops and other relationship-changing exercises.

Jana Graham  
1.03

How can we rethink citizenship beyond fixed identities or contractual relationships with sovereign powers? And how can art institutions play a part in this discussion, imagining their own relationship with their publics?

# AND THEN SILENCE

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Francis McKee  
0.02

Only Weever replied and spoke quietly. I couldn't hear much, just fragments: 'a place for self-criticism and a place to observe the world... contamination... things become alive when there is friction...' The wind carried their words away—your hurricane has almost arrived—and hurricane could hear again: 'where then I ferment in a cool, dark place... a forum... a life force... the friction between ideas and experience... we need communal space...'



5.02.09 - 'Past Disquiet: Narratives and Ghosts from the International Art Exhibition for Palestine, 1978', installation view, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 2016. Photo: Laura Fiorio/Haus der Kulturen Der Welt

that the exhibition in Beirut will bring together a Palestinian community as well as a wider local community, to acknowledge the work of those engaged in the Palestinian cause, a public interested in the history of art in Lebanon, museum-making and collection-building around causes and international militant practices from the seventies.

Throughout the years of research we have been inter-

viewing Nasser Soumi, a Palestinian artist who had been involved in the 1978 exhibition. He took it upon himself to embark on a project to trace the artworks from the collection. He found artworks that stayed in Tehran after a selection of artworks from the collection were exhibited there in 1980, but were not returned because Beirut's airport was shut down at the time. He has tracked down other artworks in Lebanon, and is actively seeking a resolution to return the collection to its rightful owner. Showing 'Past Disquiet' in Beirut will also spark a conversation into these difficult and complex issues.

In April 2018, 'Past Disquiet' will open in Chile at the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende. The museum was re-opened in 1991, adding to the remains from the collection of the original Museo de la Solidaridad por Chile (1971-1973) and the itinerant museum collections from the seventies. We have been in contact with the museum's archivist and head of collections and made them aware of the intersections between the Resistance Museum (MIRSA) collections, the Art Against/Contre Apartheid and 'International Art Exhibition for Palestine'. Their museum spearheaded the others. Over a few years, we started sharing materials, and as we researched the Chilean resistance museum we shared our findings with them, as they did with us.

In Berlin, the opening of 'Past Disquiet' was followed by a conference, in which Claude Lazar spoke briefly. He reminded the participants of the mission at the core of our research, namely, artists giving work to be part of a larger project, a collection that incarnated international solidarity with a cause. In the case of Chile, most of the works were shipped to Chile from the committees abroad and

the works are at the museum. In Chile, we aim to show the public how both the Museo de la Solidaridad por Chile [Solidarity Museum for Chile], and subsequently the Resistance Museums (MIRSA), instigated the establishment of other museums in exile. The largest Palestinian diaspora outside of the Arab world resides in Chile, and surfacing these connections will hopefully draw together different communities living in the same city, whose origins are connected in more than one way.

In Palestine, we plan to exhibit 'Past Disquiet' at the Palestinian Museum in Birzeit, which had its first official opening exhibition in August 2017. The museum, which operates with a 'base' in Birzeit, plans to activate collaborations with satellite institutions hosting shows and public programmes to reach to the diaspora around the world. On a practical level, 'Past Disquiet' is an exhibition that is not encumbered with the difficult logistics of shipping artworks past checkpoints. We hope to bring the yet unfinished story of a collection in waiting into an established institution. The borders that keep artists apart between the occupied territories, Jerusalem, Lebanon, and abroad will dissipate—if only momentarily. We hope the practices of the artists active in the seventies, as well as militants, will resurface in the public programming and be shared with the wider public. Considering that we are prohibited by Lebanese law from going to the West Bank, we plan to collaborate with curators who will adapt 'Past Disquiet' to the site and context.

By revisiting forgotten networks of artists and practices, the research and the exhibition revives them while weaving a new inter-generational constituency of activists and artists.



5.02.10 - 'Past Disquiet: Narratives and Ghosts from the International Art Exhibition for Palestine, 1978', installation view, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 2016. Photo: Laura Fiorio/Haus der Kulturen Der Welt





## ARCHIVES IN USE

A Laboratory of  
Political Imagination  
for the Present

RedCSur

ARCHIVES  
IN USE

The reflection on archive policies constitutes one of the structural axes in the research projects of the Red de Conceptualismos del Sur<sup>1</sup> (Network of Conceptualisms of the South) (RedCSur). We work with documents of Latin American critical artistic practices that emerged since the sixties, in the midst of dictatorships and situations of political violence that have marked the history of the region until the present, as we have seen with more recent coups that have taken place in countries such as Paraguay and Brazil.<sup>2</sup>

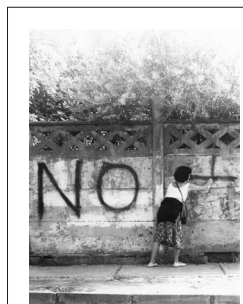
Due to the precariousness that characterizes the cultural institutions of most of our countries concerning archival policies, preservation and public access to these documents constantly face emergency conditions, especially in the context of the increasing interest in archives in the global art market. In this scenario, RedCSur seeks to contribute to the preservation, socialization, and reactivation of the critical power of art archives, based on two main axes: the institutionalization of physical archives in their respective countries of origin, which enables sustainability in time and the digitization and open access through the site [archivosenuso.org](http://archivosenuso.org),<sup>3</sup> a virtual platform that hosts various documentary collections, all with their own logics of organization.

The ethical commitment of the RedCSur to cultural archives<sup>4</sup> in Latin American and the question about their location and management, clearly implies a dispute over the geopolitical conditions of knowledge production. It also implies the notion that these documents record, at the same time, the sensitive texture of

experiences that are part of the narratives of a past that is not closed. We consider these documents to be traces that keep the possibility open of producing desire and changes on the cartography of current representations. That's why, before contributing uncritically to the processes of institutionalization, fetishization, and ritualization of memory, the RedCSur seeks to explore strategies that can resist the neutralization processes of the past and imagine more porous, open and horizontal forms of institutionality.

Archivos en uso started with the desire to establish archival policies related to our positioning. It seeks to contribute to the activation of memory and the construction of critical thinking. Archivos en uso is a platform of socialization of heterogeneous documentary collections that operates through Internet to facilitate public access. It gathers diverse collective projects of investigation with the purpose of producing narratives and lateral knowledge around a set of Latin American archives linked to poetic-political experiences arisen from the sixties.<sup>5</sup>

Archivos en uso does not follow standard systematizations. Without ignoring the value of those structures, the work of RedCSur takes other formats. Each 'archive in use' is a documentary set constituted from a research process, which has been organized according to descriptors



5.03.01 - CADA,  
No+ en la calle,  
Santiago de Chile,  
c. 1983. CADA  
Archive, courtesy  
Lotty Rosenfeld

<sup>1</sup> RedCSur is organized around four nodes (Archive, Research, Publication and Web). See: <http://redcsur.net/>.

<sup>2</sup> See public declarations on the coup d'états in Paraguay (<https://redcsur.net/2012/06/25/la-red-conceptualismos-del-sur-contras-el-golpe-de-estado-en-paraguay/>) and Brazil (<https://redcsur.net/manifiestos-e-intervenciones/no-temer-al-mundo-enfrentarlo-para-crear-otros-mundos/>).

<sup>3</sup> Archivos en uso can be consulted online and free of charge and all the material can be used with a simple order through a contact e-mail.

<sup>4</sup> The ethical commitment of the RedCSur with archives can be read here: <https://redcsur.net/archivos/>.

<sup>5</sup> Ana Longoni/RedCSur, 'Another Mapping of Art and Politics: The Archive Policies of Red Conceptualismos del Sur', in *Decolonising Practices* (2016).



5.03.02 – CADA, 'CADA convoca No+', Santiago de Chile, 1984. CADA Archive, courtesy Lotty Rosenfeld

and keywords taken from the lexicon employed by practices to characterize themselves and to describe their own processes.

In this way, the RedCSur seeks to question the universalist categories that delimit the poetic and political actions of the artistic productions developed

since the sixties in Latin America. Questioning how to organize and catalogue the documentation of these experiences confront us with the reflection on the critical power that emanates from them, since the immaterial memory of these archives seems to be reified when they are part of traditional institutional/archival formats.



5.03.03 – CADA, 'No+ en la calle', Santiago de Chile, c. 1988. CADA Archive, courtesy Lotty Rosenfeld

#### ARCHIVO EN USO OF THE COLECTIVO DE ACCIONES DE ARTE (COLLECTIVE OF ART ACTIONS, CADA)]

The Colectivo de Acciones de Arte formed in Santiago de Chile between 1979 and 1985, was propelled forward by visual artists Lotty Rosenfeld and Juan Castillo, sociologist Fernando Balcells, poet Raúl Zurita and writer Diamela Eltit. Over time, the group's configuration varied. Not only was the initial nucleus of members modified but also different people were involved and collaborated in the actions promoted by the collective.

CADA's actions employed different supports and acted in different symbolic spaces in Santiago, from impoverished areas to media and press, the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, and the CEPAL (the UN's Economic Commission for Latin America) building.

In a process of institutional experimentation undertaken by Lotty Rosenfeld and Diamela Eltit (the two members of the group who guarded the documents of the CADA for years), together with the RedCSur<sup>6</sup> and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (MNCARS), we have worked on the inventory, digital cataloguing and preventive conservation of the archive of CADA. At the same time, it was socialized through the platform Archivosenuso.org. In May 2016, it was finally physically protected at the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos de Chile (Chile's Museum of Memory and Human Rights), ensuring its preservation, integrity, indivisibility, and access.

The actions of CADA were characterized by their ephemeral condition, which means that the only thing remaining of their 'work' is their registration, which challenges not only the 'indistinction' between work and document, between original and copy but also its registration as a documentary body. In this sense, the

<sup>6</sup> The team of researchers in charge of the CADA archive was: Fernanda Carvajal, Isabel García, Paulina Varas, and Jaime Vindel.

archive in use of CADA posed the challenge of creating descriptors that are not those of a thesaurus. The RedCSur researchers proposed a series of keywords that function as a diagrammatic or scaffolding of the process of collective work of organizing the archive, in a process of a poetic-cataloguing that proposed a series of conceptual figures.

One of the conceptual figures that appeared in this process was the *Convocatorias*. In the dictatorial context, as a response to the fragmentation and atomization of social ties, the actions of the CADA were not restricted to producing a receptive attitude in the passers-by, but they sought to be a call to intervention. The group made the invitation to activate and co-produce interventions, a policy of collective agency sustained over time together with different artists and collaborators. At the same time, it promoted international calls, which appealed to the activation and dissemination of actions in other countries. The figure of the call-action materializes in an emblematic way in the 'No+'.

In 1983, ten years after the coup d'état, CADA launched a public call in Santiago de Chile with the phrase 'CADA convoca No+'. Understood as an open slogan, the 'No +' appealed to be completed by people. The slogan offered a space of enunciation to an anonymous voice and its expression of discontent: 'No + torture', 'No + death', 'No + disappeared', among others. The effectiveness of this strategy had an important dissemination result in Chile during the years of dictatorship and in April 1984 it was extended as an international mail art call. However, it also reappeared during the post-dictatorship and up to the present day, as a way of expressing and articulating the popular demands in front of the abuses of neoliberalism in Chile. The resonance and reappropriation of the slogan 'No+' at different historical moments and even in different geopolitical contexts, exhibit a semantic and polysemic force that continues to push from the South as a place of political enunciation.

The action 'No+' has posed important challenges to our archival work. As a device, the 'No+' does not fit into the traditional definitions of authorship and provenance required by traditional archival cataloguing. From the point of view of the document and its relation to the recorded event, the 'No+' exceeds and multiplies the documentary inscription, by constantly reappearing in different contexts and through different voices that claim social rights, continually challenging its merchandizing value and privatization. In this sense, Suely Rolnik's question seems particularly relevant: 'What does it mean to invent *poetics* and how would it be different from inventing only objects and documents?'<sup>7</sup> So, how to keep up the critical stance and the ability to articulate political desires of a device like 'No+' pulsing in the archive? There is not a single answer to these questions, which continue being open for us, challenging our work. The 'No+' is one of those experiences that have shown us that beyond what we can provide as researchers, the best strategy of preservation and conservation has been and still is the activation of its use value.<sup>8</sup> In this sense, we also conceive the archive policies of the RedCSur as the promise of a laboratory of political imagination for the present.

The starting point of this text was a presentation made by Isabel García/RedCSur at the MIMA, 2016.)

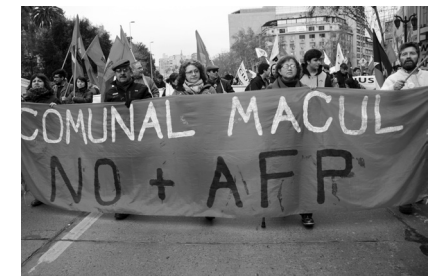
<sup>7</sup> Rolnik, Suely. 'Furor de archivo', [www.estudiosvisuales.net/revista/pdf/num7/08\\_rolnik.pdf](http://www.estudiosvisuales.net/revista/pdf/num7/08_rolnik.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Here we take up the idea of 'preservation through the use' of Interference Archive.



5.03.04 – Reappropriation of 'No+' device during the Mapuche Resistance March Against Repression, Detentions and Murders. Santiago, 9 October 2017. Photo: Marcela Ramirez, Independent Photographers Association (AFI)





5.03.06 - Reappropriation of 'No+' device during the Chilean March Against Broken Social Security System. Santiago, 3 October 2017. Photo: Marcela Ramirez, Independent Photographers Association (AFI)



5.03.05 - Reappropriation of 'No+' device during the Mapuche Resistance March Against Repression, Detentions and Murders. Santiago, 9 October 2017. Photo: Marcela Ramirez, Independent Photographers Association (AFI)



# RELATIONS OF THE UNDERCOMMONS

RELATIONS OF THE UNDERCOMMONS

About the Work of Making, Unmaking and Remaking Organizations

John Hill talks to Tiziana Terranova, Sean Dockray and Adelita Husni-Bey\*

**John Hill: I'd like to start by asking what needs to be distributed in order for a project, organization or platform to be common, and how can disputes about what is common be managed?**

**Tiziana Terranova:** Your question exposes the gap between the structural conditions of commoning (such as for example defined in the literature on the commons which is inspired by Elinor Ostrom) and the subjectivity of the commoners who do not come endowed with a unified consciousness that allows them to act together. In this sense the questions are spot on: What is the relation between the structural presuppositions of commoning and the subjectivities that participate in commoning? The relationship is not symmetrical nor to be taken for granted. What complicates it for me is the argument that Carlo Vercellone makes that the common is a mode of production which both private and public institutions draw on. So you can find something of the common—what Stefano Harney and Fred Moten call 'the undercommons'<sup>1</sup>—even in institutions that have centralized ownership, decision making, authority, and so on (such as Facebook or a University or Hospital), but it will be captured for the purposes of control and accumulation.



5.04.01 - Centro Sociale Autogestito: Officina 99, Naples, 2012. Photo: Cristianrodenas. Published under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Officina\\_99.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Officina_99.JPG).

Then again, you have other types of experiences that explicitly strive for the common and are caught in very specific kinds of problems. I am thinking about the occupied spaces in Naples, where I live, which have become vibrant cultural centres providing new forms of learning and social services from below (from help desks and health services for migrants and homeless people, to remedial teaching for disadvantaged kids, to courses of photography, theatre and dance). Such spaces can be seen as representing the

historical legacies of Foucault's disciplinary society—former juvenile prisons, orphanages, mental asylums, monasteries—designed in the 17th and 18th centuries for very different purposes indeed. When you occupy a space like that, you own it, but not in a legal sense, even though recently the city council of Naples has granted

\*All participants to this conversation are engaged in art, activism and academia.

<sup>1</sup> Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (Wivenhoe, New York and Port Watson: Minor Compositions, 2013).





right of use to these groups in as much as they serve the ‘common good’. In these spaces decision-making is not so much distributed as organized through regular open meetings. Authority is a kind of social power that is acquired at the intersection of norms of class, gender, ethnicity or political affiliations.

The question of disagreement is also very interesting. It is the rock where many such experiences floundered, and it is interesting how the latest wave of urban commoning, for example, has taken a softer line towards political differences and the call for unified positions.

**Sean Dockray:** One aspect of Tiziana’s response that grabs me is the question of the relationship between design and use. The initial conditions and affordances of a platform, for example, are written in the code, those of an organization in the charter. Both forms of writing might define how ownership, decision-making, and authority are conceptually, if not actually, distributed. Perhaps the software or legal documents are built on a larger framework, inheriting their fundamental assumptions. This would mean that the common is not guaranteed by design, and moreover seems destined to fail as long as it is constructed on a capitalist foundation.

That’s not to be fatalistic, though. I have seen how buildings have many lives and are usually not used in the ways that they are intended and it sounds like the occupied spaces in Naples exemplify this. The tentative discontinuity between the space of a project, organization, or platform and the surrounding world is an important dimension because its provisionality is the site of creation. Aaaarg.org acts as a kind of knowledge common, a shared library, but its users are often authors who publish outside of the space of the library. They are constantly negotiating between the rules that govern the two spaces, but there is not a clean break. This might be because the foundation sneaks in or, as Lacan said, we carry institutions inside of us. These moments of negotiation are moments where the space is reproduced, but also where new subjectivities are made.

To come back to the question of what needs to be distributed, one thing that’s seemed important for the projects I’ve been involved in is the circuit between use and design, or how can the people who are making use of a particular space also redesign it, whether that be changing form, code, structure, or through that use? This will probably reconfigure how ownership, decision-making,

and authority function over time, but at the heart of it is the ability, or maybe even the imperative, to consciously consider the structure of the space, its relationship to the world, and one’s self as a part of it.

Usually I think of two poles, on the one hand the production of autonomous spaces, where conscious deliberation goes into the creation of structure, and on the other hand struggle within existing institutions, where there is a long history but also greater proximity to power. After some time I began to appreciate the rhythm between these different approaches, but also how they feed into one another, in terms of bodies and ideas.

**Adelita Husni-Bey:** What makes a capitalist organization strong and perpetual is its reliance on pre-inscribed and normalized relations of oppression; the patriarchal, the classist, the racist relation that, as I think Tiziana described, produce a stable sense of absolute authority. In openly questioning those relations, commoning strategies have to constantly negotiate how to deprogram and de-inscribe these tacit operations, while frantically pushing away the ‘fences’ encroaching around them (through legal action, through organizing, through the unsexy task of managing these spaces and practices). This ‘double-work’ requires an enormous amount of emotional and physical labour, especially in the face of individualization and self-pathologization that Mark Fisher so beautifully described in ‘Good for Nothing’.<sup>2</sup> So this labour needs to be distributed, but here is where it gets more complex, because sometimes it can’t.

‘Holding in common’ is a relational practice of distribution that requires degrees of negotiation, reliance and dependency. Yet those relations of labour are constantly in flux, at times unstable, difficult, uncomfortable. The core of the commons might be the production of a narrative about the difficulty of dependency and reliance that feels normalized, that fights against the ableist<sup>3</sup> tendencies in notions of distribution. So even distribution under these more cooperative regimes is really about the capacity to broker, and the radical acceptance that there will never be an even, enforced distribution of management, of tasks, of emotional labour, but that it

<sup>2</sup> Mark Fisher, ‘Good For Nothing’, *The Occupied Times* 19 March 2004.

<sup>3</sup> The presumption of able-bodiedness resulting in the marginalization of people with disabilities, see Vera Chouinard, ‘Making Space for Disabling Difference: Challenges Ableist Geographies’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 15, no. 4 (1997), pp. 379–387.

will be temporal and shifting. The weight of organizing will have to shift across bodies, across phases, unlike the prescriptive authority of 'stable' capitalist relations.

**JH:** To take up these idea of unfixedness and weight-shifting, I'm wondering about passing of control and ownership to a second generation. Is permanence possible, or even desirable, when stability might be what is being organized against?

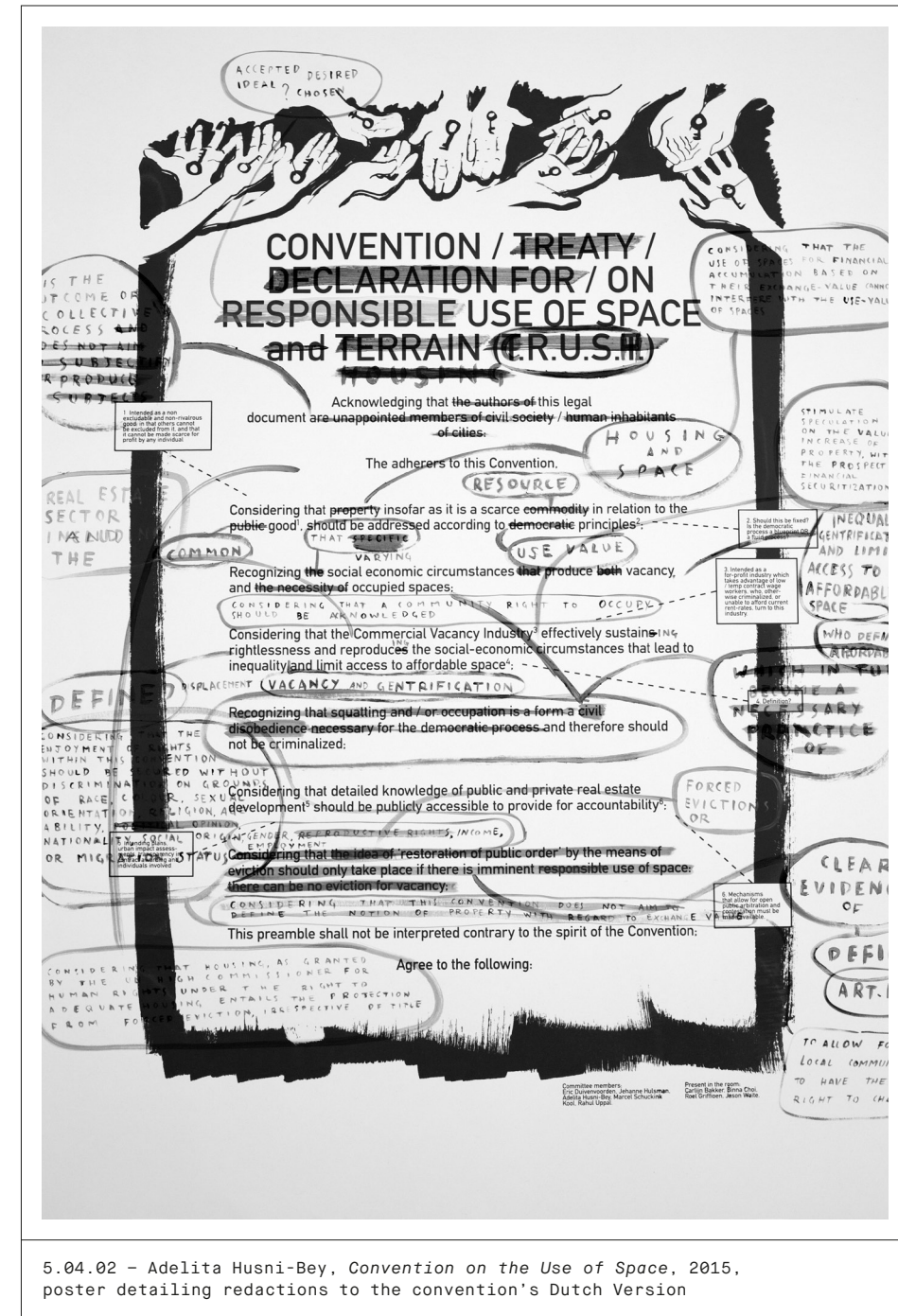
**SD:** Mary Graham, a Kombu-merri person from Queensland, writes about Aboriginal relationality (rather than 'positionality' and ownership) as a basis for stability.<sup>4</sup> From an Aboriginal perspective, capitalism and the Westphalian state don't connote stability or permanence, but rather the destruction of land, people, and culture. She suggests a model of custodianship, which 'entails a longer time frame, more effort and imagination' and embraces stability and permanence. It reconfigures ownership, decision-making, and conflict resolution in terms of empathy, place, autonomy and balance.

Although I can quote her words and summarize her arguments, I do feel removed from them to the degree that I am removed from Land—or my relationship to it is so severed, mediated, and exploitative—that to *live* her argument would demand significant (re)invention of protocols, ethics, and even traditions. The scope of this (un)doing is overwhelming, so I grasp at that core term of custodianship; as a way of thinking and acting intergenerationally.

I try to think of a library like *aaarg* in this way. Custodianship more accurately reflects the relationship many 'users' have with it, and property doesn't have much use as a concept. There is so much labour goes into the technical infrastructure of the site, the scanning of papers, journals, and books, the organization, the self-education, and so on; but it goes even beyond re/productive labour. It's more like collective care for something shared.

**AHB:** I'm interested in the way Sean describes being severed from the Land. In many ways this severance may be the result of existing in spaces where regulation mediates our relationship to resources under the threat of heavy punishment. I began carrying out some work in 2014 that tries to tackle this question by writing the *Convention on the Use of Space*, through six months of public

<sup>4</sup> Mary Graham, 'Aboriginal Notions of Relationality and Positionalism: A Reply to Weber', *Global Discourse* 4, no. 1 (2014), pp. 1–13.



5.04.02 – Adelita Husni-Bey. *Convention on the Use of Space*, 2015, poster detailing redactions to the convention's Dutch Version

meetings with various individuals and groups, sans-papier advocacy groups such as the Dutch group We Are Here, radical jurists, people currently squatting under the threat of criminalization. The convention proposes to give preponderance to use-value over the exchange value of land by setting forth a series of claims about what can be considered 'use'. For example it demands protection



from eviction for individuals or groups who require housing, for social or simply living purposes, irrespective of legal status and economic capacity. The convention is an unfixed document, as it is constantly re-written and adjusted depending on local legislation and the groups that participate in its writing. The Spanish version (2016) is very different from its Dutch counterpart (2015), through a much more developed feminist lens taken into account when writing.

To go back to your question on the stability of the commons, I recently visited the coast of Maine, which is often held in high regard as a long-term example of the commons in action. The lobstermen work on a cooperative model and adhere to strict rules in relation to fishing so as not to deplete the common resource—lobster. The punishment for breaking these norms is becoming an outcast, to be thrown outside of the ancient city walls, so to speak. I witnessed this first hand with a family who was still allowed to fish and use the common resource but had otherwise been seen as problematic and was often being denied help and community. I would argue that the long term thriving of these projects is important, but as enforcement consciously does not come in the form of the police or corporate protection of private interest, then there needs to be a deep analysis of what tools are used to understand, negotiate, and manage relations. Activists have long debated and formed frameworks for living in common, producing tools to hold others accountable while not stigmatizing or removing the other from common life. I can think of Ngoc Loan Trân's idea of 'calling-in' rather than calling-out as a means of compassionate accountability,<sup>5</sup> or Mia Mingus' term 'access intimacy', which designates a specific kind of intimacy to creating and maintaining healthy relationships of care. Focusing on 'crip solidarity'<sup>6</sup> as well as mental health discourses could greatly improve our capacity to sustain these projects as these discourses get into, through and behind structures of power and access.<sup>7</sup>

**TT:** I take Adelita's point about the fact that social organizations that enable a natural commons to exist can also be challenged, to avoid for example expulsion as the only form of sanction for those

<sup>5</sup> Ngoc Loan Trân, 'Calling IN: A Less Disposable Way of Holding Each Other Accountable', *BDG Blog*, 18 December 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Mia Mingus, 'Access Intimacy: The Missing Link', *Leaving Evidence* blog, 5 May 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Mia Mingus, 'Access Intimacy: The Missing Link' and 'Wherever You Are Is Where I Want To Be: Crip Solidarity', *Leaving Evidence* blog, 2010–2011.

who do not respect it. I have been part of some informal organizations (such as the uninomade and later euronomade collectives<sup>8</sup>) where the moments of transitions have been sometimes traumatic and, in order for the collective to be renewed or to change direction, some people were literally cast off. I am not saying that it was not necessary, however, it was traumatic. Right now I cannot but think about my own institutional context, the Italian university system, which has been subjected to a traumatic reform imposed together with drastic funding cuts and reduction of staff. At least in my institution, L'Orientale in Naples, there was a culture that nourished and carried forward a certain project of nurturing feminist, queer, post-colonial and cultural studies in ways that were quite unique and precious in the Italian context. Change here has been imposed from outside: staff have not been replaced, programmes have been cut, resources slashed, platform-based evaluative procedures of governance implemented. Younger researchers formed in this environment have been scattered in different directions. The little undercommons that made University life interesting or bearable has become heavily destabilized. What is left of that time is of course an archive of publications, but also a dispersed network of thinkers—mostly women and/or queer folks from Southern Italy. I am struggling, together with others at the Center for Postcolonial and Gender Studies at L'Orientale, to think how to allow to this dispersed network to continue operating so that this little undercommons can keep nourishing even those who have been forced to leave the University or never had a chance, given the current conditions. So, in my experience there are different kinds of changes—changes that are kind of internal, which are caused by processes of decay and renewal that take place elsewhere, changes that can be sudden and traumatic but productive, and destructive changes that leave you wondering whether you can somehow preserve something of a culture that existed for a while by grafting it into new spaces and forms.



5.04.03 - Adelita Husni-Bey, coast of Maine, USA, 2017

<sup>8</sup> See [euronomade.info](http://euronomade.info).





# VULNERABILITIES AND SHIFTING MEANINGS OF CITIZENSHIP

VULNERABILITIES AND  
SHIFTING MEANINGS  
OF CITIZENSHIP

Özge Ersoy

How can we rethink citizenship beyond fixed identities or contractual relationships with sovereign powers? And how can art institutions play a part in this discussion, imagining their own relationship with their publics? The notion of citizenship remains a contentious and divisive one both in theory and practice, especially for refugees, stateless people, and those seeking self-determination. While the meanings of citizenship keep changing, there are new propositions for frameworks where it is not a status prescribed, granted, put on hold, or cancelled by a nation state but rather manifested in participation in self-defined communities.

In thinking about new frameworks, scholar Ariella Azoulay distinguishes 'civil imagination' from 'political imagination': 'Civil imagination proposes to suspend the point of view of the sovereign; it makes space for the body politic of a governed group to form itself and become recognized as it is. How can museums and archival institutions enact this proposition, to help imagine and invent modes of civil imagination? How can they put relationships at the centre of their operation to attend to shifting meanings of citizenship?

When Vasif Kortun, the founding Director of Research and Programs at SALT (Istanbul and Ankara), stepped down from his role in 2017, he shared a paper that questions how an institution could act like a monastery or a church. 'But it cannot be a church looking like a monastery for the cognoscenti or a monastery looking like a church', he writes.<sup>2</sup> His metaphor hints at how institutions position themselves as places that create, mediate, and disseminate knowledge. Openness and accessibility are crucial for the institution's users

to grow a sense of ownership and eventually to claim the agency to transform it. Some, however, interpret openness in a different way.

In a time when there is sweeping force of exclusivism, authoritarianism, and right-wing populism, an expectation from art institutions to directly address these regimes of thoughts, with various modes of appearance and visibility, arises. Who would deal with urgent and sensitive topics, if not art institutions, some ask, especially when academics and journalists are under direct attack of politicians. In the current political climate, creating a refuge to discuss sensitive issues becomes an urgent need indeed. But what other potentials are there if the institutional priority is not necessarily confrontation and visibility?

For me, the Gezi protests in Turkey have been a milestone in this regard, as this was when I started formulating questions around who owns culture and knowledge. After all, how could art institutions help create a sense of belonging shared among their users? The premise of such a sense of belonging around a library, a collection, or an archive requires more than giving public access; it seeks for a set of collective aspirations and urgencies. 'Most amazing contributions to public thinking were fermented, tested, and negotiated away from the threatening gaze of the order, philistines, shared half-truths and populists', Kortun argues. Fermentation is a helpful analogy as it refers to a metabolic process that happens in the absence of oxygen: It produces

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed discussion, see Ariella Azoulay, 'Nationless State: A Series of Case Studies', in *Future Publics (The Rest Can and Should Be Done by the People): A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*, ed. Maria Hlajova and Ranjit Hoskote (Utrecht: BAK; Amsterdam: Valiz, 2015), pp. 62–89, and Ariella Azoulay, *Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography* (London and New York: Verso, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> The English version of 'Kurum Sorulari' [Questions on Institutions], Vasif Kortun's talk at SALT Galata, Istanbul, 30 March 2017, is available at <http://blog.saltonline.org/post/169608730654/questions-on-institutions>.





energy only in a closed environment. In other words, there are times when the premise of closeness and vulnerability can offer more than exposure and visibility coupled with bold statements.

Vulnerability has the potential of becoming a form of strength rather than a weakness. It offers more than simply being a compromise: It can act as a tool to slowly expose forms of power or build communities with common interests and aspirations. One could argue that large-scale museums and archival institutions are the custodians of heritage and thereby do not have the luxury of looking vulnerable or becoming hesitating or precarious. But vulnerability can be also defined through social forms where the institution, its publics, users, or constituencies all accept chains of dependence.

This could potentially create another understanding of resilience. Here the capacity for institutions to absorb change—reorganization in order to retain structure and function—is only possible as long as their publics ask for it. This is precisely how an institution can negotiate a position between paternalism and victimization, where they assume positions of authority and maturity, and prioritize their own continuity over individuals who form and participate in their programming. In the end, vulnerability of being receptive to potential failures and unforeseen possibilities can also turn into a form of resistance for institutions.<sup>3</sup>

The hesitation to articulate vulnerabilities from the institutions' side is often coupled with users' difficulty to articulate their demands. This gap most often appears in moments of crisis such as incidents of censorship. A recent example would be statements that followed the cancellation of a group exhibition at a privately run, Istanbul-based arts

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed conversation of the relationship between vulnerability, resistance, feminism, and social change, please see *Vulnerability in Resistance*, ed. Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti and Leticia Sabsay (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

organization in February 2016, only five days prior to the opening. The short press statement of the host institution reads: 'In accordance with [our] sense of responsibility in the Turkish contemporary art world and following various considerations regarding the delicate situation in Turkey, the exhibition has been cancelled.'<sup>4</sup> It is the terms 'responsibility' and 'sensitivity' that hint at deadlocks around discussions of freedom of artistic expression.<sup>5</sup>

Any action based on 'responsibility' and 'sensitivity', both in the arts and in daily politics, eventually stems from subjective positions and results in arbitrary interventions that are often pre-emptive measures related to contemporary political issues. Some believe that these words only appear in statements from corporate communication departments that announce unilateral decisions, avoiding any type of confrontation. The cancellation therefore can be defined not as 'a censorship incident but rather an institutional incapacity', as a colleague argues. Then how can institutions be more articulate about their fears and needs?

Institutional self-censorship still remains a taboo. Some art professionals admit that institutions constantly make tactical moves around what to show and what not to show. They list loss of financial support, fear of litigation, PR backlash,

<sup>4</sup> HG Masters, 'Istanbul Art Space Blocks Its Own Exhibition', *ArtAsiaPacific* 1 March 2016, [artasiapacific.com/News/IstanbulArtSpaceBlocksItsOwnExhibition](http://artasiapacific.com/News/IstanbulArtSpaceBlocksItsOwnExhibition), and Dorian Batycka, 'Istanbul Gallery Cancels War-Themed Exhibition, Citing "the Delicate Situation in Turkey"', *Hyperallergic* 26 February 2016, <https://hyperallergic.com/278987/istanbul-gallery-cancels-war-themed-exhibition-citing-the-delicate-situation-in-turkey>.

<sup>5</sup> Banu Karaca, 'When Duty Calls...: Questions of Sensitivity and Responsibility in Light of the Tophane Events', *Red Thread* 40, no. 3 (2011), and Özge Ersoy, 'Türkiye' de Sanatsal İfade Özgürlüğü Bağlamında Sanatçı, Küratör ve Kurum İlişkileri', Research Paper commissioned by Siyah Bant (accessed July 2016), [www.siyahbant.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/SiyahBant\\_Arastirma\\_KuratoryelPratikler-2.pdf](http://www.siyahbant.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/SiyahBant_Arastirma_KuratoryelPratikler-2.pdf).



5.05.01 – Merve Ünsal, *Now You're Far Away*, 2017, performance documentation. Photo: Onur Ceritoğlu

or causing offence as potential reasons.<sup>6</sup> What if the institutions were able to say they are afraid of the potential repercussions of showing certain works and talk with artists and curators to negotiate decisions before going public? Given this context, it is also necessary to ask whether it is productive to accuse institutions of being conformist or not brave enough. Hasty accusations also seem central to the problem of communication, or lack thereof, as much as the institutions.

In the case of the 2016 cancellation, most Istanbul-based artists, the guest curator for the exhibition, the international jury that selected the project, as well as the International Association of Art Critics, Turkey (AICA Turkey) published statements that recognized the tense political context in the country—as terror attacks and the resumption of hostilities between the state security forces and

<sup>6</sup> Julia Farrington, 'Conference Report: Taking the offensive—defending artistic freedom of expression in the UK', Index on Censorship, May 2013, [www.indexoncensorship.org/takingtheoffensive](http://www.indexoncensorship.org/takingtheoffensive).

Kurdish militants created a tense political atmosphere—and yet emphasized the need to call this cancellation as an act of censorship.<sup>7</sup> Most of these statements, however, fell short of addressing the main player in question, because they did not ask the institution how they assessed the risk and fear factors or whether they would consider opening the exhibition if the political conditions improved.

<sup>7</sup> Curator Katia Krupennikova's Facebook post, 25 February 2016, [www.facebook.com/katia.krupennikova/posts/10208875948840437](http://www.facebook.com/katia.krupennikova/posts/10208875948840437). Statement by the Jury for the Akbank Sanat International Curator Competition 2015, [artleaks.org](http://artleaks.org), 8 March 2016, <http://artleaks.org/2016/03/08/statement-by-the-jury-for-the-akbank-sanat-international-curator-competition-2015>. Uluslararası Sanat Eleştirmenleri Derneği Türkiye Şubesi, 'Akbank Sanat'ın 'Barış Sonrası' Sergisinin İptali Üzerine Kamuoyuyla Paylaşılan Bildiri Metni', 9 March 2016, [www.siyahbant.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/AICA-Turkiyenin-Aciklamasi-9-Mart-2016.pdf](http://www.siyahbant.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/AICA-Turkiyenin-Aciklamasi-9-Mart-2016.pdf). 'Anonymous Stateless Immigrants statement on Post-Peace exhibition censorship', Siyah Bant, 6 March 2016, [www.siyahbant.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Anonymous-Stateless-Immigrants-Aciklamasi.pdf](http://www.siyahbant.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Anonymous-Stateless-Immigrants-Aciklamasi.pdf).

The binary positions that immediately create victims and perpetrators only create more polarization. After all, censorship is not simply a negative exercise of power.<sup>8</sup> Freedom of artistic expression is not a given right with defined borders but rather an area of constant negotiation among artists, curators, and institutions. Being against censorship does not necessarily mean getting rid of censorship but rather to expand on the boundaries of this particular discussion. Especially when censorship involves non-state actors, there is often structural censorship about whom to invite or disinvite to discussions, where there are different layers of complicity that go beyond the victim versus the perpetrator.

While there is an ongoing shift from the centrality of the artist and the artwork to the experience of the viewer, it is also relevant to ask how often we admit or speak about the need for an institution to dissolve if it is no longer needed. Here the continuity of the institution is another crucial discussion topic that is rarely addressed: What would be more risky? Intervening in every work that could potentially harm the institution or risk the continuity of the institution? Some arts professionals argue that the *raison d'être* of institutions is not only about artists because they have wider responsibilities towards a larger public. In this view, the priority would be always to sustain the institution—the platform of continuous discussion. This view offers a criticism of the traditional model of auteur-artist, which prioritizes the value of individual artistic productions.

On the other hand, some artists and critics consider the prioritization of the institutions as an excuse to implement censorship. This contested view arguably fetishizes the institution and creates an understanding where every artist is

<sup>8</sup> Richard Burt, 'Introduction: The "New" Censorship', *The Administration of Aesthetics: Censorship, Political Criticism, and the Public Sphere*, ed. Richard Burt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

replaceable. It justifies the abuse of the 'sovereign', leading to the death of the institution. Then how could we avoid the question of primacy of the artist versus the institution, and negotiate what parties could make compromises to sustain each other's practices? For institutions, this would require those they serve to constantly question the mission and vision, and to have the influence to propose that sometimes existence is no longer necessary. This also requires a shift in the reception of an institution as a resource that can be used or exploited towards something users could shape and transform together.

The perception of the sense of publicness lies at the heart of the above discussions. The idea of publicness, especially in places where the state is not involved in instituting and supporting museums and art spaces, is often related to accountability and transparency, especially around financial structures and decision-making. These principles are crucial to make the idea of publicness possible. But they are not enough because they create expectations only for the institution to perform, where the users' agency becomes of secondary importance. Another way of interpreting the notion of publicness would be to argue it is no longer a static state or description but an accumulation of moments when the users choose to claim the agency to change the institution. And it is these moments that would eventually constitute some forms of civil imagination. In other words, the premise of museums and archival institutions can simply be to work as trustworthy custodians of heritage, contribute to public thinking, and act as facilitators for individuals to become better citizens for the communities they choose to participate in.

In a recent conversation with two colleagues, I shared some of the above ideas to discuss how to institute—with and through users—collections, archives, and public programming. One of them responded immediately: 'You don't necessarily have to find words for what you do,

you don't think about it with concepts and do it afterwards—you find it by intuition.' The other jokingly added that he wouldn't be surprised to see another clean-cut museum exhibition exploring the terms of civil imagination, citizenship as praxis, and vulnerability in resistance.

I have come to believe that it is urgent to imagine tools, both theoretical and practical, for what institutions could potentially become. I am interested in the moments when institutions use the constitutive and performative force of language and discourse—when they challenge seemingly universalized and abstracted theorizations around citizenship, and imagine new ways of belonging to a community—something that would be contextually located in cultural and political formations in their locale. Institutions, especially those with collections and archives, are only alive as much as they are used and transformed by their publics, initially through public programming that values the act of listening, responding, arguing, and doubting—the basic premises of the practice of citizenship. But we also have to admit: Self-definitions are never enough. After all, what is important is how we do it.





# DATA

DATA ASYMMETRY

Burak Arikan

# ASYM METRY

The central source of power in the digital world today is 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, organizations) interact with each other and constitute a large complex system.

When the network effect results from the links within data, it is called 'data-network effect'.<sup>1</sup> This occurs 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 machines learning algorithms. The more data users contribute, the smarter the service becomes as the users' data are computed to make predictions, recommendations, performance improvements, perfecting interfaces, etc. Examples range from Google's search result optimizations, 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 personalization and improvements that have been made based on their own data. These new means of production through capturing, predicting, monetizing people's behavioural surplus generates 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 says these platforms that host and inform our networked public sphere are unelected, unaccountable, and often impossible to audit or oversee.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Power of Data Network Effects, Matt Turck, 1 April 2016, <http://mattturck.com/the-power-of-data-network-effects/>.  
<sup>2</sup> Decentralized Web Report by the Digital Currency Initiative and the Center for Civic Media at MIT, September 2017, <http://dci.mit.edu/decentralizedweb>.



5.06.01 - 'Networks of Dispossession', exhibition view, 'Istanbul: Passion, Joy, Fury', MAXXI Museum, Rome. Courtesy of the artist

Needless to say, none of those digital platforms are public, but private digital spaces that are designed to feel like public ones. Furthermore, the report examines alternative platforms that 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 friendlier platforms, and these platforms will be constrained by the same forces that drive consolidation today.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.





Another fundamental issue with platform monopolies is data ownership.<sup>4</sup> Data ownership is usually discussed in the framework of data interoperability, because users are locked in these platforms because they cannot take their social network or data traces with them, if they want to migrate to another platform. 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.<sup>5</sup> The spectacle users create in 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'.<sup>6</sup> 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.'<sup>7</sup>

With the new version of the Internet Protocol (IP), any device in the world can be assigned a unique address for identification and location definition. This technical preparation for the so-called Internet of Things<sup>8</sup> 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 nano-engineered drug's data captured from your body? Are you paid rent for the use of sensor data captured from your house? 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.

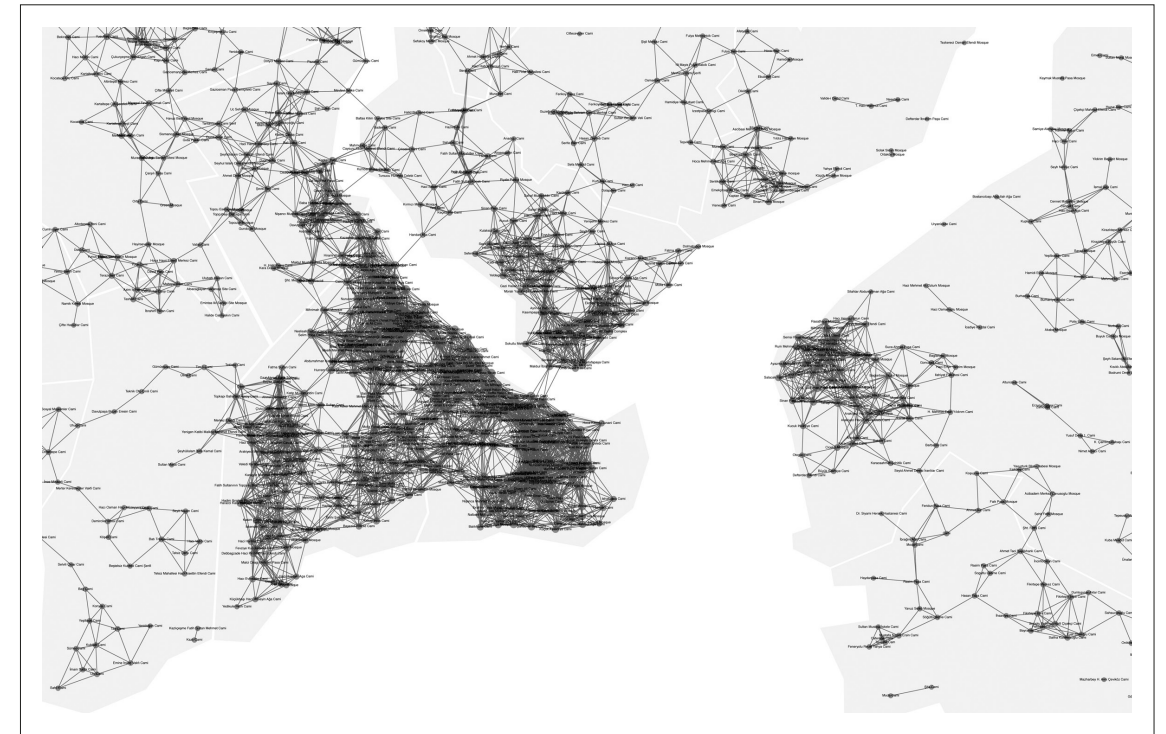
<sup>4</sup> In 2008, to free our data-networks from the social media monopolies, we've proposed an open data structure 'User Labor' to outline the metrics of participation in social web services. Its aim was to construct criteria and context for determining the value of user labour, which is a monetized asset for the service provider but not for the user herself. User Labor, Burak Arıkan and Engin Erdogan 1 May 2008, <http://userlabor.org>.

<sup>5</sup> Meta-Markets (2007), an online stock market for social media profiles, in order to evaluate the value of user labour on social media, <https://burak-arikan.com/meta-markets/>.

<sup>6</sup> 'Free Labor: Producing Culture for the Digital Economy'. Tiziana Terranova, 2003, [www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/technocapitalism/voluntary](http://www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/technocapitalism/voluntary).

<sup>7</sup> Shoshana Zuboff, 'Big Other: Surveillance Capitalism and the Prospects of an Information Civilization', *Journal of Information Technology* 9 April 2015, [www.shoshanazuboff.com/new/recent-publications-and-interviews/big-other-surveillance-capitalism-and-the-prospects-of-an-information-civilization/](http://www.shoshanazuboff.com/new/recent-publications-and-interviews/big-other-surveillance-capitalism-and-the-prospects-of-an-information-civilization/).

<sup>8</sup> See the critique of the Internet of Things at Bruce Sterling's 2014 pamphlet *The Epic Struggle of The Internet of Things* (London and Moscow: Strelka Press).



5.06.02 – Network of Mosques connected through overlapping call to prayer sounds of 3000+ mosques in Istanbul. Excerpt from 'Islam, Republic, Neoliberalism', 2012, Burak Arıkan. Courtesy of the artist





GRAPH COMMONS

Burak Arikan

# GRAPH COMMONS

Graph Commons ([graphcommons.com](http://graphcommons.com)) is a collaborative platform for mapping, analysing and publishing data-networks. It empowers people and organizations 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, strategizing, organizational analysis, activism, archival exploration, and art curating.

## EXPLORING DATA PROJECTS ACROSS A VARIETY OF TOPICS

Using Graph Commons, activists in Brazil have mapped public-private partnerships causing ecological damage in the Amazon rainforest. 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 organizations 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 people, organizations, 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.

Organizations with extensive data needs such as art institutions, museums, think tanks, civil society organizations, media journalism groups, or specialized projects use a Hub on Graph Commons. A hub is an organization's data portal, where you can search and explore their curated graph database.

MAPPING YOUR DATA: VISUAL  
EDITOR, IMPORT, CUSTOMIZATION,  
COLLABORATION, ANALYSIS

On Graph Commons, you can collectively compile data about the topics you are interested in, define and categorize relations, transform your data into interactive network maps, discover new patterns, and share your insight about complex issues using a simple interface. The platform serves both producers and consumers of graphs by linking entities together in useful ways and thereby creating a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Using the visual graph editor you can easily brainstorm ideas, or work in collaboration with your colleagues. Besides the visual graph editor, you can also import your existing data sheets. Once you import your data, you apply network analysis to discover patterns, indirect relations, and organic clusters that are otherwise hidden. As you work with your data, you can create unified data taxonomies, customize colour and icons of actors and relations in your data, and develop an effective visual language.

## PUBLISHING DATA: PRINTS, EMBEDS, STORIES, COMMENTS

Once you've prepared your graphs, you publish them on the Internet with a unique permanent link, or permalink. You can share a particular selection from your larger graph, which will also have sharable permalinks with ready-made social media cards. Furthermore, you can embed the interactive graph into your website or online article. Public graphs are licensed to their authors with Creative Commons International 4.0, which applies the license to the author's graph data structure and its contents (if copyrightable). All graphs have a comment sidebar where visitors leave comments, provide feedback, and discuss your work.

Using these 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 their work and ask others to contribute to theirs. We believe everybody will find a unique way to use Graph Commons in their own connected world.



# OPEN SOURCE PROTOTYPES

OPEN SOURCE PROTOTYPES

Oriol Fontdevila



5.08.01 - Candel'Hart visits the archive of the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, 2012. Photo: Marta Mariño © Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2017. Published under Creative Commons license CC BY-NC-SA

Open Source Prototypes was a collaborative network developed by the Fundació Antoni Tàpies (Barcelona) in relation to its institutional archive. Between 2011 and 2016, different groups with ties to education were involved in conducting research and intervention projects that revolved around contemporary artistic practices, setting out from the documentary material contained in said archive. The initiative was promoted by Laurence Rassel, curated by Oriol Fontdevila, coordinated by Linda Valdés, and featured the ongoing involvement of Núria Solé, head of the Archive Department, and the Education Department's Rosa Eva Campo and Maria Sellarès. In the project's five editions, decidedly heterogeneous proposals were developed, with the Fundació team, archive material, and the institution's resources coming into play and varying according to the definition of each project.

For instance, over a five-year period, work was carried out on 'Prototypes' with the Escola d'Art i Superior de Disseny Deià, and the collaboration with the Fundació came to form the basis of

an optional subject in Advanced Design Studies. Within this framework students considered the possibility of conducting an analysis of the institution, resulting in ephemeral intervention proposals generally carried out in the same spaces in the museum. According to Joan Vilapuig, a teacher at the school:

The documentation on exhibitions kept by the archive could provide us with details of how they were managed, to allow work and discussions on legal and financial aspects that would not emerge in any analysis of the exhibition as an end product.

In 2011, a collaboration was also set up with the Candel'Hart collective, with emphasis on analysing the distance, physical and symbolic, that opens between an institution like the Fundació and this group of amateur painters from Bellvitge, a working-class neighbourhood in the metropolitan area of Barcelona. Mariló Fernández, a member of Candel'Hart, commented:

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'Open Source Prototypes' continues on page 354

THEY QUESTION  
THE ESTABLISHED  
RELATIONS OF  
PRODUCTION  
WITHIN  
MUSEUMS

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John Byrne  
2.01

AND CRUCIALLY  
THE DIVISION OF  
LABOUR BETWEEN  
CURATORS AND  
MEDIATORS /  
AUDIENCES

One of the key outcomes of the 'Museum of Arte Útil' was the realization that any attempt to imagine a museum of the future must begin as an act of negotiating jeopardy—as both a framing of, and an intervention within, the complex conundrum of art and life that may, inevitably, result in our current understanding of art changing forever.

John Byrne  
2.03



*Arte Útil Archive*, installation at the 'Museum of Arte Útil', Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2013. Photo: Peter Cox, Eindhoven



The iconoclastic revolt in 2045 determined the fate of the building. The director at the time, Adam Kirk, was an apostate. He knew many of the great collections had been decimated over the previous decades from the disastrous subsidence of the British Museum and the Tates, undermined by floods and revolt. As the same thing happened in Scotland he assembled a team of agents to rescue what they could, hoping that, one day, people would distinguish between commodities and art. Not so much survived it seems—one or two magical things but the waters went high here and much of the rest got buried in the collapses.

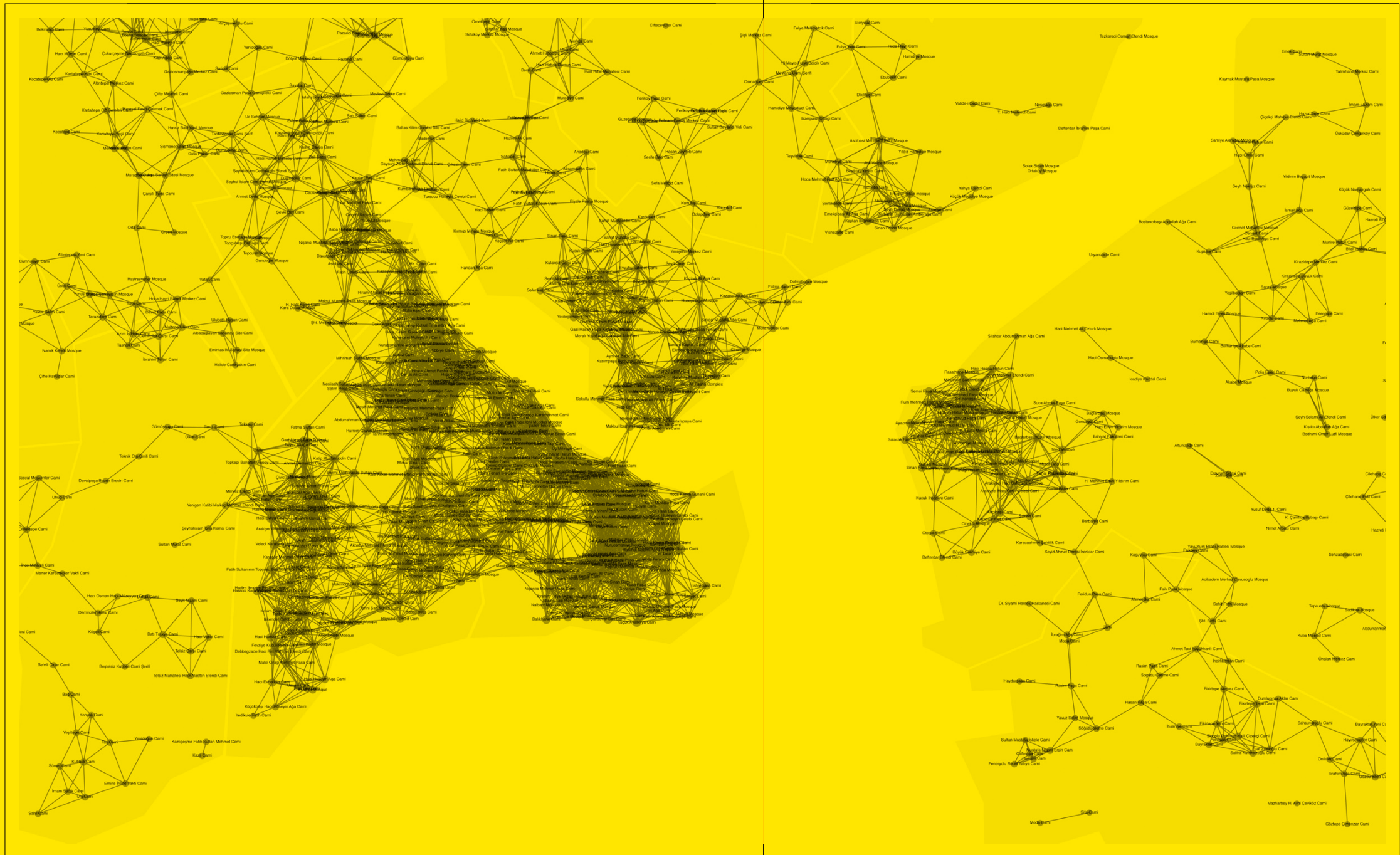
Francis McKee  
0.02

Certainly, replacing the  
rooted common sense—

‘that’s how things are’

—which the status quo  
has installed in our  
imagination with a dif-  
ferent one that unveils  
its artificial, unfair  
and obsolete nature,  
will not be an easy  
task. But we should not  
give up that vision, we  
should not step back to  
the heroic exception-  
ality of pioneers whose  
place is either the  
future or the bonfire.

Jesús Carillo  
3.09



Network of Mosques connected through overlapping call to prayer sounds of 3000+ mosques in Istanbul. Excerpt from 'Islam, Neoliberalism'. 2012, Burak Arikan. Courtesy of the artist

Graph Commons (graphcommons.com) is a collaborative platform for mapping, analysing and publishing data-networks. It empowers people and organizations to transform their data into interactive maps and untangle complex relations that impact them and their communities.

Burak Arikan  
5.06

The kind of forensic exhibition history inquest we have undertaken seldom took place in libraries or institutional archives. The bulk of information we collected was from people's testimonials, to whom we are immensely indebted for their generosity, openness, and trust.

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Kristine Khouri and Rasha Salti  
5.02

They included artists who donated works to these museums, or even organized the collection of artworks and administered its international tour, but also militants, scholars, researchers, curators, and art critics.

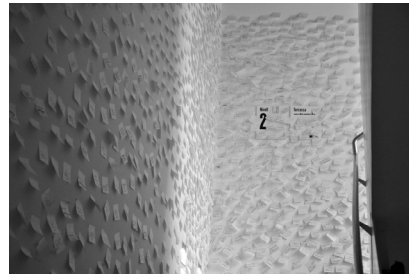


If there is one thing we consider to be entirely positive, it is the opportunity to respect and create a space in which different times and processes can coexist ... [so that] we have been able to gradually build up our way of dealing with the archive, approaching it cautiously, taking the time necessary to rethink why, for what and how to construct this relationship.

In the years the project was active, around twenty collaborations were carried out with different groups. Other projects, large in scope and time, were the Laboratory of Visual Arts Officials, training for municipal civil servants specializing in arts and culture in collaboration with the Diputació de Barcelona, and Time Explorers, a two-year project on the memory of the Poble Nou area, within the framework of the workshop on visual arts from the Sant Martí primary school.

Open Source Prototypes was re-approached in 2016 to be developed as a public archive programme from the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, under the wings of the European project 'Performing the Museum'. In this instance, the invitation to conduct research and intervention processed in the museum has primarily focused on independent agents, identified through art work—Roger Bernat, Lúa Coderch and Pep Vidal—or education work: Experimentem amb l'ART, LaFundició and Objetologías.

\* The quotes that appear in the text come from the assessments carried out over the years. The majority of those featured here were previously published in an extended version in: Aleksandra Sekulić and Dušan Grlja eds., *Performing the Museum: The Reader* (Vojvodina Novi Sad: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2016).



5.08.02 - 'Los archivos de la ciudad vacía' (The Empty City Archives). Educational project within Open Source Prototypes in collaboration with the Escola d'Art i Superior de Disseny Dejà. Fundació Antoni Tàpies, November 2011. Photo: Linda Valdés. © Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2017. Published under Creative Commons license CC BY-NC-SA



5.08.03 - 'Los exploradores del tiempo' (The Time Explorers), project in collaboration with the Escola de Sant Martí. Barcelona, 2015. Photo: Núria Solé Bardalet. © Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2017. Published under Creative Commons license CC BY-NC-SA



5.08.04 - 'How To Do Things With Documents', group exhibition within the European project 'Performing the Museum', curated by Oriol Fontdevila. Archive of the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, 2015. Photo: Núria Solé Bardalet. © Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2017. Published under Creative Commons license CC BY-NC-SA





5.09

Project study

# THE SALT OFFICE OF USEFUL ART

THE SALT OFFICE  
OF USEFUL ART

Onur Yıldız



5.09.01 – Office of Useful Art, SALT Galata, Istanbul, 2017. Photo: Mustafa Hazneci

Established in partnership with the Asociación de Arte Útil, the Office at SALT—contemporary art institution in Istanbul—also contributes to the online Arte Útil Archive by suggesting cases from Turkey and surrounding regions. In addition to talks and workshops that reflect on the idea of usefulness organized in the space, it activates broader public discussion by external programming such as a 36 week radio show that elaborates cases from the Arte Útil Archive.

The Office will provide new case studies from Turkey and the surrounding regions for the online archive. These new examples will be discussed along with a selection from the archive through public programmes. The two-year period will foster further collaborations with users and constituents. The Office of Useful Art will maintain the aim of initiating a group of ‘professional users’ who go beyond the disciplinary boundaries of artists and academics. Comprising presentations of case studies both in Turkish and English, and accommodating related programmes, the office space will remain open for use outside of its curriculum.

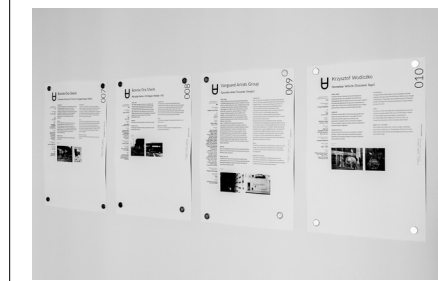
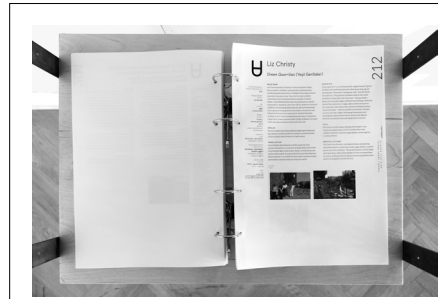
Museums are in a severe crisis, caused mostly by a delayed reality check on whether their missions from the past respond to the necessities of today. They have spent tremendous effort for corporatization and failed to foresee that this would only reinforce their inherent unidirectional communication with the world. They tend to grow with expansionist agendas, and to become more inclusive with the pressure of ongoing social movements. Growth is attained by tending to popular interests and tools that define the museum as a space of experience, whereas inclusion is achieved with short term invitations based on the museum’s own needs and wants. Fuelled by corporatization, the current management models obstruct changes prompted by users desiring engagements beyond those offered and controlled by the museum.

Alarmed by this crisis, SALT has always maintained that content is far more valuable than experience. The institution has attempted to remain open both to users and uses outside of its designated interests. A drive to share and use resources openly has materialized thanks to

individuals, collectives, universities, and NGOs seeking a space of production in the city. Since its opening in 2011, SALT has accordingly gained users who range from individuals to constituents. The learning processes initiated through SALT's research and programmes have become reciprocal with constituents' contributions from diverse fields of knowledge. Outputs of collaborations mostly in cinema, performance, photography, literature, and food, along with discussions around urban concerns such as standards of living, have updated SALT's curriculum.

Launched in September 2017, on the third floor of SALT Galata, the Office of Useful Art is another step in the search for promoting a culture of collaboration and co-learning. It is thought to operate as a medium for expanding and deepening the relation between the institution and its users. To generate openness as a solution to the concerns related to pressures coming from social, political, and economic urgencies, the ideas and questions clustered around the Office of Useful Art will permeate through the practices of SALT.

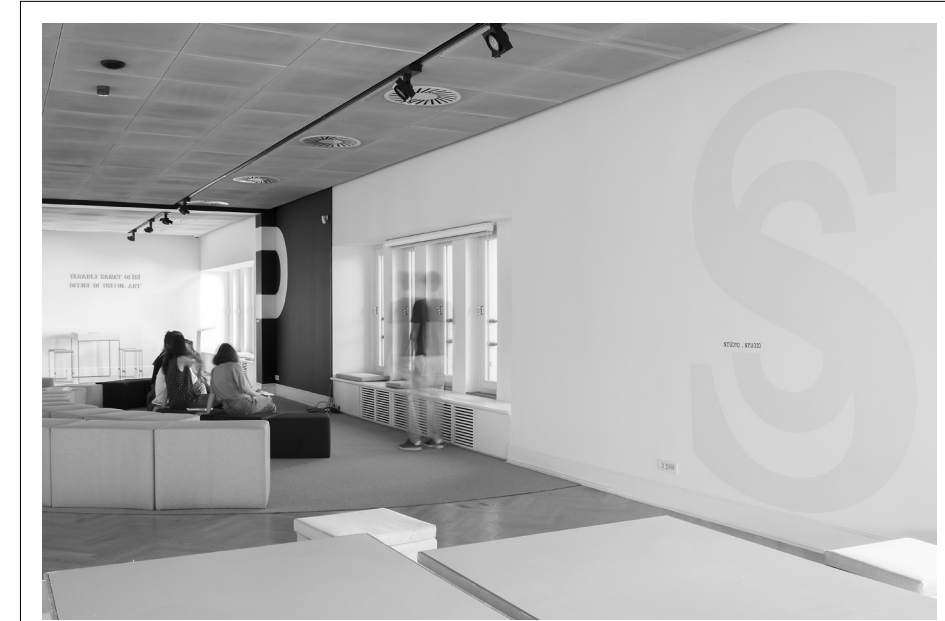
'Hospitality'—through which SALT opens its spaces to individuals, initiatives and institutions from outside, to meet, rehearse and organise events; and 'Collaboration'—by which SALT co-produces content with actors from outside the institution, are two existing ways of working with users. In addition to utilizing these schemes, the Office will seek to pluralize and intensify constituent work by devising methods to incorporate user-driven content into the institution's curriculum. In its projected two-year process, it will maintain the aim of initiating a group of 'professional users' who go beyond the disciplinary boundaries of artists and academics. This constituent group will ideally form out of users of library, archive, and programmes and inform the institution on new directions as per its deficits in its public-access content.



5.09.02/03 - Office of Useful Art, SALT Galata, Istanbul, 2017. Photo: Mustafa Hazneci



5.09.04 - Office of Useful Art, SALT Galata, Istanbul, 2017. Photo: Mustafa Hazneci



5.09.05 - Office of Useful Art, SALT Galata, Istanbul, 2017. Photo: Mustafa Hazneci

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## APPENDIX

Contributors

Index of Names

Index of Works, Exhibitions,  
Projects, Organizations

Acknowledgements

Colophon




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**CONTRIBUTORS**


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**EDITORS AND AUTHORS**


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John Byrne (born 1964) is a reader in 'The Uses of Art' and director of 'The Uses of Art Lab' at Liverpool School of Art and Design (Liverpool John Moores University). Byrne is also currently manager and coordinator of 'The Uses of Art: The Legacy of 1848 and 1984' for Liverpool John Moores University and project manager/lead editor of 'The Constituencies' strand of L'Internationale Research. Byrne also collaborates with The Association of Arte Útil and is a member of The Autonomy Project editorial board, a long-term research project initiated in 2010. He writes regularly for various magazines and journals such as *Third Text*, *Afterall*, and *Open!* Byrne lives and works in Liverpool.

ELINOR MORGAN (born 1987) is a curator and writer. She is currently Senior Curator at Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, Middlesbrough (UK), where she has developed a programme and institution that is led by its context and publics. She has previously worked at Eastside Projects, Birmingham; Wysing Art Centre, Cambridgeshire, and OUTPOST, Norwich, and on public art commissions and freelance projects. Recent exhibitions include: 'Idea Home Show', 2017; 'Wilderness Way', 2017; 'Middlesbrough Collection', 2017; 'Teesside World Exposition of Art and Technology', 2016; 'Localism', 2015. All at Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. All co-curated with colleagues at Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art.

NOVEMBER PAYNTER is director of programmes at the Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto Canada. She joined the museum in early 2017 to work on the programme and vision as MOCA commenced a distinct phase in its evolution, readying itself for relaunch in a new venue in spring 2018. Prior to this she was associate director of Research

and Programs at SALT, Istanbul and Ankara, from founding until December 2016. She has held the positions of Curator, Platform Garanti, Istanbul; Assistant Curator, 9th International Istanbul Biennial; with freelance curatorial work including projects for Grazer Kunstverein, Graz; Tate Modern, London; Philadelphia Museum, Philadelphia; Artists Space, New York and the Asia Pacific Triennial, Brisbane.

AIDA SÁNCHEZ DE SERDIO is an educator, researcher and cultural worker in the fields of visual culture, pedagogy and collaborative arts practices. She is assistant professor of the BA in Arts of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, but previously she was advisor for the departments of Education and Publics at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Spain, and lecturer at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Barcelona. She also has collaborated with or been a member of a number of educational and cultural projects such as Friction Pedagogies at the Fundació Joan Miró and Contact Zones at La Virreina Centre de la Imatge.

ADELA ŽELEZNIK (born 1962) 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 (Mala galerija, Ljubljana, 2004; ŠKUC Gallery, 1994) 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 the Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, from 2011 as a senior curator for education and public programmes. She writes about art education and participation within the museum context. Participative projects in collaboration with artists include 'Dreamers', 2016 (Maja Hodošček); Reading seminar with Jože Baršič, 2012–2013; 'Showroom/ Meeting Room, Backroom: Ultimate Audience', Mestna galerija/City Gallery, Ljubljana, 2010 (Apolonija Šuštersič); 'You and the City. Diaries of a Future Avant-garde', 2008–2009 (Jeanne van Heeswijk).

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**AUTHORS**


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AZRA AKŠAMIJA (born 1976) is an artist and architectural historian, director of the MIT Future Heritage Lab and an Associate Professor at the MIT Program in Art, Culture and Technology. In her multidisciplinary work, Akšamija investigates transcultural aesthetics, cultural mobility, and ways in which art and architecture can form a bridge between cultures. Her recent academic research investigates the relationship between culture and conflict, with the focus on cultural memory and war in the Balkans since the nineties. Her book *Mosque Manifesto* (2015) offers a repertoire of ways in which Islamic religious art and architecture may foster a better understanding between cultures, and provide a critical response to stereotypes about Islam in the non-Islamic societies. Akšamija holds master degrees from the Technical University Graz and Princeton University, and a PhD from MIT (History Theory Criticism of Art and Architecture/ Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture). Her work has been shown in leading international venues including the Generali Foundation Vienna, Valencia Biennial, Liverpool Biennial, Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb, Sculpture Center New York, Secession Vienna, Manifesta 7, the Royal Academy of Arts London, Queens Museum New York, and the Fondazione Giorgio Cini as a part of the 54th Art Biennale in Venice. She received the prestigious Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 2013 for her design of the prayer space interior in the Islamic Cemetery Altach, Austria.

ALBERTO ALTÉS ARLANDIS is an architect and researcher. He studied architecture and urban planning in Valladolid, Barcelona and Delft, and critical theory at the Independent Studies Program in Barcelona (MACBA). He now holds a Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship at the Faculty of Architecture, Technical University Delft, where he is exploring the notions of fragility, affinity and care, and the power of choreography, dance and love, to inform a

sensitive and responsible approach to 'worlding' practices and pedagogy. He has been a guest lecturer at Konstfack, University College of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm and at the Academy of Landscape and Territorial Studies in Tromsø (NO). From 2011 to 2017 he was assistant professor at the Umeå School of Architecture, where he co-founded and co-directed the Laboratory of Immediate Architectural Intervention; and from 2006 to 2011 he taught at the ETSAV School of Architecture in Sant Cugat (Barcelona). In his PhD dissertation 'Delaying the Image: Towards an Aesthetics of Encounter', he approaches film as a form that thinks and as an apparatus of spatial critique, exploring 'the encounter' as a slow, caring and open form of practice. He has co-edited *Intravention, Durations, Effects: Notes of Expansive Sites and Relational Architectures* (2013) and *The Power of Experiment* (2016, Artéria and the Lisbon Architecture Triennale), and he is co-founder and partner of LandLab Arkitektur AB.

BURAK ARIKAN (born 1976) is an artist and founder of the Graph Commons platform for mapping, analyzing, and publishing data-networks. Arikan's work deals with complex networks through software, prints, installations, and performances. Recent exhibitions include: 'Data Asymmetry', Winchester Gallery, Southampton, 2016; 31st São Paulo Biennial, 2014; 11th Sharjah Biennial, 2013; 7th Berlin Biennale, 2012; and the exhibition for the Nam June Paik Award, Kunstmuseum Bochum, 2012. Arikan lives and works in New York and Istanbul.

JAMES BEIGHTON (born 1975) is a curator, writer and researcher. He studied English Literature and Critical Theory at Leicester University and is currently completing a Cultural History PhD at Teesside University as part of the AHRC Heritage Consortium. He is Executive Director of the North East based arts development charity Tees Valley Arts and was previously Senior Curator at the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. He has a long-standing





interest in the social and artistic history of clay. Beighton lives and works in Teesside (UK). Recent exhibition include: 'William Tillyer: Against the Grain', mima, Middlesbrough, 2013-2014; 'Jannis Kounellis', mima, Middlesbrough, 2012-2013; 'Julian Stair: Quietus', mima, Middlesbrough 2012; 'A certain distance, endless light: Felix Gonzalez-Torres & William McKeown' (co-curated with Gavin Delahunty), mima/AV Festival, Middlesbrough, 2010; Recent publications include: 'Twenty Years of the Old Becoming New: British Craft 1997-2017', *Korean Craft & Design Magazine* (2017); *Two Tales of a City* (co-authored with Emily Hesse), Verge Galley, Sydney (2017); 'Why Clay' (co-authored with Emily Hesse), *The Ceramics Reader* (2017); 'The Cultural Turn in History: The Historical Turn in Ceramics', Korean International Ceramics Biennale (2015).

MANUEL BORJA-VILLEL (born 1957) has been the director of Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (MNCARS) in Madrid since 2008. Previously, he was the director of the Fundació Antoni Tàpies and the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA). Together with searching for new forms of institutionality, an important part of his programme in the MNCARS is centred on the development and reorganization of the collection, changing the method of presentation of works. Recent exhibitions he has programmed include: 'Territories and Fictions, Thinking a New way of the World' (2016), 'Not Yet, On the Reinvention of Documentary and the Critique of Modernism' (2015), 'Really Useful Knowledge' (2014), and 'Playgrounds, Reinventing the Square' (2014).

COORDINATORS OF PUBLIC ACTIVITIES FOR 'REALLY USEFUL KNOWLEDGE'  
SARA BURAYA BONED coordinates international projects at the Museo Reina Sofía; PAULA MOLINER coordinates and programmes activities and projects in the sphere of contemporary performing arts; and MANUELA PEDRÓN NICOLAU works in the field of curatorship and education in contemporary art, in collaboration with different institutions. In 2014 and

2015, they were part of the Museo Reina Sofía's Public Activities Department, jointly coordinating the programme of public actions for 'Really Useful Knowledge'.

JESÚS CARRILLO (born 1966) is a professor of Art History and Theory at the Autonomous University of Madrid. He was previously general director of Cultural Programmes and Activities at Madrid City Council (2015-2016) and head of Cultural Programmes at the Museo Reina Sofía (2008-2015). Between 2013 and 2015 he was a member of L'Internationale online's editorial board, and co-curated the Glossary of Common Knowledge project. Furthermore, he has conducted a historical and critical analysis of contemporary cultural institutions and has worked as the editor of publications for the project *Desacuerdos: Sobre arte, políticas y esfera pública en el Estado Español* (Disagreements: On Art, Politics and the Public Sphere in the Spanish State).

ALEJANDRO CEVALLOS NARVÁEZ studied Art at the Central University of Ecuador and Visual Anthropology at the Latin American Social Sciences Institute. He was previously professor of art and adjunct researcher at Quito's Instituto de la Ciudad, and coordinated the area of Community Research and Mediation at the Fundación Museos de la Ciudad, Quito. He currently develops research-action based around the pathways of mainstream and intercultural education in the Andean region of Ecuador and is part of the community education workshop *Mujeres Bordando en el mercado popular de San Roque* (Women Embroidering in the San Roque Street Market). CÉLINE CONDORELLI (born 1974) is an artist who lives and works between London, Lisbon, and Milan; she is currently Professor at NABA (Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti) Milan, and one of the founding directors of Eastside Projects, Birmingham, UK; she is the author and editor of *Support Structures* (2009) her first monograph, *bau bau* was published in 2017. Condorelli combines a number of approaches from developing structures for 'supporting' (the work of others, forms of political

imaginary, existing and fictional realities) to broader enquiries into forms of commonality and discursive sites. Recent exhibitions include: 'Proposals for a Qualitative Society (Spinning)', Stroom Den Haag; 'Corps à Corps', IMA Brisbane (AU) (2017); Gwangju Biennale; Liverpool Biennial; Sydney Biennial; and 'Concrete Distractions', Kunsthalle Lissabon (2016); 'bau bau', HangarBicocca, Milan (2015); 'Céline Condorelli', Chisenhale Gallery, London; 'Positions', Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (NL), including the publication *The Company She Keeps* (2014).

SEAN DOCKRAY (born 1977) is an artist currently based at the University of Melbourne. He was previously a research fellow in the Post-Media Lab at Leuphana University. His research has explored the sharing economy, online education and artificial intelligence and traffic control. He has published writing in *Artlink* and *Frieze*, as well as in several edited volumes. He is a founding director of Telic Arts Exchange, Los Angeles and initiator of knowledge-sharing platforms The Public School and Aaaarg. Dockray lives and works in Melbourne.

ÖZGE ERSOY (born 1984) is a curator. She is Public Programmes Lead at Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong. She is also Managing Editor of m-est.org, an online publication conceived as an artist-centred initiative. Her writings have been included in *ArtAsiaPacific*, *Bidoun*, *Brand-New-Life*, *Domus*, *Modern Painters*, and *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, and many others. Recent publications include: *Fatma Bucak: I must say a word about fear* (2014); *telegenic* (with Ekberzade) (2014); and *How to Begin? Envisioning the Impact of Guggenheim Abu Dhabi* (2010). Ersoy holds an MA from the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College. She lives and works in Hong Kong.

CARMEN ESBRI: I have a degree in Philosophy and the Arts, specializing in Art History, and documentary film-making. I previously spent thirty years working at different publishing houses—ever since I updated a guide from Madrid's Museo

del Prado—directing, coordinating and creating. Moreover, I have developed a range of titles, coordinated large collections, and published my own books and articles. Unfinished business: to write a novel, and travel. I currently act as a Legal Expert in Art and Publishing and I am a social activist. I also belong to MEDSAP-Marea Blanca, which keeps up the fight for human rights in health and life, and I have coordinated major cultural-activist events uniting art and denunciation. I am proud to help keep the flame of borderless resistance and awareness burning.

ORIOI FONTDEVILA (born 1978) is a curator, writer, researcher, focusing on art practices and education based in Barcelona. Artistic co-director of Sala d'Art Jove de la Generalitat de Catalunya (Catalan Government's Young Art Initiative). Currently he is researching, from a performative approach, the interweaving between art and mediation, granted by MNCARS, Museo Nacional Reina Sofía. Also, in 2015, he has been awarded (ex aequo) the Cultural Innovation International Prize of CCCB, Centre of Contemporary Culture of Barcelona for the project *Becoming Public*. He is co-curating *Performing the Museum*, an artistic research platform lead by Fundació Antoni Tàpies (Barcelona), Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb, Koroska Gallery of Fine Arts (Slovenj Gradec) and Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina (Novi Sad). Formerly he has curated several projects at Fundació Joan Miró, Fundació Antoni Tàpies, A\*DESK Platform, Idensitat, Centre d'Art Santa Mònica, amongst other art institutions and independent spaces in Barcelona. He is a guest lecturer at several universities and study programmes and writes regularly in art magazines and exhibition catalogues.

AMY FRANCESCHINI (born 1970) is an artist, designer, and founder of FUTUREFARMERS. Futurefarmers use various media to create work that has the potential to destabilize logics of 'certainty'. They deconstruct systems such as food policies, public transportation and rural farming networks to visualize and understand their intrinsic logics.



Through this disassembly new narratives emerge that reconfigure the principles that once dominated these systems. Futurefarmers' work often provides a playful entry point and tools for participants to gain insight into deeper fields of inquiry—not only to imagine, but to participate in and initiate change in the places we live.

GEORGE&HARRISON is an Eindhoven-based graphic design studio, founded by Martijn Maas and Maarten Stal in 2013. The studio, composed of a small team with diverse backgrounds, specialises in publications, digital media and visual identities, working on commissioned projects in the fields of art, culture and commerce. The design practice of George&Harrison focusses on combining clean, strategy-driven solutions and powerful aesthetics. Context, research and dialogue are key to George&Harrison's approach. More of their work can be found on [www.georgeandharrison.nl](http://www.georgeandharrison.nl).

JANNA GRAHAM is a writer, organizer, educator and curator. Working with the collectives Ultra-red and Micropolitics Research Group, she participates in ongoing militant research projects on the conditions of cultural workers in London and pedagogies of anti-racism in England's rural areas. She has developed education and curatorial initiatives at institutions including the Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto), Project Art Centre (Dublin), Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven) and Plymouth Arts Centre (UK).

NAV HAQ (born 1976) is Senior Curator at M HKA, Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp. He was previously Exhibitions Curator at Arnolfini, Bristol, and Curator at Gasworks, London. Haq has curated monographic exhibitions with artists such as Hassan Khan, Cosima von Bonin, Shilpa Gupta, Imogen Stidworthy and Otobong Nkanga. Group exhibitions include: 9th Göteborg International Biennial of Contemporary Art (2017); 'Energy Flash: The Rave Movement' (2016); 'Don't You Know Who I Am? Art After Identity Politics' with Anders Kreuger (2014); 'Superpower:

Africa in Science Fiction' (2012); 'Museum Show' – a historical survey of (semi-fictional) museums created by artists (2011); Contour Biennial 2007, Mechelen (B); and 'Lapdogs of the Bourgeoisie: Class Hegemony in Contemporary Art', with Tirdad Zolghadr (2006–2009). In 2012 he was recipient of the Independent Vision Award for Curatorial Achievement, awarded by Independent Curators International, New York.

YAIZA HERNÁNDEZ VELÁZQUEZ (born 1975) is a London-based researcher. She holds a PhD from the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy, an MA in Visual Culture and a BA in Fine Art. She is currently a lecturer at Central Saint Martins–UAL where she leads the MRes Art: Exhibition Studies. She has previously worked as Head of Public Programmes at MACBA, director of CENDEAC and curator at CAAM. Her research centres on art institutional settings as sites of political and philosophical import. She is the editor of *Inter/Multi/Cross/Trans* (Montehermoso, 2011) and is currently finalizing a monograph on the relationship between museums and criticism. Some of her other writings are available at [www.arts.ac.uk/research/ual-staff-researchers/a-z/yaiza-maria-hernandez-velazquez/](http://www.arts.ac.uk/research/ual-staff-researchers/a-z/yaiza-maria-hernandez-velazquez/).

EMILY HESSE (born 1980) is an artist, ceramicist and theorist. She studied at Durham University and has an MA in ceramics from Sunderland University (2015). She is co-director of New Linthorpe (2014–2017). Hesse's interdisciplinary practice questions and aggravates social and political power dynamics through regional folk histories, collective action and the use of land and its associated materials as a physical form of protest. Hesse lives and works in Saltburn-by-the-Sea, Teesside. Recent exhibitions include: 'The Idea Home Show', mima, Middlesbrough, 2017; 'Stand', Tees Valley, 2016; 'The Coffee House and Post-Brexit Paradox', mima, Middlesbrough, 2016; 'Localism', mima, Middlesbrough, 2015; 'Postcards to America', Studio 10 Gallery, Brooklyn, 2014. Recent publications include: 'Two Tales of a City' (co-authored with

James Beighton), Verge Gallery, Sydney (2017), 'Why Clay' (co-authored with James Beighton) in *The Ceramics Reader* (2017).

JOHN HILL (born 1986) is an artist and currently a Graduate Researcher at Liverpool John Moores University. His work investigates collaborative practices of making and learning, both on and offline. He has had work exhibited internationally and been commissioned by major UK institutions, including Hayward Gallery, London, 2014, and Frieze Foundation, London, 2011. In spring 2017 he led the Studio of the Visiting Artist at AVU, the Academy of Fine Arts, Prague. Hill lives and works in Prague.

ALISTAIR HUDSON (born 1969) is director of Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. His vision for MIMA is based on the concept of the Useful Museum, as an institution dedicated to the promotion of art as a tool for social change. He was educated at Goldsmiths' College 1988–1991 and has previously worked at the Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London (1994–2000) and The Government Art Collection (2000–2004) and Grizedale Arts (2004–2014). He is co-director of the Asociación de Arte Útil with Tania Bruguera. Key exhibitions include: 'Localism', Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, Middlesbrough, 2015; 'Confessions of the Imperfect: 1848–1989–Now', Van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven, 2014; 'Colosseum of the Consumed', Frieze Art Fair Projects, London, 2012; Instituto Mecanicos, São Paulo Biennial, 2010; Coniston Mechanics Institute, Cumbria, 2011; Happystack, Wuzishen, China, 2009.

ADELITA HUSNI-BEY (born 1985) is a Libyan-Italian artist who studied art, sociology and urban cultures. Her art and research focuses on self-organization and alternative forms of learning and existing in contemporary political and cultural settings. Recent exhibitions include: 'A Wave in the Well', Sursock Museum, Beirut, 2016; 'Movement Break', Kadist Foundation, San Francisco, 2015; and 'Playing Truant', Gasworks, London, 2012. Her work was

presented in the Italian Pavilion of the Venice Biennale, 2017. Husni-Bey lives and works in New York.

KRISTINE KHOURI is an independent researcher and writer. Her interests focus on the history of arts circulation and infrastructure in the Arab world. She curated 'The Founding Years (1969–1973): A Selection of Works from the Sultan Gallery Archives', Sultan Gallery, Kuwait, 2012. She and Salti co-curated 'Past Disquiet: Narratives and Ghosts of the International Art Exhibition for Palestine, 1978', Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2015, and the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 2016. Khouri lives and works in Beirut.

NORA LANDKAMMER is a mediator and researcher in the Institute of Art Education at the Zurich University of the Arts ZHdK, where she is currently working on the international project Another Roadmap for Arts Education. She is also a lecturer in the Master Art Education–Curatorial Studies at ZhdK, and is writing her PhD on post- and de-colonial perspectives in the mediation of ethnographic museums.

MARIA LIND (born 1966) is a curator, writer and educator based in Stockholm, currently the director of Tensta konsthall. She was the artistic director of the 11th Gwangju Biennale, the director of the graduate programme, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College (2008–2010) and director of Iaspis in Stockholm (2005–2007). From 2002–2004 she was the director of Kunstverein and in 1998, co-curator of Manifesta 2. She has taught widely since the early nineties. Currently she is professor of artistic research at the Art Academy in Oslo. She has contributed widely to newspapers, magazines, catalogues and other publications. She is the 2009 recipient of the Walter Hopps Award for Curatorial Achievement. In the fall of 2010 *Selected Maria Lind Writing* was published.

ISABELL LOREY is a political theorist at the European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies (eipcp) and member of the editorial board



of the alternative publication platform transversal (transversal.at). Currently she holds a professorship for Transnational Gender Politics at the Institute for Political Science, University of Kassel. As a Guest Professor she taught at several European Universities including University of Basel (2012–2015), the Humboldt-Universität, Berlin (2010–2011) and the University of Vienna (2009–2010). 2001–2007 she held the first (associate) professorship in Germany for Gender & Postcolonial Studies at the University of the Arts, Berlin. Until 2000 she worked as a journalist for several TV stations in Germany, mainly for the daily news-for-kids broadcast logo. Her international publications focus on the precarization of labour and life in Neoliberalism, social movements, critical theory of democracy and representation, and political immunization. She is the author of *Immer Ärger mit dem Subjekt: Theoretische und politische Konsequenzen eines juristischen Machtmodells: Judith Butler* (re-edition with new preface 2017); *Disputas sobre el sujeto* (2017); *State of Insecurity. Government of the Precarious* (2016); *Kırılğanların Yönetimi* (2016); *Het regeren der precären: De staat van onzekerheid* (2016); *Die Regierung der Prekären* (with a preface by Judith Butler, 2012 and 2015). She is co-author of the books *Foucaults Gegenwart* (2016) and *Occupy! Die aktuellen Kämpfe um die Besetzung des Politischen* (2012) and co-edited *Kognitiver Kapitalismus (with Klaus Neundlinger)* (2012). Currently she is writing a book on 'Presentist Democracy'. Lorey lives and works in Berlin, Kassel and Málaga.

FRANCIS MCKEE (born 1960) is an Irish writer and curator working in Glasgow. From 2005–2008 he was director of Glasgow International, and since 2006 he has been the director of the Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow. He is a tutor on the MFA at Glasgow School of Art and a researcher in the same institution. He curated the Scottish participation at the Venice Biennale with Kay Pallister in 2003. Francis McKee has written extensively

on the work of many artists, including Christine Borland, Douglas Gordon, Simon Starling, Matthew Barney, Pipilotti Rist, Willie Doherty, Minerva Cuevas, Grace Weir, Beatriz Santiago Munoz, and Abraham Cruzvillegas. Recently he published two books, *How to Know What is Really Happening* (2016) and *Even the Dead Rise Up* (2017).

ELLIOT PERKINS is a sound artist and researcher member of Ultra-red collective. In 2002, Perkins received support from the Arts Council's International Artists Fellowships Programme for his collaboration with Shahidul Alam, founder of the media activist organization DRIK. Combining Perkins's sound work with Alam's photography, EURODAC EXPRESS investigated the experience of migrants making their way from Bangladesh to England. Perkins first collaborated with Ultra-red in 2005 on BLOK 70 and is presently a member of the Ultra-red project RURAL INTAVENSHAN based in Torbay where Perkins is a field organizer for the Rural Racism Project.

BOJANA PIŠKUR graduated in art history from the University of Ljubljana and received her Ph.D. at the Institute for Art History at the Charles University in Prague, the Czech Republic. She is a senior curator at the Moderna galerija in Ljubljana. Her research focuses on political issues and how they relate to or are manifested in, the field of art looking specifically at the regions of former Yugoslavia and Latin America. She has contributed to numerous publications and lectured extensively on topics such as post avant-gardes in the former Yugoslavia, radical education, cultural politics in self-management, and the Non-Aligned Movement. Related exhibitions and projects include Glossary of Common Knowledge (with Zdenka Badovinac and Jesús Carrillo), Moderna galerija Ljubljana in the frame of L'Internationale, 2013–2017; 'Politicization of Friendship', MSUM, Ljubljana, 2015, 'Grammar of Freedom/Five Lessons' (with Zdenka Badovinac and Snejana Krasteva), Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow, 2015;

'This is All Film: Experimental Film in Yugoslavia 1951–1991' (with Ana Janevski, Jurij Meden and Stevan Vuković), Moderna galerija Ljubljana, 2010; Museum of Affects (with Bartomeu Mari, Bart De Baere, Teresa Grandas and Leen de Backer), Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova 2010.

TJAŠA POGAČAR PODGORNIK (born 1987) studied art at the University of Ljubljana and works as a writer, editor, and curator of exhibitions and projects for various institutional and non-institutional contexts. The main focus of her work are strategies of hijacking different formats, spaces and contexts as tools for rewiring existing relations and structural operations of contemporary art. She is a co-founder and editor of Šum, a journal for contemporary art criticism and theory, and a member of its research collective. She worked with Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Garage Museum and Škuc Gallery among others. Pogačar lives and works in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

ALAN QUIREYNS is artistic director of AIR Antwerpen, curator and writer. He studied art history at Ghent University and Freie Universität Berlin and participated in de Appel Curatorial Programme 2009–2010. In his practice, he focuses on the relationship between artistic practices and the everyday. Recent exhibitions include: 'The Living Room XL', Bodem, Antwerp, 2017; 'Staat van de Stad/State of the City Zustand der Stadt', basis e.v., Frankfurt am Main, 2016; 'AIR Traces: Austruweel', AIR Antwerpen, 2014; 'New Ways to Work', Extra City Kunsthal, Antwerp, 2012. Recent publications include: *The Cabinet of Traces*, *LA Magazine*, *Reprobis*, *Snake Weather*, *LA Magazine*, *Two Fours and One Eight*, *Persona* (2017), *The Temporary Inhabitant*, *The Hand*, *Bus no. 720* (2016). Alan Quireyns lives and works in Antwerp. PANTXO RAMAS, see FRANCESCO SALVINI

LA RED CONCEPTUALISMOS DEL SUR (Southern Conceptualisms Network) (REDCSUR) is a collective initiative bringing together some 50 researchers and artists from the various regions of Latin America, Canada and Europe, establishing itself as

a platform for collective thought and action in the contemporary relations between art and politics. It was founded in 2007 by a group of researchers concerned with intervening politically in the processes neutralizing the critical potential of 'conceptual practices' that had been developing in Latin America since the early sixties. The RedCSur has been involved in a long-term reflection on the uses and politics of archives, working on the constitution and organization of some of the most significant artist-held archives in South America. The platform archivosenuso.org is an open-ended tool to socialize its archival investigations. Among other research projects, the network led the exhibition and the publication of 'Losing Human Form'. A seismic image of the eighties in Latin America, produced in collaboration with the Reina Sofía Museum. Recent publications include *Desinventario: Esquirlas de Tucumán Arde en el archivo de Graciela Carnevale* (2015) and *Arte y disenso: Memorias del Taller 4 Rojo* (2015).

RASHA SALTİ (born 1969) is a curator of art and film, writer and researcher. Her interests focus on the production of art historical knowledge about the modern and contemporary in the global south with a particular attention to a transnational perspective. She co-curated with Jytte Jensen, 'Mapping Subjectivity: Experimentation in Arab Cinema from the 1960s until Now' for the MoMA, 2010–2012. She and Kristine Khouri co-curated 'Past Disquiet: Narratives and Ghosts of the International Art Exhibition for Palestine, 1978', Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2015, and Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 2016. Salti lives and works between Beirut and Berlin.

FRANCESCO SALVINI, or PANTXO RAMAS, is an activist and researcher, based at the Kent Law School, Canterbury; pantxo also works in Barcelona, where collaborates with Barcelona en Comú, and Trieste with Conferenza Permanente per la Salute Mentale. pantxo's research and activism deal with the issue of precarity and public policies in the fields of health,



care and urban rights, in contemporary contexts. In Canterbury, Francesco is research associate for the Wellcome Trust funded research project 'Law, knowledges and the making of "modern healthcare": regulating traditional and alternative medicines in contemporary contexts'.

RAÚL SÁNCHEZ CEDILLO is a philosopher, activist and translator who lives in Madrid. Since 1991 he has been collaborating with the 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 nineties, and later in the okupación and Centros Sociales Okupados movement. He is a member of the first cyberactivism network in Spain, [www.sindominio.net](http://www.sindominio.net). Since 2000 he has been promoting new autonomous educational and political projects: Universidad Nómada and the Fundación de los Comunes.

SOMATECA is a collective of research, activism, and artistic practices that came into being in 2014 and was founded by some of the participants of Advanced Studies in Critical Practices 'Somateca: Biopolitical Production, Feminisms and Queer and Trans Practices', directed by Paul B. Preciado at the Museo Reina Sofía. Bárbara G.F. Muriel, Sara Buraya, Loreto Ares and Diana Vázquez are the authors of the text published in this book, and are some of the members of somateca.

IGOR ŠPANJOL (born 1972) studied sociology of culture and art history at The Faculty of Arts, University in Ljubljana. He works as a curator at the Moderna galerija, Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana with the focus on curating of contemporary art exhibitions. Recent exhibitions include: 'Vadim Fishkin, No Magic', Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana, 2015; 'Tadej Pogačar & the P.A.R.A.S.I.T.E. Museum of Contemporary Art: Hills and Walleys and Mineral Resources', Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, 2014; 'Marko Pogačnik: The Art of Life-The life of Art', Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, 2014.

Španjol lives and works in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

NORA STERNFELD (born 1976) is an educator and curator. She is currently Professor of Curating and Mediating Art at the Aalto University in Helsinki and designated documenta Professor at the Kunsthochschule Kassel. Furthermore she is co-director of /ecm-Master Program in exhibition theory and practice at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, part of trafo.K, Office for Art, Education and Critical Knowledge Production based in Vienna (w/ Ines Garnitschnig, Renate Höllwart, Elke Smodics) and of freethought, a platform for research, education, and production based in London (w/Irit Rogoff, Stefano Harney, Adrian Heathfield, Mao Mollona, Louis Moreno). In this context she was one of the artistic directors of the Bergen Assembly 2016.

SUBTRAMAS (Subplots) is a collective based in Spain, whose members are Diego del Pozo Barriuso (artist, cultural producer, and assistant lecturer at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Salamanca), Montse Romani (independent researcher and cultural producer, teacher at the Escola Massana, Arts and Design school in Barcelona), and Virginia Villaplana (artist, cultural researcher, lecturer in the area of Audiovisual Discourse Analysis at the Faculty of Communication & Documentation of the University of Murcia). Since 2009, the collective Subtramas has been engaged in artistic research and production at the convergence of audio-visual production and critical pedagogies, collaborative practices, and social activism. Subtramas use visual narratives to explore the extent to which image-based work can help challenge the hierarchies of judgment and productivity that are intrinsic to inherited learning, how far it allows it to review and transform individual experiences and connect them to collective experience, and whether it fosters a kind of knowledge linked to collaboration that can bring about more democratic forms of communal coexistence. Subtramas has participated at the exhibition

'Really Useful Knowledge' curated by What, How and for Whom in the Reina Sofia Museum of Madrid in 2014-2015.

TIZIANA TERRANOVA (born 1967) is a theorist and activist, based at Università degli studi Napoli L'Orientale, Naples. Previously she taught at the University of East London and the University of Essex, UK. Her work focuses on the effects of information technology on society through concepts including digital labour and the commons. Terranova has edited special issues of *Anglistica AION* (2016) and *Theory, Culture & Society* (2015) and has published *Network Culture: Politics for the Information Age* (2004). She has contributed to the Italian free university network Euronomad. Terranova lives and works in Naples.

VALIZ is an independent international publisher on contemporary art, design, theory, critique, typography and urban affairs, based in Amsterdam. Our books offer critical reflection, interdisciplinary inspiration, and establish a connection between cultural disciplines and socio-economic, political questions. Our programme consists of two components:

- Theory and texts on art and visual culture;
- Books that are conceived and elaborated in close collaboration with artists, designers and art institutes.

Apart from publishing Valiz organizes cultural projects in which certain topics in contemporary art, politics and culture are investigated. [www.valiz.nl](http://www.valiz.nl)

PIET VAN HECKE (born 1983) studied Art Sciences at the University of Ghent until 2006 and the academic teachers training (University of Antwerp) until 2007. Afterwards he has worked as teacher of history and art history. At the same time he started up some theatre and visual arts projects for young people and directed a couple of smaller plays. He also worked as a museum guide and has organized workshops. In 2013 he coordinated the project Meet Me @ M HKA, the first programme for individuals with

dementia and their caregivers in Belgium. In 2014 he started working in the mediation team at M HKA.

ONUR YILDIZ (born in 1984) has obtained a PhD degree in Political Theory from the University of Essex. He is interested in radical theory, democratic politics, populism and political uses of art. He is currently the Senior Public Programmer of SALT in Istanbul.





## INDEX OF NAMES

## A

Abramović, Jadran  
 Abramović, Marina  
 Adamczak, Bini  
 Adamović, Jadran  
 Aikens, Nick  
 Akomfrah, John  
 Akšamija, Azra  
 Alakom, Rohat  
 Allende, Salvador  
 Alnablsi, Fahyma  
 Altés Arlandis, Alberto  
 Alvarado, Ricardo-Osvaldo  
 Alzaga, Valery  
 Amado, Miguel  
 Amir, Amin  
 Araia, Biniam  
 Arendt, Hannah  
 Arian, Burak  
 Arsanios, Marwa  
 Atoui, Tarek  
 Azoulay, Ariella  
 Azzawi, Dia Al

## B

Babarczy, Eszter  
 Badalov, Babi  
 Badovinac, Zdenka  
 Bajević, Maja  
 Balcells, Fernando  
 Balka, Mirosław  
 Balmazović, Djordje  
 Bardalet, Núria Solé  
 Basaglia, Franco  
 Bauer, Petra  
 Beighton, James  
 Benjamin, Walter  
 Berhe, Senay  
 Bernat, Roger  
 Beuys, Joseph  
 Bitter, Sabine  
 Blažević, Dunja  
 Borja-Villel, Manuel  
 Brolund de Carvalho, Sara  
 Broodthaers, Marcel  
 Bruguera, Tania  
 Brus, Gunter  
 Bruss, Andreja  
 Buden, Boris  
 Burke, Edmund  
 Butler, Judith  
 Byrne, John

## C

Calle, Sophie  
 Campo, Eva Maria  
 Canclini, Néstor García  
 Carlsson, Hans  
 Carmena, Manuela  
 Carrillo, Jesús  
 Castillo, Juan  
 Ceritoğlu, Onur  
 César, Filipa  
 Cevallos Narváez, Alejandro  
 Chagall, Marc  
 Cixous, Hélène  
 Coderch, Lúa  
 Colau, Ada  
 Condorelli, Céline  
 Costa, Pedro  
 Ćurić, Ibrahim

## D

Deacon, Richard  
 Delapeña, Juanjo  
 Delat, Chto  
 Deleuze, Gilles  
 Dergalin, Igor  
 Derrida, Jacques  
 Dische-Becker, Emily  
 Dockray, Sean  
 Dolenc, Božidar  
 Dory, Fernando Garcia  
 Doujak, Inés  
 Dresser, Christopher  
 Duchamp, Marcel  
 Duijnhoven, Perry van

## E

Ehlin, Fredrik  
 Ekman, Jan  
 Elliot, David  
 Elovsson, Thomas  
 Eltit, Diamela  
 Ersoy, Özge

## F

Fahlcrantz, Axel  
 Fahlén, Emily  
 Fanon, Frantz  
 Fernández, Mariló  
 Feuerbach, Ludwig  
 Fiorio, Laura  
 Fisher, Mark  
 Fiskum, Marius  
 Fletcher, Annie  
 Flink, Ulrika  
 Fontdevila, Oriol  
 Forsell, Håkan  
 Foucault, Michel  
 Foucault, Michel

Franceschini, Amy  
 Francheschini, Silvia  
 Fraser, Andrea

## G

Garcia, Isabel  
 Gebrehawariat, Baraket  
 Geschwind, Peter  
 Gillick, Liam  
 Girmay-Abraha, Yodit  
 Goldman, Irwin  
 Gonzalez-Foerster, Dominique  
 Gower, Terence  
 Graham, Janna  
 Graham, Mary  
 Gramsci, Antonio  
 Groys, Boris  
 Guattari, Félix  
 Güell, Núria  
 Guevara, Che (Ernesto)

## H

Haacke, Hans  
 Habicht, Dejan  
 Hadžiomerspahić, Enver  
 Hamdan, Lawrence Abu  
 Haraway, Donna  
 Harney, Stefano  
 Harrison, John  
 Harten, Jürgen  
 Hashemi, Omid  
 Hayden, Dolores  
 Hazneci, Mustafa  
 Heeswijk, Jeanne van  
 Henschen, Helga  
 Hernández, Yaiza  
 Hesse, Emily  
 Hill, John  
 Hobbes, Thomas  
 Holmqvist, Emma  
 Holzfeind, Heidrun  
 Hudson, Alistair  
 Hume, Judy  
 Husni-Bey, Adelita  
 Huuva, Rose-Marie  
 Huynes, Jason

## I

Ingold, Tim  
 Ivanov, Mila

## J

James, Cyril Lionel Robert  
 Jeremić, Vladan  
 Jo-Reynolds, Lauri

## K

Kapoor, Anish  
 Kelsen, Hans  
 Khalil, Ausama al  
 Khalili, Bouchra  
 Khatabbi, Abdelkrim El  
 Khatib, Hasan  
 Khouri, Kristine  
 Kings, Lisa  
 Kirk, Adam  
 Kirke, Rosena  
 Kolding, Jakob  
 Koolhaas, Rem  
 Korsika, Anej  
 Kortun, Vasif  
 Kralj, Gašper  
 Krauss, Bernd  
 Kretschek, Patrik  
 Kulunčić, Andreja

## L

Landkammer, Nora  
 Landoff, Brita  
 Lang, Peter  
 Larsson, Carl  
 Lazar, Claude  
 Lazzarato, Maurizio  
 Lenin, Vladimir  
 Lepecki, André  
 Lim, Minouk  
 Lima, Isabel  
 Lind, Maria  
 Locke, John  
 Lorde, Audre  
 Lorey, Isabel  
 Loughlin, Martin  
 Lovdahl, Monica  
 Lozac'h, Agnes  
 Lundgren, Katarina  
 Luxemburg, Rosa  
 Lynch, David

## M

Mangasha, Meron  
 Marazzi, Christian  
 Margulis, Lynn  
 Mari, Bartomeu  
 Mariño, Marta  
 Marx, Karl  
 Mastnak, Tomaž  
 Matisse, Henri  
 Matta, Roberto  
 Mattson, Helena  
 McGowan, Jérémie  
 McKee, Francis  
 Medina, Gemma  
 Meh, Ela  
 Melehi, Mohamed  
 Melo, Alexandre



Metsu, Gabriel  
 Mežnarić, Silva  
 Michałak, Lukasz  
 Mingus, Mia  
 Miró, Joan  
 Misiano, Viktor  
 Mlekuž, Lado  
 Molina, Irene  
 Moore, Jenny  
 Mörsch, Carmen  
 Moten, Fred  
 Mujić, Said  
 Muriel, Sara G.F.

## N

Nagasawa, Misako  
 Negri, Antonio  
 Nietzsche, Friedrich  
 Nilsson, Per  
 Noori, Behzad Khosravi  
 Norberg, Åsa  
 Numankadić, Edin  
 Nygren, Veronica

## O

Ögüt, Ahmet  
 Omar, Anisa  
 Orta, Levi  
 Ortiz, Daniela  
 Osten, Marion von  
 Ostrom, Elinor

## P

Pavlovec, Matija  
 Paynter, November  
 Perkins, Elliot  
 Petersen, family  
 Pezić, Osman  
 Piškur, Bojana  
 Pistoletto, Michelangelo  
 Pogačar Podgornik, Tjaša  
 Potrć, Marjetica  
 Preciado, Beatriz  
 Preciado, Paul  
 Puig de la Bellacasa, Maria

## R

Raedle, Rena  
 Rage, Bilan  
 Rallis, Tzortsis  
 Ramas, Pantxo  
 Ramirez, Marcela  
 Rancière, Jacques  
 Rassel, Laurence  
 Reichart, Achim  
 Renn, Maja  
 Renqvist, Torsten

Revel, Judith  
 Roma, Valentin  
 Rönicke, Pia  
 Ronström, Owe  
 Rosales, René Léon  
 Rosdahl, Viktor  
 Rosenfeld, Lotty  
 Rosshagen, Erik  
 Rousseau, Jean-Jacques  
 Ruskin, John  
 Rydland, Kjetil

## S

Salti, Rasha  
 Salvani, Francesco  
 Sánchez Cedillo, Raúl  
 Sandell, Thomas  
 Sarycheva, Maria  
 Satoh, Toshio  
 Saviotti, Alessandra  
 Schalk, Meike  
 Schmidt-Colinet, Lisa  
 Schmitt, Carl  
 Schmoeger, Alexander  
 Schutte, Thomas  
 Sellarès, Maria  
 Sensson, Nina  
 Serrano, Andres  
 Shahbazi, Solmaz  
 Shahbazi, Solmaz  
 Sieyès, Emmanuel Joseph (Abbé)  
 Signorelli, Assunta  
 Siza, Alvaro  
 Sjöberg, Josabeth  
 Sjödin, Erik  
 Solé, Núria  
 Soumi, Nasser  
 Španjol, Igor  
 Spinoza, Baruch  
 Stålhane, Filippa  
 Starling, Simon  
 Stenberg, Erik  
 Stengers, Isabella  
 Sternfeld, Nora  
 Stiegler, Beatriz  
 Sundé, Jennie  
 Sureda, Berta  
 Šušteršič, Apolonija  
 Svensson, Nina

## T

Tamari, Vladimir  
 Tàpies, Antoni  
 Tarasova, Nastia  
 Taussig, Michael  
 Tensta, Adam  
 Terranova, Tiziana  
 Thijs, Steven ten  
 Trần, Ngọc Loan  
 Tronti, Mario

## V

Valdés, Linda  
 Varoufakis, Yanis  
 Vercellone, Carlo  
 Vergès, Françoise  
 Verne, Jules  
 Vidal, Pep  
 Vidén, Sonja  
 Vila, Fefa  
 Vilapuig, Joan  
 Viola, Bill  
 Vox, Peter

## W

Weber, Helmut  
 Weibel, Peter  
 Wiberg, Sofia  
 Wiezell, Hedwig

## Y

Yúdice, George

## Z

Zabel, Igor  
 Zacharopoulos, Denys  
 Zachia, Giorgiana  
 Zadnikar, Darij  
 Zander, Volker  
 Železnik, Adela  
 Zeyfang, Florian  
 Zolghadr, Tirdad  
 Zuboff, Shoshana  
 Zurita, Raúl




---

**INDEX OF WORKS, EXHIBITIONS,  
PROJECTS, ORGANIZATIONS**


---

15M, ES

**A**

Abbemuseum, Van, Eindhoven NL  
 Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna AT  
*Actos improprios*  
 ADA (Colectivo Acciones  
 de Arte), Madrid ES  
 AICA (International Association  
 of Art Critics)  
 AIR Antwerpen, BE  
 Another Roadmap School  
 for Arts Education  
 'Apparent Extent', Cologne DE  
 Arab University Beirut, LB  
 Architecture and Design  
 Faculty, Ljubljana SI  
 'Art Against/Contre Apartheid'  
 Arte Útil  
 Arteast 2000+ collec-  
 tion, Ljubljana SI  
 Artes Mundi, Cardiff UK  
 Artist's Institute, New York US  
 Association of Arte Útil  
 (AAÚ), Eindhoven NL

**B**

'Beast and the Sovereign, The'  
 Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation, IT  
 Bolwerk, Antwerp BE  
 Bookcamping, ES  
 Botín Foundation, Madrid ES

**C**

CADA (Colectivo de Acciones  
 de Arte), Santiago CL  
*Caja de Fosforos*  
 Candel'Hart, Barcelona ES  
 Casa invisible, La, ES  
 Casco, Office for Art, Design  
 and Theory, Utrecht NL  
 Centre for Cultural Studies,  
 Goldsmiths College, London UK  
 CEPAL (UN Economic Commission for  
 Latin America), Santiago CL  
 Charismatic Megafauna  
*Charlie Hebdo*  
 Chto Delat School of Engaged  
 Art, St. Petersburg RU  
 CIMAM (International Committee  
 for Museums and Collections  
 of Modern Art), AU

Cine Sin Autor, ES  
*Cleaning the Mirror*  
*Coffee House, The*  
*Common Ground*  
 Coniston Institute, UK  
 Consortium Instabile, Rome IT  
*Continuará*  
 Contrabandos, ES  
*Convention on the Use of Space*  
 Cristianrodenas  
 Cristina Enea Foundation,  
 Donostia/San Sebastián ES  
*Cultural Heritage: A Treasure That Is*  
 CULTURESHUTDOWN platform, BA

**D**

*Daemons & Shell Scripts*  
 Dallas Holocaust Museum, US  
 De Gaulle Airport, Charles, Paris FR  
 Declinación Magnética, ES  
*Degenerate Poltical Art.*  
*Ethnical Protocol*  
 Delfina Foundation, London UK  
*Digestion Dayton*  
 Diputació de Barcelona, ES  
 Dorman Museum, Middlesbrough UK

**E**

E5 Bakehouse, London UK  
 El Patio Maravillas, ES  
 Escola d'Art Superior de  
 Disseny Deia, Barcelona ES  
 Escola de Sant Marti, Barcelona ES  
 ¡Esta es una plaza!, ES  
 EU (European Union), Brussels BE  
 'Every Man is a Curator'  
 Experimentem amb l'Art, Barcelona ES

**F**

Florrie, The, Liverpool UK  
 Fondazione Michelangelo  
 Pistoletto, Biella IT  
 'For the Museum of Contemporary  
 Art Sarajevo 2000'  
 Fotogràfica, La, Madrid ES  
*Fountain*  
*Four Questions for a*  
*Usefulness Still to Come*  
 Free Home University, Lecce IT  
 Fundación de los Comunes, ES  
*Future Heritage Collection*

**G**

*Garden Conversation*  
 Government Art Collection, London UK  
 Grand Domestic Revolution pro-  
 ject, Utrecht NL

Graph Commons  
 Grizedale Arts, Coniston UK

**H**

Hazte Oír, ES  
 Henie Onstad Kunstsenter,  
 Høvikodden/Oslo NO  
 'Heritage of 1989: Case Study: The  
 Second Yugoslav Documents'  
 Hermitage Moorings, London UK  
 HKW (Haus der Kulturen  
 der Welt), Berlin DE  
 Home Office, London UK  
 Honest Shop, Coniston UK  
*Hosting Moderna galerija*  
 Hotel Charleroi, BE  
*How could we energize our imagina-  
 tion to envision a form of non-cap-  
 italist managed happiness?*  
 'How To Do Things With Documents'

**I**

ICOM (international Council of  
 Museums)  
*If All Relations Were to*  
*Reach Equilibrium, Then This*  
*Building Would Dissolve*  
 IMF (International Monetary  
 Fund), Washington D.C. US  
 Immigrant Movement  
 International, New York US  
*Instigando Salud*  
 'International Exhibition  
 1885', London UK  
 'International Art Exhibition  
 for Palestine', Beirut LB  
 Investing in People and  
 Culture, Middlesbrough UK  
 Irwin group, Ljubljana SI  
 'Islam, Republic, Neoliberalism'  
 'Istanbul: Passion, Joy, Fury'  
 Ivan de Beta local, La, PR

**J**

Järva Project, Stockholm SE  
 JAVA Gallery, Sarajevo BA  
 JMK (Department of Media Studies),  
 Stockholm University, SE  
*Jubilee*

**K**

Konstfack University, Stockholm SE  
 KTH arkitektur (School of  
 Architecture), Stockholm SE  
 Kurdish Association, Stockholm SE

**L**

L'internationale museum confederation  
 L'Orientale, Naples IT  
 Labatory of Visual Arts  
 Officials, Barcelona ES  
 Las Lindes, ES  
 Levellers, UK  
*Light Therapy*  
 Linthorpe Art Pottery,  
 Middlesbrough UK  
 Liverpool School of Art  
 and Design, UK  
*Living with Genocide*  
 LJMU (Liverpool John Moores  
 University), UK  
 'Localism'  
 Lodgers, Antwerp BE  
 'Los archivos de la ciudad vacía'  
 'Low Budget Utopias'  
 Luigi Pecci Centre, Prato IT

**M**

M HKA (Museum van Hedendaagse  
 Kunst Antwerpen), BE  
 MACBA (Museu d'Art Contemporani  
 de Barcelona), ES  
 Marea Blanca, ES  
 Marea Verde, ES  
 MAXXI (Museo nazionale delle  
 arti del XXI secolo), Rome IT  
*Me acuerdo*  
 MEDSAP (Madrid Table in Defence  
 of Public Healthcare), ES  
 Mental Health Department  
 of Trieste, IT  
 MER. Paper Kunsthalle, Ghent BE  
 MESS (International Theater  
 Festival), Sarajevo BA  
 Middelheim Museum, Antwerp BE  
 Middlesbrough Institute of  
 Modern Art / MIMA, UK  
 Ministry of Culture, Ljubljana SI  
 MIRSA (Resistance Museum Salvador  
 Allende), Santiago CL, Paris FR  
 MIT (Massachusetts Institute of  
 Technology), Cambridge US  
 MOCA (Museum of Contemporary  
 Art), Toronto CA  
 Moderna galerija, Ljubljana SI  
 Moderna Museet, Stockholm SE  
 Moholy-Nagy University of Art  
 and Design, Budapest HU  
 Morning Boat, The, Jersey UK  
 MSUM+, Ljubljana SI  
 Mujeres Públicas, Rio de Janeiro AR  
 Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos  
 Humanos de Chile, Santiago CL  
 Museo Nacional de Bellas  
 Artes, Buenos Aires AR  
 Museo Reina Sofia (MNCARS), Madrid ES



## 'Museum of Arte Útil'

Museum of Contemporary Art  
(MOMA), Toronto CA  
Museum of Contemporary Art  
Metelkova (MSUM), Ljubljana SI  
Museum of Contemporary  
Art, Sarajevo BA  
Museum of Medieval Stockholm, SE  
Museum of the City of Stockholm, SE  
*Museum Solidarity Lobby*

## N

Napster  
National Gallery, Sarajevo BA  
National Museum Sarajevo, BA  
*Negotiating Institutions*  
*Networks of Dispossession*  
*New Abduction of Europe, The*  
New Linthorpe, Middlesbrough UK  
News Agency, The, Stockholm SE  
Newcastle University, UK  
Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum, Tromsø NO  
'Not Dressed for Conquering'  
'Now You're Far Away'

## O

Observatio Metropolitan  
de Barcelona, ES  
Occupy Wall Street, US  
OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-  
operation and Development), Paris FR  
Office of Useful Art, Istanbul TR  
Officina 99, Naples IT  
Ohlsson & Skarne, Stockholm SE  
Open Source Prototypes, Barcelona ES

## P

*Pages*, Rotterdam NL  
Palacio de Cristal, Madrid ES  
Palestinian Museum, Birzeit PS  
*Palimpsest 1989*  
'Past Disquiet: Narratives and  
Ghosts from the International  
Art Exhibition for Palestine'  
People's Army Yugoslav  
*Playgrounds*  
PLO (Palestine Liberation  
Organisation), Beirut LB  
*Political Reenactment, A*  
*Politics of Affinities*  
*Porto 1975*  
'Present and Past, The'  
Psychiatric Hospital of  
Blida-Joinville, DZ

## Q

Quad, Liverpool UK  
Queens Museum, New York US  
*Questions on Institutions*

## R

Radical Education Project,  
Ann Arbor US  
'Really Useful Knowledge'  
RedCSur (Red de  
Conceptualismos del Sur)  
Revolution Poetry, Stockholm SE  
RiddoDuottarMuseat, Karasjok NO  
RISE, US  
Rog centre, Ljubljana SI  
Ross Tensta School, Stockholm SE

## S

SAAL (Serviço de Apoio  
Ambulatório Local), PT  
SALT, Istanbul TR  
'Sámi Dáiddamusea'  
Sarajevo 2000 project, Venice IT  
School of Image and Evidence, Kiev UA  
School of Swedish for Migrants,  
Stockholm SE  
*Silent University, The*  
Senda de Cuidados, ES  
Sharjah Biennial, AE  
Škart collective, Belgrade RS  
Society of Independent  
Artists, New York US  
Somali Parents and Home Language  
Association, Stockholm SE  
Southern Conceptualisms, ES  
Spånga Local Heritage  
Association, Stockholm SE  
SPEAP Sciences Po Experimentation  
in Arts and Politics, Paris FR  
STEALTH. unlimited, Rotterdam NL  
*Stockholm's Tips and Tops*  
Stockholm University, SE  
Street Gäris, Stockholm SE  
Subtramas, Madrid ES

## T

Tabakalera, San Sebastián ES  
Tate Liverpool, UK  
Tensta Hjulsta Women's  
Centre, Stockholm SE  
Tensta Museum (kon-  
sthall), Stockholm SE  
*Tensta Museum: Reports*  
*from New Sweden*  
Territorio Doméstico, ES  
*There is No*  
*This is not a Fence*  
Time Explorers, Barcelona ES  
Titeres desde abojo, ES

## U

*Ultra Eczema*  
Ultra-red, UK  
Umano Centre of Contemporary  
Art, Milan IT  
UNESCO (United Nations Educational,  
Scientific and Cultural  
Organization), Paris FR  
Union of Palestinian  
Artists, Beirut LB  
University College of Gotland, SE  
University Gallery, Sarajevo BA  
University of Wisconsin, Madison US  
*Untitled (2000)*  
*Untitled (2001)*  
*Untitled (Copenhagen)*  
*Untitled (Schlachthof/Berlin)*  
'Uses of Art Lab, The'  
Uses of Art: The Legacy of  
1848 and 1989, The  
*Usual Things, The*  
Utopiana Residency, Geneva CH

## V

Venice Biennale, IT  
VSSD group, Ljubljana SI

## W

We Are Here, NL  
WHW (What, How and for Whom)  
collective, Zagreb HR  
*Why is Learning together useful?*  
'World Cotton Centennial 1884-  
1885', New Orleans US  
Wyspa Institute of Art, Gdansk PL

## Y

Yo Si Sanidad Universal, ES






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As such, it draws on the accumulated knowledge and speculations of the many artists, curators, writers and institutions involved. Some original exhibition and conference papers reappear in this book, or have been reworked for this occasion. The editors would like to give a warm thank you to the contributors of *The Constituent Museum* and the projects listed below, and all the people, too many to list by name, who made the publication possible. We are incredibly grateful, inspired and energized by your ideas and dedication.

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**'MUSEUM OF ARTE ÚTIL'**

Exhibition and public programme  
Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven,  
the Netherlands 7 December  
2013–30 March 2014

MUSEUM OF ARTE ÚTIL TEAM: Nick Aikens, Tania Bruguera, construct-Lab (with Alex Roemer, Bureau d'Études, Collective Works and others), Annette Eliëns, Charles Esche, Annie Fletcher, Gemma Medina and Alessandra Saviotti

INITIATORS: Azra Akšamija, Lara Almarcegui, Artun Alaska Arasli, Joseph Beuys, Augusto Boal, Tania Bruguera, Santiago Cirugeda, Liz

Christy, Paulina Cornejo, Eduardo Costa, Critical Art Ensemble, Sean Dockray, Electronic Disturbance, Theatre 2.0., Jalila Essaïdi, Claudia Fernández, Daniel Godínez Nivón, Rebecca Gomperts, Grizedale Arts, Núria Güell, Jeanne van Heeswijk, Institute for Human Activities, IRWIN, Djambawa Marawili, Memetro, Mike Merrington, Missdata, NSW Builders Labourers Federation and Victoria Street Resident Action Group, Ahmet Ögüt, Jeannette Petrik, Pino Poggi, Bik van der Pol, Provo, Publink, Luca Pucci, Laurie Jo Reynolds, Rolling Jubilee, John Ruskin, Ruben Santiago, Bonnie O. Sherk, Apolonija Šušteršič, Vivieternamente, WochenKlausur, Wooloo Artists from the Yirrkala región Yomango, Stephen Wright, Yao Jui-Chung+ Lost Society Document

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**'REALLY USEFUL KNOWLEDGE'**

Exhibition and public programme  
Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain  
29 October 2014–9 February 2015

CURATORS: What, How & For Whom / WHW

ARTISTS: Brook Andrew, Ardmore Ceramic Art, Arte Partisano, Ariella Azoulay, Hicham Benohoud, Chto Delat?, Phil Collins, Carole Condé & Karl Beveridge, Emory Douglas, Primitivo Evanán Poma & Asociación de Artistas Populares de Sarhua, Núria Güell & Levi Orta, Dmitry Gutov & David Riff, Adelita Husni-Bey, Iconoclasistas, Abbas Kiarostami, Runo Lagomarsino, Darcy Lange, Victoria Lomasko, Marcell Mars, Azzedine Meddour, Mujeres Públicas, Daniela Ortiz, Trevor Paglen & Jacob Appelbaum, Trevor Paglen, D. A. Pennebaker, Hannah Ryggen, Catarina Simão, Mladen Stilić, Straub-Huillet, Subtramas, Traficantes de Sueños, Lidwien van de Ven, Cecilia Vicuña, Carla Zaccagnini, Željimir Žilnik

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**'CONFESSIONS OF THE IMPERFECT, 1848–1989–TODAY'**

Exhibition and public programme  
Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven,  
the Netherlands 22 November  
2014–22 February 2015

CURATORS: Alistair Hudson,  
Steven ten Thije

ARTISTS: Constant, Jeremy Deller, Fernando Garcia-Dory, Liam Gillick, Renzo Martens, Antoni Miralda, Li Mu, Wendelien van Oldenborgh, Alexandra Pirici & Manuel Pelmuş, John Ruskin, Static and Akram Zaatari

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**'GLOSSARY OF COMMON KNOWLEDGE: CONSTITUENCIES'**

Conference Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, United Kingdom  
2–4 March 2016

CURATORS: Zdenka Badovinac,  
John Byrne, Bojana Piškur

ORGANIZED BY: Moderna galerija,  
Ljubljana and Liverpool  
John Moores University

PARTICIPATING NARRATORS: Nick Aikens, Marwa Arsianos, Zdenka Badovinac, John Byrne, Lia Colombino, Khwezi Gule, Anders Kreuger, Ahmet Ögüt, Meriç Öner, November Paynter, Alexei Penzin, Bojana Piškur, Raúl Sánchez Cedillo, Aida Sánchez de Serdio, pantxo ramas, Adela Železnik

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**'THE ARTE ÚTIL SUMMIT 2016'**

Summit / debate Middlesbrough  
Institute of Modern Art,  
Middlesbrough, United Kingdom  
22–25 July 2016

PARTICIPANTS: Biniam Araia, Kathrin Böhm, Tania Bruguera, John Byrne, Sebastian Cichocki, Charles Esche, Annie Fletcher, Granby Four Streets Community Land Trust, Núria Güell, Gemma Medina, New Linthorpe, Alessandra Saviotti, Rosalie Schweiker, Michael Simon, Kuba Szreder, Stephen Wright

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**'WORKING WITH CONSTITUENTS'**

Conference Middlesbrough  
Institute of Modern Art,  
Middlesbrough, United Kingdom  
8–10 September 2016

PARTICIPANTS: Biniam Araia, Burak Arıkan (Graph Commons), John Byrne, Jesús Carrillo, Céline Condorelli, Isabel Garcia (Archivos en Uso), Anthony Gardner, Annie Fletcher, Kristine Khouri, Elinor Morgan, Alina Müller (The Silent University), Daniela Ortiz, pantxo ramas, Nikos Papastergiadis, Igor Španjol

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**'THE USES OF ART: FINAL EXHIBITION'**

Exhibition and public programme  
SALT Galata, Istanbul, Turkey  
2 April–11 June 2017

ARTISTS: Abbas Akhavan, Refik Anadol, Amy Franceschini-Futurefarmers, Laure Prouvost

CONCEIVED BY: November Paynter

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**ASOCIACIÓN DE ARTE ÚTIL**

The Asociación de Arte Útil is part of an ongoing collaboration between Tania Bruguera, Grizedale Arts, Van Abbemuseum, Liverpool John Moores University and the Internationale confederation of European museums, as part of the five-year project 'The Uses of Art: The Legacy of 1848 and 1989'. The Asociación de Arte Útil is co-directed by Tania Bruguera and Alistair Hudson (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art) in partnership with the Van Abbemuseum. [www.arte-util.org](http://www.arte-util.org)

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## L'internationale

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Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid, [www.museoreinasofia.es](http://www.museoreinasofia.es)  
Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Barcelona, [ww.macba.cat](http://ww.macba.cat)  
Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen, [www.muhka.be](http://www.muhka.be)  
SALT, Istanbul and Ankara, [www.saltonline.org](http://www.saltonline.org)  
Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, [www.vanabbemuseum.nl](http://www.vanabbemuseum.nl)

## 'internationale

MCHMSUM M HKA SALT

L'Internationale is a confederation of six major European modern and contemporary art institutions and partners: Moderna galerija (MG, Ljubljana, SI); Museo Reina Sofia (MNCARS, Madrid, ES); Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA, Barcelona, ES); Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen (M HKA, Antwerp, BE); SALT (Istanbul and Ankara, TR) and Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum (VAM, Eindhoven, NL). L'Internationale is working together with organizations from the academic and artistic fields such as Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU, Liverpool, UK), Middlesbrough Institute Of Modern Art-Teesside University (MIMA, Middlesbrough, UK), Stiftung Hildesheim Universität (HU, Hildesheim, DE) and University College Ghent School of Arts (KASK & Royal Conservatory, Ghent, BE) and with Valiz as a publishing partner. L'Internationale proposes a space for art within a non-hierarchical and decentralized internationalism, based on the values of difference and horizontal exchange among a constellation of cultural agents, locally rooted and globally connected. L'Internationale aims to build a sustainable constellation of European museums, these civic institutes where art is used for public benefit, for inspiration, reflection and dialogue. L'internationale generates a content-driven, sustainable form of collaboration, as well as an intercultural dialogue on society and visual art. It is a place where both differences and commonalities can appear and be debated.

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Liverpool John Moores University



Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art

## 'internationale

MCHMSUM M HKA SALT

L'Internationale,  
[www.internationaleonline.org](http://www.internationaleonline.org)



KASK School of Arts  
University College Ghent



Culture  
European Union, Culture Programme



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