

# ALTERNATIVE ARTECONOMIES A PRIMER

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# ALTERNATIVE ARTECONOMIES

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# ALTERNATIVE ARTECONOMIES

Over the last two decades, the art market has grown from a relatively narrow and restricted market to a recognized site of asset growth. According to some figures, today's art market is 20 times larger than it was in 1990. Instead of a mercantile-like system, where a small number of producers create a specialized product for an equally small number of consumers, the art market has become not only place for diversifying financial assets, but, for cities, a mechanism for unchecked urban growth.

Simultaneously, the idea of art has also undergone a conceptual expansion. The autonomous category of art is a relatively new historical phenomenon, largely a product of cultural distinctions made in 18th Century Europe. In the 20th century, following Marcel Duchamp's maxim that anything can be a work of art, artists pushed the idea of art's autonomy to the limit. Since then, many artists have sought hybrid practices outside the traditional forms of painting, sculpture, and drawing for situating their work and, within this expanded field, some have also directed their efforts at finding alternate contexts for defining art in ways outside of academia or the art market.

This primer grew out of a two-part workshop *Alternative Alternatives: Art and the Economy* held at Trade School on March 12th and April 3rd, 2011. Trade School is an alternative school where teachers offer classes for barter, encouraging participants to consider a non-monetary exchange system for goods and services. The documents were later presented and discussed as part of *Artists in Residence for the US Government (Self-Declared)*, A Project by Maureen Connor and the Institute for Wishful Thinking <http://www.theiwt.com/> at Momenta Art Gallery on April 30th, 2011.

While the primer addresses global issues, much of the focus is on the US, and even more locally, on New York City, due to the location of the workshop and the makeup of the participant group. Some of the questions that emerged from the primer included: How do economic policies and structures affect artistic production? What is the relationship between artists and non-art communities? Between artists and cities? Between artists and activism? Can artists use their class position to reallocate resources from inside the art market to those outside of it? How do specific forms of behavior among cultural producers—hyper-visibility, egoism, and competitiveness—exacerbate the speculative nature of art? What kind of economic structures could transform this behavior? And, are different forms of behavior necessary to yield different economic possibilities?

The first set of articles collected in this primer address the capacity (or lack of capacity) of the current art world to address these questions. Perhaps the greatest anxiety that impedes artists' agency is simply that there is no longer any consensus about what great art is today. And, while most people still hold up the ideal of the uber-talented bohemian as the model of the artist, today artists are much more likely to be trained in the manner of any other professional. Caught in this disjuncture between the ideal and the actual, artists are plagued with overwhelming anxiety about their precarious role as cultural producers and lack the ability to define their own work outside of institutions such as museums, galleries, universities, and art schools. For many, pursuing individual celebrity comes to be viewed as an act of survival, the only modus operandi available in a celebrity driven world. While a hypercompetitive environment may allow some artists to find great success, many others are left behind. And for those who "make it", there can be a greater disillusionment when success means making a reliable product in the market or becoming a recognizable brand on the academic circuit. There are many programs and models that purport to give artists the secrets to success, but few if any that consider what success really means.

To imagine a different future means knowing the past. With a media cycle that celebrates only the last five minutes and social media platforms that distract us with the minutiae of daily life, long-term memory is perhaps the greatest victim of this great recession. Largely absent from formal art education is any record of artists' prior attempts to re-organize the system of art production and define their own work. The second part of this primer includes documents that illustrate what alternative has meant in the past in order that we might define what it could mean today.

Most artists live in cities. For governments, sociologists, urban planners, and financiers, artists are not defined by their choice of medium, but rather by their participation in a creative sector. As the world's urban population grows, artists and cultural institutions are viewed as key agents of real estate development, able to attract money and visibility to previously unattractive sectors of the city. The function of the museum (or even the alternative space), which was once to store, exhibit, or provide context for great works of art, has now been ceded in part to a different function: to increase property values and attract tourists. Where does that leave the artist? The section on The Creative Class addresses this conundrum.

Despite the seeming intractability of worldwide economic inequality, there is a growing awareness that more sustainable models of resource management are possible, both in the art world and in the economy at large. While the idea of sustainability remains hotly contested, a hopeful definition might be the capacity of a system to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations. Whether these principles can be applied to urban growth, energy, and food, much less art, remains to be seen. An enterprise or association truly owned and controlled by the people it serves—versus one

based on financial speculation—is difficult to imagine in any context, but if any group has the capacity to imagine a better future, shouldn't it include artists? The final thematic section includes texts that look to a brighter future, and relates to the links provided at the beginning of the document of projects and organizations that expressly define their values in terms of sustainability and mutual aid.

The last part of the primer includes extensive bibliographies for additional readings compiled by groups such as Continental Drift, PAD/D, and The Think Tank that has Yet to be Named.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the reader, not to mention the invaluable thoughts of the original authors. Thanks also everyone who attended the workshops and participated in the lively and sometimes tense dialogue. A special thanks to Louise, Rich, Carl, Saul and Caroline at Trade School (<http://tradeschool.ourgoods.org/>) who have done a great deal to provide a platform for conversations that address art, value, and creativity, and Maureen Connor, for inviting us to keep the conversation going at Momenta Art as part of the Institute for Wishful Thinking.

-Erin Sickler, May 2011

# ALTERNATIVE ARTECONOMIES

## LINKS

### **Talks:**

Erin Sickler: Alternative Alternatives: Art and the Economy

<http://prezi.com/n09k3sk7talt/alternative-alternatives-art-and-the-economy/>

Mary Mattingly: Alternative Economies

<http://prezi.com/e7b6fdlp0gwq/copy-of-alternative-economies/>

Rirkrit Tiravanija and Christine Hill: Art and Commerce: Alternative Economies

<http://www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/audios/128/456>

### **Microcurrencies/ Barter networks/ Resource Redistribution:**

Ourgoods: <http://ourgoods.org/>

Trade School: <http://tradeschool.ourgoods.org/>

e-flux Time/Bank: <http://www.e-flux.com/timebank/>

Hub Culture Ven: <http://www.hubculture.com/groups/47/news/96/>

Solidarity Economies Network: [www.solidarityeconomy.net](http://www.solidarityeconomy.net)

Diagram: [http://anticap.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/solidarity\\_economy\\_circle\\_fullcolor12.jpg](http://anticap.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/solidarity_economy_circle_fullcolor12.jpg)

PBS series: Fixing the Future: [www.pbs.org/now/fixing-the\\_future/index.html](http://www.pbs.org/now/fixing-the_future/index.html)

<http://video.pbs.org/video/1616543504>

Symbionics: <http://www.symbionomics.com/blog>

Metacurrency: <http://www.metacurrency.org/>

New Currency Frontiers: <http://newcurrencyfrontiers.com/>

Ithaca Hour: <http://www.ithacahours.com/>

German Local currencies: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=128546325>

Wiki of Local Currencies in the US:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_community\\_currencies\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_community_currencies_in_the_United_States)

International Reciprocal Trade Association: <http://www.irta.com/>

Hub Culture Ven: <http://www.hubculture.com/>

Video from Wall Street Journal on Hub Culture Ven: <http://online.wsj.com/video/the-coming-currency-revolution/25225F5A-B979-4609-A55D-1BAE9A1BA158.html>

Community Way: <http://www.openmoney.org/cw/index.html>

Barterquest: <http://www.barterquest.com/>

Prosper: <http://www.prosper.com/>  
Kickstarter: <http://www.kickstarter.com/>  
Lending Club: <http://www.lendingclub.com/home.action>  
Zip Car: <http://www.zipcar.com/>  
Snap Goods: <http://snapgoods.com/>  
Park at my House: <http://www.parkatmyhouse.com/us/>  
Planning Corps: <http://planningcorps.org/>  
Guelph Car Co-op: <http://ward2guelph.wordpress.com/2007/05/31/guelph-community-car-co-operative-inc/>  
One Block Off the Grid: <http://about.1bog.org/>  
Kid Clothing Swap: [www.thredup.com](http://www.thredup.com)  
Borrow or Rent from Neighbors: <http://neighborgoods.net>  
Online Library of your Things for share <http://www.thingloop.com>  
Rental Site (USA-Wide) <http://www.borrowpro.com>  
Share by Zipcode: <http://www.sharesomesugar.com>  
Gifting: <http://giftflow.org>  
Uneighbor <http://u.neighborrow.com/pages/about>  
Center for Study on the Gift Economy: <http://www.gift-economy.com/>  
Materials for the Arts: <http://www.mfta.org/>  
Tool Lending Libraries: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_tool-lending\\_libraries](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_tool-lending_libraries)  
AAAAARG: <http://aaaaarg.org>  
UBUweb: <http://ubu.com/>  
Community Economies Collective: <http://www.communityeconomies.org/Home>  
Popular Economics  
<http://populareconomics.org/ussen/civicrm/profile?gid=2&reset=1&force=1&search=0>  
Meal-based micro granting initiatives: <http://sundaysoup.org/soup-network>  
Fixer's Club: <http://fixerscollective.org/main/>  
Open Data: <http://www.opendatafoundation.org/>  
Open Government: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open\\_government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_government)

### **Models:**

L3C which is a low-profit, low-liability model—instead of grants, Foundations or individuals provide start-up money: <http://www.triplepundit.com/2009/01/the-l3c-a-more-creative-capitalism/>

Solidarity organizations based on Mutual Aid such as:

Ecovillages

Community Supported Agriculture

Kibbutz

Community Land Trusts

Community Farms and Gardens

The Commons

Coops

Camphill Movements



Credit Unions

Rotating Savings and Credit Organizations

Open Source Education: <http://diyubook.com/>

Mondragon Region, Spain: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mondragon\\_Corporation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mondragon_Corporation)

### **Think Tanks/ Artist Placement Groups/Hybrid Creative Practices:**

Pamela Lee, Think Tank Aesthetics: Mid-Century Modernism, the Social Sciences, and the Rise of "Visual Culture" [Forthcoming Book]

Fundacion Moisis: <http://www.fundacionmosis.org/logo.htm>

Duende: <http://duendestudios.nl>

Services, 1993: Andrea Fraser, Michael Clegg, Mark Dion and Julia Scher

The Think Tank that has yet to be named: <http://thinktank.boxwith.com/>

Artist Placement Group: <http://www.tate.org.uk/learning/artistsinfocus/apg/>

Pascale Gatzen: <http://www.smba.nl/en/newsletters/n-30/>

Mierle Ukeles: <http://www.feldmangallery.com/pages/artistsrffa/artuke01.html>

Temporary Services: <http://www.temporaryservices.org/>

Project Row Houses, Houston, TX: <http://projectrowhouses.org/>

Workshop Houston: <http://www.workshophouston.org/>

Mess Hall, Chicago, IL: <http://messhall.org/>

The Los Angeles Poverty Department, LA, CA: <http://lapovertydept.org/>

Estudio Teddy Cruz, San Diego, CA and Tijuana, Mexico: <http://estudioteddycruz.com/>

Watts House Project: [http://wattshouseproject.org/wp/?page\\_id=2](http://wattshouseproject.org/wp/?page_id=2)

Future Farmers, San Francisco, CA: <http://www.futurefarmers.com/>

Stockyard Institute: <http://www.stockyardinstitute.org/main.html>

Mildred's Lane: <http://www.mildredslane.com/>

Conflict Kitchen: <http://www.conflictkitchen.org/>

The Waffle Shop: <http://www.waffleshop.org/>

Dispatch <http://www.dispatchbureau.com/>

Ooga Booga (LA) <http://www.oogaboogastore.com/>

Golden Age (Chicago): <http://shopgoldenage.com/>

Build it Green (NY): <http://www.bignyc.org/>

Institute for Wishful Thinking: <http://theiwt.com/>

Single Room Hotel <http://www.etienneboulanger.com/singleroomhotel/>

Twin Oaks <http://www.twinoaks.org/>

Redemmas <http://www.redemmas.org/>

Bluestockings <http://bluestockings.com/mission/>

16Beaver: <http://www.16beavergroup.org/>

Stitching NAC: <http://stichting-nac.nl/cms/home/pfitem.php?iid=33&lng=EN>

Gyst: <http://www.gyst-ink.com/about/mission.php>

Imagination Station: <http://facethestation.com/>

Phoenix Commotion, Huntsville, TX: <http://www.phoenixcommotion.com/>

Living Paradigm, Houston, TX: <http://www.livingparadigm.org/>

David Robbins Ice Cream Social: <http://davidrobbinsics.com/>

Corrillos: <http://davidmaroto.wordpress.com/corrillos>

International Institute for Social History: <http://www.iisg.nl/>

Former West Research Library: <http://www.formerwest.org/ResearchLibrary>

### **Funding:**

Buckminster Fuller Challenge: [http://challenge.bfi.org/2011Semi\\_Finalists](http://challenge.bfi.org/2011Semi_Finalists)

Rockefeller Innovation Grant: <http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/what-we-do/current-work/advancing-innovation-processes-solve/>

MacArthur Foundation:

[http://www.macfound.org/site/c.1kLXJ8MQKrH/b.3599935/k.1648/John\\_D\\_\\_Catherine\\_T\\_MacArthur\\_Foundation.htm](http://www.macfound.org/site/c.1kLXJ8MQKrH/b.3599935/k.1648/John_D__Catherine_T_MacArthur_Foundation.htm)

Open Society Institute: <http://www.soros.org/grants>

### **The First Alternative-Artist-run collectives and spaces:**

Artist run spaces (New York)

Extensive, but incomplete list here:

[http://www.exitart.org/exhibition\\_programs/past\\_programs/althistories.html#about](http://www.exitart.org/exhibition_programs/past_programs/althistories.html#about)

International List of Artists' Collectives:

<http://collectiva.wikispaces.com/Integrated+list+of+international+artists%27+collectives>

Groups and Spaces: <http://groupsandspace.net/>

### **Public Space:**

AREA Chicago: <http://www.areachicago.org>

Boggs Center: <http://www.boggscenter.org/>

Cabrillo Solidarity: <http://www.boggscenter.org/>

chtodelat news: <http://chtodelat.wordpress.com>

dystopolitik: <http://dystopolitik.blogspot.com/>

Occupied London: <http://www.occupiedlondon.org/blog/>

occupy california: <http://www.picturethehomeless.org/>

Picture the Homeless: <http://www.picturethehomeless.org>

Take Back the Land: <http://www.takebacktheland.org/>

the imaginary committee: <http://theimaginarycommittee.wordpress.com/>

WE ARE MANY: <http://wearemany.org>

Right to the City: <http://www.righttothecity.org/>

Alan Moore's Occuprop site on European Social Centers: <http://occuprop.blogspot.com/>

Reclaiming Spaces: <http://www.reclaiming-spaces.org/>

All of Us or None: <http://www.allofusornone.org/>

Not an Alternative: <http://notanalternative.com/>

Richard Florida and the Creative Class: <http://www.creativeclass.com/>

Critique of the Creative Class (1 among many):

[http://prospect.org/cs/articles?article=the\\_ruse\\_of\\_the\\_creative\\_class](http://prospect.org/cs/articles?article=the_ruse_of_the_creative_class)

### **Technology and Media:**

The Creators Project <http://www.thecreatorsproject.com/>



Allied Media Conference: <http://alliedmedia.org/>  
Hackerspaces and Makerspaces:  
<http://omnicorpdetroit.com/blog/>  
<http://www.mtelliottmakerspace.com/>  
[http://hackerspaces.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_ALL\\_hackerspaces](http://hackerspaces.org/wiki/List_of_ALL_hackerspaces)  
<http://makerfaire.com/pub/e/4816>  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hackerspace>

### **Resource Libraries:**

Provisions Library: <http://www.provisionslibrary.org/>  
NYU's Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives  
The Tamiment Library's printed collections consist of books, pamphlets, and serials focusing on the history of labor, politics, political thought, civil rights, women's history, the Spanish Civil War, literature, the history of New York City, and the arts. Broadly speaking, the collections cover labor and the Left.  
<http://www.nyu.edu/library/bobst/research/tam/collections.html>

### **Organizing Resources:**

Smart Meme <http://www.smartmeme.com/>

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### **Housing/Health Insurance/ETC (Health and Home Resources):**

Art Home <http://www.arthome.org/>  
LINC (Leveraging Investments in Creativity) <http://www.lincnet.net/>  
Artist Pension Trust <http://www.artistpensiontrust.org/>  
Common Ground <http://www.commonground.org>  
NYCDHC: <http://www.nychdc.com/ApartmentSeekers/Applications.html>  
Manhattan Plaza (for performing artists only): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manhattan\\_Plaza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manhattan_Plaza)  
Artists Health Insurance Resource Center <http://www.ahirc.org/>  
Woodhull Hospital Health Care for Artists:  
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/hhc/html/newsletter/access-200812-artist-access.shtml>  
Office share/Coworking/Green Spaces: <http://www.greenspaceshome.com/>  
Seed Library: <http://www.seedlibrary.org/>  
Seeding the City: <http://seedingthecity.org/>

# ALTERNATIVE ARTECONOMIES

ART NOW  
AND A BIT  
BEFORE  
THAT



Making art in the early twenty-first century is just the same as making art in any other century, except for the money that coats everything like ash. It is accompanied by the creation of artist hierarchies where vanity and insecurity go hand in hand like the opposing strains of a Labradoodle. It is a nervous time, and artists respond to that. Some are clinging to nostalgia as if it were an antidote to SARS, some to technique, which has become the varnished mausoleum for "masterpieces." And nowadays there are masterpieces everywhere, racing into the marketplace like sperm to the womb. Paintings are, of course, where the masterpieces are most frequently identified, but they are also found in highly produced moving-image works, digitized photography, drawings, the lately rehabilitated art of collage and occasionally sculpture, particularly if there are fabrication costs. (Not so long ago, it used to be enough for something to be "fabulous" or "brilliant.") What is good in an age of maximal distraction is that there is no time wasted waiting for a masterpiece to achieve connoisseurial consensus. Some blowhard just pronounces it so, and that's that. Well, maybe it helps if there is a carefully choreographed auction where a manipulated record is set and an art world riff on bad history commences as dollars, euros, yen and rupees confirm the status of a masterpiece. But, really, the appellation has replaced the reality.

# ART WORK

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A NATIONAL CONVERSATION ABOUT  
ART, LABOR, AND ECONOMICS

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*INTRODUCTION – We can see how the collapse of the economy is affecting everyone. Something must be done. Let's talk. No, it can't wait. Things are bad. We have to work things out. We can only do it together. What do we know? What have others tried? What is possible? How do we talk about it? What are the wildest possibilities? What are the pragmatic steps? What can you do? What can we do? [Continues Inside]*

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# ART WORK

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# THIS IS OUR REAL JOB

## Temporary Services

We can see how the collapse of the economy is affecting everyone. Something must be done. Let's talk. No, it can't wait. Things are bad. We have to work things out. We can only do it together. What do we know? What have others tried? What is possible? How do we talk about it? What are the wildest possibilities? What are the pragmatic steps? What can you do? What can we do?

We know that larger numbers of people find themselves increasingly shut out of the American "promise" of wealth and security. The majority of committed and practicing artists have long given up these expectations in favor of having the freedom to pursue their work. We've all made sacrifices for our time, our work, and our own dreams. Let's face it – being an artist in the United States is difficult. Hell, just keeping your head above water is harder for an increasing number of Americans, artists or not. Federal unemployment numbers are constructed in such a way as to mask the real human toll and misery of joblessness in the U.S. The official number hovers around 10%. We're being told to get used to it, but we would rather explore ideas for reworking the economy to benefit everyone. Where is the discussion about how to sustain our entire country and not just our banks, corporations, and those who are privileged enough to be in the top 10% of our "earners"?

The deeply irresponsible and criminal activities of the men and women who wreaked havoc on the global economy, ushering in the Great Recession (or whatever you want to call it) have caused untold hardship for people already scraping by. Bring us their heads! Or at least take their bonuses to fund the arts, education, and health care.

Things have become demonstrably worse for artists and arts organizations. A 2008 report from the National Endowment for the Arts tells of an astounding 63% increase in artists' unemployment from 2007 to 2008. The public discourse about funding for creative projects is often limited to chatter about large-sum prizes funded unsteadily by foundations, commercial entities, or family trusts. Want to be an artist? Join a reality show and viciously compete for the title of "Art Star" while having your every move be documented for six weeks in the hopes that your witty bon mots and camera-friendly pretty face will result in a one-time cash bonus. Another option – compete with your colleagues and friends for smaller and smaller grants (as long as the government, the non-profit organizations, and the academic system continues to be able to raise funds from their own sources).

Where are the large-scale ideas that depend upon American ingenuity rather than competition? When did funding the arts and the people that make them become optional? Why is visual art, which can be understood as a basic foundation for human communication, not funded as an integral part of our lives as Americans? Why don't we think being an artist is a "real job"?

We can optimistically point to times in the past when things were more hopeful and better for artists and arts institutions. For example, the Works Progress Administration's Federal Arts Program once had money and was empowered to hire artists to take photographs, make murals, write stories, compose poems, and document the tremendous times the country was going through. Federal funding employed and nurtured some of the greatest American artists: Dorothea Lange, Langston Hughes, Ben Shahn, Walker Evans, Zora Neale Thurston, Thomas Hart Benton, and many others. It left us with tremendous public works, glorious murals, and a sense of strength and abundance that should be reclaimed out of the ashes of dirty capitalist shenanigans. However, this program was only possible after much pressure from the Left, from unions, and from artists themselves. It also worked because of leadership that carried out a vision that the free market could not harbor – nor would it tolerate for long. The infrastructure that sustained programs

like the Federal Arts Program was completely dismantled.

We can also see ourselves at the bottom of a downward spiral that started with Ronald Reagan's election. The vicious greed and racism that propelled the "Reagan Revolution" culminated in last year's massive global financial collapse, the logical conclusion of the Reagan administration's toxic ideological blend of business deregulation and trickle down fuck-you-nomics (two perilous fantasies that we see for what they are). Artists were easy targets and tools in the culture wars Reagan and his allies unleashed to dismantle the New Deal and Great Society efforts at wealth redistribution and economic parity. We've often been amazed at the fact that so many students and younger artists have no idea what kinds of great things received government funding pre-Culture Wars and before the neutering of the National Endowment for the Arts. One can trace the origins of early encouragement for even a vast genre as Video Art through looking at the record of NEA funding in the 1970s.

Capitalism works really really well – for a limited number of people. With tighter constraints on business and wealthy people, the number of people who can sustain themselves increases. Take away the constraints and less people benefit. More of us can see this clearly now. It is sad that it takes such a big crisis to get people to reconsider the "status quo".

We are in a moment very much like the Great Depression. Unfortunately, we cannot depend upon the creation of governmental programs, the learning institutions, museums, and archives, or even basic social planning to help ease the situation in the U.S. for artists. According to a report made in 2006 by the Economic Policy Institute, a nonprofit Washington, D.C. based think tank, the top 5% of income earners in the United States own 60% of the average U.S. household net worth. Furthermore, according to *Recent Trends in Wealth Ownership* (a book and research series by Edward N. Wolff of New York University's Economics department), a full 20% of the U.S. population owns negative financial wealth. That means that 20% of us, artists, professors, students, directors of museums, security guards, and otherwise actually live in debt. While many of us contribute to the struggle of American existence and create art that carries meaning and hope for all, our lives are still privy to the whims of the top 5% earners – who effectively make decisions for all of us through their daily economic and cultural choices. Many of those top 5% are on the board of directors for both corporations and cultural institutions. Is it no surprise that our major museums increasingly are using corporate sponsorship to lead their programming and name their galleries? Is it any surprise at all that even the language of art discourse is being invaded by business terminology?

For far too long, the rhetoric and logic of the market has dominated the production of discourse and livelihoods around art. Letting the market decide, as Reagan, Milton Friedman, and other ghosts of capital past cried, has drastically limited what we think art is and can be in our society. We have seen how quickly the commercial market collapsed, hurting large numbers of people. The commercial art market in the United States has hemorrhaged gallery after gallery. The flocks in the stables have been turned loose into the wilds of uncertainty and worry that the rest of us live in as normalcy. There will be no bailout or economic triage to save the galleries. The financial collapse has put a big crack in the hegemony over resources and discourse that the commercial system has long enjoyed. It is now even harder to see success in the speculative art market as a viable option for most artists, though the dictates of the market are still what gets passed off as curriculum for an MFA at most universities.

Universities continue to crank out masters of fine arts who have next to no possibility of getting gainful employment and little to no role in creating future employment outside the already tiny pool of highly coveted tenure track positions. If you are an educator, we challenge you to use your privilege and your security to improve things for your students and the rest of us. If you are an adjunct teacher, we encourage you to make it

difficult for your university to continue exploiting you. Unionize. Walk out. At least make sure to milk every resource you can, preferably to enable and supplement educational models that happen outside of these institutions. Scan those rare and out of print library books and periodicals and put 'em online. Check out A/V equipment and use it to put on free events for everyone. Get as many guest lecturers paid through your classes as you can. Bring the visiting out-of-town lecturers to an extra event space and encourage them to do a bonus talk for people who aren't clued in to academic calendars around town. Sow dissent. Teach the brave truth of poverty rather than the sniveling, competitive lie of the Top 5%. Make everyone's pay public knowledge – demand equity for all of us who create the next generations of artists and thinkers. It is time for some leveling and accountability, even for you progressives in the art schools.

Now is a perfect moment to push for new ways of doing things, developing better models, and to question commercial forms of art making and the commodification of human creativity and significance. It is also an excellent moment to look backwards at old models that might be ripe for reworking, and the myriad strategies and support systems that artists have invented in order to survive creatively and economically. It is a time to fight for a different future, better treatment, and a diminished role for the market in art discourse. Resistance to the status quo has been minimal. Artists for the most part are hiding and hoping things will get better. We must gather, pool knowledge and resources, agitate, question, confront this system and make alternative models using the creativity that we reserve for other kinds of artistic production in more stable times.

This newspaper asks us all to consider how to use this moment to do several things: to work for better compensation, to get opportunities to make art in diverse and challenging settings, and to guide art attitudes and institutions, on all levels, in more resilient directions. It is also an examination of the power that commercial practices continue to wield and the adverse effects this has had on artists, education, and our collective creative capacity.

We have focused our attention and efforts on the United States, though an international edition is needed, as there are no longer discrete nation-based economies. We leave that to others to take on. The struggle in the U.S. is a large enough starting point. The dominant discourse in this country pays very little attention to the massive numbers of people working outside the commercial centers of production. This gives a false sense of the complexity, diversity, and regional differences that are readily found when one just looks, asks, and pays attention.

This paper culls together writings from artists, curators, critics and theorists, from across the United States and Puerto Rico. Contributors were asked to reflect on a range of topics: the country's economic situation, how conditions are in their locations, what they are willing to fight to change, and more. Included are historic examples of artists' projects, initiatives and other efforts to find money for their work or to create broader infrastructural support for others. We called upon our networks for contributions but you might have a different network than us. Please read this paper and share it with others. Make copies and make an exhibition out of it. Use it as the basis of a discussion. Share it with your classroom.

Finally, check out [www.artandwork.us](http://www.artandwork.us) for more writing, images, and ideas that didn't make the print edition. There are places there for you to share your thoughts and ideas and connect with other artists, teachers, students, arts administrators, curators, preparators, interns, and others. We would love to get your feedback and hear about the conversations that this project has instigated. How are you doing? How are you sustaining your artwork? This is the moment to assert our principles, redefine our core values, and help each other continue to make great work.



# ART VERSUS WORK

Julia Bryan-Wilson

*Julia Bryan-Wilson's book Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era explores the politicization of artistic labor in the U.S. in the late 1960s and early 1970s, particularly within the Art Workers' Coalition and the New York Art Strike. Focusing on Carl Andre, Lucy Lippard, Robert Morris, and Hans Haacke, Bryan-Wilson investigates how artists and writers embraced a polemical identification of themselves as workers in relation to the social movements of the New Left. The following brief excerpt from the introductory chapter outlines some of the historical background and relevant theoretical influences that converged in the late 1960s to make the term "art worker" both viable as an activist identity, but also somewhat contradictory as a political formation.*

How is the making of a sculpture any different from the making of some other kind of commodity? At the heart of this question lie several critical issues: the division of labor under capitalism, the importance of skill or *techné*, the psychic rewards of making, the weight of aesthetic judgments, and the perpetually unfixed nature of the artist's professional status since roughly the fifteenth century. The history of Western art is marked by the unstable distinction between artistic, "creative" production and the economics of "true" labor. The social value of making art has been in flux since the Renaissance, when the "author" of a work as a concept was born. The transition of art making from a mere manual occupation to an inspired vocation has been the subject of much literature, including Michael Baxandall's key work on the separation of art from craft in the Renaissance and artists' assumption of a specialized class position.<sup>1</sup> Objects such as paintings were no longer the products of anonymous craftsmen but the singular creations of named individuals, and artists' earnings began to rise along with their status.

In the 1960s art workers theorized how modes of human making are affected by specific economic strictures, the aestheticization of experience, and the production of sensibilities.<sup>2</sup> What makes the coherence of the phrase *art worker* challenging – even oxymoronic – is that under capitalism art also functions as the "outside," or other, to labor: a non-utilitarian, nonproductive activity against which mundane work is defined, a leisure-time pursuit of self-expression, or a utopian alternative to the deadening effects of capitalism. While his writings on the matter vary over time and are by no means unified, Karl Marx's contributions to this subject have been among the most influential.<sup>3</sup> He makes many explicit connections between artistic making and labor, writing, for instance, "A writer is a productive laborer in so far as he produces ideas, but in so far as he enriches the publisher who publishes his works, he is a wage laborer for the capitalist."<sup>4</sup> Because of the erosion of patronage models, the artist is often *more* subjected to the tastes of the market and its deadening effects than other wage laborers are. This casts art not as "play" or nonwork but as another part of the capitalist division of labor. Yet Marx holds out the hope for expression or production beyond the market that might be unalienated, if still requiring skill: "Really free labor, the composing of music for example, is at the same time damned serious and demands the greatest effort."<sup>5</sup>

Drawing on Marx's theoretical work, and prompted by a desire to make art legitimate, necessary, and meaningful, artists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries tried to erode the distinction between art and labor by insisting that their actions, and the products of those actions, were indeed work. These efforts were often specifically socialist, even as their products ranged from high-priced luxury goods (as in the utopian craftsmanship model of William Morris) to laboratory experiments and functional design (as in the productivist art undertaken in the wake of the 1917 Russian Revolution).<sup>6</sup> The Mexican muralists of the 1920s identified themselves as workers, founding the Syndicate of Technical Workers, Painters, and

Sculptors in 1922 and attempting to create new iconographies that would be legible to peasants and the working class.<sup>7</sup> (In contrast to the muralists' depictions of greedy industrialists and heroic laborers, however, the art workers of the late 1960s and early 1970s did not, by and large, take a populist stance or insist that their art itself was "for the workers.")

In the 1920s and 1930s in the United States, artists formed revolutionary cultural organizations in attempts to "forge links between them and the proletariat," as Andrew Hemingway has phrased it.<sup>8</sup> Hemingway's nuanced account provides documentation of the ideological, economic, and social factors that led to the formation of the Artists' Union in 1933. Having taken part in the state-funded projects of the Works Progress Administration, the artists in the Artists' Union were literally wage laborers, and on that ground they agitated for workers' rights and demanded better pay. "Every artist an organized artist," proclaimed the posters at a 1935 rally, featuring their signature logo in which an upraised fist wielding a paintbrush is reminiscent of the Soviet hammer and sickle. The Artists' Union produced a newsletter (the *Art Front*), went on strike, and organized themselves like the industrial unions that were increasingly influential. In 1938 they voted to affiliate with the CIO. The New York branch was especially militant, demanding employment of all artists by the federal government. Taking their cues from the sit-down strikes and picket lines in the Midwest, the New York Artists' Union held violent demonstrations to protest the steady dismantling of WPA funding by the local administrator Colonel Brehon Somervell, who "had a profound conviction that to create 'pictures' was not 'work.'"<sup>9</sup>

Artists in the late 1960s and early 1970s – working under distinctly different economic conditions – looked back to the 1930s as the moment of the most ardent championing of art and/as labor in the U.S. context. Robert Morris recollects a widespread interest in the Artists' Union's organizing efforts, citing Francis O'Connor's recently published book *Federal Support for the Visual Arts: The New Deal and Now* (1969), which was circulated in the AWC.<sup>10</sup> O'Connor used this study to make recommendations to the National Endowment for the Arts regarding federal funding: lauding the WPA, the report promoted state support for the arts and countered the prevailing wisdom that such a system would necessarily impose formal restrictions on artists. Encouraged by these findings, some AWC artists supported a wage system for artists, even as the artists proved difficult to organize in any systematic way. As Lippard admitted, "Advocates of a tighter structure, of a real dues-paying union, have reason but not reality on their side."<sup>11</sup> Some art workers worried that governmental oversight would rob aesthetic production of its transgressive status. While admiring the Artists' Union for its solidarity and collective energy, Jim Hurrell, in an article for the *Artworkers Newsletter* entitled "What Happened to the Artist's Union of the 1930s?" declared that the New Deal's "sterile prerequisites" had defanged the art (even though, in fact, the WPA artists experienced some degree of artistic freedom in their projects).<sup>12</sup> Few artists in the 1960s and 1970s wanted to return to making socialist realist works under the auspices of the state; instead they sought new forms of oppositional art that were in concert with, yet not subsumed under, their politics.

One of the legacies of Marx's thought is his assertion that art is a mode of skilled production – a form of work – much like any other and as such is open to categories of analysis that attend to its production, distribution, and consumption. Within this rubric even purportedly "autonomous" abstraction practiced by artists of the 1940s and 1950s came under scrutiny by the art workers. As early as 1965, Barbara Rose stated that "art as a form of free expression is seen as a weapon in the Cold War."<sup>13</sup> The Left, haunted by the specter of Stalinism, had seen abstraction as one way out of doctrinaire socialist realism. By the early 1970s, however, in no small part because of the efforts of Max Kozloff, an AWC member, artists had become acutely aware of how avant-garde art in the United States had been made to serve state power abroad.<sup>14</sup> According to these accounts, abstract expressionist artists, who, for some, embodied the romantic ideal of working free from the pressures of the market, had, however

unwittingly, been marketed and sold as part of an ideological program in which the American government trumpeted artists' freedom to create works seemingly unrelated to politics, in distinction to Soviet socialist realism. The Cold War era's volatile entanglements of abstract form, ideology, and politics cast a lingering shadow on artists in the late 1960s, and some pursued "difficult" artistic practices that were consciously removed from "expression." As witnesses to the morphing of culture into what Theodor Adorno termed "the culture industry," art workers understood how their efforts could become caught up in regimes of commodification as well as in the larger machine of the military-industrial complex.<sup>15</sup> In the face of this instrumentalization, some sought to assert art's "unsaleability and functionlessness," to quote Rose's assessment of the radical promise of minimal art, while at the same time organizing as workers to puzzle through their shared role in protest culture.<sup>16</sup>

Thus the Vietnam War-era generation of leftist artists were influenced by numerous factors, including a rejection of previous forms of artistic labor within the United States. They were also aware – if unevenly – of contemporary international developments, not least the climate of radicalism of May 1968. As Guy Debord wrote about the Situationist International: "An international association of Situationists can be seen as a union of workers in an advanced sector of culture, or more precisely as a union of all those who claim the right to a task now impeded by social conditions; hence as an attempt at an organization of professional revolutionaries in culture."<sup>17</sup> Debord drew upon Marx's conceptions of how art is itself *productive*, for he understood aesthetics as formative to the education of the senses – art, that is, helps create social subjects. In fact, relatively recent translations of relevant texts by Marx emphasized the psychic effects of alienated labor, self-estrangement, and negation – useful concepts to apply to the psychologically dense act of producing art.<sup>18</sup> One writer in 1973 provides a summary of Marx's notions that circulated at the time: "The similarity between art and labor lies in their shared relationship to the human essence; that is, they are both creative activities by means of which man produces objects that express him, that speak for and about him. Therefore, there is no radical opposition between art and work."<sup>19</sup>

As T. J. Clark noted in 1973, within the fine arts, "for many reasons, there are very few images of work."<sup>20</sup> In the late 1960s and early 1970s, representations of work were increasingly interesting to art historians like Clark. More to the point, the question of how artistic making might be understood as a category of labor was, when Clark was writing in the early 1970s, just beginning to be thought through with rigor via the new field of social art history.<sup>21</sup> Much of the art examined in this book does not provide easy visual proof that the artist "works" and is instead somewhat resistant to such imaging, either because the labor in question is performed by other hands or because it is primarily mental. During the Vietnam War era, that is, many laboring artistic bodies were displaced: they yielded to the body of the viewer or to the body of the installer, or they were somewhat effaced in a move toward intellectual work.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, the publication of English editions of texts by Antonio Gramsci, the writings of Debord, the importation of Frankfurt School writers such as Adorno and Marcuse, and the appearance of contemporary texts by Louis Althusser (both in French and in translation) also drove a re-evaluation of how art and labor might be considered together.<sup>22</sup> Marcuse in particular exerted considerable influence on art workers. In his early writings, he fostered a utopian conception of how work might function. He believed that once erotic energies were no longer sublimated, work would be transformed into play, and play itself would be productive: "If work were accompanied by a reactivation of pre-genital polymorphous eroticism, it would tend to become gratifying in itself without losing its *work* content."<sup>23</sup> Moreover, in the late 1960s Marcuse turned his attention to artistic making and often explicitly connected it to his ideas about work. In books such as *An Essay on Liberation* and *Counterrevolution and Revolt*, he saw the merging of art and work as the ultimate aim of any revolution.<sup>24</sup>

The class mobility conferred on artists makes for a complex story, and artists' identification with, dependency on, and estrangement from the bourgeoisie are longstanding issues – for Renaissance art historians as well as for theorists of modern art. The artist's ambiguous class position raises a series of questions about both art and work: How can art be a profession if there is no employer? To count as “work,” need the effort involved be paid? Need it be, as Harry Braverman has defined it in 1974, “intelligent and purposive”?<sup>25</sup> What, then, does this mean for artists whose work goes, intentionally or not, unseen or unsold? Or is work simply, as Studs Terkel put it in 1972, “what people do all day”?<sup>26</sup> Is “work” an activity, or is it a spatial designation, a place or site? And how does the art itself function – how does it produce meanings, representations, and social relations? What mode of production is art making, and how does it mediate between the political economy of exchanged goods and, to use Jean Baudrillard's phrase, the “political economy of the sign”?<sup>27</sup> That is, how does art, as an object and a system of signification, circulate as both commodity and sign?

Precisely these questions were at stake for artists in the 1960s and 1970s, along with others: How might art operate in and upon the public sphere, and how might it serve as a kind of political activity? What was new about the conception of the art worker was not only the turn away from an explicitly unified aesthetic but also the art workers' almost single-minded focus on the art museum as their primary antagonist. Because artists in this period did not receive wages from a socialized state or a government program in any systematic way, they viewed the museum as the primary gatekeeper of power, prestige, and value.

By calling themselves art *workers*, artists in the late 1960s meant to move away from taints of amateurism (or unproductive play) and to place themselves in the larger arena of political activity. This is the connotation summoned by the British political theorist Carole Pateman in the definition of work she offers in her 1970 book *Participation and Democratic Theory*:

By “work” we mean not just the activity that provides for most people the major determinant of their status in the world, or the occupation that the individual follows full time and that provides him with his livelihood, but we refer also to activities that are carried on in co-operation with others, that are “public” and intimately related to the wider society and its (economic) needs; thus we refer to activities that, potentially, involve the individual in decisions about collective affairs, the affairs of the enterprise and of the community, in a way that leisure-time activities usually do not.<sup>28</sup>

Art is often understood as an essentially solitary, individual act, but Pateman's term provides one way to configure a broader terminology for artistic identity; it also suggests that “leisure-time activities” are usually – but not always – opposed to art. Pateman's definition of work is useful, especially as it encompasses questions of the public and of the collective.

While *labor* and *work*, as near-synonyms, are used somewhat interchangeably, it is important to recognize that they are not exact equivalents. Instructive evidence of the distinctions between the terms that operated in the late 1960s and early 1970s can be found in mainstream and scholarly texts on employment, trends in the workplace, managerial styles, and human production, from sociological studies, government reports, and congressional testimonies to trade paperbacks and business handbooks. In these texts *work* and *labor* are by no means transposable. *Work* refers to jobs and occupations in the broadest sense; *labor* designates organized labor or union politics. Two books from the era illustrate the point: one, titled *Work in America*, is a governmental report assessing employment trends, productivity, and worker satisfaction; the other, titled *Labor in America*, brings together conference papers regarding the challenges of unionization and the possibilities of raising class consciousness.<sup>29</sup>

As Raymond William notes, *work* stands in for general doing or making, as well as all forms of paid employment,

while *labor* is more explicitly affiliated with the organization of employment under capitalism. As “a term for a commodity and a class,” *labor* denotes both the aggregate body of workers as a unit and “the economic abstraction of an activity.”<sup>30</sup> Williams further comments on the slightly outmoded and highly specialized nature of labor; the Art Workers' Coalition deployment of the phrase *art worker*, meant to signal class affiliations even as those affiliations were frequently disavowed, thus activated a much wider sphere of activity than art laborer and was used to encompass current concerns such as process and fabrication.

This quick sketch gestures to the multiplicity of meanings embedded within the conception of artistic labor and frames some of the theoretical discourses that fed the emergence of the Art Workers' Coalition in New York City in 1969. The remainder of *Art Workers* examines how the notion of the “art worker” was transformed vis-à-vis minimalism, conceptualism, process art, and feminist criticism—both in light of the shift to postindustrialism and with regard to the anti-Vietnam War movement's ambivalent relationship to the working class

“*Art versus Work*” (excerpted from *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era*, University of California Press, 2009). The book can be ordered from [www.ucpress.edu](http://www.ucpress.edu).

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972). In addition, Deborah J. Haynes's fascinating book *The Vocation of the Artist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), connects religious history to theories of artistic production and the ethics of visionary imagination in order to analyze artistic work in relation to the notion of a “call.”

<sup>2</sup> This long-standing theoretical problematic can only be alluded to here; it has been most recently and intelligently mapped by John Roberts, *The Intangibilities of Form: Skill and Deskilling in Art After the Readymade* (London: Verso, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> See especially Karl Marx, *The Grundrisse*, ed. and trans. David McLellan (New York: Harper and Row, 1971).

<sup>4</sup> Karl Marx, “Productivity of Capital/Productive and Unproductive Labor,” in *Theories of Surplus Value*, pt. 1 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1969), 401.

<sup>5</sup> Karl Marx, “Labour as Sacrifice or Self-Realization,” in *Grundrisse*, 124. Jean Baudrillard critiques Marx's reliance upon a binary of work and non-work (or play), insisting that nonwork is just “the aesthetic sublimation of labour's constraints.” Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production*, trans. Mark Poster (St. Louis, MO: Telos Press, 1975), 35–51.

<sup>6</sup> For more on the Russian precedent, see, Maria Gough, *The Artist as Producer: Russian Constructivism in Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); and Christina Kiaer, *Imagine No Possessions: The Socialist Objects of Russian Constructivism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Two studies that consider this movement are Leonard Folgarait, *Mural Painting and Social Revolution in Mexico, 1920–1940* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Anthony W. Lee, *Painting on the Left: Diego Rivera, Radical Politics, and San Francisco's Public Murals* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

<sup>8</sup> Andrew Hemingway, *Artists on the Left: American Artists and the Communist Movement, 1926–1956* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 20. Other indispensable accounts of the 1930s in particular are Patricia Hills, “Art and Politics in the Popular Front: The Union Work and Social Realism of Philip Evergood,” in *The Social and the Real: Political Art of the 1930s in the Western Hemisphere*, ed. Alejandro Anreus, Diana Linden, and Jonathan Weinberg (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006); Helen Langa, *Radical Art: Printmaking and the Left in 1930s New York* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); and A. Joan Saab, *For the Millions: American Art and Culture between the Wars* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Francis O'Connor, *Federal Support for the Visual Arts: The New Deal and Now* (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1969), 47.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Morris, interview, May 26, 2006. His marked concern circa 1970 with labor history stands in contrast to his previously disengaged attitudes, as when in 1968 he claimed to have no interest in politics; Robert Morris, interview by Paul Cummings, March 10, 1968, Smithsonian Institution Archives of American Art.

<sup>11</sup> Lucy Lippard, “The Art Workers' Coalition: Not a History,” in *Get the Message? A Decade of Art for Social Change* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1984), 17.

<sup>12</sup> Jim Hulley, “What Happened to the Artists Union of the 1930s?” *Artworkers Newsletter*, May–June 1974, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Barbara Rose, “ABC Art,” *Art in America* 53 (October–November 1965): 69.

<sup>14</sup> Max Kozloff, “American Painting during the Cold War,” *Artforum* 11 (May 1973): 43–54. Eva Cockcroft followed up on Kozloff's work in her “Abstract Expressionism: Weapon of the Cold War,” *Artforum* 12 (June 1974): 39–41. These debates are most extensively, and elegantly, chronicled by Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

<sup>15</sup> See Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947), trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1991), 120–67.

<sup>16</sup> Rose, “ABC Art,” 66.

<sup>17</sup> Guy Debord, “Theses on Cultural Revolution,” *Internationale situationniste* 1 (June 1958): 21; trans. John Shepley, reprinted in Tom McDonough, *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 62.

<sup>18</sup> *The Grundrisse* (1857–58) was known primarily in the United States only in excerpts until it was translated by David McLellan and published by Harper and Row in 1971. Martin Nicolaus discussed the work in his widely read article “The Unknown Marx,” *New Left Review* 48 (March–April 1968): 41–61, reprinted in Carl Ogelsby, *The New Left Reader* (New York: Grove Press, 1969). Works by Marx that were available in English included *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, trans. Martin Milligan (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959); *Precapitalist Economic Formations*, introd. Eric Hobsbawm (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1964); and *Capital*, vol. 1, ed. Friedrich Engels, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1969).

<sup>19</sup> Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, *Art and Society: Essays in Marxist Aesthetics* (London: Merlin Press, 1973), 63. A further way to map artistic labor in a Marxian vein is to understand art objects as paradigmatic fetishes. Although they lack an instrumental use, they accrue surplus value and as such are *ur*-commodities that circulate smoothly in market economies.

<sup>20</sup> T. J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (1973; repr., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 80. Linda Nochlin, however, offers a counterpoint that crucially pushes labor in gendered directions that Clark overlooks; see her “Morisot's Wet Nurse: The Construction of Work and Leisure in Impressionist Painting,” in *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 37–56.

<sup>21</sup> While writers such as Max Raphael, Arnold Hauser, and Meyer Schapiro practiced versions of Marxist art history before the 1960s, social art history as a movement was consolidated with the publication of works such as T. J. Clark, “On the Social History of Art,” in *Image of the People*, 9–20, and his “Conditions of Artistic Creation,” *Times Literary Supplement*, May 24, 1974, 561–62. See Max Raphael, *The Demands of Art* (London: Routledge, 1968); Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, trans. Stanley Goodman (New York: Vintage Books, 1951); and Meyer Schapiro, “The Social Bases of Art,” first presented at the First American Artists' Congress in 1936 and reprinted in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds., *Art in Theory, 1900–1990* (London: Blackwell, 1992), 506–10.

<sup>22</sup> For example, Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*, trans. Louis Marks (London: New Left Books, 1957); Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” first published in *La Pensée* (1970) and reprinted in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1971), and *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Allen Lane, 1969).

<sup>23</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (1955; repr., Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), 196.

<sup>24</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969); and *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972).

<sup>25</sup> Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the 20th Century* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974), 38.

<sup>26</sup> Studs Terkel, *Working: People Talk about What They Do All Day and How They Feel about What They Do* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

<sup>27</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, trans. Charles Levin (St. Louis, MO: Telos Press, 1981).

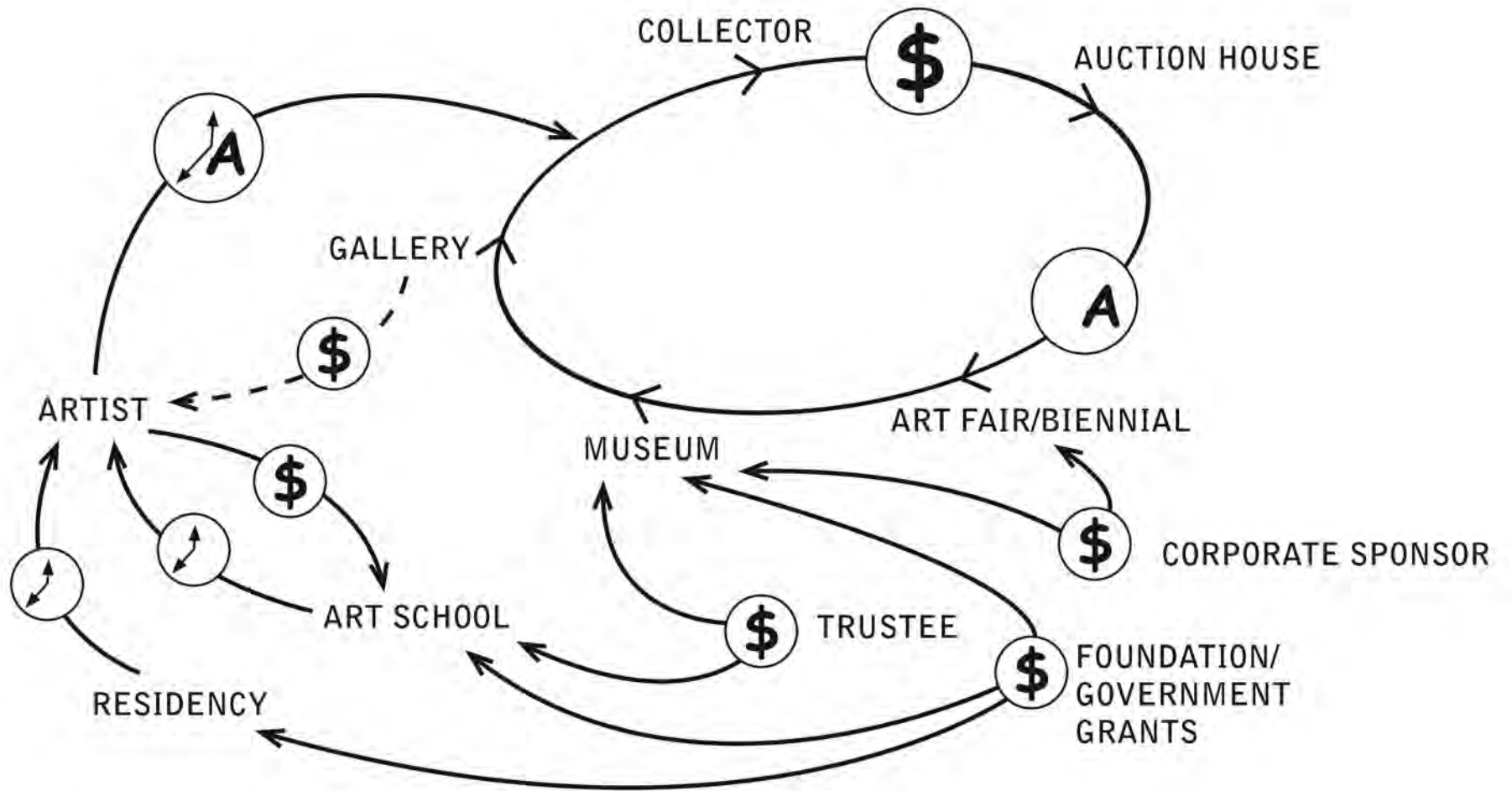
<sup>28</sup> Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 55.

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, *Work in America: A Report of a Special Task Force to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1973); Lafayette Harter and John Keltner, eds., *Labor in America: The Union and Employer Responses to the Challenges of Our Changing Society* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1966).

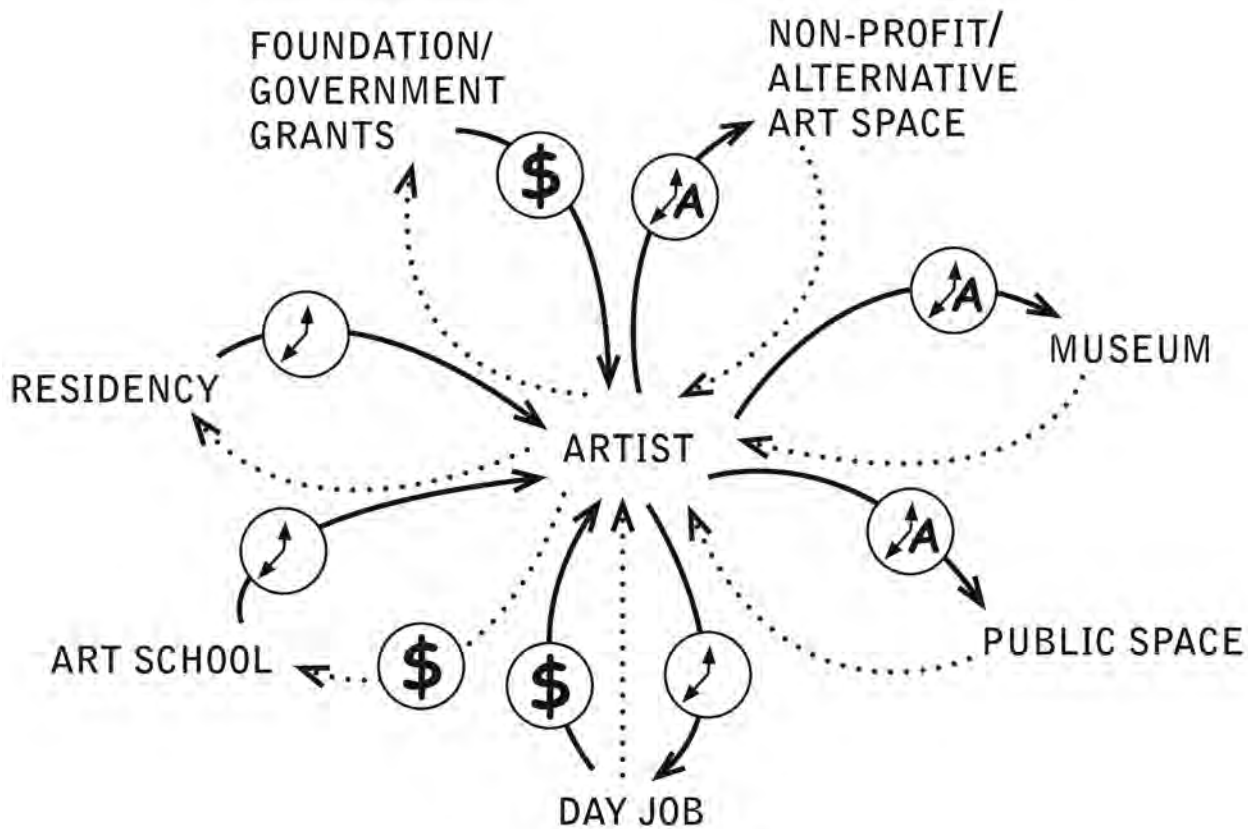
<sup>30</sup> Raymond Williams, “Work,” in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 284; see also his “Labour” entry, 145–48.



THE BUSINESS OF ART



NON-PROFIT ART PRACTICE



KEY	
	ART PRODUCTION
	ART COMMODITY
	TIME
	MONEY
.....	CULTURAL VALUE

# THE BOOM THAT WAS IS NO MORE

**THE BOOM IS OVER.  
LONG LIVE THE ART!**  
Holland Cotter

Last year *Artforum* magazine, one of the country's leading contemporary art monthlies, felt as fat as a phone book, with issues running to 500 pages, most of them gallery advertisements. The current issue has just over 200 pages. Many ads have disappeared.

The contemporary art market, with its abiding reputation for foggy deals and puffy values, is a vulnerable organism, traditionally hit early and hard by economic malaise. That's what's happening now. Sales are vaporizing. Careers are leaking air. Chelsea rents are due. The boom that was is no more.

Anyone with memories of recessions in the early 1970s and late '80s knows that we've been here before, though not exactly here. There are reasons to think that the present crisis is of a different magnitude: broader and deeper, a global black hole. Yet the same memories will lend a hopeful spin to that thought: as has been true before, a financial scouring can only be good for American art, which during the present decade has become a diminished thing.

The diminishment has not, God knows, been quantitative. Never has there been so much product. Never has the American art world functioned so efficiently as a full-service marketing industry on the corporate model.

Every year art schools across the country spit out thousands of groomed-for-success graduates, whose job it is to supply galleries and auction houses with desirable retail. They are backed

up by cadres of public relations specialists – otherwise known as critics, curators, editors, publishers and career theorists – who provide timely updates on what desirable means.

Many of those specialists are, directly or indirectly, on the industry payroll, which is controlled by another set of personnel: the dealers, brokers, advisers, financiers, lawyers and – crucial in the era of art fairs – event planners who represent the industry's marketing and sales division. They are the people who scan school rosters, pick off fresh talent, direct careers and, by some inscrutable calculus, determine what will sell for what.

Not that these departments are in any way separated; ethical firewalls are not this industry's style. Despite the professionalization of the past decade, the art world still likes to think of itself as one big Love Boat. Night after night critics and collectors scarf down meals paid for by dealers promoting artists, or museums promoting shows, with everyone together at the table, schmoozing, stroking, prodding, weighing the vibes.

And where is art in all of this? Proliferating but languishing. "Quality," primarily defined as formal skill, is back in vogue, part and parcel of a conservative, some would say retrogressive, painting and drawing revival. And it has given us a flood of well-schooled pictures, ingenious sculptures, fastidious photographs and carefully staged spectacles, each based on the same basic elements: a single idea, embedded in the work and expounded in an artist's statement, and a look or style geared to be as catchy as the hook in a rock song.

The ideas don't vary much. For a while we heard a lot about the radicalism of Beauty; lately about the subversive politics of aestheticized Ambiguity. Whatever, it is all market fodder. The trend reached some kind of nadir on the eve of the presidential election, when the New Museum trotted out, with triumphalist fanfare, an Elizabeth Peyton painting of Michelle Obama and added it to the artist's retrospective. The promotional plug for the show was obvious. And the big political statement? That the art establishment voted Democratic.

Art in New York has not, of course, always been so anodyne an affair, and will not continue to be if a recession sweeps away such collectibles and clears space for other things. This has happened more than once in the recent past. Art has changed as a result. And in every case it has been artists who have reshaped the game.

The first real contemporary boom was in the early 1960s, when art decisively stopped being a coterie interest and briefly became an adjunct to the entertainment industry. Cash was abundant. Pop was hot. And the White House was culture conscious enough to create the National Endowment for the Arts so Americans wouldn't keep looking, in the words of Arthur Schlesinger Jr., like "money-grubbing materialists."

The boom was short. The Vietnam War and racism were ripping the country apart. The economy tanked. In the early '70s New York City was on the verge of bankruptcy, bleeding money and jobs. With virtually no commercial infrastructure for experimental art in place, artists had to create their own marginal, bootstrap model.

They moved, often illegally, into the derelict industrial area now called SoHo, and made art from what they found there. Trisha Brown choreographed dances for factory rooftops; Gordon Matta-Clark turned architecture into sculpture by slicing out pieces of walls. Everyone treated the city as a found object.

An artist named Jeffrey Lew turned the ground floor of his building at 112 Greene Street into a first-come-first-served studio and exhibition space. People came, working with scrap metal, cast-off wood and cloth, industrial paint, rope, string, dirt, lights, mirrors, video. New genres – installation, performance – were invented. Most of the work was made on site and ephemeral: there one day, gone the next.

White Columns, as 112 Greene Street came to be called, became a prototype for a crop of nonprofit alternative spaces that sprang up across the country. Recessions are murder on such spaces, but White Columns is still alive and settled in Chelsea with an exhibition, through the end of the month, documenting, among other things, its 112 Greene Street years.

The '70s economy, though stagnant, stabilized, and SoHo real estate prices rose. A younger generation of artists couldn't afford to live there and landed on the Lower East Side and in South Bronx tenements. Again the energy was collective, but the mix was different: young art-school graduates (the country's first major wave), street artists like Jean-Michel Basquiat and Fab Five Freddy Braithwaite, assorted punk-rebel types like Richard Hell and plain rebels like David Wojnarowicz.

Here too the aesthetic was improvisatory. Everybody did everything – painting, writing, performing, filming, photocopying zines, playing in bands – and new forms arrived, including hip-hop, graffiti, No Wave cinema, appropriation art and the first definable body of “out” queer art. So did unusual ways of exhibiting work: in cars, in bathrooms, in subways.

The best art was subversive, but in very un-'60s, non-ideological ways. When, at midnight, you heard Klaus Nomi, with his bee-stung black lips and robot hair, channeling Maria Callas at the Mudd Club, you knew you were in the presence of a genius deviant whose very life was a political act.

But again the moment was brief. The Reagan economy was creating vast supplies of expendable wealth, and the East Village became a brand name. Suddenly galleries were filled with expensive, tasty little paintings and objects similar in variety and finesse to those in Chelsea now. They sold. Limousines lined up outside storefront galleries. Careers soared. But the originating spark was long gone.

After Black Monday in October 1987 the art was gone too, and with the market in disarray and gatekeepers confused, entrenched barriers came down. Black, Latino and Asian-American artists finally took center stage and fundamentally redefined American art. Gay and lesbian artists, bonded by the AIDS crisis and the culture wars, inspired by feminism, commanded visibility with sophisticated updates on protest art.

And thanks to multiculturalism and to the global reach of the digital revolution, the American art world in the '90s was in touch with developments in Africa, Asia and South America. For the first time contemporary art was acknowledged to be not just a Euro-American but an international phenomenon and, as it soon turned out, a readily marketable one.

Which brings us to the present decade, held aloft on a wealth-at-the-top balloon, threatening to end in a drawn-out collapse. Students who entered art school a few years ago will probably have to emerge with drastically altered expectations. They will have to consider themselves lucky to get career breaks now taken for granted: the out-of-the-gate solo show, the early sales, the possibility of being able to live on their art.

It's day-job time again in America, and that's O.K. Artists have always had them – van Gogh the preacher, Pollock the busboy, Henry Darger the janitor – and will again. The trick is to try to make them an energy source, not a chore.

At the same time, if the example of past crises holds true, artists can also take over the factory, make the art industry their own. Collectively and individually they can customize the machinery, alter the modes of distribution, adjust the rate of production to allow for organic growth, for shifts in purpose and direction. They can daydream and concentrate. They can make nothing for a while, or make something and make it wrong, and fail in peace, and start again.

Art schools can change too. The present goal of studio programs (and of ever more specialized art history programs) seems to be to narrow talent to a sharp point that can push its way aggressively into the competitive arena. But with markets uncertain, possibly nonexistent, why not relax this mode, open up education?

Why not make studio training an interdisciplinary experience, crossing over into sociology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy, poetry and theology? Why not build into your graduate program a work-study semester that takes students out of the art world entirely and places them in hospitals, schools and prisons, sometimes in-extremis environments, i.e. real life? My guess is that if you did, American art would look very different than it does today.

Such changes would require new ways of thinking and

writing about art, so critics will need to go back to school, miss a few parties and hit the books and the Internet. Debate about a “crisis in criticism” gets batted around the art world periodically, suggesting nostalgia for old-style traffic-cop tastemakers like Clement Greenberg who invented movements and managed careers. But if there is a crisis, it is not a crisis of power; it's a crisis of knowledge. Simply put, we don't know enough, about the past or about any cultures other than our own.

A globally minded learning curve that started to grow in the 1980s and '90s seems to have withered away once multiculturalism fell out of fashion. Some New York critics, with a sigh of relief one sensed, have gone back to following every twitch of the cozy local scene, which also happens to constitute their social life.

The subject is not without interest, but it's small. In the 21st century New York is just one more art town among many, and no longer a particularly influential one. Contemporary art belongs to the world. And names of artists only half-familiar to us – Uzo Egonu, Bhupen Khakhar, Iba Ndiaye, Montien Boonma, Amrita Sher-Gil, Graciela Carnevale, Madiha Omar, Shakir Hassan Al Said – have as much chance of being important to history as many we know.

But there will be many, many changes for art and artists in the years ahead. Trying to predict them is like trying to forecast the economy. You can only ask questions. The 21st century will almost certainly see consciousness-altering changes in digital access to knowledge and in the shaping of visual culture. What will artists do with this?

Will the art industry continue to cling to art's traditional analog status, to insist that the material, buyable object is the only truly legitimate form of art, which is what the painting revival of the last few years has really been about? Will contemporary art continue to be, as it is now, a fancyish Fortunoff's, a party supply shop for the Love Boat crew? Or will artists – and teachers, and critics – jump ship, swim for land that is still hard to locate on existing maps and make it their home and workplace?

I'm not talking about creating '60s-style utopias; all those notions are dead and gone and weren't so great to begin with. I'm talking about carving out a place in the larger culture where a condition of abnormality can be sustained, where imagining the unknown and the unknowable – impossible to buy or sell – is the primary enterprise. Crazy! says anyone with an ounce of business sense.

Right. Exactly. Crazy.

*A version of this article first appeared in print on February 15, 2009, in the New York Times. We include it here with the permission of Holland Cotter.*

## PERSONAL ECONOMY by Anonymous

My personal art economics have always included a full time job. I never really understood how to hustle for money in order to avoid the rat race. In addition, my practice takes up a lot of my mental energy and I value the consistency of steady pay. I don't ever want to have to figure out how to make money to see my projects to fruition. In my previous experience working off the grid, I found that whenever I had a lot of free time I did not have a lot of resources and when I had ample resources the opposite were true.

That being said, going to work and sitting at the same desk day in day out is torture. My work has absolutely nothing to do with anything I am even remotely personally interested in and my

appointment would not allow for me to entertain ideas such as multi-week/month residencies, which could be instrumental in my personal artistic growth. In addition I end up working too much, working full time 8-4 M-F, then at the studio usually 3 hours M-F and full days on the weekend, I don't have a lot of time for personal growth let alone seeking channels through which to gain exposure for the work I do, or handling the administrative side of my creative efforts.

I spend all this time doing something I don't want to do so that I can do what I want to do on my own terms.

Outside of the economics of time/mental energy/ opportunity is the actual compensation received for making art. I trade my work on a regular basis. Recently, I've traded a painting for a website, and two drawings for four massages (a gift for an overworked loved one). I also give my work away a lot. As any artist knows there is no shortage of organizations soliciting artwork for their cause. The assumption is that this is a trade for notoriety or support by said organizations down the road. Really, sometimes, this whole platform just feels like everyone wants art but no one wants to pay for it. Still, I give away several pieces a year.

In addition, I am going to more than break even on art this year which is great but it opens up a whole new arena of responsibility. I sold work for several album covers to a record label and as such am now mandated to pay taxes on this revenue. In addition I sold work to a private collector outside of the state who issued me a check that is too large not to claim on my income tax so I will have to reserve funds for this as well. Luckily, a little voice inside my head told me to start saving all receipts, but now I have to hire an accountant.

Another facet of compensation received for making art is the relationship between works sold and interest expressed by others to purchase work. If I actually sold work every time an interest was expressed by a potential buyer I would not need my day job. Often I make arrangements with a client to make payments on a piece of work rather than buying it outright. This often results in a series of humiliating exchanges where I have to contact them and ask them for money because they did not deliver to the specifics of our verbal agreement.

Many times potential clients will stop by my studio to view work several times. We will exchange multiple emails regarding the sale of particular pieces. They will attempt to haggle with me for the lowest possible price and then they will simply stop responding to my emails or phone calls. This too, is humiliating and kind of infuriating.

These last two bits are about the emotional economics of making art. On one hand a potential sale or recognition of any sort signals inside the brain this stream of thoughts that result in a renewed aspiration that one could actually subsist doing what they feel is their calling in life. Countless let downs create one of two emotional states in contrast to the prior. One, what's the point? and two, F#@!\$ everyone, I do this because it is what gets me up in the morning and I don't care if I exist in a cave until I die.



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# NOTHING CHANGES WHEN PEOPLE DO NOT ENGAGE IN THE LONG AND DIFFICULT WORK OF BUILDING A DIVERSE, MULTI-CULTURAL, WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT FROM THE GROUND UP

## ORGANIZE! WHAT THE ARTISTS' UNION OF THE 1930s CAN TEACH US TODAY

Nicolas Lampert

The present-day economic downturn is reminiscent of the Great Depression in terms of the overall morass of poverty, unemployment, and foreclosures, yet key differences separate the two eras. The 1930s was a time of massive organizing, strikes, union activity, and dissent that forced FDR and the New Deal to the left. 2009 does not provide us with such inspiring levels of resistance.

If the 1930s can teach us one key lesson, it is the need to organize. Nothing changes when people do not engage in the long and difficult work of building a diverse, multi-cultural, working class movement from the ground up. This includes artists. Fortunately, the 1930s provides us with multiple examples of how artists worked collectively to confront the economic crisis of their time.

The Artists' Union, established in 1934, and primarily based out of New York City, was one of the leading voices for unemployed artists. Their primary role was to advocate for more positions within the Works Progress Administration-Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP), better pay and working conditions, and lobbying against proposed cutbacks. In essence, the Artists' Union became the mediators between artists and WPA/FAP administrators, settling grievances between workers and bosses and threatening to take direct action if needed.

Early actions included staging demonstrations against the Whitney Museum, protesting the limited scope of the funding within the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), the federal

art program that preceded the WPA/FAP. By January of 1935, the Artists' Union began lobbying for permanent federal funding for the arts.<sup>1</sup> The Artists' Union also fought censorship by calling upon the New York City government to establish a Municipal Art Gallery in response to the destruction of Diego Rivera's mural at the Rockefeller Center. When Mayor Fiorello La Guardia agreed to establish a public gallery, the Artists' Union additionally fought to remove the provisions that excluded foreign-born artists from exhibiting work.

However, the Artists' Union did not just look after the welfare of fellow artists within a government funded art program. On numerous occasions they joined in solidarity with other workers, as Joseph Solman writes:

The Artists' Union and the National Maritime Union (NMU) were two of the most active participants in aiding striking picket lines anywhere in New York City. If the salesgirls went out on strike at May's department store in Brooklyn a grouping from the above-mentioned unions was bound to swell the picket lines. I recall some of our own demonstrations to get artists back on the job after a number of pink dismissal slips had been given out. At such times everyone was in jeopardy. Suddenly from nowhere a truckload of NMU workers would appear and jump out onto the sidewalk to join our procession.<sup>2</sup>

More so, the Artists' Union brought creativity and visual interest to street demonstrations. Members of the Artists' Union, including a young Willem de Kooning, created effigies, floats, and banners that played a prominent role in protest marches.

Yet, the main focus of the Artists' Union was always trying to improve the economic situation for artists during the Depression. For instance, one action included the Rental Policy campaign that advocated that artists be paid a modest fee for

exhibiting their work within museum shows. Einar Heiberg of the Minnesota Artists' Union reasoned:

Should a group of musicians play without recompense, for instance, simply because a hall had been provided? Should a singer give a program without remuneration simply because of the donation of a stage and possibly an accompanist? The artists felt there was no logic in the protests of the museum directors, and felt there was as much value in a given work of art as there might be in an orchestration, or a song, or a dental extraction. Prestige acquired from the hanging of a picture might bring the artists a lot of pretty words and some encouragement, but very few groceries.<sup>3</sup>

Museums immediately rejected the idea as preposterous, arguing that it lacked a precedent and insisted that artists should be thankful for the exposure and the prestige alone for showing within their hallowed halls. Yet, the Artists' Union and two other organizations, the American Artists' Congress and the American Society of Painters and Gravers (ASPG), held their ground and urged artists to boycott museums that did not pay the fee. Picket lines were also formed outside museum entrances, where flyers were handed out to visitors and because of these actions, a number of museums agreed to pay the fee.

Other actions were more heated. On November 29, 1936, the Artists' Union led a sit-down strike in the New York City WPA/FAP administration offices to protest cuts that led to numerous artists being dismissed from their jobs. Over 200 artists walked into the offices uninvited and demanded that the positions be reinstated. The Administrator's response was to call in the police who proceeded to violently assault the demonstrators (including Paul Block, the president of the Artists' Union) and arrested everyone present.

In jail, the somber mood was defused a bit when many

of those arrested gave fake last names to the gullible authorities, who then booked individuals claiming to be Picasso, Cezanne, Da Vinci, Degas and Van Gogh! The action, however, was not in vain, for the commotion and the press that it caused resulted in Mayor LaGuardia scheduling a special trip to Washington to ask



the Federal Government to reinstate the funding.

All told, actions such as these represented a new militancy amongst artists who began to realize their strength as a collective body. Stuart Davis, the celebrated painter who served as the first editor for the Artists' Union publication, *Art Front* wrote:

Artists at last discovered that, like other workers, they could only protect their basic interests through powerful organizations. The great mass of artists left out of the project found it possible to win demands from the administration only by joint and militant demonstrations.<sup>4</sup>

Davis's call needs to arise today. Hoping that others will do this work for us is foolhardy. A change for the better will not magically appear. The maddening aspect of Barack Obama's election campaign was the idea that "change" would derive from electoral politics, a top-down structure, and a politician embedded to nationalism and capitalism. Instead, it needs to come from below, and artists with their talents, economic status at the bottom rung, and ability to collaborate with anti-authoritarian groups can play a key role. The Artists' Union presents a central thesis that can be adapted today, and that is the urgent need to organize.

<sup>1</sup> *The New Deal Art Projects: An Anthology of Memoirs*, Francis V. O'Connor, ed. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1972), 201.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Solman, "The Easel Division of the WPA Federal Art Project" in *The New Deal Art Projects: An Anthology of Memoirs*, 120.

<sup>3</sup> Einar Heiberg, "The Minnesota Artists' Union" in *Art for the Millions: Essays from the 1930s by Artists and Administrators of the WPA Federal Art Project*, Francis V. O'Connor, ed. (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1973), 244.

<sup>4</sup> Stuart Davis, "Why an Artists' Congress?" in *Artists Against War and Fascism: Papers of the First American Artists' Congress*, Matthew Baigell and Julia Williams, editors, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 66

THEY CAN MAKE REPORTS ALL THEY WANT, BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER UNTIL THEY START ADVOCATING MORE AGGRESSIVELY FOR ALL OF US. READ THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS' REPORT **ARTISTS IN A YEAR OF RECESSION**  
<http://arts.endow.gov/research/Notes/97.pdf>

## SMALL BUSINESS AS ARTISTIC MEDIUM

Robin Hewlett

The chairs are up on the tables. I've stopped mopping halfway through the dining room. My partner needs to leave – to get home to her kids. Another partner is still counting the cash in the register. We say we need to meet, to talk, when there's time... And then we launch in. This is when the best conversations happen.

The ongoing discussion in these stolen moments is about value: How do we understand and value everything that each of us brings to the work we do together?

We are running a small business – a café and social center called Backstory, on the south side of Chicago. A substantial monetary investment was made at the outset and subsequent cash infusions have been necessary since. Hours upon hours of unpaid labor have been poured into the effort. Creative energies have been diverted from other projects into the resource stream of this enterprise. Family dynamics have shifted to create space for this new occupation. Other life paths have gone untraveled. How do we value each of these contributions and sacrifices? How do we appraise the worth we gain through our involvement in Backstory and the value of the relationships we're building with each other? How do we set all of these things next to each other and understand any semblance of equivalence when they are so dissimilar and, in some cases, largely immeasurable?

Just over a year since we opened our doors, and on the cusp of introducing a new member into our partnership, this is a difficult but incredibly exciting moment in our lives as business owners, friends and collaborators. We've known intuitively for some time that the practice of capitalism currently dominating the globe doesn't work. Now our situation is a tangible example of its shortcomings. The world of conventional business offers no workable model for how to relate the diverse resources we each bring to our collective effort. Nor do utopian visions of non-monetary, autonomous zones provide acceptable alternatives. Our journey necessarily begins within the infrastructure of capital, yet we struggle to build relationships that might break that mold.

For me, probing the meaning of our disparate contributions is part of an ongoing fascination with the concept of value – how it is collectively created, assigned and acknowledged. For us as a group, having come to this shared endeavor from incredibly different backgrounds, working to understand the question of value is also a process through which we actively value understanding. Commitment to each other is a central organizing principle of Backstory because we know the change we want to create in the world is something we must first practice in our own lives. The truly reaffirming thing about these partnerships is that even in moments of conflict and uncertainty, when business logic says 'look out for yourself,' we continue to prioritize the relationships, accepting the slow and steady process required to confront such complex questions in search of a resolution that works for everyone. Personally this is the closest I've come to prefiguring the world I want to live in.

Certainly there is a voice in each of our heads – whether it's my businesswoman aunt, a father-in-law or the family accountant – advising us on the ways of dog-eat-dog business; insisting that we are naïve. More naïve, however (in fact, irrational in my estimation), is blind faith in the idea of business as usual. As a society, we simply can't sustain the usual American-style capitalism, where profit trumps all other concerns, for much longer. We need new models.

But then why did we – a group identifying to varying degrees as artists, activists, community builders and anti-capitalists – go into business of all things?! Well... We chose a small

business model for very specific and strategic reasons. Our goal in operating a food business is to create a space that is accessible and appealing to a diverse population. While we fundamentally question the logic of capitalism, we feel we must acknowledge our current circumstances. We believe we stand a better chance of engaging and building a broad-based community if we create a context anyone can interact with, rather than appealing exclusively to a self-selecting group of those already tuned in – whether to activism, art, specific political ideologies or general civic participation. At this moment in time, that common meeting point for people of all stripes happens to be a commercial environment.

We are also experimenting with this organizational model as an alternative to the not-for-profit approach, in which the priorities and funding streams dictated by granting agencies strongly influence programming decisions. By operating a food business, we aim to create a self-funding space that can be flexible and responsive to the needs and desires of our community. The café acts as an access point and a meeting ground. As a social center, we hope to move beyond casual sociability to stimulate critical dialogue, develop committed relationships across the boundaries of difference and provide vital resources.

The day-to-day work of this project can be incredibly mundane: Did we order enough bread? Has the new shipment of to-go cups come in? When it does, how on earth will we find



space for it in our miniscule storage room? These very practical questions and micro-level processes definitely threaten to crowd out the big picture and I often worry they are drawing energy away from our underlying goals. In these moments I have to remind myself that the unromantic tasks provide the context in which we get to redefine our relationships to each other and to value. The daily minutia is therefore the foundation of our work together—not just the work of running a café, but the work of finding new strategies for supporting ourselves and our communities, making decisions together and sharing our lives.

Compared to previous strategies like research, performance actions and short-term projects, investing in Backstory has taken me to a whole new level of exploration as an artist. Just when I stepped away from anything that could be recognizably identified as "Art", I finally feel like I've found my medium. Artists have an incredibly powerful role to play in imaging what a different way of life in America might look like and how we might get there. Our ideas will remain impractical and marginal, however, if they are not tested in reality. Imagining and speculating only get us so far and then there is a need for action – a need to commit to some unglamorous, seemingly unrelated and often invisible grunt work, to open ourselves to hard conversations, and to risk losing sight of the vision. This is the process-based art of crafting new economic models and forging new kinds of relationships.

Backstory café can be found on 6100 S Blackstone Avenue in Chicago, and [www.backstorycafe.com](http://www.backstorycafe.com).



# **SELECTED MOMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF ECONOMIC ART**

## *Compiled and written about by Temporary Services*

### **1924 – Marcel Duchamp issues Monte Carlo Gambling Bond**

The *Monte Carlo Gambling Bond* [Obligations pour la roulette de Monte Carlo] was a small edition Marcel Duchamp made using cut-and-pasted gelatin silver prints on a lithograph with letterpress. The *Marcel Duchamp Studies Online Journal* (MDSOJ) describes the bond:

A parody of a financial document in a system for playing roulette, this Readymade revolves around the idea of monetary transactions. Giving himself the position of Administrator, Marcel Duchamp conceived of a joint stock company designed to raise 15,000 francs and thus “break the bank in Monte Carlo”. It was to be divided into 30 numbered bonds for which Duchamp asked 500 francs each. However, less than eight were actually assembled[...].

Perhaps in an effort to make the bond appear legitimate, Duchamp printed the following extracts from the Company Statutes on the reverse side:

Clause No. 1. The aims of the company are:

1. Exploitation of roulette in Monte Carlo under the following conditions.
2. Exploitation of Trente-et-Quarante and other mines on the Cote Azur, as may be decided by the Board of Directors.

Clause No. 2. The annual income is derived from a cumulative system which is experimentally based on one hundred thousand rolls of the ball; the system is the exclusive property of the Board of Directors.

The application of this system to simple chance is such that a dividend of 20% is allowed.

Clause No. 3. The Company shall be entitled, should the shareholders to declare, to buy back all or part of the shares issued, not later than one month after the date of the decision.

Clause No. 4. Payment of dividends shall take place on March 1 each year or on a twice yearly basis, in accordance with the wished of the shareholders (Schwarz 703).

The MDSOJ concludes, “In the end, the artist’s elaborate financial system did not work, and Duchamp eventually admitted that he never really did win anything.”

Source: [www.toutfait.com/unmaking\\_the\\_museum/Monte%20Carlo%20Bond.html](http://www.toutfait.com/unmaking_the_museum/Monte%20Carlo%20Bond.html)

### **1961 – Piero Manzoni cans his own shit and sells it for its weight in gold**

In May of 1961, Italian artist Piero Manzoni produced ninety cans of Artist’s Shit. Each numbered can had a text in Italian, English, French, and German that identified the contents as “*Artist’s Shit*, contents 30gr net freshly preserved, produced and tinned in May 1961.” Sophie Howarth writes, “The *Merda d’artista*, the artist’s shit, dried naturally and canned ‘with no added preservatives’, was the perfect metaphor for the bodied and disembodied nature of artistic labour: the work of art as fully incorporated raw material, and its violent expulsion as commodity.”

It is unclear how many buyers this work found in Manzoni’s own lifetime but in the years since his death the work continues to problematize the absurdity of the speculative art market in a way that a work like Damien Hirst’s recent diamond-encrusted skull, which contains raw materials that have obvious proven value, does not. *Merda d’artista* is a necessarily diminutive object. The can is not larger than it needs to be in order to contain a single bowel movement. *Merda d’artista* is prone to rusting, its label is fragile and it has none of the majestic presence that a giant painting or bronze sculpture might hold. As such, it is a particularly well-suited object to frame the question of where value lies in art. Is it in the idea? Is it in the artist’s fame and the importance of being first to have the idea? Is it in the gesture of buying shit in order to support an artist so they can buy food, eat it, digest it, make more art, and live to shit again? And once Manzoni died, what does it mean to speculate on the value of a dead artist’s shit? Or is the can and the signature on the label what people like to think they are paying for? The selling and re-selling of *Merda d’artista* brings into focus the issue of how many collectors, gallerists, and auction houses put far more value on what an artist has done after they are dead than when they were alive and really needed direct support.

By putting an artist’s shit on the same value scale as gold, *Merda d’artista* suggests myriad pricing possibilities that artists might use to create additional meanings or relationships in their work. Some examples are pricing a work of art for the equivalent cost of the artist’s home or studio rent during the time they spent making the work, or paying an uninsured artist’s medical bill for an injury or illness sustained during the making of their art.

Source: “Artist’s Shit, Piero Manzoni,” by Sophie Howarth at [www.tate.org.uk/collection](http://www.tate.org.uk/collection) (search for Piero Manzoni).

### **1966 – Fluxus art movement founding member George Maciunas begins buying real estate in the SoHo section of New York City**

“In 1966, Maciunas began buying several loft buildings from closing manufacturing companies in SoHo with financial support from the J. M. Kaplan Foundation and the National Foundation for the Arts. Maciunas envisioned the buildings as Fluxus-house cooperatives, collective living environments composed of artists working in many different mediums. By converting tumbledown buildings into lofts and living space, Maciunas pioneered SoHo as a haven for artists. The renovation and occupancies violated the M-I zoning laws that designated Soho as a non-residential area, however, and when Kaplan left the project to embark on his own artist cooperative buildings in Greenwich Village, Maciunas was left with little support against the law. Maciunas continued the co-op despite contravening planning laws, and began a series of increasingly bizarre run-ins with the Attorney General of New York. Strategies included sending postcards from around the world via associates and friends to persuade the authorities that he was abroad, and placing razor-sharp guillotine blades onto his front door to avoid unwanted visitors. The Fluxus cooperatives are often cited as playing a major role in regenerating and gentrifying SoHo.

An argument with an electrician over unpaid bills resulted in a severe beating, allegedly by ‘Mafia thugs’, on November 8, 1975, which left him with 4 broken ribs, a deflated lung, thirty-six stitches in his head, and blind in one eye. He left New York shortly after, to attempt to start a Fluxus-oriented arts center in a dilapidated mansion and stud farm in New

Marlborough, Massachusetts.”

Sources: Wikipedia entry on George Maciunas at [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George\\_Maciunas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Maciunas) and [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com) biography by Steve Shelokhonov. See also “Streetscapes: 80 Wooster Street; The Irascible ‘Father’ of SoHo”, by Christopher Gray, published in the *New York Times*, Sunday, March 15, 1992.

### **1969 – Ed Kienholz makes watercolors to use as a bartering tool**

“As he liked to tell the story, the assemblage artist Ed Kienholz was repairing a rifle back in 1969 when he found he needed a different size screwdriver to finish the job. Rather optimistically, the California artist painted an abstract watercolor and stamped the words FOR TEN SCREWDRIVERS across it in black. Within a week, a neighbor had spotted the picture at Kienholz’s house and offered to make the exchange. Thus began the artist’s groundbreaking, but to this day critically undervalued, series of watercolor trades.

He continued the series for years, creating paintings stamped with FOR A 4-WHEEL-DRIVE DATSUN JEEP when he needed a car or with FOR 2 GOOD MOUNTAIN HORSES to obtain four-legged transport. He painted for a haircut when he was getting shaggy and for a fur coat to get a shaggy garment, presumably to give away. Each has a colored background and bears the artist’s signature and thumbprint in the corner.

‘There were so many trades, it’s hard to remember them all,’ says his widow, the artist Nancy Kienholz. ‘He traded these watercolors for a sauna, for a gun, for a mattress and box spring, for “a new Nikon for Nancy.” And he’d trade anything – property, cars. He traded guns with the milkmen to get milk. He loved the game of it. He was the king of bartering.’”

Source: “Tales of the Trade” by Jori Finkel at [www.artinfo.com/news/story/31255/tales-of-the-trade/](http://www.artinfo.com/news/story/31255/tales-of-the-trade/)

### **1969 – Guerrilla Art Action Group takes the Museum of Modern Art in New York to task for the pro-Vietnam War corporate activities of members of the Board of Directors**



With support from the Action Committee of the Art Workers’ Coalition, Guerrilla Art Action Group (GAAG) performed *Blood Bath* in the Museum of Modern Art’s lobby on November 18, 1969. Jon Hendricks, Poppy Johnson, Jean Toche, and Silvianna Goldsmith entered the museum at 3:10 p.m. on a Tuesday

wearing street clothes for the women and suits and ties for the men.

Inside their clothing, they hid two gallons of beef blood distributed in plastic bags taped to their bodies. The artists walked to the center of the lobby and threw one hundred copies of their demands to the floor. This statement insisted that the Rockefeller brothers, who owned considerable percentages of multiple companies that were profiting from Vietnam war-related labor and weapons manufacturing, resign from the Board of Directors at MoMA.

Having strewn their statement, the four GAAG members began to shout at and violently attack each other, causing the bags of blood to burst as they ripped at each other's clothing. A crowd gathered and the action slowly moved from a tone of violence to anguish as the artists writhed on the floor, moaning before eventually going silent. The artists eventually rose to their feet (the crowd that stood watching applauded) and dressed in overcoats that covered the bloody remnants of their clothes. Two policemen arrived after the artists left.

## 1971 – Bob Projansky and Seth Siegelau create *The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement*

Seth Siegelau, an art dealer, exhibition organizer, publisher, and researcher, started working for the Sculpture Center in New York in the early 1960s, and gradually evolved into a more independent and politically minded curator and booster of a variety of conceptual and boundary-pushing artists as he pursued his own activities. This turn to self-organization resulted in various exhibitions, projects, and books including the *Xeroxbook* published in December of 1968. In 1970, Siegelau started International General, a publishing house devoted to distributing his publications as well as innovative work by N.E. Thing Co., Lawrence Weiner, and many others.

The Stichting Egress Foundation, keepers of Siegelau's archives, write: "...Towards the late 1960s, as part of the politicization of the art world he became active in anti-war activities in the art community as part of the growing mobilization against the U.S. war against Vietnam, including in July 1971 a fund-raising collection catalogue for the United States Serviceman Fund, an organization set up to promote free speech within the U.S. military, and which was especially engaged in anti-Vietnam War activity by means of the funding and support of G.I. newspapers and cultural actions. This activity led to his increasing involvement in the political aspects of art and in 1971, he originated, and then drafted with lawyer Robert Projansky, what is known as the 'Artist's Contract', *The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement*, which defined and attempted to protect the rights and interests of the artist as their work circulated within the art world system."

*The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement* is a form that can be used in any sale or transfer of contemporary art, and artists and collectors continue to use it as a guide for their transactions.

Source: The agreement itself as well as a lengthy introduction from Siegelau himself is available from the group Primary Information at [www.primaryinformation.org/index.php?/projects/siegelaubartists-rights](http://www.primaryinformation.org/index.php?/projects/siegelaubartists-rights). The Siegelau archives are referenced at the Stichting Egress Foundation's website, [egressfoundation.net/egress/](http://egressfoundation.net/egress/)

## 1971 – Hans Haacke's *Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, A Real Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971* exhibit at the Guggenheim Museum is canceled before it opens

This installation by artist Hans Haacke consisted of maps, photos, transactions and documents focusing on the apartments

owned by Harry Shapolsky, a Manhattan slumlord, and transactions he conducted between 1951-71. Another work by Haacke that was to be shown at the Guggenheim in the same one-person exhibition was *Sol Goldman and Alex DiLorenzo Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971*, which included a map of Manhattan marking the locations of properties held in 1971 by the largest non-institutional real-estate group in Manhattan, photographs of the buildings, and a list of the corporations operating there.

These pieces used systems-based creative practices common in Conceptual Art to expose information that caused great tension within the museum's upper ranks and led to the firing of curator Edward F. Fry when Haacke refused to withdraw the works. The exhibit was canceled six weeks before it was set to open. Michael Brenson, in a December 19, 1986, piece on Haacke in the *New York Times* noted that when the Guggenheim heard about the *Shapolsky* piece, "Thomas Messer, the director of the museum, wrote the artist that museum policies 'exclude active engagement towards social and political ends.'"

Source: "Art: in political tone, works by Hans Haacke," by Michael Brenson in the *New York Times*, December 19, 1986 and [www.nytimes.com/1986/12/19/arts/art-in-political-tone-works-by-hans-haacke.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/19/arts/art-in-political-tone-works-by-hans-haacke.html)

## 1972 – Artist-run restaurant *FOOD* publishes the "FOOD's Family Fiscal Facts" in *Avalanche*

In the fourth issue of the journal *Avalanche*, the SoHo-based New York restaurant Food published their "Fiscal Facts" as a full-page advertisement. In addition to expenditures like salaries, rent, phone and electric bills, and advertising, the document also lists the quantities of ingredients (including 1,914 lbs. of butter, 2,300 tortillas pressed, five cubic feet of bay leaves) and more surprising entries like one truck ruined, one closing order from health department, one box of toothpicks, 84% workers are artists, 1,175 notices taped to windows, ninety-nine workers, ninety-nine cut fingers, and much more. In a single page, this extensive list remains one of the most evocative records of this spirited and creative business enterprise that was led by artists Carol Goodden, Gordon Matta-Clark, Tina Girouard and others.

Source: "Other Options: A Closer Look at FOOD," by Ben Schaafsma, in the *Journal of Aesthetics & Protest* issue 6, [www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org/6/lovetowe/schaafsma.html](http://www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org/6/lovetowe/schaafsma.html)

## 1973 – Martha Rosler stages *Garage Sale in the art gallery at University of California, San Diego*

In this early work, Rosler adopted the vernacular form of the garage sale to interrogate ideas about value, biography and aesthetics. She states, "...my sale included unlikely items, such as empty boxes and welfare commodity containers, private letters and photos, cast-off underwear, girlie magazines, dead landscaping materials, broken household items and a notebook listing the names of men. The gallery was arranged so that the brightest lighting and the best items were at the front, and the questionable, less saleable, more personal, and even salacious items were located further back as the lighting progressively diminished, leading finally to the empty containers and other abject items. A tape recorder played a 'meditation' by the garage sale 'persona' I had adopted -- dressed in a long-skirted hippie costume -- wondering aloud what the garage sale represents and quoting Marx on the commodity form. A projector showed images of blonde middle-class families, at home and on trips, on slides bought at a local garage sale of the effects of a dead man. A blackboard bore the phrase, 'Maybe the garage sale is a metaphor for the mind.'" Rosler advertised the exhibition as a garage sale in local

newspapers and as an art event in the art community.

Sources: "The Garage Sale is a Metaphor for the Mind: A Conversation between Martha Rosler and Jens Hoffmann", in *The Everyday* (Documents of Contemporary Art series), edited by Stephen Johnstone for Whitechapel & the MIT Press, 2008. See also the press release from the 2005 showing of Rosler's work at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London ([www.e-flux.com/shows/view/2028](http://www.e-flux.com/shows/view/2028)).

## 1975 – Don Celender compiles and publishes the results of an informal survey *Opinions of Working People Concerning the Arts*

While teaching a course called "Art of the Last Ten Years", artist and art historian, Don Celender had Macalester College students solicit written and recorded opinions from 400 working people in the Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota area. The result is a book (published for an exhibition at O.K. Harris Gallery in New York City) that includes the responses of maids, bus drivers, hotel clerks, bartenders, gas station attendants, security officers, roofers, cab drivers, and more. Among the questions answered are: "Do you think art is important to American life? Why?" "Should tax money be spent to assist artists in producing works of art?" "Do you go to museums?" "What do you like best at museums? What do you like least?" "Do you think artists are responsible citizens?" "Do you think artists, as a group, have a particular political position?" and "Would you pay as much for a work of art as you would for your car? Your TV? A dress, or suit?"

Each survey result is accompanied by a photo of the participant along with their name, age, occupation, and residence. Though most of the responses are brief and not extremely detailed, the book is not only a fascinating window into the thoughts of working people on the arts, but an engaging participatory work of art itself.

The cover of this book is reproduced on page 16.

## 1979 – Chris Burden broadcasts *Send Me Your Money on KPFK Radio, Los Angeles*

On March 21, 1979, Chris Burden went live on the air and spent nearly an hour suggesting that people think about sending him money. The program was part of a series titled *Close Radio* that consisted of a weekly half-hour program of sound projects by artists. *Close Radio* lasted from 1976-79. Burden's piece, which violated FCC regulations for nonprofit media, was reputed to have been the final straw that got the challenging series kicked off the air.

Sources: The broadcast can be heard in the Ubu archives at [www.ubu.com/sound/burden.html](http://www.ubu.com/sound/burden.html). Information on *Close Radio* and the Burden piece can be found in Doug Harvey's review, "Corpsefucker Makes Good: up the hill backwards with John Duncan and Paul McCarthy," *L.A. Weekly*, July 26, 2007: [www.laweekly.com/content/printVersion/60848](http://www.laweekly.com/content/printVersion/60848).

The entire broadcast is transcribed in this newspaper on the next two pages.

VISIT [www.artandwork.us](http://www.artandwork.us) FOR LINKS TO ARTICLES, PROJECTS, AND OTHER THINGS RELATED TO ART, LABOR, AND ECONOMICS.



# Send Me Your Money, By Chris Burden, recorded live on KPFK Radio, Los Angeles, March 21, 1979.

Hi. My name is Chris Burden. My address is 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. I can't legally do this but let's imagine that I asked everybody who's listening tonight to send me money. Just, to send it directly to me. It would be such a small sacrifice for all of you and it could really do something for me. If you could just send money directly to me: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Over the years I've done a number of things for you people out there in the public. I've done things for free. I've put ads on television. They all cost me money. And tonight I'm asking you to send me money. Send it directly to me. Can you imagine what a great thing this would be if it could happen. I can't legally ask you to do this but I can just ask you to imagine what would happen if it did happen – if everybody listening could just send me a dollar, or a quarter even. That's all I'm asking. A quarter from everybody. Can you imagine? This would be fantastic. If you could just send it directly to me: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California. If you could just send me money, directly, without any kind of in between. I'm not trying to sell you anything. I'm not part of a religious group. I'm just asking you to imagine the possibility of you sending me money, directly. My name is Chris Burden. The address is 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. If you can just think of maybe going right now and getting an envelope and writing my address on it. I'll repeat the address again. Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Now, I know that some of you probably are more fortunate than others, and that it's very unlikely that everybody will be sending me money so maybe some of you can send more to make up for some of the people that aren't sending any. I'm just asking you to imagine the possibility, if this could really happen. If you could all just send something, it would be very fantastic, because it would be such a small sacrifice on your part and it could really make a difference to me. It could make me closer to being rich. So this is what I am doing tonight. I'm asking you to imagine the possibility of sending money directly to me. Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Maybe you saw my full financial disclosure several years ago. My public one. I only made about a thousand dollars. I need money. So this would be a fantastic thing if you could actually do this. I can't legally ask you to do this but I want you to imagine the possibility of it actually happening, of people everywhere, all over the country, sending me twenty-five cents. This would really make a big impact on my life and my lifestyle. And my address again is: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. That's what I'm asking you to imagine. The idea of you sending money, directly to me. I'm not selling anything. I'm not part of any organization. I'm not a charity. I'm just asking you to think of sending money directly to me. Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. This could really change the way I live, and it would be such a small sacrifice on your part. Just something that you could do without even feeling it. If enough of you did it, it would be a fantastic thing. It would really make a difference. So I'm asking you again to send money to: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. That's what I want you to do, or to imagine doing, is actually going right now, right now, and getting an envelope. I know that somewhere you must have some envelopes, stamps. I think you should do it now, while you're thinking about it. Don't wait. If you put it off it may never happen. So this is what I'm asking you to imagine, the possibility of everybody out there who's listening to me to send money directly to me. To: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. That's what I'm asking. I'm asking everybody who's listening to consider the possibility of sending me money. Directly. To: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Now legally I can't ask you to do this or make you do it in any way, but I can only suggest the possibility that it happen. That everybody out there actually send something. Actually go and do it. Send me some money. To: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. This would be a great thing for me and it wouldn't cost you very much at all. You could hardly feel it. And yet if you all united you could all really make an impact. You could do something for me, directly. You could send the money to me at 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. That's Chris Burden. I'm asking you to send the money, directly to me, or to imagine sending it, rather. Directly to me. My name is Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. I'm asking you to consider the possibility of actually putting a dollar bill, or maybe a ten dollar bill, in an envelope, wrapping it with paper so that it doesn't get stolen and sending it directly to me at my address. My name again: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. This is what I'm asking. Asking you to consider the possibility that if everyone contributed in some sort of small way, that I'd be almost rich. And if everybody across the country could do this, just send me a quarter, I'd be substantially wealthy. I think everybody in this country could afford a quarter. And I think you people ought to consider that this is something that could happen. You should imagine it as a possibility. This is what I want you to do. To think of, to consider sending money directly to me: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. That's right. For you people that are just tuning in, I'm asking you to consider the possibility of sending money directly to me. Because I want your money. Send it to me: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. I'm asking you to consider what a great thing this would be if everybody could just send something. I'd prefer dollar bills. They're a lot easier to handle but I will go, I would even consider just a quarter from everybody. I think anything less is not worth it considering the postage involved. So I'm just asking everybody to consider the possibility, the what if, if everybody out there could send me a quarter or more. Send it directly to me. To: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. I'm not part of any religious organization, any charity. I'm not affiliated with anyone except myself. I'm a private artist. Just a person. And I need money and I'm asking you to consider the possibility if you could just consider sending money, directly to me. That's to me: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. If you could just consider what a great thing it would be. And it would be such a small sacrifice on your part. Something smaller than a soft drink, than a candy bar, even. And you could not ever feel it, but cumulatively as a group you could really make a big impression on me. That's what I want you to do. For you people who are just sort of getting into this now, if you could just consider doing it right now. It is a possibility, it is something to think about. If somehow everybody out there could be asked to think of sending me some money. If you could just send money to me: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. That's what I'm asking. I'm asking you to consider the possibility of sending money to me. I don't have very much money, and I need more money. So if this could actually happen it would be a fantastic thing. If it could just be sent to me. If you could imagine sending me money. I'm not selling you anything and you wouldn't get anything out of it, except knowing that collectively you contributed to making one person rich. If you think about it, this can only happen if everybody sends something. It could only happen for one person unfortunately but it's better than not having it happen for anyone. It doesn't really affect you very much. If you just dig in and shell out something you wouldn't hardly feel it. If you could just imagine doing that. Now I know that some of you are maybe already thinking about this. It is a possibility. It is something to think about. That if it could actually happen. Of course it legally can't happen. I can't legally ask you to do this, but I'm suggesting the possibility. I'm suggesting that you think about it. As something that could happen in other places, other times. If you just think about sending me money as an actual thing that could happen. If everybody could send me just a quarter. Well, I'd wish, I'd hope that some people would send more, and considering their wealth that they would send me more to make up maybe for some people that wouldn't send any. But if everybody on the average could send about twenty-five cents this would be fantastic. It would really contribute to my wealth. My name again is Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, and I'm asking you to send me money. To think of sending me money, think of what a great thing it would be. If it could be sent directly to me. I'm not part of a religion or a charity, or, I'm not trying to sell anything. I'm just trying to bring up the possibility, the idea that everybody could send me some money. Just to consider this possibility. If you just could send it to me. To: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. If you could consider this, something that I've thought about a lot and it could really happen if everybody thought about it and it was something they could do. If you could think of it happening all across the country. It's a great great feeling to think of everybody just sending in a quarter, or more. You could send it to me. To: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. That's what I want you to do tonight, is to consider sending money to me, to think of this as a real possibility. If you could just do it. Just think of doing it anyway. Just think of sending money to me. Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Now that's what I'm asking tonight. If you tuned out and are coming back in, I'm still asking you to consider this possibility. To think of it happening. To imagine it happening. That people could send me money directly. There's no reason why they couldn't. That's what I'm asking you to think about. To think about everybody who's listening tonight, to send some sort of money to me directly. Send it to me: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. If you could just think of sending some sort of money to me, that's what I'd like you to consider. Send it directly to me. My name again: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Again, I don't make very much money and I need money. I need more money. So that's what I would like to you to do is to send money, or to think of sending money directly to me, to: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California. Now think of the millions of people in this country. Now if every one of them could somehow be asked or suggested that they send money to me. This would be fantastic, and I think that everybody could probably afford twenty-five cents. That's all I'm really trying to consider is twenty-five cents from everyone, on the average. Of course it would be nice if some people could think of sending more money. More than twenty-five cents. Directly to me. Thank you. If you've thought about this, I thank you. My name again: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. And what I'm asking tonight if you're listening is to consider the possibility. I can't legally ask you to do this, to send money to me, but just consider the possibility, if it could happen, if people could send me money directly. Now isn't this a fantastic idea? If people could send money straight to me. I'm not selling anything. I'm not part of a religious group. I'm not part of a charity. I'm just a person and I want your money sent directly to me. And I'm not asking for very much but as a group you, it could really make a difference. You could really make me richer, substantially richer than I am. And yet it wouldn't be painful for anyone. Now if you think about this it can only happen for one. That's what I'm asking. I'm asking all of you to consider the possibility of sending money directly to me. My name again: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. That's what I'm asking. If you're tuning in, if you've tuned out and are tuning back in again or you're just tuning in I'm considering tonight, the possibility, or trying to get you to consider, rather, the possibility of what if, what if everybody sent me some money. Everybody who's listening. What if these people could send me money. That's what I'm trying to talk about. To consider. The possibility of everybody sending me some money. My name again: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. I'm asking tonight that everybody out there consider that I'm not especially wealthy and that I do need more money. I need money, and I need more of it. And I want you to consider the possibility of you people out there making this possible, the possibility of me having more money. If you could just consider sending me some money, my name is Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Now, if you could just really consider doing it. If you imagine the people out there, and I'm sure some of you or some of them, if you could just imagine actually doing it. It is a fantastic thought. If you could actually, actually do it. If we could consider this as a possibility. I can't really legally ask you to do this but I'm just suggesting it as a possible thing. As something that we can consider happening, although it can't legally happen, but if you can just consider it happening, of people just, everywhere, all over the country sending me money. Now this radio program doesn't reach everybody all over the country, so if we can just start, if you can just start considering yourselves right now starting to send money. Just you people here that are listening tonight. Go right now. If you could just consider going and getting an envelope and putting the stamp on it and doing it. Doing it right now. Then you could dip in and help me, help me become richer. Just get a little more money from your pockets and do it. If you could just consider doing this. The possibility of everyone who's listening sending me some money. Sending money to me. To: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. If you could just consider this possibility. It could really happen and it would be a fantastic thing. If you could just consider, just the idea of it happening. Just the idea of everybody out there sending me some money. Sending it directly to me. Just think about this idea. It could really work. It's a fantastic idea and it would make me richer. A lot richer. And it wouldn't cost you hardly anything. It wouldn't, it would just be, just something you wouldn't notice. You'd forget about it within minutes. If you could just send me money. Directly. Just send it to me: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. If you could send money to me. That's what I want you to consider the possibility. Wouldn't this be a great idea if people could send money to me. Directly to me at: 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California. If you could send me some money this would be great. If everybody out there listening tonight could consider this. Consider this possibility. Think of this idea of everybody grouping together and sending me some money. Everybody grouping together and making me rich, with no cost, hardly, to themselves. This would be great. If everybody out there could send me some money. My name again: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. This is something that I hope that everybody's starting to think about seriously. Sending me some money. I prefer paper money. I mean I would prefer paper money of course because it's easier to handle, but on the average I think if I could just get everybody to contribute about a quarter. To send me a quarter. I'm not part of any religious organization. I don't work for anybody. I'm not trying to fool you in any way. I'm just a person trying to consider the possibility, or having you consider the possibility, of sending money directly to me. My name is: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. That's what I want you to consider. The possibility that all of you working as a group could make me rich. Now this is a great idea, and I think if you think about it a little, you'll agree with me. That it's so easy for you to do. So easy for you to do, to go down, dig into your pockets, and just pull out a little. Put it in an envelope, put that stamp on it and again, address it to: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. If you could just do that. If you could just send money to me, directly. Now, this is what I'm asking. I'm asking you to consider this idea that everybody could send money to me. Just a small amount, but as a whole it would really be something. You could make one person rich and it wouldn't happen otherwise. It wouldn't happen unless all of you send something. So that's what I'm asking. I'm asking everyone who's listening tonight to consider the possibility or the idea of what if you sent me money. What if you sent it directly to me. To: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. That's what I want you to consider. Yes, sending it to me, directly. Send money to me. That's what I'd like you to think about. My name is Chris Burden. My address is: 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. That's what I'm asking. I'm asking you to consider that I don't have a lot of money. And that it would be great if all of you could send me some. If you could consider doing this. If you could just consider the idea. Conceive of the idea of sending me some money. This would be fantastic. My name is Chris Burden. The address is: 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. That's what I want you to consider doing. Now I need money. And I need more money obviously. So I want you to all consider the possibility of sending me some money. It wouldn't be a very hard thing for you to do. In fact it would be quite easy. You probably pay bills every day. This wouldn't be much different, and it would be very cheap. Very very cheap. So this is the plan that I propose. That you consider this possibility. Consider this idea. Wouldn't it be great if you could send me money. If you could just send it directly to me. My name again: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Obviously I would prefer the largest amount you could send, but I think even a dollar would be sufficient. Don't you? If you could just send me some money. If you could consider this idea, of everybody who's listening and you

especially. You, just send me some money. Can you think of this idea, can you conceive of it? Can you think of actually doing it. It would be a fantastic thing. If you could just do it. If you could just think of doing it. If you could just send me some money. Send it to: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Now, I can't legally ask you to do this, but I can suggest the possibility, that you conceive of the idea. That you just think of doing this. Sending money to me. Yes, my name again is: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. And just with a small effort on your part, think how great this would be. If all of you just by sending a small amount. But if everyone did it, everyone, everywhere did it, I would be rich. If everyone listening to this radio program did it, I'd be, not rich but a lot richer than I am. So that's what I'm asking you to do. To consider the possibility of sending me money. Sending money directly to me. Consider this possibility. My name again: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. I'm asking everybody out there who's listening to consider sending me money. Of course I would accept it any way you send it. I'm asking you to send me any kind of money. To consider this possibility. The possibility that all of you out there could send money directly to me. My name again: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Can you consider this possibility? Just by sending a very small amount, you could make me rich. I don't have a lot of money, and I need more money. So please consider this possibility. The possibility of everyone with a very small penalty to themselves, financially, could really, substantially improve my financial condition. That's what I'm asking. I'm asking you to consider this possibility that everyone send me some money. My name again: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Yes, I can almost see some of you thinking about doing this. Conceiving it. Can you conceive of the idea? Isn't it fantastic? I mean if you could actually do it. If you could just send me money directly. My name again: Chris Burden. My address: 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. If you could just conceive of this possibility. Of just dipping in. Maybe getting a quarter, fifty cents, or even a dollar. Maybe ten dollars. But that's what I'm asking. I'm asking you to conceive of the idea of everyone who's listening to me tonight to send me some money. To conceive of this. It wouldn't cost you very much. It would be hardly felt. But if you could just think of doing it. Think of sending money, directly to me, to: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Now I'm not part of any religious organization. I'm not soliciting for any reason. I'm just asking you to conceive of this notion, this idea that everybody would just sort of step sideways once with a little bit of money. Just jog sideways, in one direction and you could send it to me: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Together all of you could really make a substantial impact and for any one of you it would be nothing. I won't say nothing, but it would be very very small. I'm sure it's something you all could probably afford. That's what I'm asking you to do tonight. To conceive of the plan, of the idea of everyone sending me some money. Of sending me money. Sending it directly to me. To: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Now, I don't have very much money and I need more. That's why I'm asking you to conceive of this as a concept, of a way where if all of you just took a little bit of time, a little bit of money, and sent it directly to me. I know it's gonna cost you a little bit of time. But, can't you see it? Can't you see yourself just doing it right now? Just going to get that envelope, putting that stamp on it, and enclosing some money and sending it to me: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. That's very simple really. There's nothing to it. The idea is a very simple one. It's... the idea is that all of you, working together, could make me substantially richer than I am right now. That's what I'm doing. I'm asking you to conceive of this idea, of sending money directly to me, to: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California. Now if you've tuned out for a while, and you're tuning back in, and you haven't conceived of this possibility, I want you to think about it. Not just as a silly idea but as something that could really happen. Wouldn't it be fantastic if it could happen? If you could just send some money directly to me, wouldn't this be great? Wouldn't this be a great thing? My name again: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. I'm asking you tonight, because I'm not a rich man, and I need more money. And what is money after all? It's simply an abstraction. And if you just, just spend a very small amount, it's hardly anything. It's almost, it's almost invisible. And you won't notice it's gone. You wouldn't. You can see that, can't you? It would hardly be anything. Yet if you all pool together, can you conceive of this idea? If you all pool together and sent me some money, it would be great, without making any one of you in any way poor or even poorer, I would be richer. This is what I'm asking you to do. To consider this possibility. The possibility of you actually sending me money. Now isn't this a great plan. This would be great. If you could just send money to me. I can't legally ask you to do this but can suggest it as an idea, as a concept. Where everybody would just send a little bit of money to me. Send it directly to me: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. That's what I'm asking. I'm asking that you consider this as a possibility. As something to do. Something to think about. What if everybody could do this, and everybody could, actually. It's just, if you could just think of it, conceive of it. Just send me just a little bit. If you could think of sending me some money. Now, I think this would be great. If you could just dig into your pockets and just send a little bit towards me. I'm not, I'm not selling you anything. I'm not part of any organization. I'm not part of a religious group. I'm not a charity. I'm just a person, an artist, and I need money. And I would like you to send it directly to me. Or to consider this possibility, the possibility that if all of you sent me something that I would be rich, or richer rather. If you could just consider doing this. Sending money directly to me. My name again: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Now this is a strange thing for you to be asked to consider. But if you think about it, it actually makes a lot of sense. It's sort of a great idea. If all of you could just scoot a little my way, so to speak. If you could just send me a little bit of money. Now isn't this a great concept? If you could just send money directly to me at: 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. That's all I'm asking. That you consider this possibility. That you consider this as an idea, as a plan, as a concept. That if everyone could send me some money, send money directly to me I would be richer and it would be such a painless thing for you to do. That's what I'm asking you to consider. Sending money directly to me: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. I'm asking you tonight to consider this as a possibility. I know it may sound strange. But think about it. If everybody could send me just something, wouldn't that be great. If you can consider this possibility. Wouldn't this be a great thing? If you could just send me something. My name is: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. And I'm asking tonight that everyone send me something. That you consider this possibility, as a concept, as an idea, that just by sending me a little bit of money, just a small amount on your part, something that you wouldn't even feel. Now if you all do it, or if you all could do it, or if you all did it, I could be rich. I could be richer than I am by a lot. And that's what I'm asking you to do tonight, is to consider this as a possibility. Now if you are tuning in again, I want you to think seriously about this concept. Think about this concept. Think about the concept of sending money directly to me. To: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. That's what I'd like you think about. How fantastic it would be if everyone could just take a small amount of their money and send it to me. This would be great. I would be rich, richer than I am. And none of you would be substantially poorer. It would be almost as if it didn't happen, for you, but it would really happen for me. This is what I'm asking. I'm asking you to consider this as an idea, as a concept, the concept of everyone sending me some money. Now, I think it's something you ought to think about. Sending money directly to me, to: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291 is the zip code. Yes, you may have heard it before, but I'm still asking you. Still asking you to consider this possibility. The possibility of you sending money directly to me. Now isn't this a great idea? It would be great, if you could do it. If you could consider this possibility. I legally can't ask you to do this but I can suggest the idea, the concept of it actually happening. I think you can conceive of it happening, conceive of actually going and putting money in an envelope and writing my name on it. Can you conceive of doing that? My name again is Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Now, it's something you could actually do. It is something that you could actually do right now. You could turn off the radio and go and do it. Or you could leave the radio on, but the idea would be to send me some money. That's what I want you to conceive of. To conceive of this possibility. Now wouldn't this be fantastic if everyone could just send me a little something, and together as a group it would really be something substantial to me. You could, all of you out there, you could make one person rich. You, with just sending a very small amount of money, could do this. You could make somebody rich. Wouldn't this be fantastic? Because it wouldn't cost you very much to do this, if all of you could just think of doing this. Wouldn't this be fantastic? Of sending money directly to me? To: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Can you conceive of this idea? I don't work for anybody. I'm not part of a charity. I'm not trying to sell you anything. I'm just trying to have you conceive of the idea of everyone who is listening tonight, who's tuning in, who's tuned out and is tuning in again, to send me some money. Think about this. If you could just send me a little something. My name again: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Now I don't have very much money, and I need more money. So I'd like you to consider the idea of sending me money. Of sending money directly to me. To: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. That's what I'm asking you. I'm asking you to think about it. Of actually, you can conceive of it can't you? Actually doing it? It's so painless. It would be so painless for all of you to do it, and yet it would be a great, a great thing. If you could just think of doing it. Think of actually going down, getting the stamps, getting the envelope, putting some money in it. If you can conceive of this idea, I mean I'm sure if you all could think of going that far you can probably imagine that the letter might be mailed afterwards. Because once the letters usually are addressed and stamped they get mailed. So I want you to consider this idea. The idea of everyone out there sending me some money. It's just an idea. It's just a concept. But wouldn't it be fantastic? Wouldn't it be fantastic if all of you could send money directly to me? To: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291 is the zip. That's what I'm asking tonight. I'm asking you to consider the idea of sending me money. Sending money directly to me. Yes, this may at first seem like a strange thought. But actually it makes a lot of sense, because just a few dollars, a few cents from all of you, from each and every one of you could substantially contribute to my wealth. To making me richer than I am right now. A lot richer. And, it would hardly cost you anything. That's what I'm asking you to conceive of. The idea of all of you out there sending money directly to me. To: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Yes, it's really a pretty simple concept, but can't you think of how wonderful it would be and how painless it would be for, for all of you? And how wonderful for me? It's hardly, it's hardly asking you anything. Just to conceive of sending me money. Can you think of this as a concept, as an idea, of sending money directly to me? It's a very simple thought and I need money. Can you conceive of doing this? My name is: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, and the zip code is 90291. Can you just conceive... directly to me. It's a simple thought. And if you could just send something, think of it, wouldn't this be great if all of you could just send a little something to me. Just by sending me a very small amount you could substantially contribute to my wealth. That's what I'm asking. I'm asking you all to just sort of, just chip a few my way, and the total force of all of you would make something happen. And it would hardly be anything for all of you. Think of this. Think of sending me money directly. It's not a bad idea. And it would be so easy if it could happen. If it could just, if everyone could just send a little something to me. My name: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Now, I know this may seem strange, like a strange idea, but if you think about it, just a little bit, it's actually quite simple. And, it would be such an easy thing for everyone to do. Painless too. It would be a painless thing for everyone, because it would be, the money, you wouldn't even feel it. A day from now you could forget about it. Yet, for me, I would remember it for the rest of my life. That's what I'm asking. I'm asking you to consider the possibility of you sending some money to me. Sending money to me. Sending it directly to me. Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. I need money. I don't have much money. So I'm asking you to consider what a great great thing it would be if everyone could, could send some money to me. It would be so simple. So simple for everybody to do. Can't you see that? It just wouldn't be hardly anything and yet if all of you grouped together you could really make something happen. I know it may sound like a silly idea but if you really think about it, it could happen. It's not inconceivable. It can only suggest the idea to you, but if all of you could send some money to me, think about that. My name: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. I'm asking you to consider this as a real, something to really think about, as a concept. The idea of everybody just, just sending something. Now wouldn't it be fantastic if you people that were more fortunate could send something substantial because, but I think the real important thing is that everyone think about sending something. Just consider this possibility. It's not a bad plan. If you could just send something, think about it as a possibility, as a concept. Just sending some money to me. It's just an idea. It's not something I can make you do. I just want you to think about it as a concept. The concept of everybody, by contributing a very small amount, could really make something happen. It's, by pulling, by all pushing in one direction you could really substantially improve my income. And it would be so painless for you. So painless to send a little something. It's not a bad idea is it? Think about it. If you could just think about doing this as a possibility. If you could just think about sending money directly to me. Do you think this is a possibility? Do you think this is something you could think about? The concept of everybody just jogging a little towards me, stepping to the left, everybody doing it at once, and all of a sudden it would be something substantial. And it would be such a small and a minor thing for you to do, yet if you all did it, it would be fantastic. It would really be something if you could just all do it. My name: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Can you think of this idea? Think of it spread throughout the whole country. If only everybody in the whole country could send me just a quarter, wouldn't that be great? It certainly would for me. And it wouldn't, it would be hardly anything for anybody. A quarter? Everybody's got one extra quarter. So it's such a simple idea. Such an easy thing to think about. And that's what I want you to think about tonight. The possibility of this happening. Of people sending money to me. Sending money to: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Is this something you can think about? Is this something you could really think about doing? Going down, getting the envelope, putting a stamp on it, addressing it to me: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. This is something I want you to think about. I don't have a lot of money, and I need more money. And if people everywhere could send me money I would have it. This would be a great thing. Just think of this possibility. Of everybody sending me a little bit of money. If you all sent me some money, I'd be rich. Richer. If you could just send money to me. To: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Now, that's all I want you to consider. The possibility of sending money directly to me. To: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. It's such a simple idea and it's so painless for all of you. It's such an easy thing. Can you conceive of doing this? Just taking some amount of money and sending it to me. Can you think of doing that? It would be so easy. It's as if the money was invisible for you, yet all of a sudden it becomes visible for me. It's so easy. In such small amounts, it's invisible. But when it's all put together, it's like the old story of the trees in the forest. If you could just do it. You could make it happen. Can you conceive of doing this? Actually sending me money. Sending money directly to me. To: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Could you send, could you think of doing that? Sending money to me. It's so easy. It's so painless for you, and it could be such a great, great thing for me. I would remember it. You would forget it. Could you think of doing that? Can you think of this possibility, the possibility of sending me money? Directly to: Chris Burden, 823 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, California, 90291. Thank you.

**This text is a transcription by Temporary Services of a 55:16 minute long radio piece. While we have made every effort to transcribe the piece as accurately as possible, the work exists only in audio form and this should be considered an interpretation. The recording was downloaded from [www.ubu.com](http://www.ubu.com).**



## OPINIONS OF WORKING PEOPLE CONCERNING THE ARTS



by  
DON CELENDER

### 1979 – *The Real Estate Show*

On December 30, a group of artists break into a city-owned building on New York's Lower East Side. They mount an exhibition about housing and real estate in New York. The show is quickly shut down by the police. The closure gets an enormous amount of media coverage. The artist Joseph Beuys shows up and creates even more of a spectacle with his presence. The city eventually gives the artists the building at 156 Rivington Street in exchange for a promise not to break into the building where *The Real Estate Show* was set up. The 156 Rivington building eventually becomes the fabled anti-space ABC No Rio.

Source: The original statement by the organizers of *The Real Estate Show* can be found on ABC No Rio's website, [www.abcnorio.org/about/history/res\\_statement\\_80.html](http://www.abcnorio.org/about/history/res_statement_80.html)

### 1983 – David Hammons stages *Bliz-aard Ball Sale* in New York City

Like much of David Hammons' work, *Bliz-aard Ball Sale* starts with a minor gesture. On a snowy winter day, Hammons stood in a heavy coat behind a blanket with an array of snowballs, arranged like a Minimalist grid and presented in descending order by size. It is unknown whether the artist actually sold any snowballs,

but making sales probably wasn't the point. The piece mirrored the gray market economies that were common in New York in the early 1980s. It was particularly common then to see people laying blankets or sheets on the sidewalk and offering up various items for sale that had been scavenged from the trash. The objects were often as abundant and worthless as snow on a winter day. When police forced the vendors to move, they could simply pull up all four corners of the sheet or blanket and be on their way.

Standing behind his snowballs, Hammons sold an image that he has adopted many times since: the artist as a clever, knowing jester. With *Bliz-aard Ball Sale*, Hammons gave the public direct access on the street by being bodily present in a way that he frequently denies the art world, where he is more reclusive.

Source: More on David Hammons and the *Bliz-aard Ball Sale* in the March 2009 *Frieze* article, "A Fraction of the Whole," by Steven Stern: [www.frieze.com/issue/article/a\\_fraction\\_of\\_the\\_whole](http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/a_fraction_of_the_whole)

### 1984 – J.S.G. Boggs begins to exchange hand-made money for goods and services

J.S.G. Boggs has spent over \$250,000 in hand-drawn variations on the local currency wherever he is based. After eating a meal, selecting an item, or receiving a service, he attempts to exchange his hand-made bills for goods and services that he wishes to purchase. Each transaction requires the recipient to consider whether his art is desirable enough to replace the money that they may then have to spend out of their own pocket in order to acquire Boggs' work. There is a further component to the transaction when collectors of Boggs' work have to personally negotiate with the owners of the bills in order to acquire his pieces. If someone buys this work outright, Boggs also includes the change he gets back, his purchase receipt and other ephemera from the transaction.

Though there is always a clear disclosure that he is exchanging art for goods and services, Boggs has repeatedly been arrested for counterfeiting in the USA and abroad. The U.S. Secret Service has raided his home and confiscated much of his artwork but he has never been formally charged.

Source: [www.museumofhoaxes.com/hoax/Hoaxipedia/J.S.G.\\_Boggs](http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/hoax/Hoaxipedia/J.S.G._Boggs)

### 1985 – Guerrilla Girls group forms to combat sexual, racial and economic inequality in the arts

Members of the anonymous group conceal their identities by wearing gorilla masks and adopting the names of deceased women artists (with the exception of one member, who didn't like the artist-name idea and goes by "Guerrilla Girl1"). From an interview in their first book, *Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls*:

Q. How did the Guerrilla Girls start?

Kathe Kollwitz: In 1985, The Museum of Modern Art in New York opened an exhibition titled An International Survey of Painting and Sculpture. It was supposed to be an up-to-the minute summary of the most significant contemporary art in the world. Out of 169 artists, only thirteen were women. All the artists were white, either from Europe or the US. That was bad enough, but the curator, Kynaston McShine, said any artist who wasn't in the show should rethink 'his' career. And that really annoyed a lot of artists because obviously the guy was completely prejudiced. Women demonstrated in front of the museum with the usual placards and picket line. Some of us who attended were irritated that we didn't make any impression on passersby.

Meta Fuller: We began to ask ourselves some questions. Why did women and artists of color do better in the 1970s than in the 1980s? Was there a backlash in the art world? Who was responsible? What could be done about it?

Q. What did you do?

Frida Kahlo: We decided to find out how bad it was. After about five minutes of research we found that it was worse than we thought: the most influential galleries and museums exhibited almost no women artists. When we showed the figures around, some said it was an issue of quality, not prejudice. Others admitted there was discrimination, but considered the situation hopeless. Everyone in positions of power curators, critics, collectors, the artists themselves passed the buck. The artists blamed the dealers, the dealers blamed the collectors, the collectors blamed the critics, and so on. We decided to embarrass each group by showing their records in public. Those were the first posters we put up in the streets of SoHo in New York.

Q. Why are you anonymous?

Guerrilla Girl1: The art world is a very small place. Of course, we were afraid that if we blew the whistle on some of its most powerful people, we could kiss off our art careers. But mainly, we wanted the focus to be on the issues, not on our personalities or our own work.

Source: [www.guerrillagirls.com/interview/index.shtml](http://www.guerrillagirls.com/interview/index.shtml)

## 1993 – David Avalos, Louis Hock and Elizabeth Sisco create Art Rebate

For a commission by the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego and Centro Cultural de la Raza as part of the *La Frontera/The Border* exhibition, these artists used the bulk of their project budget to refund \$10 bills to 450 undocumented workers along the San Diego, California and Mexico border. The project demonstrated the role of illegal immigrants in the national economy. Many of those who were given money immediately spent it at local businesses. English and Spanish fliers printed by the artists stated, “This \$10 bill is part of an art project that intends to return tax dollars to taxpayers, particularly ‘undocumented taxpayers’. The art rebate acknowledges your role as a vital player in an economic community indifferent to national borders.” The project infuriated many, including Republican California Representative Randy (Duke) Cunningham, who called the project “outrageous” and wrote the National Endowment for the Arts that he could “scarcely imagine a more contemptuous use of taxpayers’ hard-earned dollars.”

Source: “Art Dollars for Me, \$10 for You, \$10 for You,” by Seth Mydans. *New York Times*, August 12, 1993, [www.nytimes.com/1993/08/12/us/art-dollars-for-me-10-for-you-10-for-you.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1993/08/12/us/art-dollars-for-me-10-for-you-10-for-you.html)

## 1993 – Haha opens FLOOD in a Chicago storefront

Members of the Chicago-based artist group Haha lost a lot of friends to the HIV virus during the AIDS crisis. They were not satisfied with how the crisis was being addressed by the government, activists, or artists, and decided to initiate *FLOOD*. Haha’s hugely important (though frequently overlooked) work *FLOOD* was provided as a series of services to others. *FLOOD* had its headquarters in a storefront space in Rogers Park, the northernmost neighborhood of Chicago. In the space’s front room, the group built a hydroponic garden, which was used to grow produce that was then delivered to people living with HIV/AIDS. Raising food hydroponically kept the produce free of soil-borne bacteria – some of which could be harmful, if not deadly,

to people with compromised immune systems. This was at a time before protease inhibitors, when medication to treat the virus was less effective than today’s generation of antiviral drugs. There were raised-bed demonstration gardens outside, in front and back. There was a meeting area at the back of the space, with racks of informational literature lining one wall. The space was used on nearly a daily basis for meetings, raising food, demonstrating growing techniques to children and adult passers-by, and hosted many, many conversations with a range of visitors. *FLOOD* lasted for well over three years in several locations.

Source: [www.hahahaha.org/projFlood.html](http://www.hahahaha.org/projFlood.html)

## 1997 – Conrad Bakker initiates Untitled Project

Working under the name *Untitled Project*, Urbana, Illinois-based artist Conrad Bakker uses coarsely carved and painted wood simulations of mostly commercially available objects and playfully introduces them into a variety of social, institutional, and economic spaces. Pricing in Bakker’s replicas is generally appropriate to the price of the original. Replicas of vintage Tupperware were placed on eBay (in the vintage Tupperware sales category) at starting prices that mirror the typical prices that vintage Tupperware brings. In *Untitled Project: GARAGE SALE* (1997), Bakker used a residential lawn in Grand Rapids, Michigan to present hand-carved replicas of one hundred common domestic items on hand-carved tables and desks. For *Untitled Project: CONSUMER ACTIONS (KMART)* (2002), Bakker hand-copied items for sale in the store, placed them on the shelves alongside the source products, took photos of their juxtapositions and then left the art works to drift. In *Untitled Project: MIX-TAPESWAP* (2003), exhibition viewers and others who participated by mail were invited to exchange a real audio cassette mix tape with Bakker for a hand-made replica. For *Untitled Project: FREE [TV]* (2003), Bakker carved and painted a wood copy of an existing TV with a “Free” sign taped to its screen and left it in the lobby of an art museum. The TV was claimed within twenty minutes. In *Untitled Project: SIDEWALK ECONOMIES* (2005), Bakker placed carved and painted replicas of arbitrary debris like plastic cups, orange peels, and rubber bands around the Mission District of San Francisco and the resulting situations were photographed and presented as documentation. For *Untitled Project: VHS RENTAL [Slacker]* (2005), Bakker made thirty-two wood and paint copies of the Richard Linklater film *Slacker* (made in Austin, Texas) and presented them in a gallery in the same city. Viewers could rent the wood tapes for \$4 for the first three nights.

Source: [www.untitledprojects.com](http://www.untitledprojects.com)

## 1998 – Minerva Cuevas begins working as Mejor Vida Corp. (MVC)

Mejor Vida Corp. (Better Life Corporation) is self-described as a non-profit corporation that “creates, promotes and distributes world wide products and services for free.” One of MVC’s first subversive projects was a free international student ID card (“The MVC Student ID Card can be used internationally to obtain free or reduced museum admissions, public transportation, travel accommodation, other IDs, discounts on airfares, as well as many other benefits”). MVC has also made barcode stickers that reduce the price of food at supermarket chains like Safeway. In a collaboration with various institutions since 2000, MVC has provided free letters of recommendation. “Anyone can request a recommendation letter issued by MVC or institutions collaborating with us.” Among the participating institutions are: The Gallery Chantal Crousel (Paris, France), The Lisson Gallery (London, UK) and Hartware MedienKunstVerein (Germany). MVC projects commonly utilize institutional resources and place them into the service of the public, creating generous situations that would be unlikely to occur without an artist’s

intervention.

Source: [www.irational.org/mvc/english.html](http://www.irational.org/mvc/english.html)

## 2000 – @TMark starts Mutual Funds

The entity @TMark is legally defined as “...a brokerage that benefits from ‘limited liability’ just like any other corporation; using this principle, @TMark supports the sabotage (informative alteration) of corporate products, from dolls and children’s learning tools to electronic action games, by channeling funds from investors to workers for specific projects grouped into ‘mutual funds’.” *Mutual Funds* was an umbrella for several smaller funds for interventionists and activist art projects. Some of these included *The War Fund*, *The Intellectual Property Rights Fund*, and *The High Risk Fund*. *Mutual Funds* advanced @TMark’s goals of supporting efforts that used “...non-violent, non-branded tactics primarily aimed at disrupting the political and consumer culture through acts of détournement and poetic terrorism.” People seeking funds could post their ideas and the community that formed around @TMark could support those ideas through donations.

Sources: [rtmark.com/funds.html](http://rtmark.com/funds.html) and [affinityproject.org/groups/rtmark.html](http://affinityproject.org/groups/rtmark.html)

## 2007 – Collective Foundation issues three Collective Grants

The Collective Foundation (CF) describes itself as “...a research and development organization offering services to artists and arts organizations. The Collective Foundation focuses on fostering mutually beneficial exchange and collective action by designing practical structures and utilizing new web-based technologies. Ultimately the central concern of the Collective Foundation is to serve as an ongoing experimental process and catalyst for new ideas. CF proposes ‘bottom-up’ and decentralized forms of organization and investigates the formation and distribution of resources. This means inventing new forms of funding and new ways of working together. Like the Art Workers’ Coalition, who proposed pragmatic solutions to problems faced by artists, the Collective Foundation seeks alternative operational solutions, while reducing the bureaucratic formalities of overhead and administration.”

In 2007, this San Francisco-based group issued three separate \$500 grants to artists using a variety of creative fundraising strategies. For the *Collective Library Grant*, Collective Foundation solicited donations of 100 art catalogs from ten area art spaces that were sold as one *Collective Library*. Sales of the library paid for an artist grant to facilitate research and participation for a web-based audio project that Collective Foundation hosts. Uncirculated or old exhibition catalogs are a very common surplus item at art spaces. A particularly sweet result of this sale was that the library was purchased not by an individual for private consumption, but by the San José Institute for Contemporary Art, which turned the books into a reading room.

The \$500 YBCA Grant drew money from three separate sources in conjunction with an exhibit that Collective Foundation participated in at the Yerba Buena Center for Art (YBCA). Memberships sold during the exhibit opening, part of the sales from the Co-op Bar (another CF project created with artist Steve Lambert), and some of the sales from CF’s printing press generated a \$500 grant for an artist. The final jurors of the grant consisted of YBCA guards.

The \$500 *Collective Hosting* grant generates funds from fees paid by artists who host their websites on CF’s web server, paying a \$100.00 fee into a fund used for grants rather than giving it to an internet service provider. Those who pay into the fund then become the jurors for the grant.

Source: [www.collectivefoundation.org](http://www.collectivefoundation.org)



# ARTISTS TODAY CAN PRODUCE THEIR OWN COLLECTIVE SECURITY

## STATE OF THE UNION

Gregory Sholette

Before an artwork can be exhibited, before it represents or refuses to represent anything, before it can be dealt, sold, or collected, there come research and planning, gathering tools, purchasing materials, and even alerting networks. Whether the outcome is an object, document, gesture, or performance, it is, obviously, the result of labor. When Nicolas Bourriaud describes an artwork as “a dot on a line,” it is this indivisibility of labor and result that he seeks to capture. But it is not the “line” that museums and collectors covet – it is the “dot,” perhaps most appropriately envisioned as a red sticker. In this near-feral market, the artwork has increasingly become the focus, which probably explains why so little attention is paid to the conditions of artistic labor, even among artists themselves. This was not always the case. Contrary to the oft-cited canard that artists are too independent to work together, the United States has a substantial history of artistic guilds, unions, associations, and collectives, many of which began in the Depression of the 1930s.

While some half-million painters, printmakers, muralists, and sculptors found employment through work-relief programs managed by the Federal Art Project (FAP; a unit of the Works Progress Administration), many sought better pay and greater job security and challenged race-based discrimination through their own independently organized groups. In 1935, the Harlem

Artists Guild pressured the local FAP to hire more African-American artists not only as muralists but also as project supervisors. One year later, artist Stuart Davis and other members of the Communist Party launched the American Artists' Congress, which agitated for a permanent federal arts work program and proposed that museums pay rental fees to artists (a demand echoed thirty years later by the Art Workers' Coalition). One member, painter Yasuo Kuniyoshi, later presided over the Artists' Equity Association (AEA), which was established during the conservative years of postwar “normalization,” when radicals were purged from unions, women were fired from factories, and artists began to abandon picket lines for their studios. The AEA later split into two organizations, both of which continue to press for artists' legal rights and for ethical business practices among dealers.

It was not until the years of the “Great Refusal,” as Herbert Marcuse described the '60s and '70s, that artists again took up militant self-organizing, often identifying with a blue-collar workforce already coming under pressure to accept pension cuts and disband unions. In January 1969, a group of artists and critics that included Vassilakis Takis from Greece, Hans Haacke from Germany, Wen-Ying Tsai from China, and Tom Lloyd, Willoughby Sharp, and John Perreault from the United States established the Art Workers' Coalition (AWC). The coalition quickly drew several hundred people to its open-door meetings, among them familiar names such as Carl Andre, Benny Andrews, Gregory Battcock, Lee Lozano, and Lucy

Lippard. At first, the AWC functioned much like a trade union. It treated museums, their boards, and their top administrators as if they constituted a managerial front for the interests of the commercial art world. The group presented a list of thirteen demands to the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1969 (the following year, these were boiled down to nine and addressed to “art museums in general”). Among the reforms called for was a royalties system by which collectors would pay artists a percentage of profits from the resale of their work. The AWC also proposed the creation of a trust fund that would provide living artists “stipends, health insurance, help for artists' dependents and other social benefits”; a levy on the sale of work by dead artists would ensure the fund's endowment. The coalition also demanded that museums “should be open on two evenings until midnight and admission should be free at all times.” Before it disbanded in 1971, the group actively protested US military involvement in Southeast Asia, supported striking staff at MoMA, and called on museums to set aside exhibition space for women, minorities, and artists with no gallery representation. However, it is the insistence on free-admission hours that remains the AWC's one concrete, lasting achievement.

That said, it is not without irony that artists, critics, and intellectuals – then as now a relatively privileged group both economically and in terms of education – would identify themselves as workers at a time when traditional brick-and-mortar industries were disappearing from the very urban centers where artists concentrated; low-cost housing, unprecedented income

parity, and the social safety net of the now-extinct liberal welfare state also made political organizing less of a threat to one's livelihood. But as we well know, the conservative "revolution" of Reagan and Thatcher soon followed. After experimenting with ideas, politics, unions, and other not-so-marketable practices, artists began to paint again. As critic Craig Owens commented at the time, East Village artists of the '80s surrendered themselves "to the means-end rationality of the marketplace," while mimicking the subaltern culture they were helping to displace. Nevertheless, some artists continued to self-organize for greater equity at a time of rapid defunding of the public sphere through targeted cuts in nonmilitary state expenditures. Calls for economic justice were most explicit in the Guerrilla Girls' agitprop street campaigns, but collectives such as Carnival Knowledge, Group Material, Political Art Documentation/Distribution, Paper Tiger Television, and Gran Fury, to name only a few, helped make manifest an otherwise hidden force of social production that was not visible to most in the art world. In some cases, this missing cultural mass included nonprofessionals such as street artists, political activists, and even porn stars.

This collapsing of formal and informal modes of cultural production has since inched steadily closer to the mainstream art world. Which, of course, raises the question: What constitutes artistic production when artists abandon traditional craft skills to include the work of amateurs, incorporate mass-produced images and objects, or outsource the making of the work itself? Marx believed that artistic production is the inevitable outcome of an artistic nature, but the introduction of collage, montage, productivism, appropriation, conceptual art, and, most of all, the readymade has greatly upset this tidy assessment. The de-skilling of art has its corollary in the rise of digital technologies that allow even laptop-toting preteens to turn out sophisticated-looking aesthetic products.

Further complicating the current status of artistic production is the 180-degree shift in the profile of the artist, from marginal outcast to a fetish figure for the "creative," networked economy. Cultural critics from Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello to Brian Holmes have analyzed how '90s-era business managers and policy makers absorbed the desire for autonomy writ large by the artistic demands of '60s counterculture to transform the workplace into a softer, less hierarchical, and ultimately more flexible form of social control. The new spirit of capitalism calls on all of us to think like an artist: outside the box.

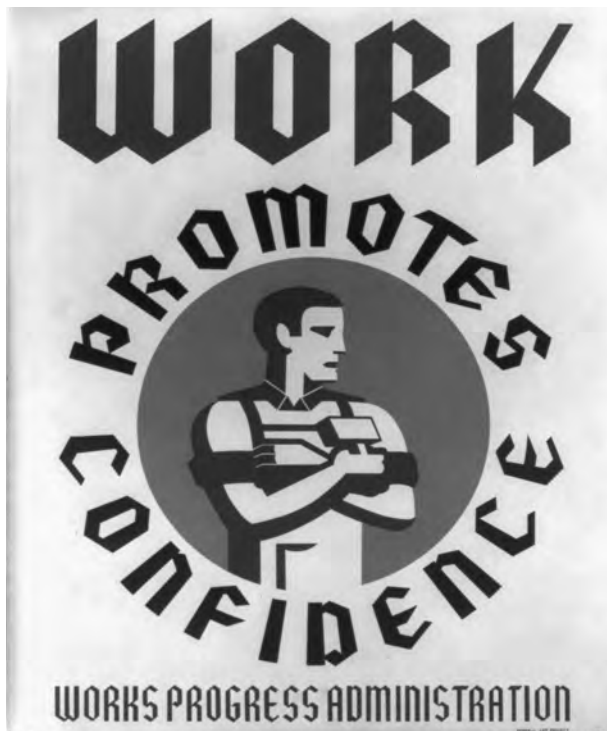
Yet despite this alleged upgrade in status, the majority of artists continue to lead a precarious existence, especially in those countries where the state has ceased to mediate between the well-being of the working population and the needs of the corporate sector. Widespread de-regulation has certainly increased prosperity for a few, but it provides no substantial "trickle-down" advantage for the many – not in China, India, Eastern Europe, the United Kingdom, or the United States, and not within the contemporary art world, a notoriously unregulated market. Even relatively successful artists must cope with constantly shifting employment, global transit (from biennial to fair to biennial), and tireless networking and self-promotion, which may be the real reason artists are hailed as the prototype of the knowledge proletariat.

If even those artists at the top end of the food chain struggle for more equitable treatment, then what becomes of the invisible tens of thousands whose production seems more or less superfluous? On graduation from art school, the newly minted artist enters a world of unaffordable health care, studio space pushed to the margins by gentrification, a scarcity of full-time teaching positions, and part-time adjunct work that is typically bereft of benefits and lean on wages. All these factors have contributed to poverty rates among artists in the US that, according to sociologist Pierre-Michel Menger, are "higher than those for all other professional and technical workers." And yet the siren song of the information economy insists that you, too, can prosper from your inner creativity, perhaps helping to explain why enrollment in art schools continues to increase, duly augmenting the oversupply of labor that art historian Carol Duncan perceptively described as "the normal condition

of the art market." But while a glut of artists is nothing new, remember that art is one economy where excess product does not lower prices; it only lowers labor costs. A recent study by the RAND Corporation reveals the widening gap between the few who do succeed and the many not sharing in the tumescent wealth of today's global art world. This may relate to another labor stratification in the art world that separates "thinkers" from "makers" – the former tend to employ the latter, typically graduates of schools where nonconceptual skills such as painting, printing, welding, and casting are still emphasized.

The artist as laborer has become the artist as entrepreneur – a free agent, like other "creative" workers, scrambling to wind up on the right side of the ever-widening have/have-not divide. Accordingly, like workers in other fields made precarious by deregulation, most artists in search of greater financial security are now bypassing collective organizing for private market mechanisms such as Artist Pension Trust (APT). Created in 2004 – by technology entrepreneur Moti Shniberg, Dan Galai (onetime accomplice of the late economist Milton Friedman, father of Reaganomics), and David A. Ross (former SF MoMA and Whitney Museum of American Art director, and soon to head a New York branch of London's Albion Gallery) – APT has opened offices not only in New York, Los Angeles, London, and Berlin but also in the budding art-market centers of Dubai, Mumbai, Beijing, and Mexico City. The fund's goal is to collateralize the chronic insecurity of art professionals by enlisting artists – generally those who have already achieved a certain level of market success – to invest some of their work "alongside a community of select artists, thereby providing a uniquely diversified, alternative income stream." In theory, it will take only a few superstars to emerge from this cluster of investors for all the shareholders to enhance their economic security. Sounding more like an old-fashioned WPA reformer than a neoliberal entrepreneur, Ross insists APT is "a way to take advantage of the capitalistic nature of the market and mix in a healthy dose of socialism to create a hybrid form." But real autonomy depends on organizing not only the workers in the office but also those on the loading docks – consider the economic significance of those artists who invisibly help make the art world work; no doubt New Deal artists, as well as those of the Great Society, grasped this. Perhaps by gleaning what is most useful from the past, artists today can produce their own collective security. They have much to gain and nothing to lose except their own precarity.

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## THOUGHTS ON STANDARDIZING FAIR ARTISTS' LECTURE FEES

Harrell Fletcher

I started doing lectures about my work at various schools and institutions over a decade ago. One thing that became clear right away was that there are no regulations to standardize the fees that you are paid for a lecture; some places offered me very little, others paid me far more than I thought the lecture was worth. On top of the fees, some places cover travel, hotel, and sometimes a per diem, while others don't. When I was getting started I was happy to have a chance to talk about my work pretty much anywhere so I took almost every offer I got and didn't mention the inconsistencies I was running across. Later on I decided to come up with a minimum lecture fee, which was not only helpful financially, but also limited my travel, which appealed to me after my daughter showed up and I wanted to spend more time with her.

I found out that in Canada they have government standards for artist's fees. The non-profit that administers the program is called CARFAC ([www.carfac.ca](http://www.carfac.ca)). They make sure that any arts organization that gets government funding provides adequate artists fees to artists for doing shows, lectures, workshops, etc. Even when I participate in a group show in Canada I get a small check in the mail for participating. Obviously, that's not the way it works in the US, but for several years I've thought that it would be a good idea to at least make a website that lists suggested minimum fees for US arts organizations to use when paying artists. What I'd like to do is survey artists and organizations and find out the fees that they have been paid and pay for various services, and then from that information come up with a set of standards. That way when an artist is being asked to do a lecture they can just refer to the website to find out what they should be getting paid. If that isn't the amount they are being offered they can let the organization know that they are paying below the minimum and need to alter their payment amounts. Maybe at some point I'll actually get around to putting the website together. If anyone wants to help, let me know.

Another related issue is that the art world is such a winner take all, capitalist, star system that arts organizations are willing to pay large amounts for "art star" types, while offering lesser known artists smaller fees or expecting them to perform services for free. In my own little way I have been attempting to challenge this with a lecture series that I organize with my graduate students at Portland State University. We have been doing the series for four years now, and right from the start I decided that all lecturers, regardless of art world status, would be paid the same amount to do a lecture. In the past we have had about twenty-five public lectures a year, one almost every Monday night of the school year. The grad students have a big hand in selecting the lecturers and organizing their visits. In the beginning, all of the lecturers were paid \$500, and if they were coming from out of the area, their travel and two nights at a hotel were also covered. This last year I was able to increase the fee amounts for the out of towners – \$750 if they were coming from outside of the Oregon/Washington region but were still in a Western State and \$1000 if they lived further away than that. Once again the prices stayed the same for big shots and more obscure people; the increase was only based on the distance traveled and the time and hassle that requires. When asking someone to do a lecture at PSU we let them know the general fee structure to make all of that as transparent as possible. So far running the lecture series in this way has worked out well, and we have been able to host dozens and dozens of amazing lectures. For some lecturers the fee is smaller than what they normally receive, for others it is a great amount of money, but either way I feel like it is a decent and fair payment for the service they are providing.



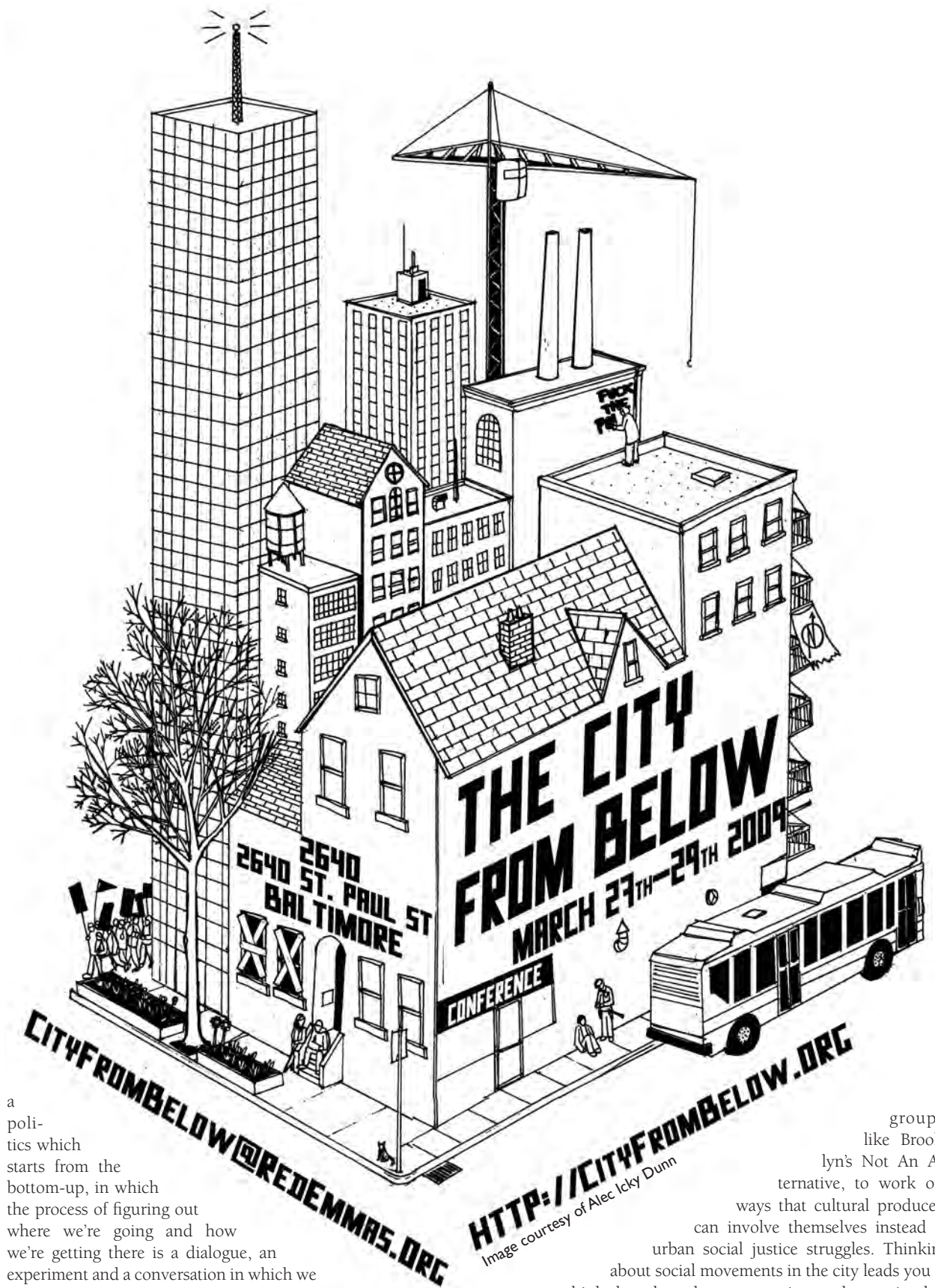
# REPORT ON THE CITY FROM BELOW

Scott Berzofsky and John Duda  
For *The City From Below* Organizers

In March 2009, Red Emma's (a worker-owned and democratically managed bookstore and coffeehouse), the Baltimore Development Cooperative (an artist group) and the Independent Reader (a free quarterly newspaper) co-organized a conference in Baltimore called "The City from Below." Our motivation for the conference came out of our own organizing experience and a shared recognition that the city is increasingly the space in which all of our diverse struggles for social justice – for affordable housing, environmental justice, prison abolition, living wages, food security, decent public education – have the potential to come together and form something greater. As the financial crisis played out in the national news and in the spectacle of legislative action, we felt an urgent need to highlight grassroots responses to the crisis, including challenges to foreclosures, and to use the moment as an opportunity to promote an alternative vision of urban democracy: one in which the city's inhabitants themselves directly control the way the city works and how it grows – not by electing a mayor or a council person once every few years, but by actively participating in a thriving fabric of locally controlled projects and initiatives which build and manage the urban environment.

From the start, we worked under the assumption that "another conference was possible." We wanted to organize something that wouldn't solely consist of academics detached from – and above – social movements, talking to each other and at a passive audience. Instead, we envisioned a conference "from below," where social movements set the agenda and where some of the most inspiring campaigns and projects on the frontlines of the fight for the right to the city (community anti-gentrification groups, homeless advocacy groups, transit rights activists, tenant unions, sex worker's rights advocates, prison reform groups) would not just be represented, but would concretely benefit from the alliances they built and the knowledge they gained by attending. At the same time, we wanted to productively engage those within the academic system, as well as artists, journalists and other researchers to produce a space where academics and practitioners could listen to each other and share their theoretical analysis and practical experiences. Locally, we consulted with social justice organizations in Baltimore as a part of the conference organizing process, in particular building a strong partnership with the United Workers as they ramped up the organizing for their own major event, the B'More Fair and Human Rights Zone March on the Inner Harbor. We prioritized inviting and funding the travel for groups that were working at the grassroots level in radical ways to address urban injustice, getting folks like Miami's Take Back the Land, NYC's Picture the Homeless, and Boston's City Life/Vida Urbana to Baltimore for the conference.

Significantly, the entire event was organized independently with no financial support from universities or big grant-makers, relying instead on the power and energy within our own social movement networks. This was accomplished by holding several fundraisers, getting small donations from supporters, requesting pre-registration fees, inviting local artists and several members of the Justseeds Artist Cooperative to design posters and donate artwork, asking supporters with positions at universities to leverage their access to video equipment, and relying on our amazing network of friends to volunteer their time and labor to provide everything from a free child-care program, Spanish translation, video documentation, web design, catered meals and housing for folks from out of town. In addition, none of this would have been possible without 2640, the cooperatively run events space that hosted the event. While there are many things we could have done better, overall we felt we did a good job of living up to the Zapatista slogan from which we drew part of the conference title – "from below and to the left" – a description of



a politics which starts from the bottom-up, in which the process of figuring out where we're going and how we're getting there is a dialogue, an experiment and a conversation in which we listen to each other and decide on our goals, our strategy, and our tactics together.

The response we received to our calls for participation (more proposals than we could accommodate in a packed three-day program) confirmed our initial assumption that there was indeed something productive about using "the city" as a way to think and act on a multiplicity of political concerns in a shared framework. As capitalism tries to give itself a green makeover, thinking about urban sustainability reveals the unavoidable connections between food supplies, public spaces, common lands, and inexcusable inequalities based in race and class divisions. Thinking about art in the city leads you to think about the role that artists play in gentrification, and drives

groups, like Brooklyn's Not An Alternative, to work out ways that cultural producers can involve themselves instead in urban social justice struggles. Thinking about social movements in the city leads you to think about how they communicate, what stories they tell themselves and others, how they preserve and transmit their own history and how they use media to agitate and organize. Thinking about the millions of people in prison in the U.S. makes you connect the dots between a crumbling economy, institutionalized racism, and the militarized approach to policing exemplified by the "War on Drugs." *The City From Below* was broad enough of a platform to bring together insurgent urban planners and designers with the members of a social movement mobilizing shack-dwellers and other dispossessed communities to fight displacement and evictions in the wake of post-Apartheid South Africa's enthusiastic embrace of neoliberal development policies, and at the same time, focused



enough that a real conversation, productive for all parties involved, might just take place.

Perhaps nowhere was this ability of “the city” to draw together multiple strands of struggle and resistance into concrete problems and potential new avenues of collective action more apparent than in the multiple presentations which dealt with the impact of the current economic crisis on the city. While at the national level the crisis plays out in the stratosphere of financial capital, with bailouts and bankers, the effects in the city are much more real. While fictitious assets vanish from the corporate balance sheets, real homes disappear as families are foreclosed on, real public infrastructure crumbles as budgets are slashed. Formulating an appropriate radical response to the crisis from below was a major concern of many who presented at the conference – how does a community stop foreclosures through direct action? How can foreclosed or abandoned properties be reappropriated to provide housing for those who need it? How do we build communities of care and sustainable food systems that provide what we all need to live, outside of disastrously unstable (and fundamentally exploitative) globalized financial systems? The economic crisis is not just an aberration, but points towards serious contradictions in the capitalist system – built on the creation of speculative wealth and the transfer of power away from the people who have to suffer the consequences. This is perhaps no where more evident than in the city, where the prevailing model of development “from above” and for the benefit of the already privileged has used imaginary property values to replace neighborhoods with condominiums, to subsidize private projects like hotels and casinos instead of public projects like schools and hospitals. The bursting of the housing bubble and the domino effect bringing down banks and insurance companies is just a symptom of the real crisis: an economy of privatization and dispossession, undemocratic to the core, which puts the markets and profit first and the real needs of people a distant second.

Perhaps the most inspiring thing about *The City From Below* was the way in which one could see, in the various overlapping initiatives and struggles represented at the conference, the glimmers of an appropriate response. This response is one which contests the dominance of private property and private interests in directing urban development, which asserts the right of the city’s inhabitants to housing, food, and above all to dignity, and which reimagines urban space as a site of collective experimentation and the construction of alternatives rather than a territory to be controlled and managed. And this response, the outlines of which the conference helped us see, is to be constructed out of what makes the city beautiful – not politicians and bureaucrats or speculators and developers, but people living together, learning from each other, sharing spaces, working and fighting side by side, building a future together. It is a vision not only of a more just and equitable city, but of the reinvention of urban democracy that it would take to make such a city real.

## MICRO GRANTING FROM THE BOTTOM UP

### InCUBATE

#### Who We Are

InCUBATE stands for the Institute for Community Understanding Between Art and the Everyday. We’re dedicated to exploring and documenting experimental approaches to arts administration and arts funding. InCUBATE is an open platform where we can openly question how the art world actually works and what possible directions it could conceivably take. Our main focus has been to address the lack of resources for artists operating outside the boundaries of institutional and market support and experiment with possible solutions. We are a research group. We produce exhibitions.

We run a residency program. We co-manage a storefront, and we put on public programs on our own and with others.

InCUBATE is a learning tool to figure out how and why institutions function the way they do, who the people involved are, and what interests they serve. We want to learn by doing. How can we participate in artist-run culture as it exists beyond analyzing and historicizing its practices? What does collaboration between administrators and artists look like when institutional authority is called into question? We aren’t experts. Our process is directly dependent on a gradually accumulating group of people who want to be involved in collectively pooling resources, sharing histories on what’s already been done, and imagining the conditions for an ethical and critical art world that would support its constituents. It’s built upon social relationships that have to develop over time.

InCUBATE does not have non-profit status. Instead we are interested in developing work patterns that are capable of circumventing many of the commonly held truisms of non-profit management, especially the incessant desire for organizational growth and the notion that institutional success can and should be measured quantitatively. While exploring our own process of becoming a research institute, we become a resource for others by generating and sharing a new vocabulary of practical solutions to the everyday problems of producing under-the-radar culture.



#### Projects We Do

*Sunday Soup Brunch* started because we were engaged with these abstract ideas about funding but wanted to figure out a way to address them practically. One Sunday a month, we invite people to the storefront space we share for a meal based around soup. Guest chefs cook simple soups using local ingredients (when possible). We supplement this with side dishes and dessert. The meal is sold for \$10 per person. All the income from that meal, after ingredient reimbursement, is given as a grant to support a creative project. We accept grant applications up until the day of the meal; everyone who purchases soup that day gets one vote to determine who receives the grant.

*Sunday Soup Brunch* is explicitly functional as a way of generating independent funding for cultural producers, and implicitly critical because it contributes to a conversation about the availability and distribution of resources within the mainstream arts establishment. In an environment where governmental support for experimental art practice is minimal at best and private support is dictated by the values and priorities of granting foundations, corporations, and wealthy individuals whose motives are often anything but disinterested, innovative and potentially controversial work is compromised in order to fit within categories deemed “fundable.”

While raising money, *Sunday Soup Brunch* also serves as a way to build a network of support that reaches beyond purely monetary assistance. Guest chefs organize presentations and lead discussions after the meal. We like to think of it as



an open platform to discuss ongoing projects with new audiences, meet new collaborators, and share ways of working as well as being a lively social space centered on the pleasures of eating with others as well. The project also integrates with our other activities in that often our residents cook soup or present their work and also apply for the grant itself. It has also allowed us to fund the projects of fellow travelers like Gabriel Saloman’s *Spartacus School of Passing Time*, Geraldine Juarez’ *Tanda Foundation*, and Joseph Del Pesco’s *Black Market Type* project. Presentations have taken the form of an art historical lecture by critic Lori Waxman on walking as an aesthetic practice, a meal by San Francisco underground restaurant chef Leif Hedendal, and Marc Moscato from Portland who screened his documentary about Chicago’s Dill Pickle Club and spoke about the accompanying exhibition at Mess Hall.

*Sunday Soup Brunch* has been taken up and repurposed as a model in various cities around the world. In Portland, Katy Asher, Ariana Jacob and Amber Bell have started *Portland Stock*. So far they’ve held two events and given away over \$700. In Newcastle, former InCUBATE resident Michael Mulvihill has started *Saturday Soup* at Waygood, an organization that houses collectively run artists studios. In New York City, a group called FEAST began a similar granting project last winter and has already given away \$6,000 to eleven grantees. Although *Sunday Soup* is rooted in the local, its framework is easily adaptable to different contexts and situations. It’s exciting for us to see the *Sunday Soup* model prove successful in such different contexts.

The questions InCUBATE asks through the framework of the *Sunday Soup Grant Program* are meant to be pointed and challenging so that this inquiry extends beyond the rhetorical basis for our program model. We imagine the project as a much-needed and necessarily local gathering space to begin talking about the kinds of alternative economies we want to create, both on the macro- and micro-scale. We want to actively examine the ways in which we are implicated and accountable within the economies of culture. So we find ourselves concerned with keeping our own miniature economy functional, but also contemplating economies of scale. We are faced with the questions: How do we bridge scales? How do we operate locally, within our own network and simultaneously puncture its borders?

Our newest project is the *Artist Run Credit League* (ARCL), a rotating credit association for artist-run spaces in Chicago. The ARCL format is derived from that of the *tanda*, a monetary practice formed by a core of participants who agree to make regular contributions to a fund, which is given to each contributor in rotation. It basically acts as a collective savings account and micro-credit line, which is based on a mutual trust amongst the members and a shared faith in the value of keeping the community networked. Members can swap out the months that they will receive their credit based on their programming needs. They are also required to throw one fundraiser per credit-cycle that will raise at least \$200 dollars, the collective sum of which gets distributed equally to all members on a quarterly basis. Besides the participation of individual



Memorandum of Understanding

ARTIST RUN CREDIT LEAGUE (ARCL)
artistruncreditleague.org

Initiated by the Institute for Community Understanding Between Art and the Everyday (InCUBATE)

//// ARCL Member Agreement ////

/// Project Description

ARCL is a rotating credit association designed to support artist-run spaces in Chicago. The league is formed upon a core of participants who agree to make monthly contributions to a collective interest-bearing savings account and line of credit.

/// Why Start a Credit League?

ARCL is a means of addressing the collective lack of economic resources amongst Chicago's artist-run spaces.

Just like a community bank, together we can generate interest for each other.

As a means of establishing an informal credit network, ARCL requires a mutual trust amongst all contributing members as well as a shared belief in the value of Chicago's artist-run community itself.

/// General Agreement

// Monthly Contribution

Each participating space will pay \$20/month into the ARCL Fund for the duration of the credit-cycle.

// Credit-Cycle & Individual credit

Both the credit-cycle and amount of individual credit will be determined by the total number of ARCL members. For example: If there are 8 members, then the cycle will last 8 months, and each group will have \$160 of credit.

// Rotating Payout

Each month of the credit-cycle, one ARCL member will be paid the full amount of their individual credit. The monthly schedule of disbursements will be established by a random draw at the commencement of each credit-cycle. Groups may switch months if both are in mutual agreement.

// Fundraisers

Each ARCL member agrees to hold one fundraising event per credit-cycle. Events must attempt to raise at least \$200.

// Donations to the ARCL

Any donations made to the ARCL by non-members may be considered tax deductible.

// Bonuses

Every three months and/or at the conclusion of the credit-cycle, the total funds garnered by ARCL fundraisers as well as from any additional donations will be divided equally and distributed to each ARCL member in the form of a bonus check.

// Exiting & Joining the ARCL

A two month hiatus will follow the conclusion of each credit-cycle. During this time any current ARCL members may exit the league and new members may join.

// Modification of the Memorandum of Understanding

A meeting to consider modifying the MOU will be initiated if requested by 2 or more ARCL members. Any modifications must be unanimously decided by all current ARCL members.

Table with 3 columns: Member Name, Signature, Date. Multiple rows for signatories.

members, the league is also structured to accept tax-deductible contributions from outside donors wishing to support the entire community as a whole. We hope that artist-run spaces, by being mutually invested in the fund itself, will have an interest in attending each other's fundraisers and building the community of participants outwards. The fund will accrue value the more

the community invests in its well-being, meaning that it will become a sustainable model based on the group's level of commitment to making it work. In essence, it is an experimental community bank in which artist-run spaces can have a platform for sharing resources and discuss creative fundraising tools. We don't have any idea if this project is going to work, but

in order for these new forms to have any real political currency, they need to be developed through a group process, creating alliances between artists and non-artists that are animated within particular contexts of power. Though InCUBATE is far from being an authority in creating credit associations, there are plenty of fundraising specialists from disciplines outside the art context who are willing to share their knowledge and experiences about how to combine traditional organizational models with more experimental approaches for social justice and grassroots causes. We would like to learn from them and hopefully they have something to learn from us. The language we are building addresses the distribution of resources within the art-world that we hope extends beyond the art context. It's a means of learning how to operate in the world as it exists, but also imagining what a radical administration practice could do.

Projects of ours like the ARCL Memorandum of Understanding and Sunday Soup Brunch create a forum to reflect on infrastructures that affect artists and cultural workers' lives and practices. For us, posing them as a public set of questions is a means to figure out how we want to operate and to share strategies with artists already negotiating their own choices. We try to treat arts administration as something other than an expert process, one that incorporates experiential learning. Hopefully, by bringing people in on this conversation with us, we can think through what a supportive infrastructure might be that we feel good about participating in.

THINK BIG, ACT SMALL
Linda Frye Burnham

After thirty years in the alternative art business, my husband/ collaborator Steven Durland and I have come up with the perfect insurance against recessions and meltdowns: stay as small as possible.

Steven and I co-direct a nonprofit organization called Art in the Public Interest (API), the only project of which is a huge web site, the Community Arts Network. It's a portal into the world of community-based arts - artists and communities collaborating together, sometimes for "social change." After the experience of creating four nonprofits (founding, respectively, a magazine, an arts complex, a performance space and a Web site), we now find ourselves with the smallest board (four) and the smallest staff (two) in our history. Sailing into our golden years, we have few material goods to show for it, but we did what we wanted to do and we are proud to say it.

Like many of our peers, we spent the last thirty years trying to think outside the box while learning on the fly how the box actually works. That meant putting aside writing and art making and learning a perfunctory version of arts administration, business management and development. While we accomplished a great deal, we were, as they say, making the road by walking. There were a lot of peak experiences, but they came with large helpings of bewilderment, anxiety and sleep deprivation. When it came down to creating API and CAN, our most recent manifestation, in 1999, we decided to design our jobs around our strengths instead of challenging ourselves to learn a raft of new skills.

For CAN, we wear hats so numerous they are uncountable, but I am essentially the wordmaster and Steve is the webmaster. We've managed, in the last ten years, to help build an emerging field and stuff the CAN site with more than 10,000 pages of news, critical writing, profiles, case studies, dialogues, field reports and interactivity - all on \$100,000 a year. And we were even able to pay freelance writers, something that is rare in the arts and on the web. This was only possible if we left California and its ludicrously sky-high cost of living, and moved to North Carolina, where we inhabit in a cozy singlewide mobile home and a yurt on twenty-eight wild and glorious acres of woodland

with wireless broadband. We brought with us connections to a diverse, global network of people who are still grinding away out there, stretching the envelope, brainstorming outside the box, teetering on the cutting edge and staying in touch with us. When it's necessary or desirable to see what's up, we fly the redeye out of RDU, thirty-five minutes away. What we have is not much, but it's all paid off.

CAN receives up to 70,000 visits a month, about ten times the number of people we were ever able to reach in the past. We know from an outside assessment that CAN is being widely used as a reference tool, a source of news and a treasure trove for curriculum builders. Yes, it needs constant gardening, and yes, it always needs a technical upgrade, and no, there's no earned income. So it's not perfect and it doesn't run by itself. But we can do it, partly because "stay small" is in our mission statement. We just have to resist the opportunity to "build capacity."

For advice, I leave you with two bromides: Follow Your Bliss (that means pay attention to what gives you healthy energy) and Do Better What You Do Best (my father's family motto). And don't let the bastards get you down.

*Linda Frye Burnham is a writer who founded High Performance magazine and traded editing stints with visual artist Steven Durland throughout the magazine's history (1978-1998). She co-founded the 18th Street Arts Complex and Highways Performance Space in Santa Monica, Calif. in the '80s; Art in the Public Interest in North Carolina in the '90s; and the Community Arts Network on the WWW. She and Durland were wed in 1994. They live in Saxapahaw, N.C.*



## A FIELD GUIDE FOR THE FUTURE: INTRODUCING THE INSTITUTE FOR APPLIED AESTHETICS

Chris Kennedy

The Institute for Applied Aesthetics (IAA) is a community of artists and educators who share a love of making worksheets for life and field guides for the future. We started the Institute in 2007 with a belief that the future of artist communities depends on a new understanding of "education"; one that explores learning as an integral part of artistic practice and everyday social process. Here we want to share with you one idea we have for the future of the Institute and some ongoing research we hope you will be a part of.

### An Idea for the Future

The IAA secretly wants to be a consulting agency with men in business suits and money on the table. A consulting agency that will fund a new kind of research institution where artists can make money and work on collaborative projects.

We want to have a physical space, with a table, a computer and some chairs. We will create a job board and invite artists to sign up and take the job they can do best. We will also invite them to incubate projects and teach and learn at the Institute. Not really like a skill share or gift-economy attempt, but more like a consultancy that will charge people money for services provided. The money will be used by the artist to buy food and housing. But maybe sometimes local honey or expensive wood to make a beautiful table.

We imagine the Institute occupying a storefront space that will actually flip open, where we will re-work the physical façade when we think it's needed. Our first idea is to create a vertical garden on the front of the building where the public can snip their own salads and then come in and eat with us.

Our intention is to share something long-term with each other; a community that allows us to do what we love

without worrying about our basic needs. Here at the IAA we think this is possible, but only by knowing more about your community and participating with it.

To start this process, we propose the setup of Regional Research Stations across the country, an extension of the Institute in your backyard or maybe in a tree house or a vacant room. We imagine each Station providing a central node for collaborative research to help cultivate your idea for the future. The only thing we require is providing your station with lots of tea and beverage options in general. Maybe also some beautiful vessels to drink the beverages in.

In exploring your community's identity we hope that potentials for collaborative exchange, new forms of learning and economic possibilities begin to manifest both locally and regionally. We've prepared a guide for you to check out online and are always looking for new faculty to have tea with! Research with us by visiting: [www.applied-aesthetics.org/researchstation](http://www.applied-aesthetics.org/researchstation)

### Research for the Future:

In 2009 we did some research that fell into a file we call "Artiscycle". The following are some important field notes from independent art spaces, groups and organizations we've profiled in the United States that make us happy. You can find full reports at [www.artiscycle.net](http://www.artiscycle.net)

1. Center for Urban Pedagogy (NYC) | \$600k/year | Non-profit
2. Hester Street Collaborative (NYC) | \$750k/year | Non-profit partnership with Leroy Street Studio | Developing opensource civic engagement tool "Parks for People"
3. Space 1026 (Philadelphia) | \$2500/month for rent | Artist group that runs a space
4. Elsewhere Artist Collaborative (Greensboro, NC) | \$30k/year | Non-profit and living museum
5. Phil Mechanic Studio (Asheville, NC) | LLC and non-profit partnership with Blueridge Biofuels and Flood Gallery
6. Everett Station Lofts (Portland) | \$500/month subsidized by Artspace Projects, Inc. | Gallery and living space
7. Wowhaus Residency (Occidental, CA) | \$800-900/month negotiable with labor assistance
8. Third Root (NYC) | \$4000/ month (avg.) profit | Workers cooperative | Alternative health clinic and community space

9. InCUBATE Chicago (Chicago) | \$1000/month | Experimental research institute

10. SuperFRONT (NYC) | \$1200/month rent | Dance/architecture collaborative residency

11. Blackstone Bicycle Works and Backstory Café (Chicago) | Creative organizations housed at the Experimental Station in Chicago

## PERSONAL ECONOMY

by Tim Kerr

If you are doing any sort of self-expression solely to make money, I think you will be disappointed. Don't get me wrong. I am not going to turn down money, but that is not why I do what I do. I, for one, do not want to have money be a factor in why or why not I choose to do something. Yes, I have been paid for music and art but it has never paid my bills. I have worked at the University Of Texas Libraries since 1978 and that's my income. I have to say that after spending last year (2008) applying for grants, it's a sad state of affairs in the US when it comes to funding any sort of self-expression project, especially when you look at the opportunities artists have in Europe. But then again, why are you doing this? If its because it's something that you have to do like breathing, you will do it no matter. And no matter, I always seem to rely on Do It Yourself.



# PERSONAL ECONOMY

by Anonymous

Since I graduated from art school things have gone pretty well. I've found interesting people to collaborate with, my friends with crappy part-time jobs have invited me to come to speak to their college classes (for pay ranging from \$50-\$500) even though they know my lame ass cannot return the favor, and I've developed my skills as an arts writer, editor, event planner, and administrator to a point where sometimes people pay me to do these things.

Now I should state that I don't necessarily feel I should be paid more money for doing these things. My ideas are very rough and underdeveloped. Even though I have pretty decent follow-through, most of the time I am winging it. I put out publications and press releases with glaring typos. And when I am managing a budget that involves paying others, I almost always combine the budget with favors, unpaid assistance, and other approaches to stretching small budgets super-far by basically exploiting peoples' labor. And I do so in the most friendly and respectful way possible. I promise.

The shitty part is this: while I am trying to exploit friends, interns, and nice people with a smile on my face and a genuine commitment to producing interesting, provocative and challenging culture ... there are people who ARE PAID relatively well to do similar kinds of labor but they do it with a bad attitude, poor follow-through, with lame ideas, and treating people as sucky as possible all along the way.

And while this may get under my skin, I still don't have an expectation that I SHOULD be paid better to do what I do.

Because A) we do not operate in a meritocracy or a friendlyocracy; B) without some sort of social-democratic or socialist system or truly autonomous self-organization (hard to achieve in this complex society) in place, then our solutions will always just be band-aids on a broken way of organizing our lives (with art being a small part of that); and C) the art institutions and the arts-finance-complexes we love to hate thrive on exploitation and competition. So I don't expect that people who are higher up the totem pole will magically disappear and then all the "ethical" artists and administrators will replace them. Because I think that if that happened then everyone in those positions would be faced with the same dilemma: in a system in which culture is simultaneously so integral to the capitalist economy and also de-prioritized as a "public good" then the harsh market itself is the strongest entity organizing culture.

And with that being the case, I don't expect that my hardworking ass or anyone else's hardworking asses are going to get what's fair just because we ask, or we work hard, or we deserve it. Because if an abstract, profit-hungry, labor exploiting, and culture-savvy free-market capitalism can get me to bend over backwards and get me to get other people to do the same, then why would it stop? That is a remarkable achievement. Getting people who know better to still bend over backwards in order to please the market.

So I can make all the "good" culture I want. And others can make all the "lame" culture they want. But if we keep playing into the same logic then how will it ever stop? Asking for extra pay or more fairness in a system that wouldn't work without exploitation is the same thing as factory workers in the US asking for better pay and forgetting about the people in other countries who get exploited in the end after the jobs are offshored. We must look at these things in a holistic and integrated manner - not just look for better compensation from a broken system. Our work as radical artists must be to understand and to address the root causes of ours and everyone else's oppression. Our radical art should make sense of and interpret the root causes of the economic and cultural logics that structure our lives and imaginations.

## UNDER THE GUN

Nato Thompson

Space, time, and culture operate under neo-liberal capitalism today and its effects are quite measurable. When people can't afford rent. When people tell me they have no time. When people are competing against each other to make more cultural projects. When these things happen we begin to see that, yes, in fact, we are all under the gun of capitalism. We can see it with our eyes.

Infrastructures produce meaning in the world and when they can't afford to exist, that type of meaning disappears with them. As cities become more expensive and the privatization of city centers a general urban planning rule of thumb, we find an equal privatization of collective imagination. In an age of cultural production under capitalism, contrary to Mao, the worse things get, the more conservative people get. Specifically thinking of the art community, the evaporation of alternative models that resist capitalism and authoritarianism makes the collective imagination think in a limited manner.

It is without coincidence that cities without substantial art economies have less presence in the mechanisms of mass media, but have substantially less invested in the capitalist economy of meaning production. The more affordable a city (when artists and activists can retain space), we find more potential for resistant models. When people have time - as in countries with either a social welfare system or a tradition of anti-work - the more actively engaged the public sphere. When culture is not for sale, people share it easily. These forces are not abstract. They are physical. They are on us. There must be a collective effort to dismantle the coercive conservatism that this fighting over the scraps form of cultural participation has gotten us in. We must take back space. We must make time. We must share our cultural productions. There must be an accounting of space, time and culture in anti-capitalist, anti-authoritarian terms.



MEET FOLKS. HAVE FUN. EAT FOOD. FUND ART.

### aperitif

CLEANSE YOUR PALATE OF BUSINESS AS USUAL

#### STEAL GOOD IDEAS

It's what we did. With models like InCUBATE, FOOD restaurant, grocery co-ops, and CSAs, much of the figuring out had already been done.

#### FIND COLLABORATORS

It's a community-based project. So tell your community and get friends and neighbors to help out.

### hors d'oeuvre

SET A TONE FOR THE ENTIRE EVENT

#### WHO ARE YOU?

Everyone loves a snappy acronym. Once you settle on that, build a web site and send out e-mails to local artists and press.

#### WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

A good space is critical. We love our church basement because it has tables, chairs, and a stage. And our drunk friends are careful not to fuck up God's house.

### antipasto

BEFORE THE MAIN EVENT

#### MENU

A well-curated menu is crucial to the success of FEAST. Working with local farms, bakeries, and breweries - we serve a seasonal, vegetarian, organic meal.

#### ARTISTS

Target a handful of your favorite artists so you have a strong pool of proposals.

#### GET CRAFTY

Prepare decorations, ballot box, ballots, proposal posters, table decor, and lighting.

### entree

THE WAIT IS OVER

#### SET UP

Arrange tables, chairs, artist proposals, entry desk, food distribution, and voting booth.

#### IN THE KITCHEN

Get as much ready ahead of time as possible.

#### ON STAGE

FEAST is full of bands, surprise performance, poets, toasts, and artist presentations.

### dessert

EVERYONE'S FAVORITE PART

#### COLLECT

It's the best. Count the ballots. Count the money. Pay yourself back and save some for the next event.

#### DISTRIBUTE

Hand those big bucks over. We have a big bag with a dollar sign on it. The kids go crazy for it.

#### DISPERSE

Kick 'em out. Clean it up.

### digestif

FINISH WELL TO START WELL

#### HELP THEM OUT

Work with grantees to help present a good product at the next event.

# JUSTSEEDS: COLLECTIVISM IN A CULTURE MACHINE

Dan S. Wang

The artists of Justseeds Artists' Cooperative were born of a particular time. Ranging in age from mid-twenties to late thirties, they identify with the broad-based movements from the last decade and a half, for which there is no single accurately descriptive name, and which emerged out of demands for an egalitarian social order, a radically decreased role for private capital, greater environmental responsibility globally, and which, in anticipation of brute US military aggression in late 2002, grew to include a clear antiwar message.<sup>1</sup> In the wake of the Obama victory, right wing discredit, and the collapse of the world's financial machinery, zombie forms litter the social and political landscape, solving no problems but wreaking damage.<sup>2</sup> The work of imagining future possibilities, now more than ever, requires self-directed experiments in autonomous action and voluntary association. To Justseeds and other political artists coming after the New Left, anarchism gains in promise.

Radical culture evolves continually, even while associated political expressions wax and wane over the decades. The work of creating culture and cultures – meaning respectively, the production of value-laden symbols, images, narratives, and representations, and the work of applying imaginative values and visions to our lived experience and lifeways – ensures that the work of radical change always continues at the cellular level of small groups, grassroots organizations, and site-specific work, no matter the possibilities for broad, movement-based political action. Moreover, the work of small groups in local initiatives, focused efforts, and/or of organizing around specific causes, forms the ocean of decentralized action and experimentation out of which flow social tides that inform, catalyze, and periodically renew mass political movements. Precisely because it is interpersonal in scale, cellular action is where individual sovereignty meets the demands of the group, where individually embodied minds pool energies and perspectives for common cause, and where group structures take individual personalities most fully into account. The terrain of struggle I speak of includes the task of creating different relations between persons, finding shared thought processes, and enlarging one's sense of self by indentifying with the collective. And as a collective, Justseeds, a group now numbering just over twenty artists, belongs to a radical tradition of small groups who produce culture (representations) and a culture (values- and visions-informed lifeways).

Justseeds works in two spheres or modes. The best known and constantly visible sphere is that of the distributor. As a distro, Justseeds is a retail webstore selling printed works and books by socially and politically active artists and an example of economic democracy in action. Following its transformation from an enterprise belonging to a single person to an artist-run collective going on several years ago, as a distro Justseeds is a machine. Along with the website and the physical space from which the inventory is distributed, the art worker-owners and their activity as creative and responsible individuals constitute the machine's parts. With roles set but not unchanging, the machine is organized to favor stability but allows for tweaks and new ideas. The stock of output is constantly refreshed with new offerings, and it operates along a steady path demanding ready maintenance but little experimentation. In this sphere, Justseeds is a successful retail store, and a reliable and autonomous dissemination port for activist messages, political graphics, and related news. It is also a machine for enabling livelihoods, and a self-sustaining revenue generator for the group.

The other sphere and mode – in its infancy compared to the long-running distro – is that of the social experiment. Here we have an open-ended project, a search for insight and inspiration from within the collective, a sharing of labors at the level of dreams and possibilities, as well as material production.

The social experiment sphere is where faith gets put to the test, far beyond the sometimes prosaic trust governing the handling of money and earned time. This is where the abstract struggles of program and ideology meet the idiosyncrasies and contradictions of personality and personal history. Unmoored from the website, the nature of this sphere is less definite, formally open, and only periodically visible. Attitudes and moods inform this mode as much as learning and argument, opening important roles for conviviality, comradeship, and personal affections.

The machine creates culture, the experiment creates a culture.

How can artist collectives, on a very concrete, material, and temporally-bound level, actually think and create as one? Obviously, there is no single answer. As experienced facilitators know, even the most carefully structured group process may blow up in a moment, given a sharp turn of attitude or mood. Similarly, outwardly unstructured situations can turn into bonding experiences, orchestrated actions, and highly efficient expressions of group will, sometimes surprisingly quickly. Such is the irregularity of collectivism, not for random factors, but rather for collective consciousness being essentially immanent and context-dependent.



Every positive example will be conditional necessarily, because collective consciousnesses always emerge in highly contingent forms and cannot be reduced to formulae. Part exercise, part journey, the group emerges from large collective projects strengthened, confident, united, and humbled in the knowledge that giving up a degree of control normally assumed in an individual practice can, with one's collaborators, return something no single person could have imagined, much less realized.

Their work is an argument for the complexity, the richness, the density, and above all, the real, achievable possibility of a collective imagination made concrete.

*Excerpted from a longer blog post about Justseeds' exhibition at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Union Art Gallery. Read the full essay here: [prop-press.vox.com/library/post/a-text-about-justseeds-written-on-the-occasion-of-their-uwm-union-art-gallery-show.html](http://prop-press.vox.com/library/post/a-text-about-justseeds-written-on-the-occasion-of-their-uwm-union-art-gallery-show.html). Image: Justseeds, courtesy of Kevin Caplicki and Justseeds. Background (left to right) Kevin Caplicki, Nicolas Lampert, Melanie Cervantes, Colin Matthes, Pete Yahnke, Favianna Rodriguez, Bec Young, Eric Ruin, Roger Peet, Molly Fair, Meridith Stern, Kristine Virsis, Jesse Purcell, Alec Icky Dunn. Foreground (left to right) Hippo the dog, Josh MacPhee, Dara Greenwald, Mary Tremonte, Shaun Slijfer. (Not pictured: Chris Stain, Dylan Miner, Jesus Barraza, Lesly Geovanni Mendoza, Santiago Armengod, Swoon, Thea Gahr)*

<sup>1</sup> The term that the corporate press attached to elements of this movement following the spectacularized 1999 actions against the World Trade Organization (WTO) in the Seattle, anti-globalization, is not only a misnomer, but in some profound respects Orwellian. The various critical dimensions of less familiar non-Western resistant social phenomena are typically tagged with neologisms that fashion a logic out of thin air, such as 'Islamofascism.'

<sup>2</sup> I first learned of sociologist Ulrich Beck's theory of zombie categories in the glossary compiled by Continental Drift Zagreb. In recent news, we hear much about zombies in relation to the so-called toxic assets bedeviling the American banking system. The artists of Justseeds were born in the seventies and early eighties, when the zombie cocktail dominated in the category of, as Hunter S. Thompson would say, 'whatever fucks you up.'

# PROBABLY NOT PEACHES

Nance Klehm

My egg economy fell out on Monday. All of my quail and all but one of my chickens were killed by a predator with dexterous digits – one that can turn a latch and pry chicken wire away from an armature. Prolly, aka PNP, aka Probably Not Peaches, my one remaining hen, is in a liminal state of health. She is hovering. I am sitting in my bathroom with her. She is breathing deeply, sitting on a bed of straw in a small cage with a dish of her favorite foods nearby: scrambled eggs with crushed egg shell, raisins and chickweed. This food has remained untouched.

I live with animals and plants. It is my practice and lifestyle to make medicine, build soil, and grow, forage for, and preserve food. This practice of mine is an economy in and of itself. It sustains me and I am also able to use it to create other economies that create other relationships with people and that pays the bills. The art world casts lines to my practice and I use aesthetic strategies to illuminate and frame this lifestyle. A few of my on-going and one-off projects include: inviting Chicagoans to shit in a bucket and collecting and composting the resulting 1,500 gallons of human waste into fertile soil, serving homemade tacos made from foraged and dumpstered produce cooked in a solar oven-rocket stove pulled by a bicycle on the streets of Copenhagen, and designing/managing a large scale vermicomposting system of plus or minus a million worms at a large homeless shelter to consume their cafeteria waste.

From the back of her comb to her shoulder blades, Prolly has been scalped. I rub honey with finely chopped yarrow into her rawness. I hold her in my lap and loop energy through my heart, into my left arm, through her, into my other arm and then into my heart again. And I keep looping this circuit. It occurs to me that I am allowing myself to be increasingly late to my own art opening.

I am surprised she is alive and holding onto this compromised state of being, but animals are like that. They continue to persist even when they've been knocked down a notch or four. If my chicken could think abstractly, what would Prolly say about "economy"? About "art"?

The word "economic" directly follows "ecology" in many dictionaries. In mine, the Oxford Pocket American Dictionary of Current English reads:

Ecology / economic / economical / economics / economist / economize, economy / ecosphere / ecosystem

All these "eco-" words framed between the bacteria "e.coli" and the color "ecru" come from the greek OIKOS meaning "home".

Ecology is about the quality of relationship of a community of organisms and economy is about the wealth and management of resources of a community. Ecology is a self-perpetuating economy. There is a cyclical give and take and give once again. I am a homesteader. I follow these cycles.

Prolly breathes long and heavy. I take advantage of this and drip watery eye droppers full of blended chicken soup, molasses and bee pollen. She drinks each dose and then suddenly flails herself from my lap.

I go to the art opening. I drink wine and snooze. I am taken to a delicious dinner with boring company. I get home at midnight and sit in the straw and drip feed my chicken until we both nod off.

It's been five days and Prolly lets go. When I returned home, I paused at the door and asked her if she was there and she said, "No". And she wasn't. That night I planted her to feed the witch hazel.





## IMPRACTICAL LABORERS, UNITE! ILSSA Co-Operators

“The question is not who will patronise the arts, but what forms are possible in which artists will have control of their own means of expression, in such ways that they will have relation to a community rather than to a market or a patron.”

– Raymond Williams, 1962

“[T]he experimental rhythm of problem solving and problem finding makes the ancient potter and the modern programmer members of the same tribe.”

– Richard Sennett, 2008

Many modern workers, whether retail clerks or television producers or strawberry pickers, are alienated from their labor. Perhaps you are. What does this mean, to be alienated from your own labor? You don't feel your employment makes use of your particular skills. You suspect your potential is untapped and beginning to spoil. You are not personally or emotionally connected to your occupation's processes or products. You don't feel that the work you are doing is necessary or a beneficial contribution to society. You just toil in return for payment, which you in turn exchange for the goods and services that you require to survive and/or to enjoy yourself in the few fleeting hours you spend not working. Your work is a job.

Perhaps there is work you do enjoy. But you're not paid for it. Let's call this activity “art.” While you enjoy very much the time you spend art-working, you berate both it and yourself. It isn't “real work” because you're not being paid. As you aren't receiving payment for this work, you're not “professional;” therefore, you're not a “real artist.” The fruit of your labor is literally not “worth anything.” You devalue your own labor not because it is not good. You belittle it because it is not financially compensated.

But let's say that it is. Maybe things change for you. People start paying you money to do your work. All of a sudden, this activity you pursued for enjoyment has a specific monetary value. Now it is worth exactly X dollars. This is exciting. Of course it is! But gradually the excitement dulls because the nature of the work has changed. Before your work was something else, something not equivalent to money. Before, your labor was priceless. Your time could not be bought.

We don't deny that capitalism has raised the standard of living for millions of people, and that it has produced remarkable improvements in many lives. It promotes innovation, invention, ingenuity, real progress. But when left unchecked, it causes deep and unjust inequalities, devastation to our environment, and decay of social mores. And it does all this because it prizes one thing above all else, which in turn reduces everything else to that very same thing: money. Any type of tunnel vision deforms and distorts, shutting out an entire horizon of alternative priorities, experiences, and values. Bartering was an economic system that filled material needs by the exchange of

goods, but it also fostered human relationships and interdependence. Because of its emphasis on competition, our American brand of capitalism obscures that which people really need: other people. Community.

In the mid-twentieth century, Abraham Maslow described human needs this way: we need food, shelter, and security; we need other people; we need meaningful work; and, well, that's about it. Capitalism has provided food and shelter (although notably not security) for many of us. Many of us also have found meaningful work – it just isn't necessarily what we're paid to do. But most of us are working without a community, often feeling lonely and isolated: we are without other people. Since craftsmen first formed guilds a thousand years ago, workers have successfully self-organized in order to improve their lot. There's no reason why art-workers shouldn't also self-organize. Not for better pay or for material benefit. Rather, for solidarity and spiritual gain: to create a non-monetary return-value for work that is itself too meaningful to be compensated by purely financial means.

For this very reason we founded Impractical Labor in Service of the Speculative Arts (ILSSA), a membership organization for those who make conceptual or experimental work with obsolete technology. We are writers-turned-letterpress printers. We desire to bring together people working in radically different forms and technologies who share our same ideals: time over money, process over product, re-use over discard.

### Uniting Hands & Minds: about ILSSA

ILSSA consists of a Union and a Research Institute (RI). Together, the two departments produce resources and opportunities – that is, theory and practice – that in turn support the meaningful work of our members.

The ILSSA RI publishes the ILSSA Quarterly, a periodical produced by obsolete means that consists of a variety of morale-boosting ephemera. Our letterpress printed leaflets contain essays that reframe labor issues and encourage our membership to reconsider how and why and what they do. Our PRACTICE INSTANT GRATITUDE thank-you cards are to be distributed to helpful persons encountered in everyday life, fostering generosity and collaboration.

Earlier this year we observed our first annual holiday, the Festival to Plead for Skills. The festival is derived from the Chinese holiday of Qi Xi and the Japanese festival of Tanabata, in which celebrants wish for the betterment of their own craftsmanship. Instead of wishing, the ILSSA festival is a holiday of practicing: every year on July 7th, union members are invited to practice a skill through the making of small objects. Members send the objects to us, we collate them into sets, and return one set to each participant. The set is an archive of the holiday but moreover it is a commemoration of our collective action: it unifies impractical labor efforts from our membership around the world.

Our latest project, the Reference Collection, is an “analogue internet” collectively and continuously generated by our members. All members are encouraged to submit reports of books, lectures, articles, movies, websites, and other resources essential to their practice. Together, we hope to build a new framework of purpose and valuation that will reward impractical labor.

We've barely begun to explore what is possible to accomplish as ILSSA, but happily we have plenty of opportunities. Since our first call for membership in January 2009, our Union has grown to 86 members. Among them is a librarian of deaccessioned books, an heirloom seed farmer, a designer/builder of vacuum tube audio electronics, a blogger who posts in needlepoint, and a handloom weaver-as-social-sculptor. We hope that if you share our interests and concerns, you too will join us.

AS MANY HOURS AS IT TAKES!

[www.impractical-labor.org](http://www.impractical-labor.org)

# PERSONAL ECONOMY

## by Anonymous

I worked my way through college doing jobs in student government and living communally. Afterwards I moved to New York in 1974, wrote art criticism for a living for a couple of years (imagine!), and then set type freelance (job now obsolete). Rent on my tiny place was super low, and I made video and films on the extra. Despite intermittent grants and shows, these projects never fully paid for themselves, much less paid me. I also distributed artists video (starting in 1986). For several years this was nearly, but not quite, a break even venture – with no salary for me, but pay for one worker, and a thin stream of bucks to the artists. Afterwards, for over a decade, it has been a dead loss and archival albatross.

After I married we moved out of town, and I went back to school. Through school I was supported by my wife and parents. I began to teach academic art history as an adjunct, but could not write, so I quit that. That pay was shit. (This has since improved, I am told, and also the benefits picture – but not a whole lot.) I had to shortchange the students or cheat myself. The control by regular professors and officious staff was impersonal and alienating. Finally, I had two years full-time out-of-town, well paid visiting appointments with full freedom, great support, much agency, and had loads of fun. Now I have been nearly three years off interspersed during which time I have been living on the parental subsidy, traveling, and staying rent-free with my wife.

I don't regard this as a comfortable situation ... I like working fulltime and look forward to doing so again. Adjunct teaching was useful training, but not a way to live and advance intellectually unless you can teach what you want and know best. My trade is gone, so there is no easy way back to the world of cognitar-iat production. This year I will work hard to find alternate income sources and stabilize my situation. I have used the years out of work to write and produce projects my institutional peers could not do. (None of my writing or projects pay, and in fact I pay for the projects myself.) While it does not feel comfortable to me, I am very sensible that I enjoy great privilege now in my means of living. I try to do work that responds to this, work that others cannot or dare not do.

Why go on? I believe in art and artists as perhaps society's last free agents. Artists and children augur change, and no one listens to children. (Besides, I don't know what else to do!)

# EPEIOS, A SCULPTOR



\* A SHORT STORY FROM VISIT ME IN CALIFORNIA by  
by Cooley Windsor

THE FIRST HOLLOW THINGS I EVER BUILT WERE MUD  
figures of animals + people when I was young. I'd sneak  
into the woods + make them, hoping that spirits would  
inhabit them + bring them to life. But they would still be  
there the next time I would visit + I would end up breaking  
them with a stick or throwing them against trees or rocks.

Years later I made a hollow oak leaf out of wood  
and linen for my sister's wedding. A neighbor's  
boy with a clear treble voice crouched inside and sang  
a hymn. It was lovely everyone said, and people even  
started borrowing the leaf for their own weddings.

I ALWAYS LIKED WORKING WITH MY HANDS + TOOLS  
IT'S MY ONLY TALENT I CAN IMAGINE THINGS + FIGURE  
WAYS TO MAKE THEM. IT'S LIKE WATCHING A CLOUD +  
SAYING WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE, EXCEPT YOU CAN MAKE  
THE CLOUD BE WHAT YOU SAY.

The solid medium you're working with - wood or silver or  
clay or whatever - can be made to change shape, like  
changing your mind, + when you're finished you can see  
how you see things by how you've made them look. That's  
your mark, just like when you write your name on the  
bottom. The way you are is as if you have honey smeared  
on your hands + it gets on everything you make. Sticky +  
sweet + you - you learn to recognize it that's your mark.

When Agamemnon sent for me I was truly happy. I  
knew it would be a commission + I knew what I wanted  
to make. An eagle, all bronze, which in day would shine  
like the sun + at night would glitter like the ocean. I'd been  
seeing that bird for years in my mind but could never  
figure out how I'd purchase the materials + rent the forge.  
But when Agamemnon's summons came I knew that  
this was it.

They wanted a horse. An enormous hollow horse  
soldiers would hide in. A horse? I said. Yes, they  
said, and they wanted it in wood to contain cost.

I was a man divided. This didn't really seem  
like the thing for me. I knew that and I knew what all  
is involved in a project of this magnitude. These

things are hard to do. They take forever and you are  
confronted by endless problems and I told myself that  
BUT SINCE I WAS THERE ALREADY AND ONE JOB LEADS TO  
ANOTHER JOB AND THE FEE THEY OFFERED WAS ENTICING, I  
SAID YES. Still I felt bad, but everyone congratulated  
me and thanked me and praised my work.

## YOU LOOSE YOURSELF WHEN YOUR MAKING SOMETHING

You get involved. Every day I was busy + every day was  
different. I couldn't tell where I'd be or what I'd be doing,  
I'd examine things. I'D HAGGLE WITH VENDORS FOR GOOD  
DEALS ON MATERIALS. Keep an eye on carpenters + skilled  
craftsmen. Try to stick to plans + project out a schedule.  
Answer questions + endure interference from the people  
Agamemnon insisted on sending over. Worked on things  
I didn't originally foresee - how to keep the lumber dry,  
how to reduce theft, how to set the axle length to ensure  
the horse would fit through the gates of Troy.

At night I would go out by myself + go over the plans  
over + over in my head. Every night in my mind I'd build  
that horse. Start at the beginning + work it through. I'd  
determine what we should do next, look for ways to make  
it better.

Then the next day I'd be at the site, check  
this, check that, talk with the overseers to make  
certain everyone was clear on the day's assignments.  
But sometimes I would draw away so I could see the  
horse all at once and as a whole. First I'd see the  
completed horse in my mind's eye, + then the horse  
that we were building that was surrounded by scaffolds,  
+ partly I'd plan, but mainly I would enjoy it. It would  
help me to tell how we were doing. It encouraged me.  
AND I LIKE WORKING WITH BOTH HORSES - THE SMOOTH  
PERFECT ONES IN THE PLANS AND THE BIG DUSTY ONE  
WITH GRIPY CARPENTERS IN IT

The horse's eyes I made myself from the bronze  
shield of Deokos, a local who died early in the battle  
and had no family to claim it. The armory hated me  
using metal and wouldn't furnish anything good. I  
cast the bronze on the fire, + tin with it + silver + set  
it upon the anvil + laid hold to the hammer + pincers.

There in the studio I beat the metal + rendered each  
brilliant eye with my own strength. There comes that part  
in making something when you think "I am doing this."  
Orange sparks rose through the column of blue smoke,  
+ with the bang of the hammer coursing through the  
muscles in my arm I STOOD SWEATING AT THE HARD EDGE  
OF ABILITY + MATERIAL.

ILLUSTRATED BY

FUTUREFARMERS

CRITICISM? SO  
WHAT



HORSESHIP - AN ADAPTATION OF NICOLE WUTKE'S USF ART STUDENT

That's how it was every day until we were done.  
The scaffolds came down + our part was over. Then it  
was time for the soldiers. By then I'd worked on the  
horse so long I was pleased with the job + the work my  
crew + I had done. I envisioned the Trojans dragging the  
horse inside their gates, their pride in owning this new  
thing so well crafted + of such dimension + stature. How  
would they feel to receive such a remarkable gift? +  
then the brilliant emergence of our warriors, our victory,  
our return home.

The soldiers were going into the horse that very  
night and men had been selected to push the horse up  
to where the Trojans would see it. Everyone else would  
withdraw and hide. I couldn't eat supper because of  
my excitement. I hurried at sundown to be by the horse  
in case anyone had questions or I was needed.

But it was a madhouse down there. People were  
running all around yelling and soldiers were packing  
their supplies and quarreling about who would get  
apples because there weren't enough for everyone to  
have one, and the camp followers were trying to turn a  
last trick in the bushes before the men got into the  
horse because orders were you couldn't come out once  
you went in, AND THE SOLDIERS WERE COMPLAINING THAT  
THE HORSE WAS HOT AND WHY WASN'T THERE A HOLE TO  
PISS OUT OF, WHAT IDIOT BUILT THIS THING?

I said to myself don't take it to heart. You  
shouldn't depend on praise. What do they know?  
Criticism? So what. Fine as the horse is, wouldn't  
the Trojans be alarmed if it passed water? Is it  
better for interior padding to make it hot, or for the  
Trojans to hear movement or the accidentally dropped  
sword or axe? Not to mention the twenty percent price  
reduction I had negotiated on the cost of the fabric  
for the pads. I told myself to keep thinking about the  
design and construction of the horse and to rejoice. I  
strived for this until after the sun went down. Then I  
could only see the outline of what we'd built + I was  
horrified. It wasn't a horse. Not at all. It was just a  
ship. It was a ship + the men inside were sailors + I  
hadn't built a horse, I'd built a ship + we already had  
the thousand we'd come in. I'd built the thousand + first.

My heart broke. What a fool I was. I'd been puffed up +  
thinking of all the good I could do with my talent + art - I  
was one of a kind - + striving to do original work. But all  
I had really been doing was something that had been  
done over + over, done by people better than me. I'd  
built a boat disguised as a horse. Mine wasn't even a  
good boat. If you set it in water it would sink. That  
horse wasn't hollow. I was in it. Trapped by ambition +  
blandishments + desire for other people's good opinion,  
I inhabited that horse dragged into an enemy city +  
burned. The soldiers were released to fight. But not me. I  
will never emerge. I'll drag that horse around the rest of  
my life + never equal it. This is fame. This is what I'm  
known for. Just a hollow horse that only a few people  
saw. All that's left is the idea + what kind of art is that?

I DIDN'T EVEN WANT TO MAKE IT.  
I ONLY DID IT BECAUSE THEY ASKED ME.





# THE U.C. STRIKE: AT LAST, THE SHIT HITS THE FAN IN CALIFORNIA

Brian Holmes

After the huge student movements in France in 2006, along with last year's occupation of the Sorbonne by the staff and the professors; after the rolling and agitated "anomalous wave" of protests against the American-style restructuring of higher education that swept Italy last year; after the astonishing refusal of tuition fees by Croatian students this spring and summer, the global crisis of the university has finally come home to the neo-liberal heartland: the USA. On September 24, 2009, a walkout of students, faculty and staff was called across the entire University of California (UC) system, in protest against draconian budget cuts decreed by the UC Regents, an extremely powerful and prestigious administrative body whose members are appointed directly by the state governor for 12-year terms. At Berkeley, the demonstration numbered over 5,000 people – the biggest campus strike since the '60s. At UC Santa Cruz, they occupied a campus building and held it for a week.

California is the state where, in 1979, the infamous Proposition 13 began choking off funding for public services, while launching the "taxpayer revolt" of the rich and inventing the basic neoliberal campaign rhetoric that would bring Ronald Reagan to power. Since 1983 there has been only one Democratic governor of the state, Gray Davis, which means that the UC Regents have mostly been named by Republicans in order to represent multiple business interests in the fields of both research and education. The budget squeeze has been permanent, since Prop. 13 requires a two-thirds majority vote for any new local or state taxes. After Davis was prematurely recalled by a Republican smear campaign following the "rolling blackouts" inflicted on the state by the most corrupt corporation of the dot-com era, Enron, it was the new "Governator" Arnold Schwarzenegger who signed the 2004 Higher Education Compact with the President of the UC Regents. In the context of the ongoing fiscal crisis of the states and the resulting budget shortfalls across the US federal system, Schwarzenegger is now using the effective minority rule granted to the Republicans by the two-thirds majority requirement to be the "Terminator" of California's public education and research, which the Compact redefines as a private good, to be produced by corporate investors and sold to clients on an open market.

There are now plans to raise tuition by 32%, in addition to a 9.3% hike approved last May. The result will be the elimination of large numbers of economically disadvantaged students from the university and a shrinkage of the student population by as much as a third. In a video-taped speech where he explains the issues, the award-winning Berkeley linguistics professor George Lakoff had to choke off his emotion as he recalled how glad he had been, thirty-four years ago, to come to teach at a public university: his own parents had been too poor to attend high school.

A wealth of information on both the budget crisis and the student/staff/faculty movement can be found by following the links at the UC Walkout website, the Occupy California blog, and the east-coast site of The New School in Exile (see below for these and other links). But if you somehow missed it, the first thing to read – and one of the most powerful student-movement texts since the Situationist tract "On the Poverty of Student Life" – is a fire-breathing document by the Research & Destroy collective, called "Communiqué from an Absent Future." It's a brilliant text for one reason: it says flat out a large number of things that are true, concerning the fundamental

bankruptcy of the public university and of the society whose decay it has helped to perfect with a thousand sophisticated branches of knowledge and techniques of social engineering. The current economic collapse, the defeat of the US oil-grab in Iraq after the needless loss of hundreds of thousands of civilian lives, and the current extension of the useless war in Afghanistan are only the most visible hallmarks of this decay, which has crept into daily life on every level, from the most pragmatic to the most subjective. Check out a quote from the text to get the basic angle of attack:

We work and we borrow in order to work and to borrow. And the jobs we work toward are the jobs we already have. Close to three quarters of students work while in school, many full-time; for most, the level of employment we obtain while students is the same that awaits after graduation. Meanwhile, what we acquire isn't education; it's debt. We work to make money we have already spent, and our future labor has already been sold on the worst market around. Average student loan debt rose 20 percent in the first five years of the twenty-first century – 80-100 percent for students of color. Student loan volume – a figure inversely proportional to state funding for education – rose by nearly 800 percent from 1977 to 2003. What our borrowed tuition buys is the privilege of making monthly payments for the rest of our lives. What we learn is the choreography of credit: you can't walk to class without being offered another piece of plastic charging 20 percent interest. Yesterday's finance majors buy their summer homes with the bleak futures of today's humanities majors.

It goes on to cover a long list of societal failures in excruciating detail. What it calls for – as you could guess from the shortest excerpt – is a revolution. I don't disagree. But because this moment and this movement are so important, I will take issue with one aspect of what I consider to be an otherwise perfect analysis. This criticizable aspect comes only after a series of remarkable arguments that have to be taken on board to get to the heart of the question:

The university has no history of its own; its history is the history of capital. Its essential function is the reproduction of the relationship between capital and labor. Though not a proper corporation that can be bought and sold, that pays revenue to its investors, the public university nonetheless carries out this function as efficiently as possible by approximating ever more closely the corporate form of its bedfellows. What we are witnessing now is the endgame of this process, whereby the façade of the educational institution gives way altogether to corporate streamlining.

This is true. What we are witnessing with the current economic crisis and the collapse of state budgets is the culmination of the neoliberal program, i.e., the end of the welfare state that was instituted in the 1930s and strengthened again in the 1960s, and consequently, the beginning of the full-scale slide of the former middle classes in the US and in Northwestern Europe towards precarity, which has already occurred in countless countries of Latin America, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa, after their subjection to bankers' techniques for the extraction of value from public institutions and infrastructures. To destroy any democratic critique of this process – and to open up another lucrative private market in the same blow – it is necessary for capitalist elites to destroy the public university. The real-estate bubble and its deflation, which finally delivered a wake-up call to the general public, is at the same time serving as the pretext for a decisive round of privatizations that seek to finish the job,

and eliminate any resistance to the appropriation of the entire public sector. The fact that this extreme makeover of the former welfare state will ultimately be fatal to the entire system, threatened with climate change and also with the looming revolt of all kinds of peripheries and underclasses, seems not to matter one whit to the people in charge. Precisely because to a large extent, there is no one in charge. The logic of capital has not only pervaded the hearts and minds of those who benefit from it in any way – the very middle classes produced during the postwar period by welfare-state entitlements – but it has also sedimented itself in a very large number of technologies, laws, bureaucratic procedures, organizational models and operational goals, whose inertial force is tremendous and still serves as a powerful tool in the hands of those elites who are, in small numbers, very conscious of what they are doing. Yet all this, immense as it is, hardly removes from us the obligation to think and to act intelligently, strategically, in what is clearly a dangerous situation.

The knot of the text comes when it attempts to define its own speaking subject: the students whom the university educates. Not coincidentally, this is the passage that introduces the call to insurrection – yup, that's the word, right here in Amerika – which takes up most of the third part of this extraordinary text:

The university is subject to the real crisis of capitalism, and capital does not require liberal education programs. The function of the university has always been to reproduce the working class by training future workers according to the changing needs of capital. The crisis of the university today is the crisis of the reproduction of the working class, the crisis of a period in which capital no longer needs us as workers. We cannot free the university from the exigencies of the market by calling for the return of the public education system. We live out the terminus of the very market logic upon which that system was founded. The only autonomy we can hope to attain exists beyond capitalism.

Now exactly here, I want to ask the question: how can anyone accept this idea that the function of the university is to reproduce the working class, without distorting every meaning of the words, "working class"? The working classes of the university are the janitors, the food-service people, the maintenance men and women, the day-care staffers and receptionists, all the people stuck in increasingly exploited and precarious positions. Even when they do the same jobs at night or at odd hours scattered over the week, the students aspire to be trained as scientists, engineers, technicians, health-care professionals, government officials, middle and upper managers, and cultural ideologists (a category in which I would include both artists and teachers). The difference between them marks the common consciousness and it has to be addressed, even at a time when the objective distinctions between students and workers are blurring. It is true to say that the United States, like all countries that have undergone full-scale neoliberal regime change, no longer has any essential need for its traditional working class, since industrial work has been largely outsourced, automated or delegated to immigrants under conditions of extreme exploitation facilitated in many cases by lack of citizenship papers. But it is false to say that the neoliberal societies do not need the "human resources" produced by the university. They do, crucially, to maintain their advantages in what they themselves define as the Darwinian struggle of each country, and indeed, of each corporation against all the others. The present aim of the Republicans – the neoliberals – is to save money on taxes, to open up new markets for education and research while continuing to exploit the remaining (and hardly inconsequential) public budgets, and to exert further discipline over its future middle-management cadres by placing them under even more intense threats of

joblessness and inability to pay their enormous student loans. In other words, they want to complete the program first launched in the age of Prop. 13.

Why then, in such a brilliant text, do we get such a major mistake of class analysis? Undoubtedly because from that point forth, it is very easy to lapse into an outdated concept of revolution, wherein everyone dons a black mask and engages in a sweeping orgy of destruction that will send the existing system up in flames and allow the rise of a new one from its ashes. Now, does that appear likely? Has anyone studied what Homeland Security has been preparing for in this country for the last eight years? Has anyone observed the massive deployment of police, National Guard, secret service and Army personnel armed with so-called less-lethal weapons at the recent G20 meeting in Pittsburgh, or at the Republican National Convention in Saint Paul last summer? Above all, has anyone noticed how successfully agents-provocateurs have been used at all these kind of events since the anti-globalization movement brought street demonstrations back to the Western countries at the turn of the millennium?

The “Communiqué from an Absent Future” marks the return of an insurrectionalist spirit to the United States, where it has not been seen on any large scale since the 1970s, with the brief exception of an important moment in Seattle. This spirit should be put to good use by everyone. If the current movement goes anywhere, some rioting in the streets is gonna happen, and a lot of occupations. But no one should kid themselves that student riots are going to change the system. What students can do, from their own class position, is both to reach out to the hyper-exploited working classes toward whom they are, in effect, precariously sliding, and at the same time, to help to radicalize all those around them in what has become the central institution for the reproduction of the neoliberal hegemony, namely the contemporary research university. This will require inventing original techniques of radical action that can't be neutralized and made into a pretext for fascist reactions. Strikes that shut a university down – as has already happened for a day in the huge UC system – can also open up space for questioning what the uses of the university could be in a different society. Writers, media makers, performers and artists, whether inside or outside the university, can use this moment to go further, to dig deeper into our hearts and minds and desires, and to lay the basis for a long-term, broad-based, constructive refusal of the literally insane and dangerous system that has taken root in the US over the course of the last three decades, and especially the last ten years.

If the former role and glory of the public university under the welfare-warfare state is definitively over, then what can it become in the future? Wouldn't the best way to shut down its current operations be to convince all those inside it that the way it is operating is a travesty of all its potentials, including those inscribed at the heart of every academic discipline? Why not shut it down with an excess of transformative intellectual and artistic production that would have a huge insurrectional advantage, namely that it could not be stopped by police armed with truncheons and stun guns and less-lethal weapons that they are just dying to use? In the absence of a deep, problematic delegitimation of neoliberal capitalism and the invention of new ways to run a complex society, which transparently appears as the most urgent thing for all of us to focus on, the real revolution will never come. Yet the way things are going, with climate change and planetary civil wars looming on the horizon, all of us are mortally threatened by the absence of that revolutionary future.

Links:

<http://researchanddestroy.wordpress.com>

<http://ucwalkout.ning.com>

<http://ucfacultywalkout.com>

<http://www.edu-factory.org>

<http://tinyurl.com/universities-in-struggle>

<http://occupyca.wordpress.com>

<http://reoccupied.wordpress.com>

## LOST SOUTH

Adam Trowbridge and  
Jessica Westbrook

Rather than begin, we surrender. We surrender to Richard Florida, promoter of creative gentrification. Our small, southern city has been intoxicated by the idea that the “creative class” can save a city. While our existing cultural institutions struggle, enormous amounts of money have been spent betting that “creative entrepreneurs” will immigrate here if only there are enough art parties. Art + martini = Artini! Importing a “Creative Class ®” is intended to raise property values. No mention is made of what will happen to the uncreative class that currently populates the target neighborhoods.

We did not come from the South, we washed up on the shore. We tried to make a life and form a community. As artists, we understand that most of us are trying to make a life, wherever we wash up. We moved nomadically across the South from childhood on: Florida, Tennessee, Virginia, D.C., and Maryland. We are not “from here”, but with so many years down here, we could write about the South and our struggle to make art here but ...

We are retreating. We are retreating from the constant barrage of flyers, postcards, tweets and Facebook updates promoting more empty art events that can only serve as the centerpiece for another party. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were flooded into a marketing campaign, instantly creating a local base of credibility and power. What we have now is a 24/7 branding machine promoting Chattanooga as a place to create. Unfortunately, there remains little reason to create here. What Chattanooga lacks, what we tried to build from 2005 to 2009 as a collective of artists under the name SEED, cannot be purchased or imported: an interdependent creative community.

We accept responsibility for helping to spark the current marketing machine but we never intended to use art to raise the rent. It is a common problem. When artists need cheap space, they move to low rent neighborhoods. Their presence attracts others. Art events lure upscale, potential real estate clients to the neighborhood. Eventually the rents go up and the neighborhood “improves”. What we now face is an active attempt to use this effect for profit to the detriment of those with the least power to counteract it. This is not limited to our city, of course. Cities around the country are employing various strategies, several similar to or based on Richard Florida's Creative Class ®, to lure artists to the city and to specific neighborhoods.

If the end result of our creative activity can so easily be channeled into empty marketing for the purposes of gentrification, we have to admit that we were on the wrong track. We are retreating locally and connecting with outside artists and collectives concerned with social practice. We now question our old initiatives as driven by public relations and publicity. We are in a space where everything is in question: art practice and education, intellectual and cultural arrogance, community and the place of art in community, and most vitally, the unfortunate practice of culturally invading a place already occupied by real people. Culture-based invasion and art-based gentrification did not begin here, it was exported from urban centers. In experiencing it on a small scale, we have been lucky to see our own approach turned into a ridiculous, profit-driven parody. We surrender that approach. Where we go from here is uncertain but we will proceed much more thoughtfully. Where we are now is lost, perhaps a useful place to be.

# PERSONAL ECONOMY

by *Anonymous*

I used to teach college. Straight out of grad school I landed a full time job teaching at a university in NYC. I took it and I moved to New York. In Chicago-money I would have been well off, but in New York as a full time faculty member at a university, my standard of living was worse than my standard of living as a grad student in Chicago. One of my colleagues said to me “I wouldn't move to New York for less than \$75,000” wish she'd told me that before I moved. I wasn't making close to that.

After that year I returned to Chicago and started to teach part-time at an art school and a couple of universities but had to take other part time and freelance jobs in order to be able to afford to teach. I worked at galleries and museums doing installation work. I taught more classes than a fulltime faculty member for two years, just divided over multiple schools. But still I added career development advisor and an admissions officer to teaching and prep work to pay the bills. I worked 5 or 6 days a week, usually each of them at a different job so when I came home from building walls or hanging art I had to shift gears and write a lecture for the next day.

I received my contract for my third year at the art school and found that despite all of my teaching experience and professional accomplishments (museum shows, awards, reviews, etc.) I was literally tied for the lowest paid person on faculty. I got paid as little to teach as anyone could at that school. I was offered the same money as someone who had just finished school, had never taught and never exhibited and, of course, still no benefits. When I complained about my contract amount I was told, “tough, you'll get a raise next year” and “you can apply for a merit raise.” I wasn't even asking for a merit raise, I was asking for parity, for fairness. Because I was team teaching and didn't want to abandon my collaborators I agreed to teach that year but told them I would not return the following year. I ran into the Dean in the elevator and she tried to convince me to stay, saying that I was a valued colleague and an important member of the school community. She wasn't able to explain why my contract didn't reflect that. Now I just work those freelance jobs I worked before, I make about the same money, don't have to stress out about lesson plans and the like, have more time to work on art and get paid as a visiting lecturer to speak to classes at that same school multiple times a semester. I still don't have health insurance.



# WE PATCH FLATS. DETROIT.

Compiled by Nick Tobier

This report from Detroit is a selection of responses to the question I posed: "In the wake of a crisis it takes considerable effort to resume normal life as best possible. As our current economic crisis careens around Detroit, is resumption of life as it was before the current conditions the only possibility? For with every crisis, there is also the opportunity to radically restructure the ways in which we live. As an artist living/working in Detroit in 2009, what are the opportunities you see for re-imagining a creative future? Respond as you see fit.

## NATE MULLEN

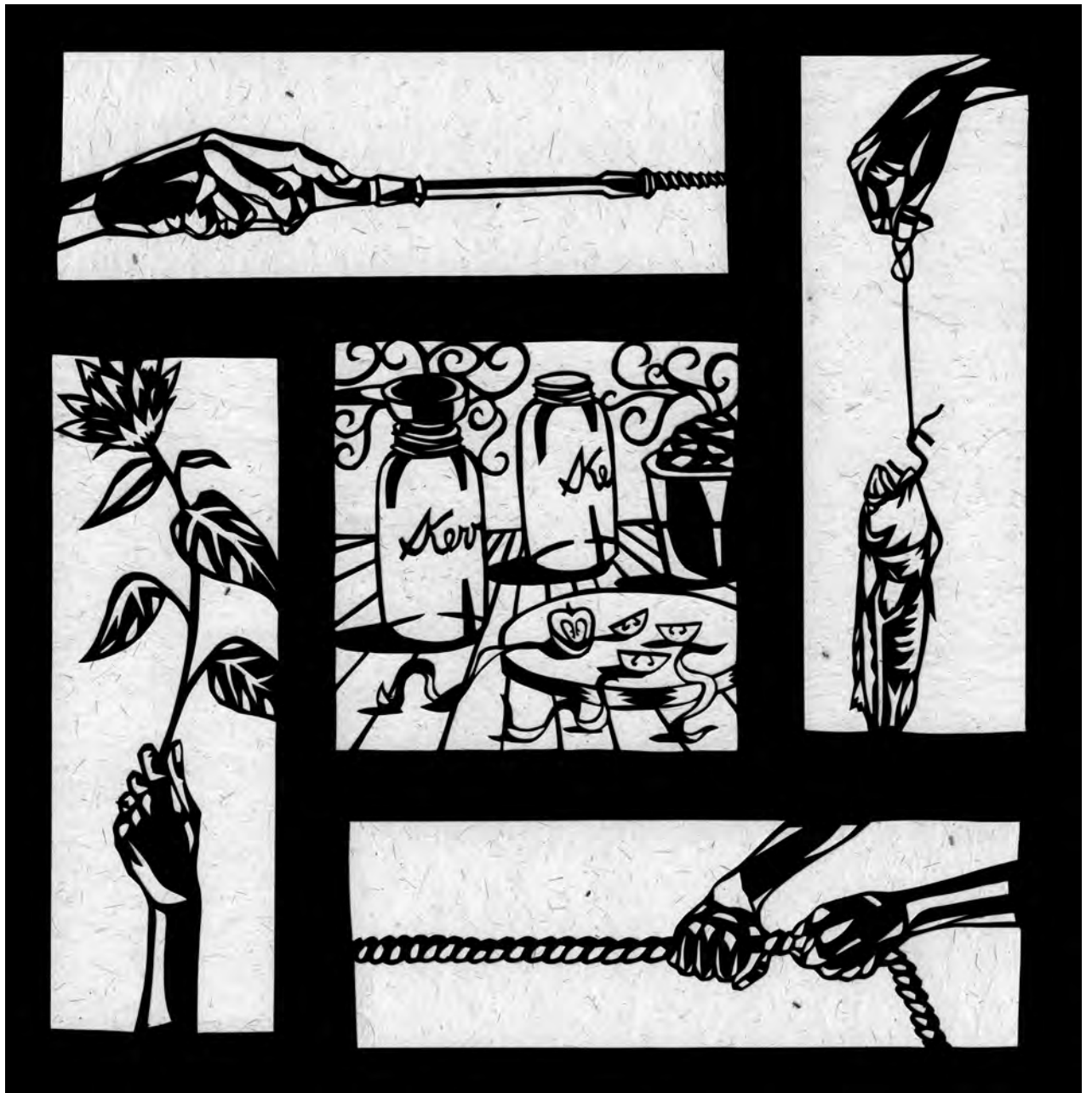
Detroit doesn't have opportunities that people are handing out, but rather raw materials that could possibly yield major rewards. To live in this city is a daily struggle with the failing city government, educational system and inadequate access to basic resources. To succeed you have to take things into your own hands. Which is prime real estate for an artist or anyone bold enough to take on the challenge. As residents of Detroit it is our duty to take these resources and use them to rebuild this city, in our image.

This is what shapes the people of this place and what informs my work as an artist. What may look like vandalism to some is my reform for the city. What the city lacks in typical resources, it makes up for in alternative mediums. In my case, old billboards that populate my neighborhood serve as the canvas for my work. Many of them have been abandoned; because the area's population is so low, companies don't see it as worthwhile to advertise, making them a perfect display for my work. I paste oversize drawings on the billboards to relay messages to my neighborhood or anyone passing through. The people of Detroit need not look to or depend on others to support our city; we will make our own in our city – our own food, our own stores, and our own billboard.

## AARON TIMLIN

Detroiters are pioneers going into the wild and making something beautiful, healthy and vibrant from the remains of a long neglected and abandoned post-industrial city. They are tilling under years of decay with plows of imagination – planting fields and harvesting them.

Imagine every home in Detroit with a garden, a recycling water system, solar panels, a goat for milk, chickens for eggs, passive solar heating and cooling along with geothermal heating and cooling. Imagine green roofs on warehouses and industrial complexes across the city filled with chicken farms, solar energy collectors and windmills. Imagine all the vacant land planted with alfalfa, potatoes and sunflowers, and grazing sheep and pigs. The neighborhoods once gutted by freeways would be connected again by huge freeway overpasses that would be covered with greenways, parks and other community shared land. Imagine the people becoming stewards of the land. School stewardship programs would teach students how to care for the land, the animals and plants as well as how to harvest natural resources such as rain water, wind and solar. They would bring their knowledge to their new neighborhood community centers housed in what at one time were abandoned storefronts, houses or other buildings. These centers would provide meeting rooms for groups and organizations, a food co-op and food exchange, access to computers and the internet, and provide workshops and lectures on anything from how to start a new business to how to spin wool or plant a garden. Each center would also broadcast a low frequency AM signal that would play local music, news and informative discussions. Children would learn at these centers, at home and in traditional public and private schools.



Detroit would become a new great city of agriculture. The word agriculture comes from the Latin word "agricultura." "Agri" means field and "cultura" means culture. So Detroit will be a field of culture. Culture as a noun means the quality in a person or society that arises from a concern for what is regarded as excellent in arts, letters, manners, scholarly pursuits, etc. Culture as a verb means to culture; cultivate or to introduce living material into a culture medium. Detroit will imagine a world of agriculture where urban farming is integrated with great educational, cultural and political institutions. Detroit will transform itself from hosting an automobile industry to a broadly defined creative industry, a model for urban sustainability, renewal and hope.

Is this farfetched? It is already happening. Detroit-based urban farmers, artists and cultural organizations have already begun to transform their city by installing windmills and solar panels, planting fields of alfalfa, transforming abandoned houses and commercial buildings (through real estate partnerships with landlords and artists) into galleries, artist studios, live/work spaces or public pieces of art.

Detroit is at a new dawn where the opportunity for change has shaken us awake from a long sleep. We jump up and embrace the new day, celebrate the power of the soul as it imagines a new type of city.

## STACEY MALASKY

Image above: Hands, 2009

## LOLITA HERNANDEZ

As my good friend General Baker said the other day, "There are so many demonstrations against the current economic situation it's beginning to look like the sixties; you could lose yourself in all of this activity." He has planted his feet in the struggle for national health care, as have I, in addition to anti-war and anti-ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) demonstrations. But as an artist I write within the tension of guilt from having to avoid all of this activity. This may be an unexpected response to your question, but I've been finding myself apologizing to all of my activist friends and trying to justify my absence in the organizing end of this struggle. I tell them, I'll be a body in the demos, a presence; I just can't organize anything right now. And I may not make every activity. The exchange is that no one can write my stories. I need to be quiet and moil in the sense that Carol Bly recommends as a way to find a story. Then again, I embrace the sentiment of the great Argentine writer Julio Cortázar in his brilliant essay, "Don't Let Them," "The poet or story writer's most arduous struggle is maintaining the delicate equilibrium that will allow him to continue to create work with air under its wings without becoming a holy monster, a worthy freak exhibited in history's daily carnival, so that his compromise can



be worked out in the appropriate domain, where his foliage can put forth new growth." I feel guilty about sitting at the computer worrying about words that may not have any relevance to big issues. But, it is this guilt that propels me to write. It is a justification. I must do this or be lost. In the end, I'm trying to maintain my humanity. General is right; you could lose yourself. And for what? Still, I march when I can in favor of HR 676, the National Health Insurance bill, because I am at the age when health care is a major issue. But then again it's a major issue for all. My son and daughter do not have health care. And the war in Afghanistan is escalating. So I spend sleepless nights worrying about this stuff and wake up mornings full of the painful energy that wants to inform my writing these days. So though I am angry, I can't use my fiction for anger because I am writing a novel about love. Go figure.

#### NICK TOBIER

When I was new to the east side of the city, my bike had a flat. Front tire. Not a big deal. I asked this guy Rory (his bike didn't have brakes, so he sort of hurled himself off in a roll to the side when he needed to stop) where the nearest place was to get a new tube. No bike store on the east side he said, "Jimmy's on Gratiot is never open. Ask Howard."

Who's Howard?

"He's the dude who fixes bikes." I asked Howard.

Howard brought me a tube that had more patches on it than tube. "Do you want me to show you how to patch a tube?", Howard asked gently.

For me, that says it for Detroit, and echoes what so many of my fellow creative citizens were saying putting this report together. Local knowledge and resourcefulness keep the city rolling creatively – Detroit is ahead of the crisis curve. Watch this space and this city for the tools we'll all need to pick up.

## PERSONAL ECONOMY

by Anonymous

I am an interdisciplinary artist who makes sculpture, drawings, photographs, performances and installations. In the years 1989-1992 I made enough money off the sales of my work and grants to survive. Then my gallery stopped paying me regularly (a very prominent NYC gallery), and then stopped paying me at all. I made a deal with them to trade the money owed me for art by a famous dead artist. I eked by for the rest of the decade on show honoraria, lecture fees, adjunct teaching, occasional sales and freelance design jobs. Then I decided to use the art by the famous dead artist as collateral for a loan to buy a piece of property in NYC. I rent out part of it to help pay my mortgage. I then got a full-time teaching job, as I did not want to lose this bit of stability by defaulting on the loan. I've been teaching full time for a decade now. Making work is much more important to me than selling it, and now I only sell a small piece about once a year out of my studio. I find the

commercial gallery system tiresome. I only accept museum shows when I am paid a decent honorarium and production costs, therefore I don't show that often. I learned to say no. Much of my work is made from surplus and recycled materials. I try to be inventive. When I am able, I always hire my ex-students to help, and I pay them a decent hourly rate. Three years ago I cashed out my retirement account from my teaching job to buy another piece of

property, which I can rent out, sell, or live in. Last year I got a grant and a commission which was great! I am working towards getting my NYC property off the grid, and when I can afford it will install DIY solar panels and a wind jenny. I grow vegetables & herbs in my urban garden, and save money on groceries in the summer and fall. I feel very fortunate with the way my situation has played itself out. I am space rich and money poor.



[DATE HERE]

Dear [ARTS ADMINISTRATOR NAME HERE]:

We are writing to you as a growing movement, a group of artists, performers and independent curators organizing to obtain fees for the labor we provide to art institutions. W.A.G.E. (Working Artists and the Greater Economy), as a movement, builds on a long history of activism and advocacy on behalf of artists and art workers.

As cultural workers, we provide a labor force. It is socially acknowledged that payment is granted for services rendered. Your institution is enforcing a system of non-payment to cultural workers – a system shared by numerous art institutions, including many which receive non-profit status as educational institutions. This system of organized irresponsibility must end. Cultural workers not only contribute to the health, education and growth of our local communities, but also to the economy-at-large through the businesses, real-estate investors and individuals we support through our art-making practices. Institutional staff members, advisors, trustees and board members are part of our community and must serve as our advocates, rather than our adversaries, in maintaining an arts community. As artists, performers and independent curators, we can no longer afford to be factored out of our own equation. We are your conduit to the public, your livelihood. Your salaried jobs are dependent on our labor and works, as well as our acquiescence and cooperation. W.A.G.E. demands transparency: base fee and honoraria schedules must be implemented by art institutions as a matter of policy for cultural workers whose services and/or works are requested for presentation. This effort corresponds logically and fairly with the economic system we're participating in.

In this difficult financial time, there is a window of opportunity to restructure this system, a system by which artists AND art institutions can, and must, survive through a conscious, active exchange of support mechanisms. Together we must set new standards.

W.A.G.E. hopes to engage directly with you, wherein these pertinent issues can be discussed in order to establish a relationship based on mutual respect and an embrace of economic realism and responsibility. We would like to begin a dialogue, and ask for your participation and input. In order to negotiate on behalf of our community, we request a meeting with you within the next 30 days. Please contact us at [wageforwork@gmail.com](mailto:wageforwork@gmail.com)

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME(S) HERE]

W.A.G.E.

# LANSING AND THREE FIRES TERRITORY: TOWARD AN ACTIVIST-BASED INDIGENOUS NEO-REGIONALISM

Dylan A.T. Miner

Let me be honest. The radical arts infrastructure in Michigan, much like its present economic state, has faced better days. When I left the state nearly a decade ago, I never intended to make my way back to Michigan. As someone who was born and raised in rural areas of the state, while also studying art at both the College for Creative Studies (Detroit) and Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo), it didn't take long for me to realize that the opportunities to become actively involved in contemporary arts practice were dismal, similar to the fate faced by the rest of Michigan's working-class. I left Michigan in 2000, intending to only return for holidays and family vacations.

Like many of my contemporaries, I considered the once vibrant cultural scene of mid-twentieth century Michigan, so intimately connected with working-class and union activism, as having little to offer artist-activists in the late-1990s and early 2000s. While I remain unconvinced about the state's radical cultural infrastructure, my recent return to Michigan has nonetheless sparked my desire to uncover what it is we have in the state and how we may better connect ourselves in a rhizomatic network capable of operating without large infrastructural support. If fact, this heterodox thinking was key to my desire to return to the Great Lakes State and reconnect with the people and communities that remain so central to my art-making practice.

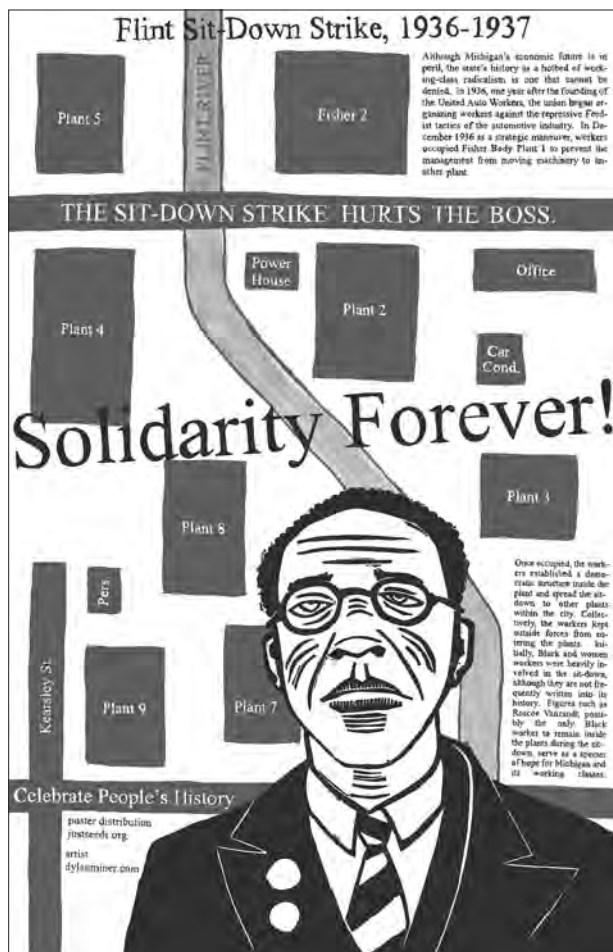
As a member of Justseeds, a decentralized artists' collective of approximately twenty print-based artists, my art-making practice is one that operates, by and large, outside of the dominant gallery system. While I do not eschew participation in the gallery system, my interest in galleries is connected with my interest in radical pedagogy: seeing the gallery as a site where "teaching moments" are produced. Like my collective-mates in Justseeds, I am interested in making art that functions prominently within movements of social justice, whatever form this visual language may develop.

While preparing for a recent lecture at the University of Arizona, I recognized that there are four fundamental components to my work as an artist: teaching, object-making, intellectual labor, and activism. While intimately interconnected, these four distinct modes of working each connect seamlessly in the quotidian expressions of my daily life. As such, and I hope that many of you also feel this way as well, there is no visible separation between my work as an "artist" and my work as a "professor," not to mention the lack of distance between my "activism" and "scholarship." The various ways that these categories connect with one another are what prove so dynamic and exciting about being an artist in the current economic climate in Michigan.

The presumed distance that many are forced to choose, segregating their various modes of creative production, must be disassembled in hopes of maintaining an active and creative existence in a region without a viable art market. While the state's creative infrastructure continues to erode beneath our feet, the alternative potentialities continue to grow. Since artists have historically, at least with the rise of modernism, grown accustomed to living economically marginalized lives, the opportunity that artists may offer local communities is tremendous, even if it doesn't coalesce the capitalist ideologies embedded in Richard Florida's notion of the creative class.

While mainstream art institutions face economic

constraints due to large-scale governmental budget cuts, grass roots and tribal institutions have grown accustomed to working with little or no money; they remain somewhat isolated from the impending budget cuts awaiting arts programming in the state. According to one newspaper article, state funding for the arts could decrease from \$7.7 million in 2008 to its current allocation of \$6.1 million to a proposed \$1 million in 2010. As if these frightening figures are not enough, in July, Democratic Governor Jennifer Granholm signed an executive order eliminating the Michigan Department of History, Arts and Libraries.



While the economic logic of cutting essential cultural services is unconvincing, the implications on the cultural life of the state are terrifying. What these recent and impending cuts signify for the state's arts infrastructure have yet to be determined, but their presence is already being felt. Thankfully, Michiganders have grown accustomed to using grass roots strategies to get things done. After all, this state is a virtual archive of local histories where common citizens have collectively contested the dominant logic of capitalism that many of us have grown accustomed to. Maybe we need to be reminded of the various resistant practices that have transpired within the state: Flint is the birthplace of the modern strike; Port Huron gave us Students for a Democratic Society; punk rock and techno are both indigenous to Detroit; the working-class intellectualism of James and Grace Lee Boggs remains fruitful; not to mention how the Anishinaabeg have now actively resisted three consecutive imperial powers in their ongoing struggles for self-determination. These are, of course, only a few of examples of everyday people standing up against empire.

With all of these amazing histories, often unknown or ignored, Michigan offers a wealth of oppositional material that I have been able to draw from in my own work. In economic times like these, we must all use these examples as sources within our practice. As a child, I dreamt of escaping the Winter Wonderland and seeking greater prospects in a warmer and more prosperous environment. However after nearly a decade

away, I have decided to allow my roots to reconnect with the state's rich soil. I hope to engage in existing endeavors and help develop new fertile and exciting projects. Following my participation last spring in What We Want! Artists' Retreat at the Co-Prosperity Sphere in Chicago, I began to wonder why Detroit or Grand Rapids (or Mid-Michigan for that matter) had not developed the radical sense of community that exists in cultural epicenters like Chicago. Although I cannot easily explain why Chicagoans have created such strong alternative arts infrastructures, I am reasonably convinced that we can do the same in Lansing, Grand Rapids, Detroit, Flint or rural areas in the state. Although these networks may not be quite as robust or fully developed as our cousins in the Windy City, I believe that there exist many exciting projects throughout the state that haven't been adequately documented or networked in the same way that you see with those artists involved in Chicago-based activities. It is my hope that with this essay, those of us involved in radical Michigan-based projects can better integrate ourselves into a network that works collectively across both time and space.

Since Michigan will never be an artistic center, I believe that we must accept our marginality and engage in a unique artistic practice that looks absolutely nothing like the capitalist-oriented market-based practices we see elsewhere. It is for this reason that some of the most exciting local undertakings are those that are not uniquely artistic, but instead are predominantly activist in orientation. For instance, many Anishinaabeg communities are engaged in stimulating ecological, cultural, and language-based projects. Protectors of the Earth, headed by the efforts of Bucko Teeple, operates out of Bawaating (the French renamed it Sault Ste. Marie) and works on ecological issues from an Indigenous perspective. Through the work of Lansing-area Anishinaabeg activists Don Lyons and Ahz Teeple, Protectors of the Earth has partnered with the Aboriginal Australian Traditional Knowledge Revival Pathways (TKRP) to document local Indigenous knowledge by way of digital video and audio recording. The material is then placed into a community-based digital archive where it may be used for the common good. Working with community members, these projects place the future of local knowledge in the hands of the community.

Along these lines, I have also been working with Lyons and Ahz Teeple on the Urban Anishinaabeg Oral History Project (UAOHP). Established this summer as a university course, UAOHP conducts bi-weekly dialogues with Lansing area Anishinaabemowin speakers by discussing everything from labor, to sports, to family and politics. Since nearly all of the fluent Anishinaabemowin speakers moved to Lansing from Manitoulin Island, Ontario to work in the automotive industry, their thoughts on the current economic and ecological crises are poignant and timely. These oral histories will eventually be used to form the basis of a grass roots publication and in a touring exhibition. Another important project is the Anishinaabeg Joint Commission, a cross-border initiative dealing with international water issues that neither the US nor Canada have adequately addressed. Together, these projects demonstrate the potential of place-based Native activism to radically transform the ecological future of Michigan and the Great Lakes basin.

Moreover, tribal entities have recently developed a sustainable infrastructure for language maintenance programs and community museums. The Saginaw Chippewa have a remarkable cultural center, directly across the street from their Mt. Pleasant casino, called the Ziibiwing Center. The center includes a permanent exhibition that addresses Anishinaabeg history from the perspective of the Saginaw Chippewa. In addition, Ziibiwing has an art gallery which hosts traveling and rotating exhibitions, having recently exhibited photographs of the American Indian Movement and an impressive retrospective of Native beadwork. The Saginaw Chippewa also maintain a tribal college that is actively engaged in teaching Anishinaabemowin. Its instructor, George Roy, is one of the participants in the Urban



Anishinaabeg Oral History Project. Further north, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians recently opened a tribal museum, Eyaawing Museum and Cultural Center. Bay Mills Indian Community, located near Baawaating, also have a vibrant Anishinaabemowin program at Bay Mills Community College, while Michigan State University and the University of Michigan also instruct the language.

The Nokomis Learning Center and the Woodlands Indian Community Center, both in metropolitan Lansing, face harsh futures with the lack of grants to fund their projects. Nokomis, although small, has both an interpretive center and an art gallery. The gallery has featured work by artists such as Dave Shannanaquat, known for his efforts on the pow-wow circuit, while they also hosted my exhibition “Otepaymisiwak: The People Without Bosses.” Recently, Becky Roy, Ashley Harding and Estrella Torrez have begun working with the public schools to develop an Indigenous curriculum geared toward urban Indians. Last summer, Roy headed an urban cultural program where Native students learned traditional cultural practices, art-making, and language skills, all of which are vital to the future of disenfranchised urban communities.

The Xicano Development Center, a Mexican-American and Indigenous organizing project, has developed a forceful array of projects. As a board member of this non-profit, we are presently coordinating a conference on direct action and democracy, particularly as they relate to the Native and Latino communities in Michigan. The conference will feature a keynote speech by Ward Churchill (a figure that bifurcates Indian Country, as many feel he is non-Native) and a performance by the Bronx-based rap group Rebel Díaz.

There are some specific Lansing-based arts programming and projects that deserve mention. Basement 414 organizes itinerant exhibitions and concerts in downtown Lansing. LookOut! Gallery, located in the Residential College in the Arts and Humanities (RCAH) at Michigan State University (where I teach), hosts an array of exhibitions, from local artists and student work, to large-scale curated shows. Last spring, I co-curated an exhibition on activist art from Oaxaca, Mexico, focusing on street art and photography. Cheyenne-Arapaho artist Edgar Heap of Birds was also in residence for two weeks at RCAH, while installing a “Native Hosts” intervention and working with students. While the installation had a nice long run, four signs recently disappeared during Homecoming weekend. Across from campus, Scene MetroSpace is a gallery that has arranged some interesting exhibitions, even if not focused entirely on interventionist or activist work.

While this essay began as a lament on my return to Michigan, the writing process has become therapeutic in its ability to help me recognize the multiple projects currently circulating around the Lansing metropolitan area, as well as within Three Fires Territory as a whole. Through these various projects, it seems that alongside other artists, activists, and intellectuals, we are beginning to lay the foundation for what I envision as a place-based, neo-regionalism that has emerged from the ashes of the state’s industrial history and is intimately tied to the precious ecology of our rural and semi-urban communities. In the vein of the Industrial Workers of the World, both Native and non-Native activists are “forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.” I hope to be a part of this.

*Dylan Miner (www.dylanminer.com) is an art historian by training, Miner is Assistant Professor of Transcultural Studies in the Residential College in the Arts and Humanities at Michigan State University, where he also holds appointments in American Indian and Chicano/Latino studies. An Indigenous studies scholar, Miner has published numerous articles and chapters, contributed several encyclopedia entries, and has written for Indigenous and Latino community newspapers. In spring 2010, he will present three solo exhibitions focusing on the radical tradition of the Great Lakes. He is Michif (Métis), active in the Justseeds Collective, and lives in Three Fires Territory with his partner and two daughters.*

## WATCH WHERE YOU ARE PUTTING THAT PENCIL

Anthony Elms

“I have a good conscience; I’ve written thousands of slips of paper. In the sense of this responsibility – work, conscience, fulfillment of duty – I’m no worse a worker than anyone who has built a road.” – Hanne Darboven

There might only be one thing worse than the financial support structure for artists: the support structure for art writers. Today, to try and be a writer of essays for catalogs, magazines or journals without being an academic, even a lowly adjunct academic, is to play against long odds. Which is why it feels that traditional scholarly art history writing styles and concerns, which in the past often felt distinctly different than the style and concerns of art criticism, are increasingly on display in contemporary art writing. Academics have the training to finish a text fairly fast and are the only ones who can afford this writing habit, excepting the insane and the independently wealthy. Not that academia is recognized by anyone as a path to riches either.

First some facts. I always hear that the standard rate for a writer is one dollar a word. Twice I have been paid more than this amount. Twice I have been paid one dollar per word. The rest has checked in somewhere around half if not lower. The most I’ve gotten for a review is \$275. Most reviews for the art magazines I’ve written for are 500 words and up. Write a review for Time Out Chicago, you are lucky if you break \$80 for about 270 words. Not that they will hire you, the number of freelancers featured in the art section lately is approaching, if not absolutely, nil. Or you could write a cover story for, say, the New City weekly newspaper in Chicago a year ago, that’s around 2,500 words. Somehow the \$100 check is slow arriving.

Now, there’s going to be some dour words in this text; don’t think I’m bitching. I am still writing essays and reviews. If the above pay scale is the beginning of a bad model for making a living, consider that probably a third of the texts I’ve written have been for free. That is not counting texts where I was supposed to get paid and didn’t. I mean texts I chose to write for free. Like this one. Not an uncommon fact for someone who has been involved in the artist-run or independently organized scenes. Sometimes it feels better to not get paid to write. Like this one. At least with this situation, I don’t collect the check and realize how little my input is valued. Writing free essays for artists and spaces I admire, like, or am intrigued by has given me some of my best essays and some of my most cherished artworks, not to mention a nice selection of books. Neither the works nor the books help pay the bills, that is an entirely other matter; the artworks and books successfully distract me from the nagging bank account, and besides, that is why I have a day job.

Many writers – and I guess I need to include bloggers as well – do what they do for free, or nearly so, because they love what they do. They see themselves as enthusiasts, supporters, and often think they serve as ethical voices, untainted by institutions and filthy lucre. The writer and critic Bob Nickas, summarized his stance succinctly:

I also decided early on in my career, when I was poor, that I would never write a catalogue essay for an artist in whose work I had no interest, but for which a sizable chunk of money was offered ... I resolved as well not to publish an essay just before an exhibition to avoid it being read as nothing more than a glorified press release. I have, however, actively written about – and included in shows – the artists whose work makes mine possible.

Admirable. And yet many who write for free become blinded by friendships or the desire to support, and are just as compromised in their estimations as if they had made a run on the bank. Besides, the last refuge of any scoundrel in the art world is: I love what I do and mean well. Still, I do. And others do. Even if I am also aware that, to paraphrase William S. Burroughs, no one does more harm than someone who feels bad about doing it. Enthusiasm and an opinion do not equal criticism.

Ethical or dastardly, often you get exactly what you pay for. The sad reality is that if the writer isn’t getting paid, or getting barely paid, that means the infrastructure at the publication or publisher for which they write is often similarly threadbare, both economically and culturally. The current economics of the publishing world do not allow for depth of talent in the editorial offices. In the general trades – daily and weekly newspapers or lifestyle magazines – generalist editors who are overtaxed are the best you can expect. Yes, even the most genius writers amongst us need editors. Literary culture is full of tales of not-so-famous editors who made the famous greats the greats we value them as. If the greats benefit from editors, the rest of us desperately require editors. This is why most major art magazines, Frieze, Artforum, Art in America, who, it should be noted, do still fact check, have a standard format they want in their reviews. It is easier and faster to deal with the texts if shuttling materials into a formula. Three brutal editors I encountered early in my writing career greatly improved my writing and my ability to structure an argument, even if I still am slow to learn how to write to formula. You cannot count on that attention today, which explains in part why academics might have a leg up in this field. It also explains why so much visual art writing is not worth reading. (This isn’t just in visual art, look at film criticism, or the childish pastiche of influences that counts as music criticism for many.)

Facts are not checked, assumptions made. Some sleep-deprived general editor with little knowledge of visual art or concern for art history barely has time for copyedits and assumes the writer knows his field and doesn’t bother to restructure the argument. Everyone makes mistakes. This scenario assumes there even is an editor – not always the case. In this laissez-faire editorial environment I’ve embarrassed myself and sounded like a blathering lunatic; and I increasingly encounter, time and again, art historical facts provided incorrectly by other writers. Like that local writer who in a review while mentioning influences name checked the 70s art movement Fluxus (only about 12 years late). Then there is a local blogger who cannot structure a logical argument to save his life (often the point of a short 300 word post is even hard to locate). A regular and prolific critic misrepresents any fact or attitude about an artwork in her writing in order to instrumentalize artworks in service of her pleasures or pet-peeves. Or yet another writer who regularly misuses theoretical terms in articles at every chance she gets (for example, “relational aesthetics”, which begs the question: who wants to reference “relational aesthetics” to begin with?). Some of these writers may be dumb, some may simply mistype on the rush to deadline, some may never have been told how to write a critical text; no matter, a lack of editorial oversight is equally to blame.

In this environment, even well-meaning and perfunctory writers barely stand a chance at coherence. By the time the errors appear the damage is done: the writer looks a fool, and the publisher looks like an idiot for hiring such a bad writer. Criticism is then judged to be ineffectual and art writing is viewed by the institutions and the artists alike as either grudge-bearing hackwork or glorified press releases. Hence I have a crackpot theory about critique and historicism entering into the artworks themselves: first, because the artists do not trust the writers and take the words into their own hands; second, because it allows artists, and the institutions who display the projects, to return critical dialogue and historiography to a powerful platform in



the public realm via channels that do away with the uncertainty of whether an other will concur with your viewpoint.

I have yet to mention such moments of job satisfaction as being completely excited about a project and yet not convincing an editor to run a review because it is “not right for that month;” finding that a publication wants only good reviews; having some editor add pizzazz to your text by choosing a title for you; and having publications not check the final print version with you, learning months later that some sentence was completely misconstrued and rewritten to mean almost the exact opposite of what was intended. Or having first person descriptions or asides changed to the “editorially consistent” plural, making the voice of the text downright schizophrenic. Still, I like writing about art; I just need to remind myself that, poor justification or not, it’s exactly what Michael Gerald of Killdozer said about his band’s experience in the music industry: “Now and then, we have to remind ourselves that we’re not doing it for the money because, if we are, we’re doing it all wrong.”

## SEVEN YEARS OF CHAOS

Carolina Caycedo

“At this moment the question remains; the struggle continues. What do artists want – a Lotto-like chance at making a fortune in a restricted market, with unbridled opportunities for a few winners, or a broad network of support for a larger number of artists working with limited to modest means?”

–Thomas Lawson, in “Attempting Community”, published in the catalog *Cultural Economies: Histories from the Alternative Arts Movement* (The Drawing Center, New York, 1996)

The beginning and the ending of my project *Daytoday* have been marked by two major economic crises. From the end of 2001 through the beginning of 2002, Argentina suffered from the culmination of the country’s financial decadence that started in 1998. Suddenly there was no cash flow. Argentineans had to resort to all kinds of imaginative strategies to make their “day to day” possible. A strong national barter network (based on local and community nodes) sprouted. This showed the rest of the world that grassroots collaborative efforts can generate

autonomous solutions that benefit and dignify an entire population. Around 12,000,000 Argentineans were part of 6,000 barter nodes by the end of 2002!

During 2008 and through 2009, the entire globe has felt the worst economic recession in decades. The president of Argentina, Cristina Fernandez, called the recession the “Jazz Effect”, named for its origins in the burst of the United States’ subprime lending bubble. Communities worldwide that have been practicing alternative economy strategies (local currencies, time banking, free markets, community owned housing and trading networks) attain significance within this crisis. However the majority of humanity still depends on a market model that doesn’t give a penny for individuals.

Who was most affected by these crises? Middle and lower class – count me in, please. We are all still coping with the effects of the present collapse. Artists and art laborers who are not market savvy (like me) are juggling with the cuts of resources. I believe a lot of us see opportunities in the mishap of the economy: opportunities for reevaluating needs, discourses, methodologies, strategies and alternatives.

It is in this context, and after a five week intervention in Los Angeles last July, that I have decided to put an end to the *Daytoday* project. I believe that, probably more than ever, the art realm needs projects like these that intertwine economic, political, social and aesthetic aspects. Art is a cultural sphere from which marginal strategies for inhabiting this world can be discussed and even attempted. But as an artist, one has to be aware of the limits of a proposal and the dangers of formulaic intervention. In his essay, “Vernissage”, Hakim Bey puts it like this: “To heal, one first destroys – and political art which fails to destroy the target of its laughter ends by strengthening the very forces it sought to attack.”

I’ll put it like this: *Daytoday* was like a soda pop that I shook and shook for the last seven years. Every time I shook it, some of the bubbles would pour out of the art context bottle onto the social strata of a determined city, affecting different individuals as well as my own life course. Well, the soda pop art container is empty now and all the bubbles have been spilt. No use in shaking an empty bottle, is there?

This doesn’t mean that barter is over for me. Oh no. Barter is part of me, and the swap boat has enabled a rich and satisfying navigation through early adulthood. But it was in Los Angeles that I was inspired by the strong network of communities, non-profits, collectives, activists, artists and individuals

working in support of autonomy and sustainability. I understood that my swapping efforts could shift from a person-to-person exchange that was coming from and inserted in an artistic framework toward a communal exchange that may help build up and tighten community bonds in my own locality.

I recently found out that here in Puerto Rico, other individuals with similar concerns have been organizing. Two years ago, several people started the Red de Trueque Borinquen (Borinquen Barter Network). This network is mostly based on the Argentinean model of nodes, in which “prosumers” produce for themselves and for others – without charging or receiving goods and services in exchange. A prosumer is an evolved form that synthesizes the producer-consumer division into a single person. I think all this is great for Puerto Rico, where rampant consuming is part of the colonial cause and effect. Borinquas in return, and without much political intent but instead as a means of survival, have a huge “under the table” economy, where cash is moved to and fro without state or federal taxation. I feel that in Puerto Rico a Time Bank community, together with the prosumer barter network, would be successful in complementing this “submerged” economy. So, after more than a decade of swapping, I am ready to help build up this sidewalk, or at least promote it before my drifting habits take me somewhere else.

### From Object To Subject

Doris Lessing writes at the end of *The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four and Five*:

“There was a lightness, a freshness, and an enquiry and a remarking and an inspiration where there had been only stagnation. And closed frontiers.

For this is how we all see it now.

The movement is not all one way – not by any means.”

During the last twelve years, I have been swapping and bartering objects, services and knowledge. Though *Daytoday* started in 2002, my praxis of barter started collectively with the group Cambalache Collective and the *Street Museum* in Bogota, back in 1997. This gesture of swapping and barter was born from a three-way liaison between social and public aesthetic practices, ideals of autonomy and an intuitive interest in alternative and gift economies. Both the *Street Museum* and *Daytoday* projects allowed me to visit and learn about different cities and to interact with the most incredible array of people. Places and individuals became layers of experience and knowledge that construe my swapping baggage. But my baggage is





not only made out of what I gave and what I obtained. It is mostly heavy with the unique situations that we constructed together with other swapping enthusiasts. With some people, this “complementing” situation based on trust would be a once in a lifetime, or even a once upon a time. But with others, it is the foundation for a longer interaction.

I consider all these people I exchanged with, and with whom relationships developed post our initial swap, allies in space and time. These relations to my allies perpetuate the intention of immediacy, and elongate the primal swap into a myriad of possibilities and realities. I like to compare it to the hxaro gift exchange, practiced by the !Kung people in southern Africa. This system is primarily about social relations and the goods themselves are of secondary importance.

Basically, hxaro is a delayed form of nonequivalent exchange: I give you something today, and you give me something in return much later, when you find an object that you know may please me. Once you exchange with someone you are bonded, and you pass the years together exchanging gifts. Any two people, regardless of age or sex, may do hxaro. Each item in the !Kung material culture may be put into hxaro, and you can pass on something that you received through hxaro to someone else. This way the most valued or useful goods are always in circulation, and potentially every one can enjoy them for a period of time at some point. The delayed aspect of the exchange is crucial to the !Kung. One person or another is always waiting to see what comes back.

What *Daytoday* basically proposes is that we rethink the way we value things and situations. How can we value something based upon a set of circumstances like memory, love or attraction, nutrition, ideology, personal preferences, spiritual significance amongst others, instead of valuing things for their monetary value, or the time we spent with them. It's this shift in the way we value things that I ultimately ask people to share with me. While I am very interested in understanding how others react to this proposition, I must confess that *Daytoday* was mostly about me. It was a continual personal testing site. How do I relate to strangers? How do I move in a new city? How do I feel about this or that situation or exchange? Do I want to take a position? Do my emotions affect my social skills? How am I going to engage with the public?

### Communication Strategies

In every city I devised different strategies that would allow interaction. The van was a constant in all the cities, as it allowed mobility and also provided an intimate space where I could host and receive people. It was my mobile living room, our magic carpet, and my hideout when I was exhausted. The other constants would be the interactive website, where people could propose a barter, as well as flyers and posters distributed around

the city.

In Vienna, *Daytoday* was launched with an outdoor party in the back garden of the Secession building. A lot of passer-bys got news of the project because of the party. Mostly it worked by word of mouth. People who exchanged would refer me to friends and family and so the swapping kept rolling. Also, an online computer with direct access to the webpage was installed in the bookstore. This way I lived in Vienna for three weeks without using money.

In New York, a table with an online computer was installed in the lobby of the Whitney Museum. Visitors could access the webpage without paying (as museum visitors only need to pay for a ticket once they pass the lobby to go into the exhibition spaces). A vintage-looking red telephone was also installed beside the computer. This red phone was a direct line to my cell phone. There was no dialing disc and as soon as you lifted the handset, you would be calling me. I received an average of twenty calls a day. When the museum had free entrance, I was called around fifty times!!!! Beside the table was a small, colorful chalkboard inviting people to use the computer and the phone, with some examples of the possible barter. A lot of people missed the table, because of its location. I was lucky that it wasn't more visible. I can't imagine coping with a higher calling average!

In North Adams, Massachusetts, I merged with the *Trading Post*, a project by Daniel Pineda. There we crashed different outdoor spaces in the small town, like the public library and the MASS MoCA museum's parking lots. It was summer and we looked for areas with a lot of human traffic. We also hosted a barter space at the Contemporary Artists Center, where we were both in residence.

In San José, Costa Rica, I was interviewed on the radio as soon as I arrived. A lot of people heard the program, and contacted me afterwards. It was only a week, but it was very intense. At the end, I decided not to take any photos or document the barter in any way. There is no trace of the San José exchanges, except for the objects and memories I retain, and those retained by the inhabitants there.

In Berlin, I edited a video that was displayed in a window shop gallery called SOX 36. The video offered my home in Puerto Rico for a month in summer while I was away, in exchange for a used laptop, or HD video camera. This offer comes from a personal conviction that all private property should be available to anyone if empty but also from an intimate desire of having someone occupying my space and kind of stepping into my shoes. The trade never actually took place, however, people all over the globe inquiring about the possibility contacted me. In Los Angeles, we didn't build a proper webpage, but instead took advantage of Internet social networks and blogs like Wordpress, Facebook and Twitter, creating pages that were interconnected and constantly updated. We also relied upon the rich email list of the gallery, and its huge network of regular visitors, fans, collaborators and friends. I was also reviewed on a couple of local blogs. With the van, I crashed some exhibition openings, and a popular cumbia night called “Mas Exitos”.

Every single person I encountered in these diverse cities gave me their unique insight on the urban layout, architecture, private and social gathering spaces and codes of their territory. *Daytoday* became a strategy for learning about a city through the eyes of insiders. Routes, gardens, living rooms, swimming pools, parks, restaurants, murals, bars, plazas, monuments, ruins, theaters, stairwells ... places and things off the beaten path that I would have never visited or attempted if it weren't for these encounters.

### FAQ

Did I ever get in trouble? No, fortunately I am a woman. A woman with acute intuition, and since I grew up in the tough streets of Bogotenaz (local slang for Bogotá: Bogotenacious), I know

how to dodge myself out of uncomfortable situations. And I did have to dodge out a couple of times, but I never really felt threatened.

Did I turn down barter proposals? Yes. At the beginning of the project, I would say yes to everything and get used a lot. But then I sharpened my negotiation abilities and would turn down proposals and people that didn't interest me.

The best barter I did? What I learned and obtained from different individuals through barter, or post-barter, is invaluable and illogical to compare or look for the best. However, I want to mention taking care of a two-year-old baby in New York. I enjoyed so much the trust deposited in me, as a stranger, by her parents. It was very special.

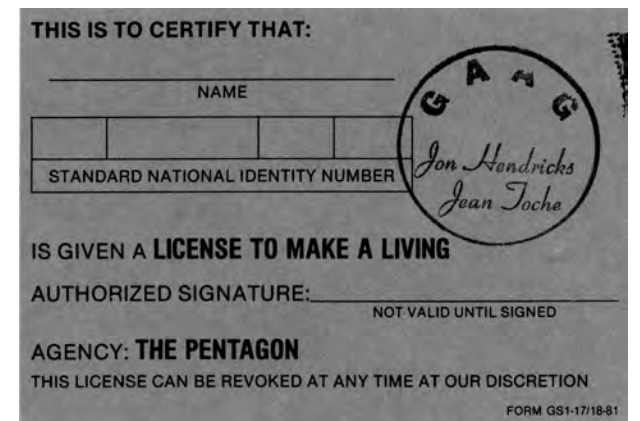
The weirdest barter I did? Follow someone for a week, in exchange for a couple of exquisite bottles of wine. The requester asked me to follow his brother's fiancé previous to their marriage. It was like penetrating this woman's privacy without her asking. I felt close to her, but she didn't know. After the years, I ask myself if they were just testing me. Was it all a set-up?

How did barter work within an art institution? I used the institution as a key to open doors. It would be my credibility card. But seldom exchanges took place in the museum or gallery. We would meet in other public spaces or privately.

Do I have a bank account? Yes, and I own a debit MasterCard.

What have I got after seven years of chaos? The ability to trust, immense confidence in my own social skills, no fear of zero cash flow, a string of allies dotted around the globe, and overall hope.

*Isabela, September 2009.*



## LICENSE ACTION (JAN. 17 - 18, 1981) Guerrilla Art Action Group

In 1981, Guerrilla Art Action Group (GAAG) made 10 license cards, like the one pictured above. The cards came in a small manila envelope with a red stamp on the front. Each card comments on a different person or government agency that in some way limits or controls peoples' freedoms through abuses of their power.

The cards are both humorous and very serious. They take aim at individuals like (deceased Senator) “Strom Thurmond's National Security And Terrorism Committee” which offers a “License to Silence Dissent” – something Thurmond did on a regular basis as he attacked the National Endowment for the Arts, helping to neuter the agency and silence provocative, powerful, and dissenting art projects and performances.

See page 12 for more on GAAG.



# GLOBAL MEGA-MERGER ANNOUNCED WITH 'WE CAN RUN THE ECONOMY' CAMPAIGN

## 16 Beaver Group

Many years in the making, New-York-City based 16 Beaver Group announced today the initiation of a complex multiyear process that will produce the largest global merger of arts and politics collectives known to date. Critics immediately attacked the move as being, "out of touch with recent developments in art and economics." But the group argued at their press conference that the new mega-art collective, which will use the acronym C.A.R.T.E.E.L. (the group did not specify what each letter stands for) will soon be ready to compete within the current monopolistic anti-marketplace. C.A.R.T.E.E.L. plans to bring to a politicized cultural community a significant share of the benefits enjoyed by the recent slew of mega-mergers, also known as rescues, such as the few and well subsidized surviving banks that have risen from the ashes of the economic meltdown. Based on emboldened notions of the commons, C.A.R.T.E.E.L. members will launch their activities this Fall with the 'We Can Run ... The Economy' campaign.

C.A.R.T.E.E.L. members began their unorthodox press conference by donning jogging suits and invoking names like Jane Fonda, Joskha Fischer, David Harvey, Karl Marx, a product or person named Bifo, and a long list of Feminist thinkers, with the only recognizable name being Eve Sedgwick. Perhaps with an intentional spirit of openness to potentiality, the group was long on theory but short on specific actions that will be enacted to form this global collective art cartel. Little information was provided about its ideological position. Although one of the presenters, who wore a mirror mask, did emphasize that dance was a necessary part of this coming together of different groups. It was altogether unclear if this was metaphorical or literal.

What seems sure is that the announcement is intended to rally artistic groups from around the world, inviting them to join by sharing information and developing autonomous, yet interconnected cultural structures whose economies may be seen or said to work against the power of exploitive market practices. To put it in their own words we now quote from their press statement:

"We've seen financial institutions that were 'too big to fail' merge into even bigger ones, and yet the technocrats who allowed this to happen have been given government positions, bonuses and remodeled offices, and overall more power to exploit. The news of stability and dust settling is false, if we speak of anything ending right now, it should not be a recession we describe, but the end of capitalism in general and the real creation of large-scale alternatives. We all saw the cracks in the system and we know they are still there. We will occupy them through the exchange of 0 values and a subversive inversion of affective economies. In the old days the worker was the factory. Today the worker is the bank, the mortgage company, and Fox News. We're torture and a war in the Middle East. We're Google, our every move strip-mined for indicators. We're content providers ready for a change. Human energy and desire is also a finite natural resource! Stop with the upgrades! Your 'Free Market' is holding all of us in chains! Everyone is an Incompetent. The 'experts' and 'technocrats' are without clothes. Long live incompetency! We don't want an end to the recession. We want the end of Capitalism!"

Potential participants in the merger will receive an email or mail announcement in the next few weeks or months with the title 'INVITATION TO JOIN C.A.R.T.E.E.L.' If you receive one, please open it, share it, and do not ban it to the folder

where you place viagra announcements or emails you receive from Africa. If you or your organization would like to join C.A.R.T.E.E.L. or learn more about it, send an email to [cartel@16beavergroup.org](mailto:cartel@16beavergroup.org)

Included here is also a selection of FAQ:

Q: What is the 'WE CAN RUN ... THE ECONOMY' initiative?

A: See <http://wecanrun.org/>

Q: Who is the economy? How can I become part of the economy?

A: We are the economy. Each of us is already a part of it and should have a public voice in how it is organized. Reclaim the economy with us, say "We" can run it, and in the process begin to reclaim our collective future."

Q: How am I already part of the economy?

A: More than half of your day is devoted to economies of barter, gift, of non-monetary exchange, of non-exploitation. How can we give greater shape and force to these practices?

Q: As an artist/activist/adjunct/barista/student, I feel like I live in a permanent recession, working as a precarious laborer while someone else generates value for their real estate/brand/olympic bid/tourism/fake-old-upscale-restaurant off of my participation in urban "creative industries." Last year felt like a rupture, this year feels like the continuation of a bad fiction. How did our current economic regime go so quickly from gasping on the ropes to stomping on my head again? And how can we score a

TKO (sorry for the sports metaphors)?

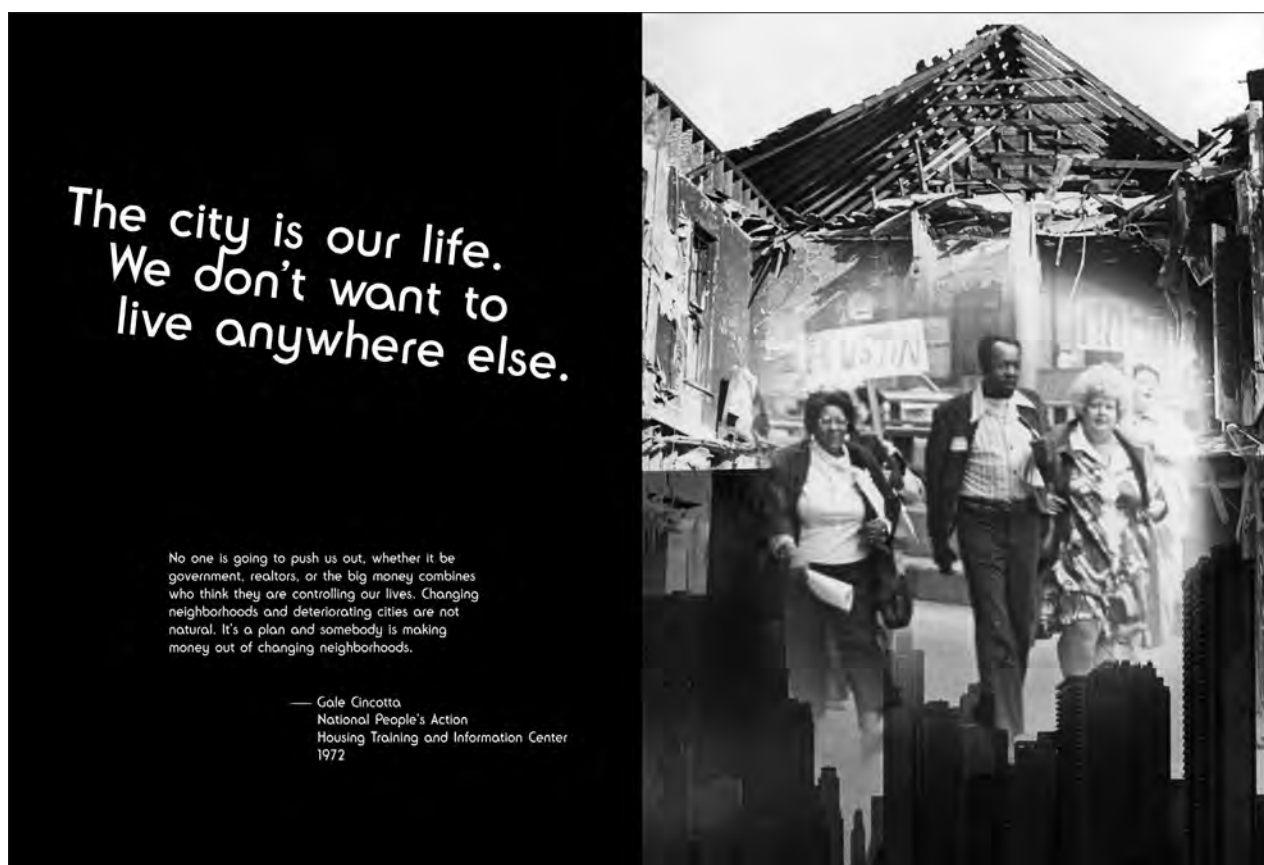
A: We feel collective experiments are necessary. Oikos, from which the word economy comes was associated for the Greeks with the home. And it begins with the home and finds its way to the polis, the city, the politics. Corporate media may be talking up recovery, but when so many are still losing their homes, their jobs, and their belief in the rhetoric of a 'free market' the world is more open to experiment with the future now. We are calling for a culture which is activist in the sense that it rejects complacency and calls attention through protest, resistance, and creative intervention to actual lives, actual circumstances, and actually-existing alternatives.

Q: I feel like my demographic/neighbors/friends/generation have failed me and remain content to gamely tap on their iPhones while massive pillaging and injustice continue to be perpetrated on a global scale. Weren't there supposed to be more bankers committing suicide? Now I'm the one who is depressed; I'm tired of waiting, what should I do?

A: We'd also prefer not to wait until the world ends in the next decade to find out what it would take for those around us to actually wake up and participate. In the meantime, group work and activities such as exercise can be excellent mood enhancers.

Q: My affinity group/running club/punk knitting circle is interested in running capitalism out of town, what can we do to help?

A: Hold a run wherever you are, but there's more: participate and make these questions public.



This image is from *Red Lines & Death Vows: Mortgage Politics in the 20th Century*, by Damon Rich, from the exhibition *Red Lines Housing Crisis Learning Center*. Thanks to Larissa Harris, Joseph Heathcott, Stephanie Greenwood, David Smiley, and John Mangin. There are several other slides that accompany this one. They can be found on the website for the newspaper: [www.artandwork.us](http://www.artandwork.us).



# PERSONAL ECONOMY

by Anonymous

Each year we are able to host around a dozen large art exhibitions, scores of performance events, screenings, and talks, a festival that has over 400 participants, one internationally distributed magazine, one widely distributed local magazine, several annual periodicals, a dvd project, online video projects and several traveling exhibitions and events.

We are extremely fortunate and lucky that many people are interested in working with us on the multiple projects, publications and programs that we take part in. But the most important facet of this work is that these hundreds of individuals donate their labor in creating them. As facilitators of various outlets for expression we try to barter our services and provide space, opportunities and venues for these individuals to share their ideas and work. But this exchange and barter of labor does not pay any of the bills.

Everything we do is funded by the solicitations of money from hundreds if not thousands of individuals and independent businesses that we reach out to each year. Without this community nothing we currently do would be possible.

We own a building whose first floor functions as an art space, residency room, studio space and office for the publications we produce as well as the projects and festivals that we facilitate. To cover the costs of operations we rent our top floor apartments. The rental income from these apartments does cover our mortgage. But it does not cover our insurance, taxes, utilities and day to day operations.

To pay for these extra basic expenses we host events where we charge admission and sell beverages. This income barely helps us cover our costs. We must also work on other jobs. Sometimes one of us will do part time carpentry work, tend bar, nanny, get paid as a guest lecturer, or do odd consulting jobs.

The only way we have survived and continue to produce our projects is because we rely on multiple methods of financing the projects. We raise money to pay for our printing costs and assorted bills through the aforementioned events, soliciting advertising for display ads, fundraisers, applying for grants and then, of course, we sell our publications and products.

Often times we barter services between individuals and independent businesses. For example we will trade an ad for silk screening posters. Or we will trade ads to get credit at a store. These bartered arrangements allow us to eat out, purchase a pair of jeans or get zines, books and magazines we otherwise could not afford.

We are also fortunate that our families have let us use their credit ratings to allow us to buy our building. We also rely on them from time to time to borrow money when we are short on funds for a project. Many times we borrow additional money to pay for a publication, gambling on the hopes that we might earn that money back at a release event or fundraiser.

Besides winning the lottery, getting better paying straight jobs, or applying for some larger grants, we don't see how any of this might change soon ... But we desperately want it to change. We want to be able to create sustainable projects where everyone involved can get financially compensated for their labor and we can expand on the work we already do.

And of course, like most artists, we don't have health insurance. Some day it might be great to have that option.

## W&N

We are a duo of artists that has been working together in San Juan, Puerto Rico since 2005. We do not receive sustenance from a patron. On the contrary, to be able to finance all the expenses of our artistic ventures we work like normal people. We've worked with a website, in a house basement, and contribute to independent organizations or those focused on the development of emerging artists, among others.

The website covers events of the young/emerging artistic community. It addresses the need to document and show those cultural activities that are out of the mainstream. In addition, it presents social events that seem pertinent including: organic markets and flea markets, theatre, concerts and other productions of great cultural relevancy that represent an independent effort being made by diverse groups that are ignored by the mass media.

It is very typical for us to work with low-cost second-hand materials. In moments of economic crisis we use our basement to carry out activities and art events (which are always collective). We organize a series of events where artists with little or no commercial representation have the opportunity to show their work (locally and internationally).

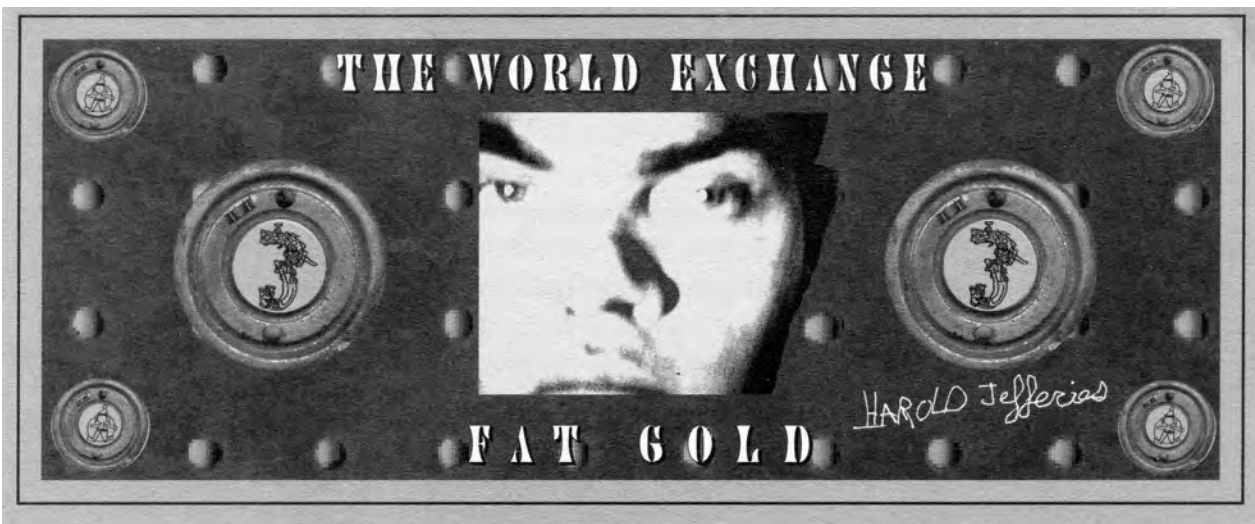
In the four years that we've been working we have sold four artworks. The money obtained from one of these sales served to pay for our webspace on the Internet, to fix up the basement and for the CHA (Center of Horrible Arts) that, while it lasted, was dedicated to independent music and art. The other three artworks we sold were auctioned and this money was donated to another alternative space, which now serves as residence for artists.

[www.wn.repuestoweb.org](http://www.wn.repuestoweb.org)

[www.repuestoweb.org](http://www.repuestoweb.org)

1. To join the TAU network, cut out the ID along the black line, trimming off all the black but leaving the four pieces together.
2. Fold along dotted lines: first along the vertical line, then along the horizontal.
3. Sign the bottom.
4. "Laminate" (by any means necessary)
5. Use with confidence and pride to get more for free.





Harold Jefferies is an artist working at the Little City Foundation art studios, outside Chicago, a program for artists with developmental disabilities. He has been making his own money for years.

## HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO THE ECONOMIC DEPRESSIONS OF THE WORLD?

Marc Herbst and Christina Ulke for  
*The Journal of Aesthetics & Protest*  
Editorial Collective

*The Journal of Aesthetics & Protest* and *Journal of Aesthetics & Protest Press* evolved as a collectively-run, DIY publishing project concurrent with the globalization movement. In the late

90s, the less monetized territory of networked protests and the insurgency of relational and tactical media opened up a stage for new forms of collectivities, movements and publics.

For the editors, publishing was an opportunity to create a critical platform – a public space where the benefits to large groups act to ameliorate the ambitions of individual writers, subjects, or editors. Public also related to an unstated understanding between writers and editors regarding the goals of the project – to engage a common discursive space around issues of art and culture, media, and activism toward social and political change. Perhaps we now have a better understanding of this “public” as “movement”, except that the word “public” on first glance maintains the non-ideological space of a true inquiry.

Public also holds to our understanding of how to define our work's exchange value. Any profit (symbolic or monetary) accrued within the creation, distribution, application

or broadcasting of the concepts are to be intrinsically redistributed to the larger collective, and not to be withheld for personal economic gain.

Our group, *The Journal of Aesthetics & Protest* Editorial Collective, has not accrued monetary profit in the creation of *The Journal of Aesthetics & Protest*. Our situation is quite the opposite. We run at a loss with no funding and high printing costs. However, like other projects that rely upon the input of contributors and a larger group or network, *The Journal of Aesthetics & Protest* has gained cultural and social capital. Some of us editors think that this question, the question of how to create a structure for the sharing of our collective wealth, has become a key question for both our small network, and the greater community as well. This notion of collectivity threatens capitalism itself, a system that relies on the exploitation of the collective labor of others.

In *Go Post-Money!!!*, our seventh issue of *The Journal of Aesthetics & Protest* we address some of these issues when our writers investigate the structures and the aesthetics that contribute to supporting public and common projects. Many articles address the creation of shared networks in ways that attempt to leverage out money-based economies.

Economic crisis in capitalism is system-immanent. Critical analysis is needed. We are facing the further privatization of knowledge production, the further economization of social space and social practice as symbolized by web 2.0, and an increasing precarity in thought labor. The defunding and neglect of traditional institutions all constitute to this situation. Unfortunately, this is nothing new. Under the Bush administration, it was clear that an element of this pressure for criticality was partially a result of something beyond the economic – the damping down of the democratic process through fear-mongering, corruption, media manipulation and lies, which impacted heavily the nature of knowledge. It is still unclear how the current administration will affect this space.

Our hopes are high. We choose to move forward, collectively.

## THIS NEWSPAPER IS AN EXHIBITION

### Temporary Services

This newspaper was designed to be taken apart and turned into an exhibition. Everyone is welcome to follow the instructions below and present the results to the public.

Make a one-evening exhibition. Host a discussion about the content of the newspaper. Use one of the essays to spark a thematic event of your own creation. Get involved in a longer-term initiative and teach classes or share skills based on the topics presented in this newspaper. Or make your own newspaper that better reflects the concerns of your community.

You will need two copies of the paper to make a complete exhibition. Take the papers apart and cut each spread down the center along the fold. This will give you two separate pages. Affix the pages to the wall.

If you don't have access to an indoor space, wheatpaste the entire publication to a public surface, like the side of a museum, gallery, or art school. Tape up your favorite texts in bathroom stalls at cultural centers. Use bulletin boards at your grocery store or hallway display cases at your school. Make cardboard or wooden structures in place of a wall and display the paper in a free-standing manner in your yard. Mount the paper on panels that can be hung from a ceiling or fence.

For *Temporary Services'* first presentation of this project, we are making a border for each sheet using different colored tape with varying thicknesses and textures. To use this style, cover the edge of the page with tape. Note that depending on the conditions where you hang the paper up (humidity, heat, pH balance of the wall relative to that of the tape, etc.), you may need to do some additional preparation of the wall for the tape to





stick. Packing tape should stick to most walls. If you want to use other kinds of tape, experiment with prepping the wall with spray adhesive, which may get other kinds of tape to adhere better. Make increasingly larger rectangles of tape around the first rectangle. Repeat this effort until the pages and their tape halos have the presence you would like in the exhibition space. We took the pages of the paper and taped them up using multi-colored packing and duct tape. Gaffer tape would work well too. We suggest using different finishes, widths, and other variations to make the pages pop out. We put some pages by themselves and clustered others together when the articles went from one page to the next. In a large space, this works well, but for a smaller space, you may want to make stacked clusters of the pages.

There is no one correct way to display this newspaper. We tried to come up with a fun, visually stimulating way of displaying it and encourage you to invent as well. The main idea is to use the paper and its presentation to create an energetic background for discussions and a space for people to engage with the ideas. Be creative and find interesting ways of displaying the paper in your community.

We would love to see images and hear reports from your exhibition, discussion, release party, or other event. Send images and notes to us at [servers@temporarieservices.org](mailto:servers@temporarieservices.org). Post images and reports online at [www.artandwork.us](http://www.artandwork.us).

## DISTRIBUTION OF THIS PAPER

### Temporary Services

We are working to distribute this paper in all 50 states and Puerto Rico and should achieve this in the next few months, hopefully with your help. There are some states we haven't organized distribution for yet. Maybe you live in one and maybe you can help. See the list below for locations of distribution for the paper. You can also visit the web site we set up to check for regular distribution updates: [www.artandwork.us](http://www.artandwork.us). There will be exhibitions, discussions, presentations, and more in many of the cities listed below from November 2009 well into 2010.

You can download the paper at the same address. In case you aren't in a place where the paper is being distributed and you want a printed copy, we are making them available for free through Half Letter Press – [www.halfletterpress.com/store](http://www.halfletterpress.com/store). We will have to charge a small fee for shipping. But we are making no profit on the paper's dissemination. Order one copy or 100. We will ship them to you. We have also made a high resolution version of the paper available for anyone who would want to reprint it. The web site has additional material and information that we were unable to include in the paper

because of either monetary or time constraints.

The list that follows is only partial and you should check the [www.artandwork.us](http://www.artandwork.us) for the most up-to-date listings. Please feel free to contact us: [servers@temporarieservices.org](mailto:servers@temporarieservices.org).

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Temporary Services is Brett Bloom, Salem Collo-Julin and Marc Fischer. We are based in Illinois and have existed, with several changes in membership and structure, since 1998. We produce exhibitions, events, projects, and publications. In 2008 Temporary Services initiated Half Letter Press, a publishing imprint and an experimental on-line store.

Temporary Services would like to thank all the people that helped bring this paper into being. This paper would not have been possible without the monetary, editorial, web development, and networking support of SPACES in Cleveland and the great people there, especially Christopher Lynn, Sarah Beiderman, Nicole Edwards, Sarah Hoyt, Marilyn Simmons, and Susan Vincent. *Art Work* is funded in part by Lauren Rich Fine & Gary Giller and the John P. Murphy Foundation.

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Thank you to everyone who is helping distribute the paper, making exhibitions, and holding discussions.

We also want to extend our gratitude to the great folks who contributed to this paper. Their generosity is a testament to what is exciting, ethical, and possible in our vast overlapping art communities. The reader will note that some authors included short biographies with their text. Due to space restrictions, we were unable to put biographies for everyone in the paper. We have put them on the web site for the paper. Please take a look.

The image on page 12 is by Hui Ka Kwong. It shows Blood Bath, by Guerrilla Art Action Group at the Museum of Modern Art, November 18, 1969. All other images are courtesy of the contributors whose text they accompany, except the one on page 19, which is an image made for the Works Progress Administration and is free use under public domain laws. The drawing on the back cover was derived from a photo of an unidentified protest by the Art Workers' Coalition.

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## Sublime Economy

On the intersection of art and economics

Edited by  
**Jack Amariglio,  
Joseph W. Childers and  
Stephen E. Cullenberg**



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JACK AMARIGLIO, JOSEPH W. CHILDERS, AND STEPHEN E.  
CULLENBERG

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# 11 The sociology of the new art gallery scene in Chelsea, Manhattan

David Halle and Elisabeth Tiso

## Overview: the debate over the commercial market and its dominance

Chelsea, on Manhattan's Far West Side, has with stunning speed become the center of Contemporary Art in New York City and the United States. Between 1998 and February 2008, the number of commercial galleries in Chelsea grew from 71 to at least 268, dwarfing other art districts in the United States and supplanting SoHo, once the most dynamic gallery neighborhood in New York City. The number of SoHo galleries has now fallen to 44 from its 1990 peak of 262. (See Figures 1 and 2.)<sup>1</sup>

This mega-concentration of commercial galleries in Chelsea represents an opportunity to engage the long debate over the impact of the rise of the market and the decline of patronage as the major way that art is produced. Our five-year study suggests that the current situation is pluralistic and far more interesting than allowed by perspectives that just stress the dominance of commercialism in a one-dimensional way, or conversely by approaches that simply ignore the market's role. "Economics," in the language of the editors of this volume, is important but definitely not "everywhere" in Chelsea.<sup>2</sup>

The contours of the debate over the role of the market and commercial forces in art have long been drawn. On the one hand, an important line of twentieth and now twenty-first century thinkers decry the growth of market forces whose impact, they argue, has been huge, and lament the commercialization of art as, for example, it is processed through the modern corporation. These thinkers include F.R. Leavis and the "mass culture" school as early as the 1920s and 1930s, the (Marxist) Frankfurt School such as Adorno and Horkheimer in the 1930s, and, later, Western and Central European intellectuals such as Baudrillard and Václav Havel in the 1970s as they contemplated the penetration of their societies by Western capitalist culture (with Hollywood movies as paradigmatic). A recent statement is by the curators of the New Museum of Contemporary Art which opened, with great anticipation, in December 2007 in the Bowery in New York City. For example, curator Richard Flood complained that "Making art in the early twenty-first century is just the same as making art in any other century, except for the money that coats everything like ash.

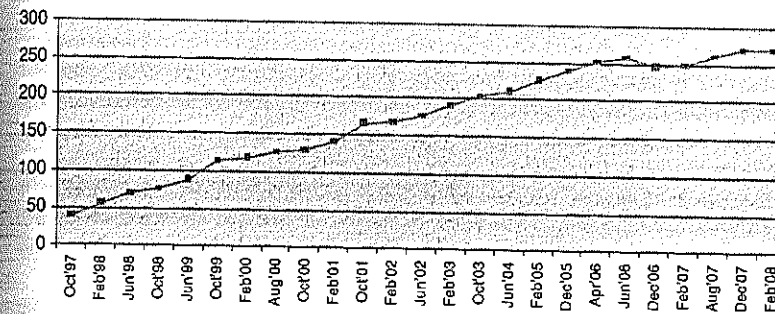


Figure 1 Growth of galleries in Chelsea, 1997-2008.

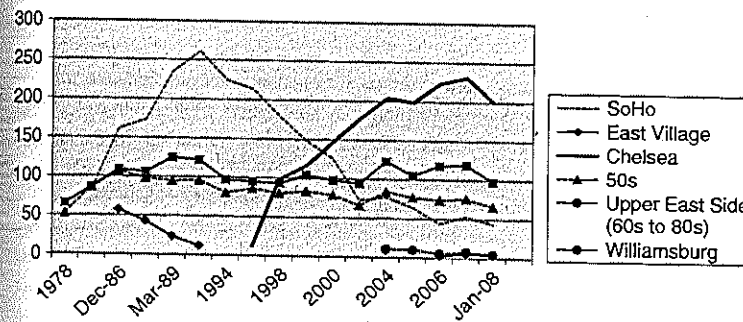


Figure 2 Art gallery areas, Manhattan and Brooklyn, 1978-2008.

... Nowadays there are masterpieces everywhere, racing into the marketplace like sperm to the womb. ... In an age of maximal distraction ... there is no time wasted waiting for a masterpiece to achieve connoisseurial consensus. Some blowhard just pronounces it so, and that's all. Well, maybe it helps if there is a carefully choreographed auction where a manipulated record is set and an art riff on bad history commences, as dollars, euros, yen and rupees confirm the status of a masterpiece. But, really the appellation has replaced the reality."

Although there are differences of emphasis and degree among these theorists, they all tend to believe that this commercial, market system imposes products onto a largely passive, mass public that this public would not otherwise purchase, and that it flattens out the tastes and critical sensibilities of the public. These theorists also often argue that the system "contaminates" the works by forcing the artists to produce what the market will sell, not what the artists would like to produce. Adherents of this perspective often refer to the whole process as the "commodification" of art.<sup>3</sup>



On the other hand, such views have been repeatedly criticized as, at the least, exaggerated. For example, it has been said that it is simplistic and condescending to imply that, for the audience, art and culture has just one set of meanings (or one "basic" set of meanings) that are somehow attached to commodified cultural products and that the audience simply absorb. Why should cultural products have just one set of (basic) meanings and even if they do where is the evidence that people more or less passively accept these meanings?<sup>4</sup>

The evidence from Chelsea's commercial gallery system suggests a current situation that is fascinatingly complex, in sometimes unexpected ways. There are, for sure, several ways in which the market is important and even dominant in Chelsea.

First, Chelsea does represent the triumph of the commercial gallery system as a mode of showing and distributing art. Unlike SoHo, which was initially colonized by artists and which represented, in its early days at least, an attempt by artists to short-circuit the market (e.g. by selling directly from their studios to customers), Chelsea was developed primarily by commercial galleries. Few artists live in Chelsea. They could not afford to even a few years ago when Chelsea first began to develop as an art gallery area, still less now. Nor is Chelsea like the East Village of the 80s, which was the first major attempt in New York City to create a new art district for contemporary art distinct from SoHo. The East Village's grass-roots, artist-based movement fizzled after a few years, partly because it lacked the commercial muscle of Chelsea's dealer driven move.

Further, several international gallery giants such as Gagosian or Pace-Wildenstein are active in Chelsea. These galleries are trans-atlantic operations with outlets in European cities too, and they have the economic resources to attract artists from smaller galleries. Such international corporations, long dominant in other economic spheres, are still fairly new in the gallery world. Their importance is likely to grow.

Also, every Chelsea gallery must deal with New York City's ferocious real estate market. Indeed, SoHo's decline and Chelsea's rise were above all real estate-driven. Rents soared in SoHo from 1995-1999, driven by an influx of clothing boutiques, and forcing a mass migration to Chelsea of galleries that could not afford the new rents. Learning the lesson of SoHo, many of those galleries that came early to Chelsea (with sufficient capital) bought their spaces, so as to insulate themselves from the commercial rental market. The other galleries signed leases and many were concerned about what would happen to their rents when those leases expired. Actually, by 2005 the main threat to Chelsea art galleries, to those who rented and even to those who owned their space, was not boutiques but the voracious demand for condominiums in Manhattan, with developers willing to pay enormous sums for condominium development on land now occupied by galleries. The heart of Chelsea's art gallery district is currently zoned to prohibit condominiums, but in 2005 the surrounding area, which includes many galleries too, was rezoned to permit condominiums. No-one knows how all this will play out, but in Chelsea's art district, real estate is, if not King, then probably Queen.

On the other hand, several Chelsea developments offset, or modify, an image of the world of Contemporary Art as dominated by the commercial market juggernaut.

First, Chelsea's gallery system offers an enormous free "show" of Contemporary Art. Very few of the audience come with the slightest intention of purchasing works. Further, in terms of its openness, continuity, size, and the range and quality of works displayed, Chelsea's free show has few parallels in the history of art, though it intensifies a trend begun in SoHo. Whether this is a trivial development, or a significant counter-trend to the modern tendency to commercialize leisure life (e.g. via the imposition of entry/access charges), remains to be determined.

Also, the overwhelming majority of galleries in Chelsea are neither global nor just "star," but small, and often not hugely profitable, shops that offer a plethora of uniquely crafted products whose collective effect amounts to a crucible of creativity. In many ways this is the opposite of commodification, and echoes an earlier, artisan structure, though in a modern market context.

Related to the previous point, the artists we interviewed, both the successful and the struggling, tend to embrace the commercial gallery system. They do not, on the whole, see it as a structure of dominance or oppression. Rather, they believe that it offers them a range of market venues for displaying their work that is to their advantage and that contrasts with the more restricted opportunities available through the museum world. Most artists consider that museum directors and curators—at MoMA, the Whitney, the Metropolitan, and so on—tend to be more conservative than commercial galleries, more focused on established art and less open to new art and artists.

Nor, as privately funded institutions, are the commercial galleries subject to the morality spats that periodically roil the U.S. art scene. Such spats focus on publicly funded institutions since they involve a debate over whether public funds should finance certain topics (e.g. pornographic art, gay art, "anti-Catholic art," "political" art). Commercial galleries, by contrast, are free to show almost all forms of art, and artists know and appreciate this.

Finally, and perhaps most important of all, is the evidence from a content-analysis of the art displayed in Chelsea, and from interviews with the audience that attend the galleries there. We identified five major, and three minor, themes that dominate the content of the art and also pervade the meaning of the art for the spectators who view it. For example, there is (in the works and among the audience) a concern about the destruction of the modern landscape, and there is an interest in depictions of inter-personal life that either avoid the romantic image of the nuclear family, or present it in a highly critical light. It is not plausible to analyze such themes as being pre-packaged and imposed by commercial forces. Rather, they are often intimately connected with central themes and issues in the audience's lives and are, in many ways, about the artistic depiction of modern life. Critics who argue that the audience are not well-understood if represented as basically passive receptacles for art are certainly correct, and the same considerations suggest problems for those who talk about the "commodification" of art.

In what follows we first discuss those factors that affirm the importance of the market. We then turn to the developments that either run counter, or are unrelated, to this.

### Data

Our research in Chelsea began in 2000. To make the study systematic, we organized it around the galleries, and did so in two main ways. First, we drew a sample of 40 galleries selected at random from all those in Chelsea. We refer to this as the "general" sample. Second, we studied all of the most famous and economically successful galleries. We identified 16 such galleries, which we refer to as the "star" list. They include Gagosian, Paula Cooper, Metro Pictures, Matthew Marks, Pace Wildenstein, and Luhring Augustine. (Table 1, note a, contains the full list.) In this way, we were able to study both what is going on throughout Chelsea generally and also to focus on the famous galleries that attract the best-known artists and are often international leaders in the art world.

### Commercialism/the market

#### *The gallery system*

Chelsea does reflect the dominance of the commercial gallery system as a way of presenting and distributing art. This is a crucial difference from SoHo, which was first turned into an art district by artists. Chelsea was developed primarily by commercial galleries, although the not-for-profit DIA Foundation was a key initial pioneer in 1986. (DIA was founded and funded by the De Menil family, much of whose huge fortune comes from Texas oil.) Then in 1993 DIA's director, Lynne Cooke, found space near the DIA for the young gallery owner Matthew Marks, who purchased it. Matthew Marks quickly encouraged his friends Pat Hearn and Paul Morris to move their galleries from SoHo to Chelsea, and the growth of commercial galleries in Chelsea had begun. For example, Paula Cooper, who had opened the first SoHo gallery in 1968, purchased a run-down Chelsea garage in 1995 and left SoHo.

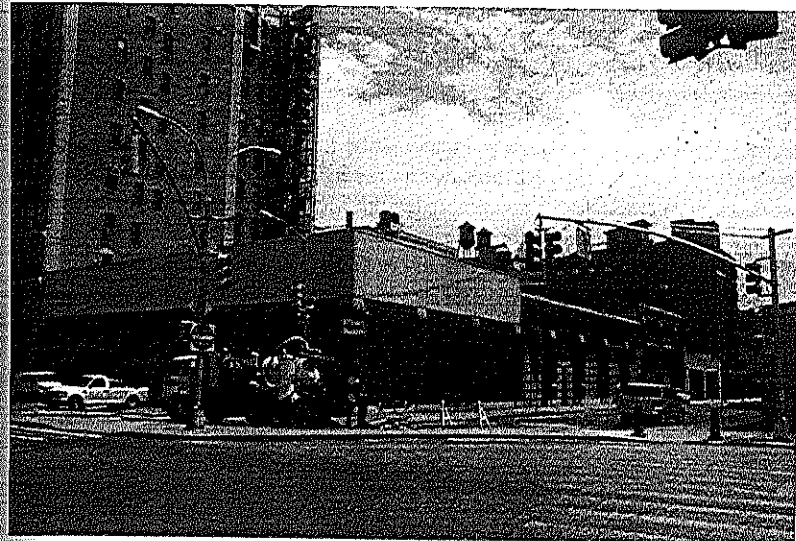
Few artists live in Chelsea. They could not afford it even when Chelsea began to develop as an art gallery area, still less now. (The reasons why SoHo was affordable for artists but Chelsea was not are discussed later.)

#### *International galleries*

Several international gallery giants such as Gagosian, Marlborough, and Lelong have moved to Chelsea. These are trans-atlantic operations, some originating in the United States and others in European cities. It is tempting to call them "global" (a term often used very loosely these days) but in truth even the largest rarely have galleries in more than a handful of countries. Still, they have the economic resources to attract (or poach) artists from smaller galleries, and from "star" but not



*Photo 1* Matthew Marks Gallery, Chelsea. This was built from a former garage, which is a typical form of Chelsea conversion. Unlike SoHo, which was founded by artists (with galleries coming later), Chelsea as an art district was developed primarily by commercial galleries (after the DIA Foundation's pioneering move). Photo by Elisabeth Tiso.



*Photo 2* Gagosian Gallery, Chelsea. This gallery, whose one-story structure covers 10,000 square feet and almost a third of a city block, approaches, in size, a small museum. Gagosian has several galleries in the United States and abroad. There are just a handful of such global galleries in Chelsea, but they represent a new direction for the art world. Photo by Elisabeth Tiso.



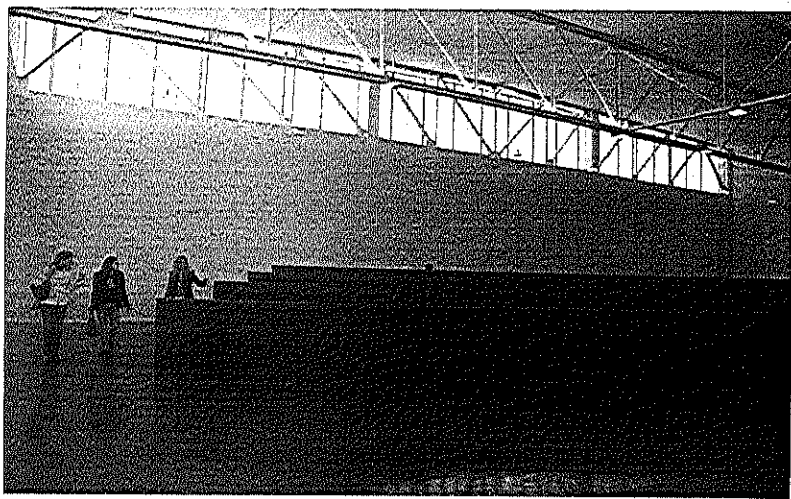


Photo 3 Gagosian Gallery, Interior (section). This cavernous space parallels the height of many museum interiors. Photo by Elisabeth Tiso.

international galleries too. The United States dealer Gagosian, for example, has two galleries in Los Angeles, two in New York City, two in London, one in Rome, and a Paris office and is looking for space in Hong Kong. The French gallery Lelong, which has outlets in Paris and Switzerland, recently opened a branch in Chelsea, as did another large French gallery, Yvon Lambert. Such international corporations are a fairly new, but growing presence in the gallery world and are bringing the latter more in line with other spheres of the economy. Still, the overwhelming majority of galleries in Chelsea are neither international nor just “star” but are often struggling boutique operations, as we discuss later.

Andrea Rosen, a “star” list Chelsea gallerist who owned just one gallery, complained about Gagosian’s business model:

Gagosian has a different agenda from 99% of the other galleries. He’s not interested in recording the place of his artists in history or in long-term relationships or in preserving the archives of his artists. For Gagosian, it’s all about money. It’s really about the business model that didn’t exist before. He’s instilled a sense of competition. Still, it’s not all bad. He does bring art to a wider audience, and he’s had many fabulous shows.

Paula Cooper was less critical of the internationalists:

It’s a huge world now, the art world is enormous. It’s completely intertwined, e.g. there are shows all over the world of everybody. The American-European

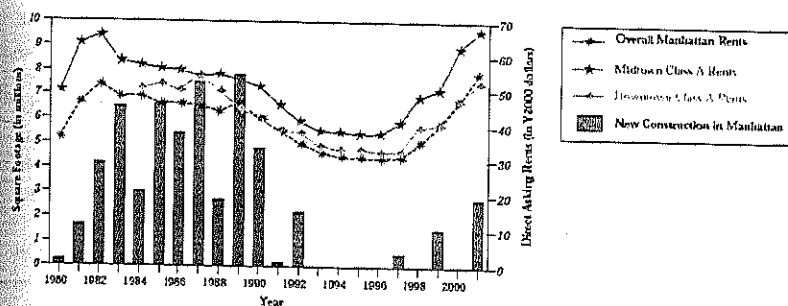


Figure 3 Trends in direct asking rents and new construction completions in Manhattan, 1980–2001.

Source: Charles Schumer and Robert Rubin (co-chairs), *Preparing for the Future: A Commercial Development Strategy for New York City*, June, 2001.

thing has exploded. Artists are coming from all over the world. There are so many big international shows.

#### The Manhattan real estate market

Manhattan’s daunting real estate market is an ever-present force with which galleries must deal. Real-estate drove SoHo’s decline and Chelsea’s ascendancy as art gallery districts. Figure 3 shows how commercial rents in Manhattan basically doubled from 1995–2000, and Figure 2 depicts the associated decline of SoHo galleries, gradual until 1995, steep thereafter, and the highly correlated rise of Chelsea.

The havoc wreaked by rising commercial rents in the late 1990s on those SoHo galleries—the majority—that were on commercial leases and did not own their spaces is affirmed in interviews with Chelsea gallery owners and managers (both those on the “general” gallery list and the “stars”) who fled Soho in search of affordable space. The interviews are replete with references to “greedy landlords/developers” who do not care about art.

Miles Manning, now director of the Elizabeth Harris gallery in Chelsea, worked for the Danish Contemporary Art gallery (DCA) in SoHo in the early 90s. The DCA rented the ground floor of 420 Broadway, SoHo’s most famous art gallery building. The building had a star cast of gallery owners—John Weber, Leo Castelli, Ilana Sonnabend. Manning explained what then happened:

The DCA had a two year lease (in SoHo) with a three year option beyond. Our landlords, two Dutch businessmen, started coming to us in the 2nd year [1997] to get us up to the 4th floor, but they really wanted to get us out. Meanwhile most of the ground floors in other buildings were closing or moving, because the fashion stores were moving in. We saw the handwriting on the wall.

Mary Boone was across the street. She had the same landlord as we did. Her lease came due, they had a fight, and Rene Lazard, the German fashion designer, moved in.

There were 28–30 galleries here (in Chelsea) then. Finally the landlord said (to us) “We want you to get out. What will it take?” We said: “If you find us comparable space in Chelsea.” They offered us \$250,000 plus they found this space. Here we have 5,000 square feet and we’re paying 1/3 less than we paid in SoHo. November ’97 we opened our doors and since then, all around us, more and more galleries have moved in.

Moving early was our luck. Otherwise our lease would have played out last year [2000] and the gallery would have ended. We would have been priced out of the market and unable to afford to move here. Survival stories in the art world are about knowing when to act and leave. Those who don’t make it right end up as footnotes in history!

Most of the gallery owners who fled SoHo commented on a change in the composition of the SoHo audience in the mid-90s and beyond. High-end shoppers now largely replaced those who came to view art. The new audience was despised by most of the gallerists. For example, Barbara Gladstone (star list), who rented space for her gallery in SoHo from 1983 to 1996 until high rents drove her to Chelsea, commented:

When I first moved to SoHo it was very quiet. Then, once rents got so high [her landlord wanted to triple her rent], the crowds were now a detriment. The real collectors couldn’t get into the gallery. The new crowd didn’t know the difference between a gallery and a furniture store. There’d be fifty people in the gallery, and no collectors, because they’d [the crowds] be going down the street to shop, from one shop to the next. Anything is better than that.

Seeming to affirm these judgments, a recent (March 26, 2006) feature article in the *New York Times* Real Estate section described SoHo as a “shopping nirvana. Bloomingdale’s arrived last year, and it would be hard to find a major designer or upscale retail outlet that hasn’t.”

The East Village of the 80s was a brief offshoot of SoHo and primarily an artist-based movement interested in expanding the content of contemporary art (e.g. to make room for political art and for figurative art especially depicting sex including gay sex). When landlords in SoHo lowered rents in the early 1990s recession, many of the East Village’s new galleries returned to SoHo.<sup>5</sup>

Will Chelsea go the way of SoHo?

Not surprisingly, a much debated topic among Chelsea gallery owners and other observers is whether real estate developments will eventually cause a similar debacle for the art galleries as happened in SoHo. Several of the earliest, large galleries to move to Chelsea bought their spaces, partly because prime, first floor rental locations were not readily available and partly as protection from the commercial rental market. The other galleries in Chelsea signed leases and

were keenly aware of what Chelsea insiders called the “2005” factor, a reference to the year when leases expired for the cluster of galleries that had moved to Chelsea around 1996 and had signed the typical ten-year lease. Many of these galleries worried that an influx of boutiques would eventually drive them from Chelsea too.

Barbara Gladstone, who co-owns her Chelsea building—a converted warehouse—with Matthew Marks (his second Chelsea gallery) and Metro Pictures, commented:

I have mixed feelings about Chelsea. I moved here four years ago [1996] because my rent in SoHo was going to triple. I was looking for a place where I could buy something in order to be protected from landlords.

What I like about Chelsea is there’s nothing to do here. So if you come, you come to look at the art. But the neighborhood here is changing. The way it happens is first you have galleries, then restaurants because the rich people who buy the art want somewhere to eat and someone figures out there are rich people around. And they [the rich people] want to buy things, and then you get the boutiques, and “that’s the end of the neighborhood.” SoHo went like that.

Still, I feel protected here because I’ve bought my space. Most of the gallery owners that moved here early bought. There weren’t that many Chelsea spaces to rent. This building was a warehouse. Now they’re building an apartment house across the street. It’s a rental building. “There goes the neighborhood.”

Gallery owner Clement Glasser was less sanguine, commenting (in 2002):

Chelsea will go the way of SoHo surely in fifteen years. I’m 100% sure. There’ll be a lot of boutiques. The main difference is there are no high buildings here. The only fixed point in New York is the Upper East Side—that’s always the right place to show secondary artists, Vermeer to Balthus. The super-rich people live there.

A member of the audience for a show by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen commented:

It’s a real estate play. I’ve seen the same thing in New York for 30 years. They (i.e. the real estate industry) bring in the art. Then the real estate prices go up, the real estate people bring in the fancy shops, then they build fancy apt buildings, then the rent goes up so the galleries will have to leave.

Still, 2005 came and went without a cataclysm. Indeed, the number of galleries in Chelsea continued to rise that year, from 226 in January to 239 in December. (See Figure 1.) Further, the global and star galleries were in expansionist mode. By 2005 Matthew Marks owned four Chelsea galleries, Paul Cooper had opened a second, and Marianne Boesky’s new space was in construction.

Yet major change was in the air. A key factor that had limited the rise of rents in the art gallery area of Chelsea was the fact that, zoned as manufacturing, it had no resident population of artists who could give the district a special caché. By contrast the process of SoHo becoming an art neighborhood began with artists moving into the neighborhood to live from 1959 onwards.<sup>6</sup> SoHo's cast-iron industrial buildings were ideal for the space artists needed. Artists were able to afford to move there because landlords could charge only very low rents because almost no-one else wanted to live in SoHo. This was because the neighborhood seemed doomed after Robert Moses, in 1959, announced plans for a ten-lane Lower Manhattan Expressway, which would have wiped out SoHo. To much surprise, after an epic struggle, the Lower Manhattan Expressway was finally defeated in 1969. The ensuing promise of stability, and the presence of artists, created a demand for bars and restaurants and then galleries, and then tourists came including art buyers.

The artists' industrial lofts in SoHo were, at first, illegal residences, since the area was zoned M1-5 which permitted light industry and commercial establishments such as galleries and retail stores, but precluded residential. After the defeat of the Lower Manhattan Expressway, the Department of City Planning legalized residences in 1971, but only for artists, changing the zoning to M1-5A and M1-5B, with the A and B designations permitting artists to live there so long as they were certified as such by the DCP.<sup>7</sup> Actually, the certification of residents as artists was, and still is, widely ignored (by the DCP too), so SoHo lofts traded freely on the residential market. This created an on-the-spot coterie of wealthy residents/shoppers to help support the clothing and later furniture stores too, both small boutiques and large chains, to attract tourists (shoppers), and to add to the upward pressure on commercial rents that eventually displaced most of the galleries. By the mid-1990s SoHo was a "hot" neighborhood.

Chelsea's zoning was also M1-5, which is why the art galleries were able to move there. But Chelsea never came under the rent reducing apparent death sentence of a project like the Lower Manhattan Expressway, so even from the start few artists could afford to live there. Chelsea also lacked SoHo's multitude of attractive, cast iron buildings, although it did have some very large warehouse and industrial buildings into which artists could have moved had they been able to afford to.

The heart of the Chelsea gallery district is concentrated on the midblocks between W. 20th and W. 27th Streets and 10th and 11th Avenues, in converted warehouse buildings and garages. The wealthier galleries tend to occupy first floor converted garages in expensive remodelings designed by architectural minimalist gurus like Richard Gluckman. The ordinary galleries more often occupy a small, upper floor, section of one of the large warehouse buildings.

Without a resident artist population willing to live there illegally in exchange for tiny rents, there was little demand for services such as restaurants and stores to open in Chelsea's art gallery district. Nor, under existing (M1-5) zoning, was there an opportunity for owners of the buildings in which the galleries were located to sell to a developer who would build condominiums or residential rental buildings on the site, an enormously profitable proposition in Manhattan's current (to 2006) real

estate market. Thus Chelsea's art gallery district lacked condominium residents to provide wealthy, on-the-spot shoppers. As a result most of the upward pressure on the rents paid by galleries in Chelsea in 2005 came from other galleries seeking to move to prime space there, although a handful of boutiques had moved in by 2005 (e.g. Comme les Garçons was an early pioneer).

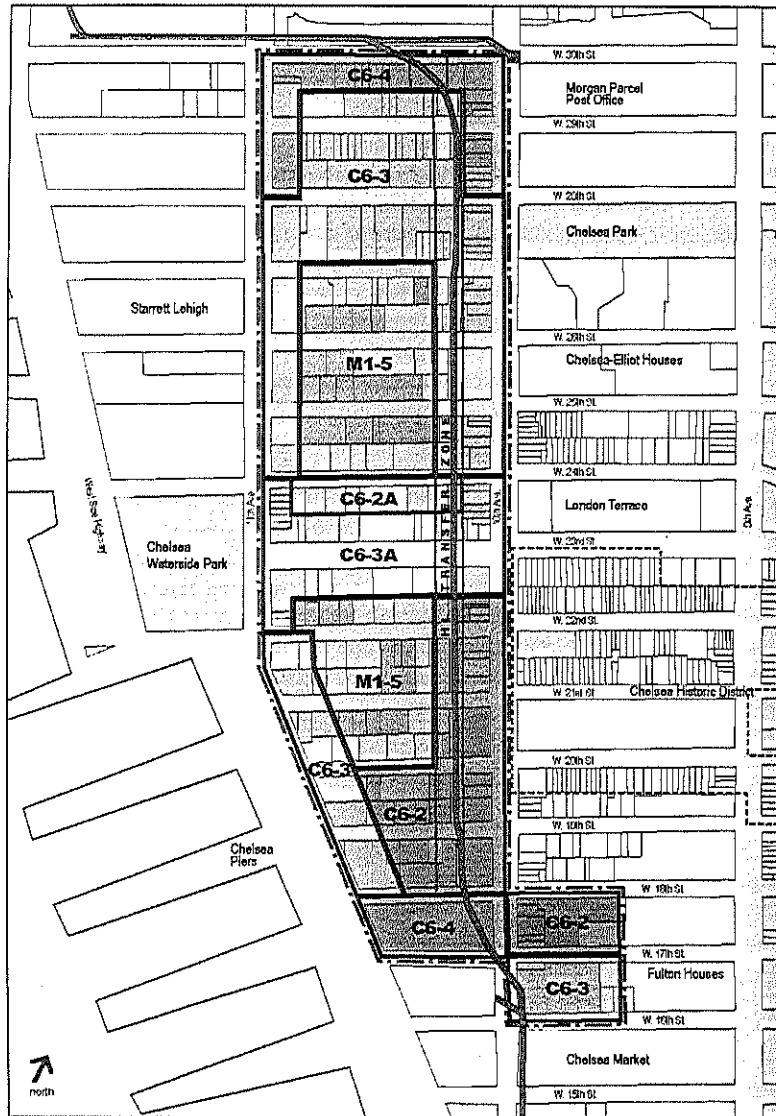
This, however, was not a stable, market equilibrium. In 2005 the Department of City Planning ushered through the approval process a West Chelsea rezoning plan, which created a special purpose zoning district. The crux of the plan, which was supported by the local Community Board (CB4), rezoned much of the manufacturing area around the art gallery section, but not the art gallery section itself, to a Commercial (C) designation which allowed residential development. (See Figure 4. The zones C6-2, C6-2A, C6-3, C6-3A, and C6-4 replaced manufacturing zones.) The DCP kept the original manufacturing zoning for the core of the gallery section, with the intention of protecting the galleries from the commercial pressures that would be unleashed in the surrounding areas by the ability to build residential buildings (condominiums).

The 2005 West Chelsea rezoning had actually been triggered by another intricate dance between ferocious commercial considerations and other concerns, revolving around the High Line, a long disused elevated railway that ran through the art gallery area. A local group, including some architects, had come up with a plan (first mooted in the late 1990s) to turn the High Line into a public park along the



Photo 4 High Line railroad. In the background is the Frank Gehry-designed IAC headquarters (opened 2007), which was built under the pre-2005, manufacturing zoning. The new zoning is unleashing a wave of condominiums. Photo by Elisabeth Tiso.





Proposed zoning

**West Chelsea**

DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING  
City of New York MANHATTAN OFFICE

--- proposed special district boundary

Figure 4 West Chelsea rezoning, 2005.

model of the Promenade Plantée in Paris. A crucial part of this plan, which by 2002 had the strong support of Mayor Bloomberg and the DCP, involved finding a way to compensate the property owners who owned land under, and adjoining, the High Line and who had long sought to demolish the High Line so that they could develop their properties. Organized as the Chelsea Property Owners, they had threatened to hold up the High Line project indefinitely with legal and political action unless they were financially compensated for being unable to develop their properties when the High Line was turned into a park rather than demolished.<sup>8</sup>

The compensating mechanism that City Planning settled upon was to allow the High Line property owners<sup>9</sup> to sell their air rights to owners/developers in a special transfer zone composed of "receiving sites." This special transfer zone did not immediately adjoin the High Line, so the visibility of the High Line for its park mode would be somewhat preserved from the encroachment of tall buildings. The zone's value as a development site (whose owners would be willing to pay for air rights so they could construct taller buildings) was assured by its having been rezoned from manufacturing (M1-5) to commercial (C), which allowed residential, as well as art galleries.

As well as providing a mechanism to satisfy the Chelsea Property Owners, the whole West Chelsea rezoning suited one of City Planning's broader goals, namely fostering residential development in West Chelsea and throughout the city. Thus DCP planned to encourage the creation of 65,000 new residential units throughout the city over the next few years, on the reasonable grounds that this allowed more people to live in the city and also increased the city's tax revenue.

In short, the 2005 rezoning is strikingly ambiguous. It is unclear if retaining the art gallery section zoning as manufacturing, while rezoning the area around the art gallery section to allow profitable residential development (C), will have the desired effect of insulating the galleries. The DCP said, bluntly, that the large galleries' current protection consisted mainly of the fact that they were already commercially strong enough to afford high rents. As it wrote:

The proposed action is not anticipated to diminish the viability of the art gallery industry in West Chelsea. Most of the larger art galleries, which represent the bulk of the industry, are not vulnerable, as they currently pay premium rents, particularly ground floor establishments (\$45 to \$60 psf).

Actually, the fact that many of the large galleries owned their own spaces certainly provided better protection than their sheer commercial power. Gagosian, in a typical attempt to combine art with the latest economic developments, in 2007 applied for permission to build a condominium tower on top of his art gallery in Chelsea!

City Planning said nothing about how the many smaller galleries in Chelsea would fare beyond its ambiguous assertion that the large galleries constituted the "bulk of the industry." This might have been true as a statement of the proportionate value of Chelsea art sales attributable to the large galleries, but it was not true as a statement of the relative number of small and large galleries.

Still, retaining the manufacturing designation did provide some insulation for the small galleries.

Overall, the ability of galleries to occupy a niche position in the real estate market was critical to the original establishment of Chelsea as an art district and will be critical to its survival. Under the prevailing manufacturing zoning, galleries were able to move to Chelsea because they could compete with such uses as garages, and yet were protected from the hopeless task of competing with condominiums. Whether commercial considerations will eventually lead to Chelsea's demise as an art gallery area, as they did with SoHo, is uncertain, but the possibility will always be there.

### Non-commercial forces

While the previous points are consistent with a perspective that stresses the importance, and sometimes the dominance, of the commercial market, there are several other developments that offset, or modify, an image of the world of Contemporary Art as ruled by the commercial market Behemoth.

#### *"The best free show in town" and the general audience as creators of "buzz"*

Chelsea galleries represent a strikingly new role for the audience. In the traditional gallery there was an expectation that most of those who entered did so with at least some thought of buying. By contrast, very few of the audience for Chelsea galleries have any intention of buying the art. We refer to these non-buyers, who constitute at least 95% of the audience, as the "general audience."

The Chelsea gallery audience is not, of course, a cross-section of the general public, but it is reasonably representative of the public who are interested in Contemporary Art. As such, it includes a sizeable proportion (about half) of art professionals (artists, curators, designers, critics etc.). It is a plausible assumption that the rest of the public (i.e. those who do not attend galleries that display Contemporary Art) do not on the whole have clearly defined views on the subject and indeed probably have only a hazy notion of what "Contemporary Art" is.

This "general audience" freely admit that they have come just to look, not to buy, usually because they cannot come anywhere close to affording the works. They are, therefore, viewers but arguably not "consumers" if the latter refers to people whose role is to purchase goods in the market.

Chelsea galleries impose no entry charge, do not pressure the onlookers to buy, and are open and welcoming. This shift in the function of the gallery is institutionalized in current gallery practices. On not one occasion during our research did a gallery employee make the classic "can I help you?" sales approach. The typical Chelsea gallery has an unobtrusive reception desk well to the side of the entry so that viewers can walk straight into the gallery without feeling any need to interact with the person at the desk.

Chelsea gallery owner Barbara Gladstone ("star list") referred to the Chelsea scene as "one of the best free shows in town," and the spirit of this comment was repeated by many owners and viewers. Further, this free show in many ways surpasses in quality and quantity that provided by New York's museums, almost all of which charge an entrance fee. Entry to the recently re-opened MoMA is \$20. This absence of an admission charge runs counter to the strong tendency in the modern world towards the "commercialization of leisure life," whereby a growing proportion of spare time consists of events for which admission is paid (see, for example, Clark, 2004).

The gallerist Andrea Rosen ("star list") argued, plausibly, that this constituted a radically new relationship between gallery and audience:

The wonderful thing about Chelsea is that there has been a change in the public's attitude to the art. The spaces are accessible. Galleries are free, unlike most museums. On a typical Saturday 1,000 people come through the gallery. Sometimes I say to friends who haven't been here before, "Why not come by the gallery?" Often they're hesitant, they're thinking of the older galleries where they're expected to buy.

Hence Chelsea galleries have a dual role. To the traditional role of the gallery as a place where art is sold has been added the role of the gallery as a place where huge numbers of people can come to just view contemporary art, including the latest work by the stars of the field, without feeling the slightest obligation to buy or even to pretend that they might buy.

Of course some people, i.e. the "collectors," do buy the art. Often these come to private showings and pre-views. For sure they are also part of the general audience (though less than 5%).

But our research suggests that the "general audience"—those who come to look with absolutely no intention of buying—may perform a crucial function, that of validating the art for the collectors, of helping to create and to support the "buzz" without which collectors are unlikely to have the confidence to buy, or to continue to buy, the works. This was suggested to us as a hypothesis by several audience members we interviewed, and several gallery owners said it was plausible. This "filtering" or validating mechanism may be a new and interesting way in which the market works. In the language of economics, it helps create an upward shift in the demand curve for the works of particular artists. Still, it is too soon in the development of the "free show" phenomenon to be sure what is going on.

Illustrative are a random sample of twenty-five of the spectators who came to an exhibition of drawings by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen at the Paula Cooper Gallery, in May 2004. The show consisted mostly of small drawings, watercolors done on lined paper depicting standard restaurant food items—shrimp cocktail, banana split, and so on. Being small drawings, these were selling for about \$15,000, far less than art usually sells for in "star list" Chelsea galleries. So assuming that the demand for art is inversely related to its price—the standard economic assumption—the audience for this show could be expected to

be somewhat more inclined to purchase the art than the audience for the average "star list" show.

Still, only one person in this sample had even a thought of buying anything in this show. He was a man in his mid-40s, dressed in a smart yellow jacket, who identified himself as a "collector" of "modern and contemporary art." He was with a woman who identified herself as his "art adviser." She explained she was taking him around to "see as many galleries as we can fit into the next forty-five minutes." A chauffeur waited outside so they would waste no time.

The rest of the audience had no intention of buying. Indeed, for about half, the question whether they came to buy elicited satirical comments on their financial condition. Consider the following examples:

- A female professor of speech pathology at Lehman College, who had come with her husband and another male friend: "No we're not here to buy, unless the price is in the two digits." [The group laughs heartily.]
- A married couple, a photographer and a designer, who live in Greenpoint, Brooklyn: "We come to look, not to buy. We're living in Brooklyn!" [They laugh at the point that if they could afford to buy this art they would not be living in Brooklyn.]

#### *Galleries versus museums*

Almost half (46%) of the audience members interviewed during the study preferred going to Chelsea galleries over going to museums. Only 10% preferred museums. The rest liked museums and galleries equally. Those who preferred galleries did so partly because galleries are free and partly because they perceived Chelsea galleries as more open and innovative in their choice of artists, and generally less intimidating, than museums. For example, a female in her 40s from the upper east side of Manhattan who worked as a secretary said she felt uncomfortable in museums and found galleries more inviting. Two recent unemployed male grads from Yale University, asked if they frequented galleries or museums more often, laughed and said: "It's easier to go to galleries because they don't cost \$20." A museum curator from Utah felt that New York museums (MoMA, Whitney, Met) tended to show over and over again the same canonical contemporary artists to the detriment of the younger and off-beat artists. Chelsea offered her an opportunity to see what was new and different.

#### *The gallery system as opportunity for the artist*

The artists that we interviewed rarely see the commercial gallery system as oppressive. Instead, they believe that it offers them a broad range of market opportunities for displaying their work, far broader than those offered by the museum world where the official gatekeepers are more likely to make cautious judgments favoring artists who have already established reputations elsewhere, especially in the commercial galleries. These views are generally shared by more successful artists showing in star Chelsea galleries (e.g. Mike Bidlo, Dan Graham,

or Bill Owens) as well as by artists who are struggling, many of whom were part of the audience that we sampled.

While no artist that we interviewed would refuse patronage work (a commission from a museum or private person), none see this as a viable alternative to the main system, the operation of the commercial market through the gallery system. Thus the call, in the writings of some of the "commodification of art" school, for a return to private patronage as the main way of funding art seems hopelessly distant and foreign.

#### *The multiplication and persistence of small galleries*

Despite the presence of a handful of global galleries, Chelsea would not be the dense art gallery neighborhood that it is without the plethora of small, boutique-size galleries, owned by individuals not corporations, that make up by far the majority of the gallery scene. In this sense the Chelsea gallery world is still a far cry from, and seems to refuse to conform to, the oligopolistic concentrations (Gaps, Starbucks, and so on) that mark so much of the rest of the economy including the leisure and entertainment sector. This is, of course, a central reason why the gallery system offers, for most artists, a far more open system than the museums.

Art historian Thomas Crow has commented on this peculiarity of the gallery system, with so much of it existing at the "artisanal level" (Crow, 1996a, 1996b). Crow theorizes that what underpins this system is that the art sold in the galleries constitutes a form of unique intellectual property, a highly creative product akin to some of the unique software programs that permeate the "continually beta" world of high technology. The Contemporary Art world too requires continual novelty. This analogy between art/art galleries and artisanal shops selling unique products in a "continually beta" world suggests a complex situation that does not fit simply into a model of market dominance.<sup>10</sup>

Many of these small galleries appear to be economically marginal operations, and while often these are excused as tax right-offs, this answer seems too simple. The owners/dealers often say they view their activity as not just commercial but as philanthropic, almost akin to a calling or a religion, where they believe that it is important to display their artists' works not only to sell but as providing a message or knowledge-based service to the public, much like a museum. Interestingly, as large galleries come to see their roles as similar to museums, museums are starting more and more to function like galleries. The Los Angeles County Museum has an Art Sales and Rental Department representing "dynamic and cutting edge Southern California Artists." This convergence of museums and galleries raises interesting and as yet unresolved questions about "commodification" of art in the twenty-first century.

#### *The content of the art displayed in Chelsea*

Analysis of the content of the art in Chelsea's shows, and interviews with the audience, further undermines a "commodification" perspective. Five topics dominated the content of the art, to the point of being arguably obsessions.



Each of these topics constituted at least 13% of all the works in the sample. See Table 1.

Depictions of landscapes/nature constituted 25% of all the topics. These landscapes divide into two main kinds. There is the classic "good stretch of countryside/water/sky" (13% of all the topics). Here human figures, animals, and other items are either absent or small enough to avoid detracting from the view. This vision featured prominently in Western landscape art over the last 200 years, and clearly remains immensely popular (see Andrews, 1999).

The second type of landscape, 9% of all topics and almost as common among Chelsea landscapes as the first, is "radical environmental." These landscapes foreground concern, and often alarm, about the deterioration of the natural environment. This world is depicted as threatened by human development in numerous ways. It is variously shown as shriveled by suburban growth, crisscrossed by freeways and other transportation devices such as power lines, littered with garbage, polluted by devices that ruin the atmosphere, and subject to apocalyptic nuclear and other holocaust-style shocks. This "environmental art" is, in many ways, a new genre that has appeared since the 1960s. An interesting example is Nigel Cooke's *Silva Morosa*. See Photo 5.<sup>11</sup>

Sex, as a theme, is just as popular as landscapes, constituting 25% of all the topics of the art displayed in Chelsea. About half of these images go beyond nakedness to depict sexual activity—most often intercourse between male and female, sometimes same-sex intercourse, and sometimes male or female masturbation. (Counted here are a few cases where the image focuses primarily on the sex organs, though without showing sexual activity.)

The other half of the images classified as "sex" here depict people (usually women) naked or semi-naked, but not engaged in sexual activity. These are, therefore, more akin to the classic nude of art history. Often these naked images shade into feminism as the artist and audience use them to muse on the role of women in modern society. In some cases in the Chelsea sample, where the people naked are men, the images trigger musings on homosexuality.

Like "radical environmental art," sexual intercourse has not been a mainstream topic of Western art until Contemporary Art. Naked or semi-naked men and women pervade the history of Western art, but they have rarely been depicted as engaged in sexual activity. Nor have sexual organs usually been the image's primary/exclusive focus, rather than just an important part of the overall composition. This is one reason why in art history, even in the twentieth century, such naked or semi-naked figures have basically been classified as "the nude," not sex. The term "sex" is not even indexed in the two classic histories of art, Gardner (2005) and Janson *et al.* (2006). From time to time the adjective "erotic" occurs in histories of Western art, but this is always attached to descriptions of particular works, rather than to an entire genre that is prominent in a particular epoch.

There are a few possible exceptions. Indian art has a well known "tradition of eroticism" which, for example, depicts pairs of men and women (mithunas) embracing or engaged in sexual intercourse in an extraordinary range of positions. Still, Indian art is "Asian" not Western art. Further, this tradition is usually

Table 1 Subject matter of the art shows in the sixteen most important ("star") Chelsea galleries<sup>a</sup>

% of all shows (n = 32) <sup>b</sup>	
<b>MAJOR TOPICS<sup>c,d</sup></b>	
25%	LANDSCAPES Classic landscapes (Beautiful views) (13%) Environmentalist landscapes (Landscape is threatened) (9%) Political (3%)
25%	SEX Sexual activity and/or focus on sex organs (12%) Nudes or semi-nudes (without sexual activity or focus on sex organs) (13%)
16%	DECORATIVE/ABSTRACT
16%	TROUBLED NUCLEAR FAMILY
16%	NATURAL FORMS/MAN-MADE BASIC MATERIALS
<b>MINOR TOPICS</b>	
9%	POOR, THOSE IN TROUBLE (Poor, addicts, etc.)
6%	MASS PRODUCTION/COMMODITIES
6%	POLITICAL
3%	RELIGION

<sup>a</sup> The galleries include: Paula Cooper, Matthew Marks, Barbara Gladstone, Larry Gagosian, Metro Pictures, Robert Miller, Marlborough, Mary Boone, Andrea Rosen, Luhring Augustine, James Cohan, Pace Wildenstein, Cheim and Read, Galerie Lelong, Sonnabend, Marianne Boesky. A different group of experts would probably not pick an exactly similar list of "star" galleries, but we believe there would be agreement on the vast majority in the list.

<sup>b</sup> The research is still in progress, with n = 32 so far.

<sup>c</sup> Classifying the content of the art is not straightforward. For example, a depiction of a naked female could, in theory, be about at least one or several of the following—classic mythology, anatomy of the nude, eroticism, or feminism. The depiction might, on scrutiny, not even be unequivocally a female. This objective ambiguity is obviously one reason why artists usually title their work, to endow it with, and narrow it down to, particular meaning(s). So, in classifying the works we supplemented this "objective" look with a second perspective that considers the artist's intentions. We derived these intentions from the written materials that accompany most shows, since these typically have the artist's approval. These materials include the title of the works, any other wall text, and any catalogue and press release. These two perspectives—the "objective," supplemented by the artist's intention/commentary—are the basis for the classifications in Table 1.

<sup>d</sup> Multi-topic works/shows. Several of the works/shows covered more than one topic. If the topic constituted a third or more of the show (or if it had some other prominence, e.g. the first room in the gallery as with Warhol's movie "Blow Job") it was assigned 1 point. Thus some shows could count for up to 3 points. For example, Cecily Brown's images depict landscapes and sex and are decorative.

These "multi-topic" works/shows therefore have more weight in the overall table than single topic works/shows. We did this because our aim is to understand which topics are most widespread in Contemporary Art, so if a show has three topics that should be recorded. Hence the percentages in Table 1 sum to over 100. An alternative way of handling "multi-topic" shows/works would have been to assign to each topic a fraction of a point that corresponded to the importance of the topic in the show. For example, Cecily Brown's work/show could receive half a point for landscape, a quarter for sex, and a quarter for decorative. As it turned out, this counting procedure did not give especially different results, in terms of determining the main topics of the art, than the procedure that we used in Table 1.

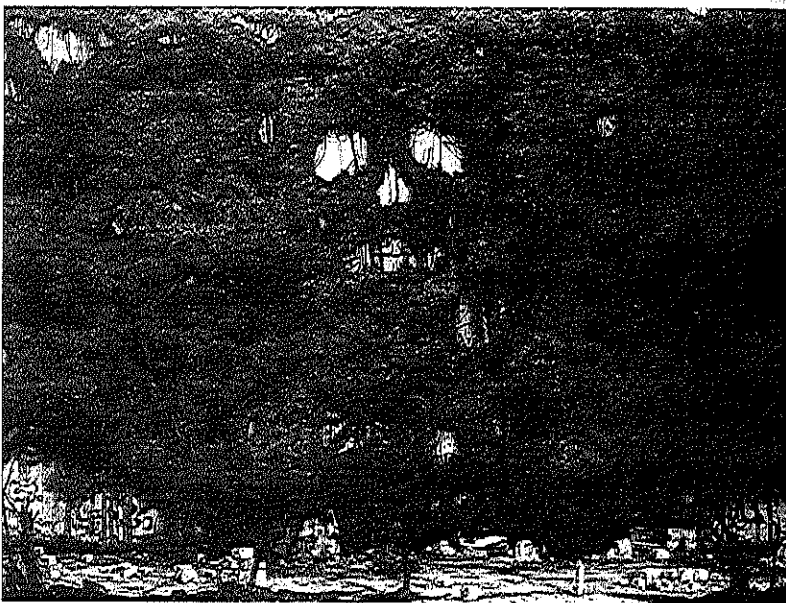


Photo 5 Nigel Cooke  
*Silva Morosa*  
 2003  
 Oil on canvas  
 72 × 96 inches (183 × 244 cm)  
 Image courtesy of Andrea Rosen Gallery, NY  
 Photo by Oren Slor.

classified as a basically religious, not secular, phenomenon, with the figures seen as deriving from the Hindu and Buddhist religion and rooted in the symbolization of fertility and the propagation of life. Another interesting case are the rooms in ancient Pompeii, which contained depictions of mortals in sexual intercourse with mythological figures. Still, these rooms were hidden at the time—art historians call them the “secret rooms.” They were also apparently linked to mystical religious cults—the rites of the Greek god Dionysius (Roman Bacchus). They are now housed in the Archaeological Museum of Naples, viewable only by adults. Sexual intercourse was sometimes depicted on ancient Greek pottery, but that was over two millennia ago.

This handful of possible exceptions underlines the point that sexual intercourse has, at least for the last two millennia, been unusual in Western art. Clearly in depicting sexual intercourse Contemporary Art is influenced by other widely available components of modern culture such as pornographic magazines and web sites.

A third topic is the nuclear family, but typically depicted with a critical or satirical edge as a troubled institution (16% of all topics). Serenely confident families and individual family members, of the kind depicted by Norman Rockwell, are so rare as to be almost taboo. This topic—the problematic family—also seems a new genre in art history. While troubled families have obviously existed in actuality throughout history, in the past periods artists or patrons have not wished to depict them in a sufficiently systematic way so as to make them a recognizable genre.

The fourth topic (16% of all topics) is the decorative/mostly pure design. Grouped under the umbrella of “abstract” art, this topic was seen by an “avant-garde” in the twentieth century as the apogee of art, superior in almost every way to other specific topics depicted in representative or figurative art. The anthropologist Franz Boas even argued that the aesthetic core of “primitive art” too was formalistic abstraction. These claims are now widely seen as not only exaggerated, but as having alienated much of the broader public.<sup>12</sup> Thus in Contemporary Art nowadays as it is displayed in Chelsea the abstract/decorative has settled into a more modest, though still important, position as (just) one of five themes.

A fifth topic is raw/basic materials, either of nature (wood, stone, etc.) or man-made (steel I beams, plastic structures), along with a related interest in the basic constituents of our world. This topic also clearly has affinities with the first topic of landscapes as well as with discoveries in modern science, especially molecular biology.<sup>13</sup>

These five topics suggest a general picture that is far more interesting and complex than could be derived from some view that the art is imposed on people. On the contrary the topics are mostly rooted in modern life and in the complex and varied ways that people (artists and audience) experience today’s world. For example, environmental landscapes seem rooted in post-1960s alarm about the deteriorating natural environment. Landscapes as “beautiful views” gained a massive fillip from the suburbanization of life that has been ongoing now for two hundred years. Sexual intercourse seems to mimic current interest in pornography and modern feminist themes. The troubled nuclear family is a basically new art genre that is certainly related to (historically) high divorce rates. The decorative, downgraded now to a more realistic place as one among several motifs and currents, is a perennially popular genre in art. The interest in basic materials (natural and fabricated) and in the constituents of the world seems to derive from the stunning advances made by molecular biology, mixed with interest in the landscape environment.

#### *What the audience see in the works<sup>14</sup>*

Interviews with samples of the audience for particular shows likewise suggest that these themes flourish because they resonate with the audience’s lives in an ongoing, creative, and interactive way. This is the best interpretation of the main reasons that the audience offer when asked why they like a particular work. It undercuts

the idea that the dominance of market forces and commercialism has led to a homogenization of the audience's views, which mechanically reproduce a set of meanings somehow attached to the works.

*Robert Adams*

Consider two case studies. First, Robert Adams's photos in a show at the Matthew Marks Gallery (January 2006). In the show Adams continues the theme—his life work—of how humans have ravaged the natural landscape. "Turning Back" revisits states such as Oregon and Washington and notes how sadly deteriorated are their forests as compared with when explorers Lewis and Clark encountered them. The wall text explains:

Two hundred years ago, Lewis and Clark recorded finding in the American Northwest a landscape of monumental trees. Most of this ancient forest has since been clearcut, as has later growth. We travel now to confront these facts and look for hope.

The photographs in the show focus on the mutilation of the trees to make way for development. Examples include a tree stump in a cemetery alongside tombstones (titled "A cemetery, Bandon, Oregon"); a road cut through a forest (titled e.g. "A stump next to Oregon Highway, 47, Columbia County"); mature trees lying cut down to make way for development; spindly, immature trees likewise felled for development (titled "Stacking the de-limbed trunks of an immature harvest"); a huge cross-section of a tree trunk showing many rings to stress its age but also cracked in half; and birds flying (forlornly?) over tree-less fields (nowhere to nest?).

Of the audience interviewed (a sample of 20), half liked the show without reservation. In almost all cases this was because they resonated with Adams's concern about the fate of forests, and of the environment in general. A female in her early twenties, who had come to New York from Texas in order to study teaching English as a second language:

I really like the idea, i.e. the exploitation of nature, what we've done to it. We're slowly starting to take over nature, but you can't live without it.

A female curator who works at the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago:

I think it's a very interesting show. I'll probably include his work in an exhibition I'm doing dealing with the contemporary landscape. He [Adams] started in the 70s with environmental landscape ... it's not like Gursky with big large flashy color photos. The show (I'm curating) is "Landscape and Trauma." It's about how you can document trauma to the landscape with a camera ... For example, there will be photos of Siberia work camps, and concentration

camp in Germany long after the camp has been taken down, and you still see a rough disturbance in the landscape ....

On the other hand, almost half the audience found the show unappealing, either because they found Adams's treatment of a potentially interesting topic to be dull, or because they were not that interested in seeing the subject depicted in art. Many of these spoke about an excess of trees, tree overload, tree fatigue.

For example a female lawyer in her fifties who bought art frequently and lives in the affluent New York suburb of Rye:

I'm disappointed with this show. This is "pure trees," "too many trees," its like taking a long walk in the woods. I own a tree or two myself. How can you object to someone who's objecting to the destruction of nature? But I go for the visually interesting.

A female in her early forties whose profession was art adviser (instead of Adams's work, she was looking for some "very large-scale abstract canvases" for her clients):

The subject of trees, deforestation, I blanked out. I've just seen 15 shows in Chelsea and I've been spoiled by large scale. The scale [smallish photographs] here is boring. And it's traditional, black and white.

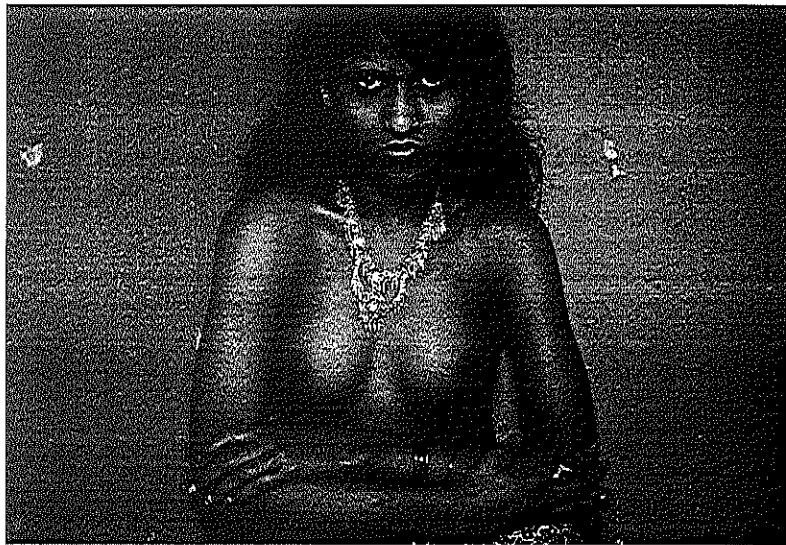
Some trite little art show isn't going to do much. You might as well fall asleep here. Artists' political statements are pathetic and pointless. I'm looking for very large-scale abstract canvases.

*Mary Ellen Mark*

"Sex" with a feminist perspective is the topic of documentary photographer Mary Ellen Mark's show, "Falkland Road" (November 2005, the Marianne Boesky Gallery). The setting is the brothels of Bombay (Falkland Road). Shots included the prostitutes waiting for business, applying makeup, having sex with customers (the latter were slightly secluded in a rear room of the gallery), napping, bathing, and crying (Photos 6–7). Young children of the prostitutes were in some of the photographs, giving the impression that this was often a generational business into which women were born. The prostitutes themselves were often aged around 13–15.

For the audience sampled, this was the best-liked show, by far, of those where we interviewed. The reaction to this show was more uniform than to any other. Everyone praised it, citing one or both of two reasons. First the commentary about the plight of the women, exploited and mistreated, cited by 90% of respondents. There was a uniform sympathy with, and objection to, the suffering and exploitation of the female prostitutes. (The show included a few photos of transvestites, but no one mentioned them.) Moreover, the line between these feminist issues about the exploitation of women, so prominent in the minds of the audience, and eroticism was clearly drawn. Although there were several images of women frontally naked,





**Photo 6 Mary Ellen Mark**  
 Putla with a Gold Necklace, Bombay, India (from Falkland Road Series)  
 1978  
 C-print  
 16 x 20 inches.  
 Image courtesy of Mary Ellen Mark Library, New York Studio.

including the first, and most prominently displayed as viewers entered the show (Photo 6), no-one, when asked generally about what they liked in the images, volunteered that they found them erotic. This contrasts with other artists (e.g. Lisa Yuskavage) where some in the audience could empathize with the women (feminism) while others saw the same women in erotic terms. Again, this underlines the critical importance of the audience interviews as the only way of determining whether images are or are not actually erotic.

The second reason for liking the show was the technical merit of the photos—their colors and the thoughtfulness of their staging. This was mentioned by 60% of respondents.

The following comments are illustrative. A male in his 30s, also a documentary photographer:

It's wonderful, amazing. Artistically it's really great, but it's all about the content, the despair and tragic situation in which they live. It's heartbreaking to see these women, they're exploited, some by their own choice and some are brought from Nepal. And it's a rarity to have this in Chelsea. Documentary is very hard to show and to sell at the galleries—of course the galleries have



**Photo 7 Mary Ellen Mark**  
 A New Girl Being Made-up for the First Time, Bombay, India (from Falkland Road Series)  
 1978  
 C-print  
 16 x 20 inches.  
 Image courtesy of Mary Ellen Mark Library, New York Studio.

to sell, though this may sell now. I hope it does, though these pictures are not pleasant in someone's living room.

I know her work from before, this is some of her earliest work. I'm happy she's being re-released, it deserves to be. Things didn't change much in India, it's always relevant to communicate stories like this. And the fact that it was shot in slides and color chrome makes it so unique, you don't find that these days.

An Asian male in his 40s, born in Hong Kong, who works as an artist in Toronto where he also teaches Chinese calligraphy:

It's powerful! I can see the suffering of life, it goes on generation by generation. The people don't know what they're doing, just like the animals, maybe it's the rhythm of nature. But it's reality.

We are in North America here, so people here are surprised, but in India and Africa and all round the world these things are happening all the time. Here you are so sheltered.

About a third of the audience also commented on how, beyond the suffering of the prostitutes, there was an issue of the exploitation of the children (the male quoted above had this in mind when he referred to "generation by generation"). A female photographer in her 40s who lives in New York:

Some of the images are positively scary, feral [animal] like. I assume she took 100s of photos and selected these with the feral quality because they were more powerful. These were done more than twenty years ago, but there's a recent documentary "Born into Brothels" about the same topic done by a woman who went into this same area and tried to rescue the children from all this. Things haven't changed.

In short, these photographs managed to evoke feminist sympathy while basically shuttering out an erotic component. Thus the audience for Mark's show, like that for Adams's work, demonstrates the active way the audience typically react to the works.

### Conclusion

Approaches that stress the commercialization and (in stronger versions) the commodification of art are consistent with some features of Chelsea such as the agglomeration of commercial galleries, the rise of the international gallery, and the threat that the commercial real estate market may replace galleries with residential condominiums and/or stores selling more profitable merchandise. Yet some of Chelsea's most interesting features do not fit this model. These include Chelsea's role as providing a giant free art show for people, few of whom are "consumers" (i.e. purchasers) of art, its place as a flexible and open structure of opportunity for artists that far surpasses the opportunities offered by museums, and the fact that the vast majority of galleries are not international (let alone "global") or star but small, boutique-like operations selling unique products, each one of which proclaims its individuality and the creativity of the artist who produced it. Above all, a commodification theory fails to jibe with the active way the audience attributes meaning to the art and with the way the audience often scrutinizes the art for ways in which it may be significant for their lives. In a complex way much of the art in Chelsea, like Impressionism in its day, relates to the visual depiction of contemporary social and economic life, albeit a mediated and selected version of that life.

### Notes

- 1 *The Art in America Gallery Guide for Chelsea*, the source of the data in Figure 1, appears every two months as a fold-out map. Galleries must pay an annual fee of \$175 to be included in the guide, so the actual number of galleries in Chelsea is higher (by about 40% based on actual counts in selected buildings) than in Figure 1. The data in Figure 2 are based on another guide, *Gallery Guide* (which has comparative data), which is why

they differ a little from the Chelsea numbers in Figure 1. *Gallery Guide* also charges a fee to be included and so also underestimates the actual numbers.

- 2 There have been a number of empirically based studies of the role of the market, at other stages in its development, in the art world. A broadly historical study of the evolution of the commercial art market is Getty Research Institute (2004). A study of the art market in France is Moulin (1967). A recent study of how art Galleries in New York and Amsterdam set prices is Velthuis (2005).
  - Theorists who have called for the open-minded, empirical study of art markets include Fredric Jameson who considers the market to be "the most crucial terrain of ideological struggle in our time" and calls for examining the market not just as an ideological or rhetorical trope but as a "real market just as much as about metaphysics, psychology, advertising, culture, representations, and libidinal apparatuses." See Jameson (1998).
  - 3 For Leavis see Leavis and Thompson (1937). For the formulations of theorists of "mass culture," see Rosenberg and White (1957). The formalist art critic Clement Greenberg also believed that the market system often encouraged mass-produced products of low aesthetic quality ("kitsch") that were largely passively absorbed by an uncritical audience. See Greenberg (1939). For some of the original Frankfurt-School formulations see Horkheimer and Adorno (1994) and Adorno (1983). More recent Western theorists in a similar tradition include Baudrillard (2004a,b) and Jameson (1979). See also Havel (1979) and the New Museum of Contemporary Art 2007; Curator Flood's quoted remark is p. 12.
  - 4 For some of the critics see Bauer and Bauer (1960), Gans (1974), Frith (1981), Miller (1987), Halle (1994), and Roseler (1979).
  - 5 On the East Village move and real estate see Deutsche and Ryan (1984).
  - 6 The main study of SoHo as an art neighborhood is Simpson (1981). For some artists SoHo also represented an attempt to escape the commercial art gallery market by showing their work directly to the public in alternative spaces—e.g. artist co-operatives or private lofts. There is no such movement in Chelsea.
  - 7 For a lucid guide to these zoning designations see the Department of City Planning's, *Zoning Handbook* (2006). M1-5 is a manufacturing designation with the 5 indicating a permitted floor area ratio (FAR) of 5. FAR is the ratio of total building floor area to the area of its zoning lot.
  - 8 In 1992 the Chelsea Property Owners obtained a court order requiring CSX, the railroad that owned the High Line, to demolish it. But demolition had been held up because not all the owners of property under the High Line had signed the agreement that specified how the demolition costs would be shared. Meanwhile, in 1999 a group of neighborhood residents, businesses, design professionals, and civic organizations joined forces to form Friends of the High Line, a not-for-profit hoping to turn the High Line into an elevated park. The mechanism that they identified to convert the High Line to a public open space was called rail-banking. As part of the 1983 National Trail Systems Act, the U.S. Congress passed legislation that allowed out-of-use rail corridors to be utilized as trails while being "banked" for future transportation needs. Then in December 2001, in the final week of his administration, Mayor Giuliani signed a Demolition Agreement with the Chelsea Property Owners seeking to compel CSX to demolish the railroad.
    - The new Bloomberg administration supported the plan to preserve the High Line, though only after an economic feasibility study that showed that over a 20 year period the revenue generated in taxes for the city would be about 140m and the cost to the city only about 65m. (The High Line had long been a favored project of DCP's Director Amanda Burden, who lived in the West Village, just to the south of Chelsea.) As a result, the city on Dec 17, 2002 filed an application to the federal Surface Transportation Board (STB) requesting that negotiations begin to transform the High Line into an elevated public walkway. But the STB made it clear to the city that it would not give final approval

for the rail-banking unless a majority of the Chelsea property owners were supportive, at which point the DCP came up with the rezoning and special air-rights transfer plan.

- 9 Those in a High Line Transfer Corridor, 100 feet wide, encompassing lots occupied by the High Line or immediately to its west.
- 10 Thus it would be impossible for 300 shoe stores, selling products of varying styles, to exist in a single neighborhood.
- 11 The "classic landscape," which basically presented a "beautiful view," did of course sometimes hint at such environmental themes. For example, certain artists and patrons of the Hudson River school of landscape were motivated by concern about the harmful impact of the railroad on the landscape and by a related desire to document still unspoiled natural scenery. As early as 1836 Thomas Cole, one of the most important Hudson River school artists, after extolling the American wilderness, lamented that:

... the beauty of such landscapes is quickly passing away—the ravages of the axe are daily increasing, [leading to] ... desecration by what is called improvement ... which generally destroys Nature's bounty without substituting that of Art .... I hope the importance of cultivating a taste for scenery will not be forgotten. Cole, (1836).

Such anxiety was, too, a background motif in some Impressionist paintings, where for instance a railroad sometimes popped up in a corner of the picture. Still, the Impressionists for the most part viewed technology positively where it became a metaphor for modernity and modern life.

But these environmental concerns rarely, if ever, intruded center-stage in these classic landscapes, as they do in the radical environmentalist landscapes of Contemporary Art in Chelsea. In his paintings Cole depicted the still beautiful scenery, not the "ravages of the axe." Hence art historians have noted the emergence in the 1960s of a basically new genre, "environmental art."

- 12 Gardner's standard art history comments that "The prevalence of abstraction and the formal experimentation in much of postwar art had alienated the public".
- 13 The concern with raw materials also represents a "modernist" formalist interest in the material of art and expands the discourse on "process art" that began in the 60s and that rejected the traditional academic material of art like marble and bronze and sought to examine materials more relevant to life.
- 14 In order to study systematically the views of the audience, we started with the sample of shows selected for the study of the content of the art (Table 1) and then focused on a sub-group of these, 14 so far. For each show in this sub-group we interviewed 20 audience members chosen at random. Our criterion for selecting shows for this sub-group was to ensure that the topics (content) of the shows were representative of the topics that our content-analysis had revealed as typical of Chelsea art (Table 1).

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**Excerpts from:**

***The Rise of the Secondary Market and the Fall of Art***

By Sergio Tombesi, economist, with the direction of Jana Leo, conceptual artist and president of Mosis Fundación MOSIS- Modelos y Sistemas; Arte y Ciudad.

**This text starts with the premise that giving priority to the secondary market in the art market has change the meaning of art. An analysis of the agents and the rules of the market serve to clarify that the real problem of the art market is the displacement on the demand and not the lack of collectors etc... now days something is art is when reaching the secondary market.**

...Does art produce money for artists? Can art really generate money for a country or does it serves only to create the illusion that there is money? And how is the illusion created that there is money generated, is it through moving money around? In summary, does the art generate money or only shuffle it around? ....A more accurate term in economics is "wealth." For a country, its ability to meet the future needs of its citizens, it's wealth is made up of several factors. ...Translated into art, these factors are firstly, exploitable natural resources which would be the raw material used by the artist; exploited natural resources but not consumed, the work of art will be the second; the third, the number of artists and the fourth, cultural policies, cultural management and the market structure.

..."Can this economical activity called Art actually increase the wealth of a country, or the money that moves around the art market is only a transitional means to facilitate the exchange of existent assets? "

...When art has a simple structure, it seems to be close to the perfect market model. Formerly, the artist was also a craftsman and lived in a market zone of the city with other artists and artisans. Customers visited the various workshops to find the artist who understood their needs and whom they liked aesthetically for the price they were willing to pay. This market can be defined as "direct primary market." Such a market was conducive to direct contact between the producer and consumer of art, it encouraged competition among clients to hire the best artists and between artists to get the best jobs. This scheme is not far from the concentration of galleries in zones, in new York: SOHO, Chelsea or the LES where people walk and shop around; the only difference is the presence of an intermediary, the gallery, now we are facing the "indirect primary market".

For works that have some mobility, there soon began to establish a market of "second hand" or, to use an economic term, "secondary," where the possessor of a work was able to sell to a third party not even know personally to the artist. The onset of this secondary market confirmed that a work of art can be a capital asset

that is used to store wealth, and introduced a third type of trader: "the middleman".

Since then, the art market structure has gotten more complicated but always maintaining this dichotomy of base; an study of the current situation needs to analyze this division of primary and secondary market. ... Today it is highly unlikely that an artist sells his work directly to a customer. The direct primary market has been giving way to an indirect primary market with art galleries and fairs as intermediaries, while in the secondary market, auction houses and private dealers have emerged.

The current market has a structure in which artists sell their work through galleries. The galleries represent (in some cases, invite, choose, and / or "discover") the artists. They take on deposit their works and try to sell them to collectors. Through exhibitions at the gallery, writings of critics, the art pieces try became of value... After a career of exhibitions, it is possible that the artist is selected for art fairs (the markets require that the artist has gallery shows in order to participate), which gives more value to the art. This may be the time when the artist is capable of choosing a gallery as their work is likely to be collected with ease. The artist has exhibitions in non-commercial art centers such as museums and art centers and may continue to have good reviews and those who bought the artist's work, resell, entering it into the secondary market (auction houses and private dealers.)

In this structure, the most prominent agent has been the gallery, followed by the curator whose specific function is to select the most outstanding artists. In fact the role of the curator that seems to be purely cultural, produces a market jump for the artist, that is, those elected in the primary market are launched to the secondary. In this launching into the second market, the curator and the art center play a prominent role. A lot of stuff moves around the art center. We can speak of a third market that is not art but linked to them. A market of collateral activities-"promotional" such as exhibitions and catalogs, grants, educational activities, and tourist activities.

The secondary market is basically: an auction house. Increasingly art dealers and brokers are all trying to work in both markets. It is in the interest of auction houses, who charge percentage commissions to increase the volume of work passing through their auctions, and therefore they participate or sponsor art fairs to promote and make known new artists, to promote demand for their works in the secondary market. Importance is given to the fairs in this game because buyers are willing to pay a higher price if they think they have the ability to resell a work at a profit. On the other hand, the galleries resent that auction houses receive the largest portion of the profits from their "investments" in new artists and collectors try to lure customers with discounts and rights of first refusal, asking in return be the first to be consulted in case of resale.

What role has the artist, the key player, in this whole market structure? Less and less, except for those artists who manage to reach the secondary market, they become stars, some of which, shooting stars, because they are interdependent on the continued support of the primary market.

...In the indirect primary market, because of the asymmetry of information, the buyer needs to be convinced that the quality of what you propose is worth the price they ask and find some "objective" indicators of quality. How to value a work of art in an objective manner? Experts speak of historical, conceptual innovation, originality, technical mastery, but the most important factor is when there is a true consensus of experts and critics of these qualities in a work. So to promote artists, galleries and fairs try to raise the profile of an artist, looking to create a consensus among critics and experts on their qualities. The strategy is to minimize the risk, looking for a few potential winners and to invest in them, leaving all others behind. And the investment begins to bear fruit when the works make the leap to the secondary market. Therefore it seems that the structure of this market is likely to focus all resources on the validation of the artist to increase their marketing but not in creation.

...Observations on the demand curve: the art centers, and museums that in theory should fuel demand for the art of necessity, in reality have become an instrument to the speculative demand. Their main task the validation of the artists, they offer a service to the secondary market.

...The language that has developed around the arts center, like the emerging artist, or artist with projection specifically serves a function: validate an artist for the investor to buy, to help the artist reach the secondary market, that is to enrich speculative and not the existential necessity of art.



# Artists Resale Right

## Introduction

Half a dozen pieces over three decades mark the progress of artists' resale royalty right legislation in Europe, California and the UK. A campaign by artists lobbying for the introduction of this economic right in the UK was formally launched in 1993, and in 1996 the EU Commission proposed and then adopted (in 2001) a Directive (legal requirement) that all Member States introduce this right into their domestic laws by 2006.

Artist Resale Right finally became law in the UK on 14 February 2006.

The resale royalty right gives artists the legal right to receive a small share of the resale price on the second and subsequent sales of their works, during their lives and for 70 years after death and, by 2012, the right will be given to the estates of artists who have died within the previous 70 years.

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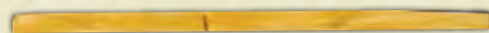
## FUNDAMENTAL OBLIGATION OF SELLERS

Under circumstances that trigger a resale royalty, the California Resale Royalty Act requires the seller to pay five percent of the full resale price to the artist or a deceased artist's legal heir(s), legatee(s) or personal representative within 90 days of the sale.

A "seller" may be the private owner selling the work, gallery, dealer, broker, museum, auction house or other person acting as the agent for the owner/seller. Sellers' agents are prudent to advise the private owner selling the work of this requirement in advance of the sale as the royalty is paid by the owner. The payment of the royalty may not be decreased or waived by any party.

**WEBSITE  
RESOURCES** California Resale Royalty Act information (including a link to the full text of the Act, and lists of artists who have not responded to the CAC's notifications and for whom contact information is sought) is on the California Arts Council website: [www.cac.ca.gov/resaleroyaltyact/resaleroyaltyact.php](http://www.cac.ca.gov/resaleroyaltyact/resaleroyaltyact.php)

California Lawyers for the Arts:  
[www.calawyersforthearts.org](http://www.calawyersforthearts.org)



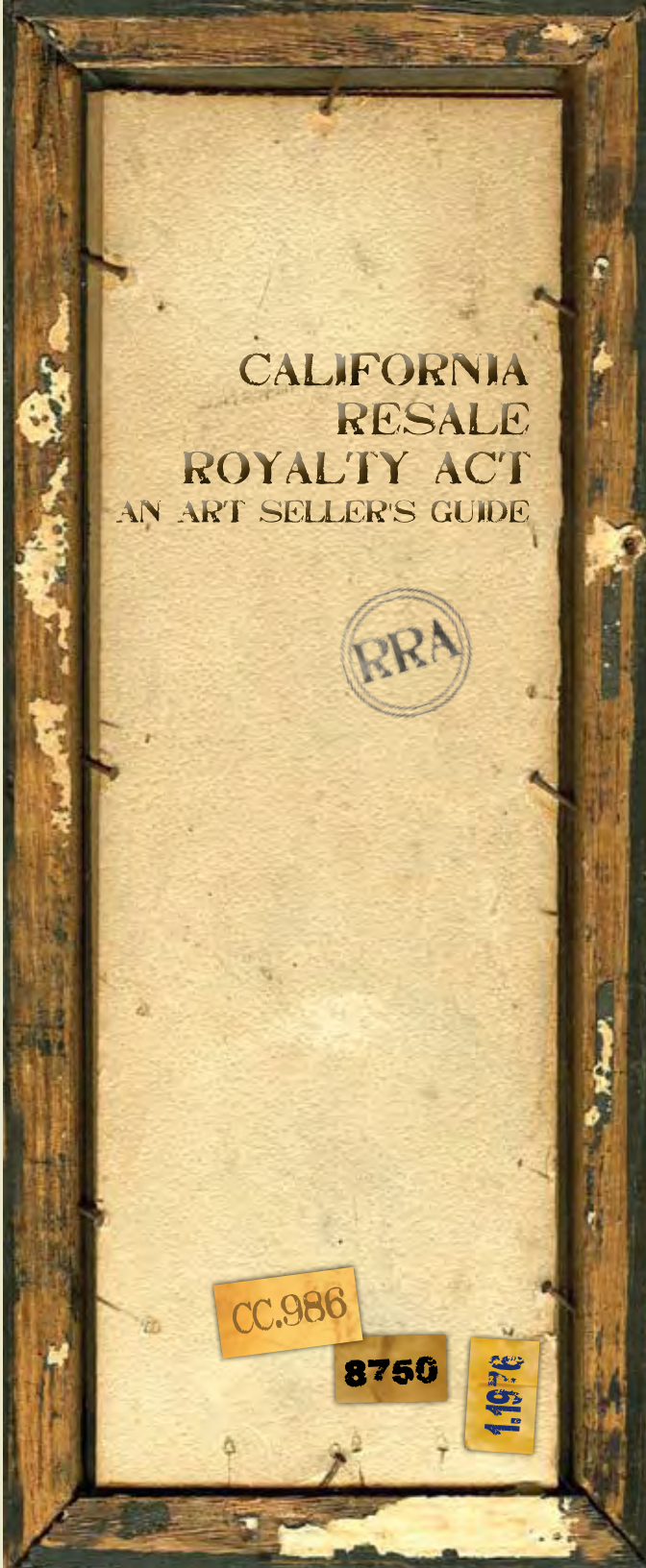
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## CALIFORNIA RESALE ROYALTY ACT

The California Resale Royalty Act (California Civil Code Section 986) requires a seller of art in the secondary market to pay a resale royalty to the artist under certain circumstances. This California law is unique in the United States, although it is a well-established legal right in some other countries and is being considered for adoption by many more. The right of artists to share in the appreciated value of their works when resold is an important principle. This pamphlet is meant to help orient sellers to the law, but is not a substitute for reading the full Code.



## CIRCUMSTANCES GENERATING A ROYALTY PAYMENT

Under California Civil Code Section 986, an artist shall be entitled to a royalty upon the resale of his/her work of art provided that:

- ☞ The seller resides in California or the sale takes place in California. [California residents who sell the art outside the state do not eliminate their obligation to pay a royalty to the artist.]
- ☞ The artist at the time of the sale is a United States citizen or has been a California resident for at least two years.
- ☞ The work is an original painting, drawing, sculpture or original work of art in glass.
- ☞ The work is sold by the seller for more money than she or he paid.
- ☞ The work is sold for a gross price of more than \$1,000.
- ☞ The work is exchanged for one or more works of fine art, or for a combination of cash, other property, and one or more works of fine art, with a fair market value of more than \$1,000.
- ☞ The work is sold during the artist's lifetime or within 20 years of the artist's death.

**At the same time, however, the California Resale Royalty Act does not apply if:**

- ☞ The sale is the initial sale of the work and the legal title of the work at the time of such initial sale is vested in the artist.
- ☞ The resale of fine art is by an art dealer to a purchaser within 10 years after the initial sale by the artist to an art dealer, provided that all intervening sales are between art dealers.
- ☞ The sale consists of a work of stained glass artistry permanently attached to real property and it was sold as part of the sale of the real property to which it was attached.

## INABILITY TO LOCATE THE ARTIST

At times, a seller may be unable to locate and pay the artist within 90 days of the sale. In such cases, the seller is required to send the amount of the royalty to the **California Arts Council (CAC)**, a state agency, to deposit into a Special Deposit Fund in the State Treasury. The CAC actively works to locate the artist and distribute those funds to the artist or deceased artist's legal heirs, legatees or personal representative in a timely manner. In addition, the CAC maintains online lists of artists who have not responded to CAC notifications or for whom contact information has not been found. If the artist or rightful claimant to a deceased artist's royalty fails to claim the royalty or the CAC is unable to locate the artist or deceased artist's legal heirs, legatees or personal representative within seven years of the sale, the funding reverts to the California Arts Council for use in its Art in Public Buildings Program.

## LEGAL HELP FOR ARTISTS & SELLERS

California Lawyers for the Arts (CLA), a statewide nonprofit, offers educational seminars on various topics, some of which include information on the California Resale Royalty Act. CLA also operates a lawyer referral service under the authority of the State Bar of California and matches artists, arts organizations and others in the California arts community with lawyers who have a special interest in and the necessary expertise on the specific issues involved. It also provides Arts Arbitration and Mediation Services, a neutral service to help parties work out conflict situations without going to court.

## RECOURSE OF THE ARTIST

If the resale royalty is not paid by the seller as per the Civil Code, the artist may bring a legal action for damages within three years of the sale or within one year after discovery of the sale, whichever is longer. The prevailing party will be entitled to reasonable attorney fees as determined by the court. Any royalties held by a seller for artists are exempt from enforcement of a money judgment by the creditors of the seller or seller's agent.





## One Place after Another: Notes on Site Specificity

Miwon Kwon

*October*, Vol. 80. (Spring, 1997), pp. 85-110.

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# One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity\*

MIWON KWON

Site specificity used to imply something grounded, bound to the laws of physics. Often playing with gravity, site-specific works used to be obstinate about “presence,” even if they were materially ephemeral, and adamant about immobility, even in the face of disappearance or destruction. Whether inside the white cube or out in the Nevada desert, whether architectural or landscape-oriented, site-specific art initially took the “site” as an actual location, a tangible reality, its identity composed of a unique combination of constitutive physical elements: length, depth, height, texture, and shape of walls and rooms; scale and proportion of plazas, buildings, or parks; existing conditions of lighting, ventilation, traffic patterns; distinctive topographical features. If modernist sculpture absorbed its pedestal/base to sever its connection to or express its indifference to the site, rendering itself more autonomous and self-referential, and thus transportable, placeless, and nomadic, then site-specific works, as they first emerged in the wake of Minimalism in the late 1960s and early 1970s, forced a dramatic reversal of this modernist paradigm.<sup>1</sup> Antithetical to the claim “If you have to change a sculpture for a site there is something wrong with the sculpture,”<sup>2</sup> site-specific art, whether interruptive or assimilative, gave itself up to its environmental context, being formally determined or directed by it.<sup>3</sup>

\* This essay is part of a larger project on the convergence of art and architecture in site-specific practices of the past thirty years, especially in the context of public art. I am grateful to those who provided encouragement and critical commentaries: Hal Foster, Helen Molesworth, Sowon and Seong Kwon, Rosalyn Deutsche, Mark Wigley, Doug Ashford, Russell Ferguson, and Frazer Ward. Also, as a recipient of the Professional Development Fellowship for Art Historians, I am indebted to the College Art Association for its support.

1. Douglas Crimp has written: “The idealism of modernist art, in which the art object *in and of itself* was seen to have a fixed and transhistorical meaning, determined the object’s placelessness, its belonging in no particular place. . . . Site specificity opposed that idealism—and unveiled the material system it obscured—by its refusal of circulatory mobility, its belongingness to a *specific site*” (*On the Museum’s Ruins* [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993], p. 17). See also Rosalind Krauss, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field” (1979), in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, Wash.: Bay Press, 1983), pp. 31–42.

2. William Turner, as quoted by Mary Miss, in “From Autocracy to Integration: Redefining the Objectives of Public Art,” in *Insights/On Sites: Perspectives on Art in Public Places*, ed. Stacy Paleologos Harris (Washington, D.C.: Partners for Livable Places, 1984), p. 62.

3. Rosalyn Deutsche has made an important distinction between an assimilative model of site specificity—in which the art work is geared toward *integration* into the existing environment, producing



In turn, the uncontaminated and pure idealist space of dominant modernisms was radically displaced by the materiality of the natural landscape or the impure and ordinary space of the everyday. The space of art was no longer perceived as a blank slate, a *tabula rasa*, but a *real* place. The art object or event in this context was to be singularly *experienced* in the here-and-now through the bodily presence of each viewing subject, in a sensorial immediacy of spatial extension and temporal duration (what Michael Fried derisively characterized as theatricality), rather than instantaneously “perceived” in a visual epiphany by a disembodied eye. Site-specific work in its earliest formation, then, focused on establishing an inextricable, indivisible relationship between the work and its site, and demanded the physical presence of the viewer for the work’s completion. The (neo-avant-garde) aspiration to exceed the limitations of traditional media, like painting and sculpture, as well as their institutional setting; the epistemological challenge to relocate meaning from within the art object to the contingencies of its context; the radical restructuring of the subject from an old Cartesian model to a phenomenological one of lived bodily experience; and the self-conscious desire to resist the forces of the capitalist market economy, which circulates art works as transportable and exchangeable commodity goods—all these imperatives came together in art’s new attachment to the actuality of the site.

In this frame of mind, Robert Barry declared in a 1969 interview that each of his wire installations was “made to suit the place in which it was installed. They cannot be moved without being destroyed.”<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Richard Serra wrote fifteen years later in a letter to the Director of the Art-in-Architecture Program of the General Services Administration in Washington, D.C., that his 120-foot, Cor-Ten steel sculpture *Tilted Arc* was “commissioned and designed for one particular site: Federal Plaza. It is a site-specific work and as such not to be relocated. To remove the work is to destroy the work.”<sup>5</sup> He further elaborated his position in 1989:

As I pointed out, *Tilted Arc* was conceived from the start as a site-specific sculpture and was not meant to be “site-adjusted” or . . . “relocated.” Site-specific works deal with the environmental components of given places. The scale, size, and location of site-specific works are determined by the topography of the site, whether it be urban or landscape or architectural enclosure. The works become part of the site and restructure both conceptually and perceptually the organization of the site.<sup>6</sup>

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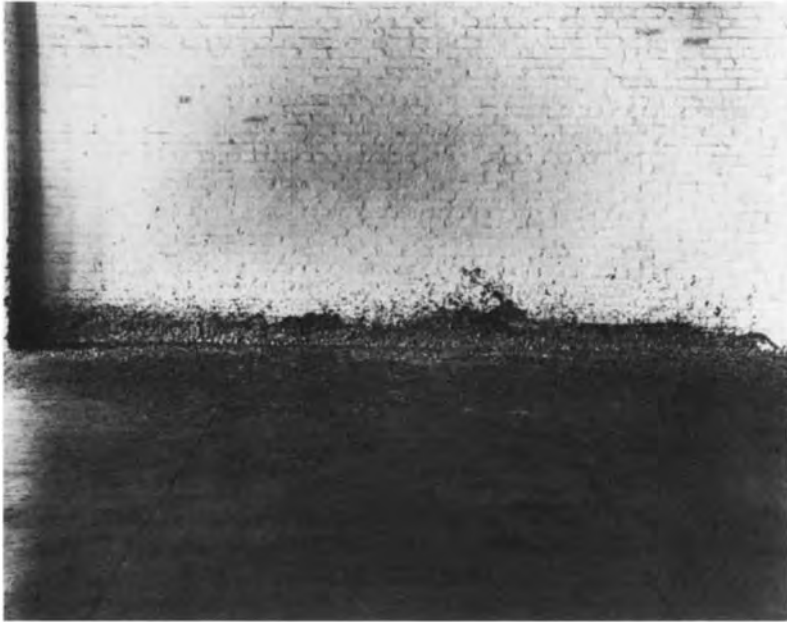
a unified, “harmonious” space of wholeness and cohesion—and an interruptive model, where the art work functions as a critical *intervention* into the existing order of a site. See her essays “*Tilted Arc* and the Uses of Public Space,” *Design Book Review*, no. 23 (Winter 1992), pp. 22–27; and “Uneven Development: Public Art in New York City,” *October* 47 (Winter 1988), pp. 3–52.

4. Robert Barry in Arthur R. Rose (pseudonym), “Four interviews with Barry, Huebler, Kosuth, Weiner,” *Arts Magazine* (February 1969), p. 22.

5. Richard Serra, letter to Donald Thalacker, January 1, 1985, published in *The Destruction of Tilted Arc: Documents*, ed. Clara Weyergraf-Serra and Martha Buskirk (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), p. 38.

6. Richard Serra, “*Tilted Arc* Destroyed,” *Art in America* 77, no. 5 (May 1989), pp. 34–47.

Richard Serra. *Splashing. Installation*  
at Castelli Warehouse. New York 1968.



Barry and Serra echo each other here. But whereas Barry's comment announces what was in the late 1960s a new radicality in vanguard sculptural practice, marking an early stage in the aesthetic experimentations that were to follow through the 1970s (i.e., land/earth art, process art, installation art, Conceptual art, performance/body art, and various forms of institutional critique), Serra's statement, spoken twenty years later within the context of public art, is an indignant defense, signaling a crisis point for site specificity—at least for a version that would prioritize the *physical* inseparability between a work and its site of installation.<sup>7</sup>

Informed by the contextual thinking of Minimalism, various forms of institutional critique and Conceptual art developed a different model of site specificity that implicitly challenged the “innocence” of space and the accompanying presumption of a universal viewing subject (albeit one in possession of a corporeal body) as espoused in the phenomenological model. Artists such as Michael Asher, Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren, Hans Haacke, and Robert Smithson, as well as many women artists including Mierle Laderman Ukeles, have variously conceived the site not only in physical and spatial terms but as a *cultural* framework

7. The controversy over *Tilted Arc* obviously involved other issues besides the status of site specificity, but, in the end, site specificity was the term upon which Serra hung his entire defense. Despite Serra's defeat, the legal definition of site specificity remains unresolved and continues to be grounds for many juridical conflicts. For a discussion concerning legal questions in the *Tilted Arc* case, see Barbara Hoffman, “Law for Art's Sake in the Public Realm,” in *Art in the Public Sphere*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 113–46. Thanks to James Marcovitz for discussions concerning the legality of site specificity.

defined by the institutions of art. If Minimalism returned to the viewing subject a physical corporeal body, institutional critique insisted on the social matrix of class, race, gender, and sexuality of the viewing subject.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, while Minimalism challenged the idealist hermeticism of the autonomous art object by deflecting its meaning to the space of its presentation, institutional critique further complicated this displacement by highlighting the idealist hermeticism of the space of presentation itself. The modern gallery/museum space, for instance, with its stark white walls, artificial lighting (no windows), controlled climate, and pristine architectonics, was perceived not solely in terms of basic dimensions and proportion but as an institutional disguise, a normative exhibition convention serving an ideological function. The seemingly benign architectural features of a gallery/museum, in other words, were deemed to be coded mechanisms that *actively* disassociate the space of art from the outer world, furthering the institution's idealist imperative of rendering itself and its hierarchization of values "objective," "disinterested," and "true."

As early as 1970 Buren proclaimed, "Whether the place in which the work is shown imprints and marks this work, whatever it may be, or whether the work itself is directly—consciously or not—produced for the Museum, any work presented in that framework, if it does not explicitly examine the influence of the framework upon itself, falls into the illusion of self-sufficiency—or idealism."<sup>9</sup> But more than just the museum, the site comes to encompass a relay of several interrelated but different spaces and economies, including the studio, gallery, museum, art criticism, art history, the art market, that together constitute a system of practices that is not separate from but open to social, economic, and political pressures. To be "specific" to such a site, in turn, is to decode and/or recode the institutional conventions so as to expose their hidden yet motivated operations—to reveal the ways in which institutions mold art's meaning to modulate its cultural and economic value, and to undercut the fallacy of art and its institutions' "autonomy" by making apparent their imbricated relationship to the broader socioeconomic and political processes of the day. Again, in Buren's somewhat militant words from 1970:

Art, whatever else it may be, is exclusively political. What is called for is the *analysis of formal and cultural limits* (and not one *or* the other) within which art exists and struggles. These limits are many and of different intensities. Although the prevailing ideology and the associated artists try in every way to *camouflage* them, and although it is too early—the conditions are not met—to blow them up, the time has come to *unveil* them.<sup>10</sup>

8. See Hal Foster's seminal essay, "The Crux of Minimalism," in *Individuals: A Selected History of Contemporary Art 1945-1986*, ed. Howard Singerman (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 1986), pp. 162–83. See also Craig Owens, "From Work to Frame, or, Is There Life After 'The Death of the Author?'" *Beyond Recognition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 122–39.

9. Daniel Buren, "Function of the Museum," *Artforum* (September 1973).

10. Daniel Buren, "Critical Limits," in *Five Texts* (1970; reprint, New York: John Weber Gallery, 1974), p. 38.



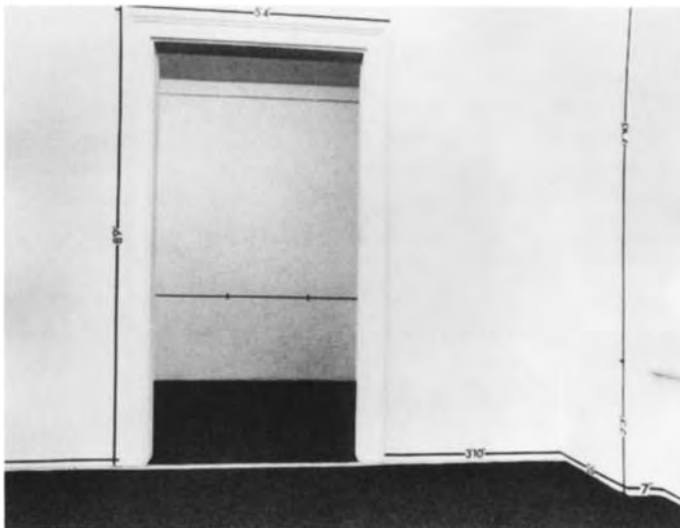
In nascent forms of institutional critique, in fact, the physical condition of the exhibition space remained the primary point of departure for this unveiling. For example, in works such as Haacke's *Condensation Cube* (1963–65), Mel Bochner's *Measurement* series (1969), Lawrence Weiner's wall cutouts (1968), and Buren's *Within and Beyond the Frame* (1973), the task of exposing those aspects which the institution would obscure was enacted literally in relation to the architecture of the exhibition space—highlighting the humidity level of a gallery by allowing moisture to “invade” the pristine Minimalist art object (a mimetic configuration of the gallery space itself); insisting on the material fact of the gallery walls as “framing” devices by notating their dimensions directly on them; removing portions of a wall to reveal the base reality behind the “neutral” white cube; and exceeding the physical boundaries of the gallery by having the art work literally go out the window, ostensibly to “frame” the institutional frame. Attempts such as these to expose the cultural confinement within which artists function—“the apparatus the artist is threaded through”—and the impact of its forces upon the meaning and value of art became, as Smithson had predicted in 1972, “the great issue” for artists in the 1970s.<sup>11</sup> As this investigation extended into the 1980s, it relied less and less on the physical parameters of the gallery/museum or other exhibition venues to articulate its critique.

In the paradigmatic practice of Hans Haacke, for instance, the site shifted from the physical condition of the gallery (as in the *Condensation Cube*) to the system of socioeconomic relations within which art and its institutional programming find their possibilities of being. His fact-based exposés through the 1970s, which spotlighted art's inextricable ties to the ideologically suspect if not morally corrupt power elite, recast the site of art as an institutional frame in social, economic, and political terms, and enforced these terms as the very content of the art work. Exemplary of a different approach to the institutional frame are Michael Asher's surgically precise displacement projects, which advanced a concept of site that was inclusive of historical and conceptual dimensions. In his contribution to the “73rd American Exhibition” at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1979, for instance, Asher revealed the sites of exhibition or display to be culturally specific situations generating particular expectations and narratives regarding art and art history. Institutional siting of art, in other words, not only distinguishes qualitative and economic value, it also (re)produces specific forms of knowledge that are historically located and culturally determined—not at all universal or timeless standards.<sup>12</sup>

11. See “Conversation with Robert Smithson,” edited by Bruce Kurtz, in *The Writings of Robert Smithson*, ed. Nancy Holt (New York: New York University Press, 1979), p. 200.

12. This project involved the relocation of a bronze replica of an eighteenth-century statue of George Washington from its normal position outside the entrance in front of the Art Institute to one of the smaller galleries inside devoted to eighteenth-century European painting, sculpture, and decorative arts. Asher stated his intention as follows: “In this work I am interested in the way the sculpture functions when it is viewed in its 18th-century context instead of in its prior relationship to the façade of the building. . . . Once inside Gallery 219 the sculpture can be seen in connection with the ideas of other European works of the same period” (as quoted in Anne Rorimer, “Michael Asher:

*Mel Bochner. Measurement: Room.  
Installation at Galerie Friedrich.  
Munich 1969. (Photo by artist.)*



*Michael Asher. Installation at Claire  
Copley Gallery, Inc. Los Angeles 1974.  
(Photo: Gary Kruger.)*

In these ways, the “site” of art evolves away from its coincidence with the literal space of art, and the physical condition of a specific location recedes as the primary element in the conception of a site. Whether articulated in political and economic terms, as in Haacke’s case, or in epistemological terms, as in Asher’s, it is rather the *techniques* and *effects* of the art institution as they circumscribe the definition, production, presentation, and dissemination of art that become the sites of critical intervention. Concurrent with this move toward the dematerialization of the site is the ongoing de-aestheticization (i.e., withdrawal of visual pleasure) and dematerialization of the art work. Going against the grain of institutional habits and desires, and continuing to resist the commodification of art in/for the market place, site-specific art adopts strategies that are either aggressively antivisual—informational, textual, expository, didactic—or immaterial altogether—gestures, events, or performances bracketed by temporal boundaries. The “work” no longer seeks to be a noun/object but a verb/process, provoking the viewers’ *critical* (not just physical) acuity regarding the ideological conditions of that viewing. In this context, the guarantee of a specific relationship between an art work and its “site” is not based on a physical permanence of that relationship (as demanded by Serra, for example), but rather on the recognition of its unfixed *impermanence*, to be experienced as an unrepeatable and fleeting situation.

But if the critique of the cultural confinement of art (and artists) via its institutions was once the “great issue,” a dominant drive of site-oriented practices today is the pursuit of a more intense engagement with the outside world and everyday life—a critique of culture that is inclusive of non-art spaces, non-art institutions, and non-art issues (blurring the division between art and non-art, in fact). Concerned to integrate art more directly into the realm of the social, either in order to redress (in an activist sense) urgent social problems such as the ecological crisis, homelessness, AIDS, homophobia, racism, and sexism, or more generally in order to relativize art as one among many forms of cultural work, current manifestations of site specificity tend to treat aesthetic and art-historical concerns as secondary issues. Deeming the focus on the social nature of *art’s* production and reception to be too exclusive, even elitist, this expanded engagement with culture favors “public” sites outside the traditional confines of art in physical and intellectual terms.<sup>13</sup>

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Recent Work,” *Artforum* [April 1980], p. 47). See also Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, ed., *Michael Asher: Writings 1973–1983 on Works 1969–1979* (Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Los Angeles: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and The Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles), pp. 207–21.

13. These concerns coincide with developments in public art, which has reprogrammed site-specific art to be synonymous with community-based art. As exemplified in projects such as “Culture in Action” in Chicago (1992–93) and “Points of Entry” in Pittsburgh (1996), site-specific public art in the 1990s marks a convergence between cultural practices grounded in leftist political activism, community-based aesthetic traditions, conceptually driven art borne out of institutional critique, and identity politics. Because of this convergence, many of the questions concerning contemporary site-specific practices apply to public art projects as well, and vice versa. Unfortunately, an analysis of the specific aesthetic and political problems in the public art arena, especially those pertaining to spatial politics of cities, will have to await another venue. In the meantime, I refer readers to Grant Kester’s excellent analysis of current trends in community-based public art in “Aesthetic Evangelists: Conversion and Empowerment in Contemporary Community Art,” *Afterimage* (January 1995), pp. 5–11.





*Mierle Laderman Ukeles. Hartford Wash  
from the series Maintenance Art Activity  
at Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford,  
Connecticut. 1973.*

Furthering previous (at times literal) attempts to take art out of the museum/gallery space-system (recall Buren's striped canvases marching out the gallery window, or Smithsonian's adventures in the wastelands of New Jersey or isolated locales in Utah), contemporary site-oriented works occupy hotels, city streets, housing projects, prisons, schools, hospitals, churches, zoos, supermarkets, etc., and infiltrate media spaces such as radio, newspapers, television, and the Internet. In addition to this spatial expansion, site-oriented art is also informed by a broader range of disciplines (i.e., anthropology, sociology, literary criticism, psychology, natural and cultural histories, architecture and urbanism, computer science, political theory) and sharply attuned to popular discourses (i.e., fashion, music, advertising, film, and television). But more than these dual expansions of art into culture, which obviously diversify the site, the distinguishing characteristic of today's site-oriented art is the way in which both the art work's relationship to the actuality of a location (as site) *and* the social conditions of the institutional frame (as site) are *subordinate* to a *discursively* determined site that is delineated as a field of knowledge, intellectual exchange, or cultural debate. Furthermore, unlike previous models, this site is not defined as a *precondition*. Rather, it is *generated* by the work (often as "content"), and then *verified* by its convergence with an existing discursive formation.

For example, in Mark Dion's 1991 project *On Tropical Nature*, several different definitions of the site operated concurrently. First, the initial site of Dion's intervention was an uninhabited spot in the rain forest near the base of the Orinoco

River outside Caracas, Venezuela, where the artist camped for three weeks collecting specimens of various plants and insects as well as feathers, mushrooms, nests, and stones. These specimens, picked up at the end of each week in crates, were delivered to the second site of the project, Sala Mendoza, one of the two hosting art institutions back in Caracas. In the gallery space of the Sala, the specimens, which were uncrated and displayed like works of art in themselves, were contextualized within what constituted a third site—the curatorial framework of the thematic group exhibition.<sup>14</sup> The fourth site, however, although the least material, was the site to which Dion intended a lasting relationship. *On Tropical Nature* sought to become a part of the discourse concerning cultural representations of nature and the global environmental crisis.<sup>15</sup>

Sometimes at the cost of a semantic slippage between content and site, other artists who are similarly engaged in site-oriented projects, operating with multiple definitions of the site, in the end find their “locational” anchor in the discursive realm. For instance, while Tom Burr and John Lindell each have produced diverse projects in a variety of media for many different institutions, their consistent engagement with issues concerning the construction and dynamics of (homo)sexuality and desire has established such issues as the “site” of their work. And in projects by artists such as Lothar Baumgarten, Renée Green, Jimmie Durham, and Fred Wilson, the legacies of colonialism, slavery, racism, and the ethnographic tradition as they impact on identity politics has emerged as an important “site” of artistic investigation. In some instances, artists including Green, Silvia Kolbowski, Group Material, and Christian Philipp Müller have reflected on aspects of site-specific practice itself as a “site,” interrogating its currency in relation to aesthetic imperatives, institutional demands, socioeconomic ramifications, or political efficacy. In this way different cultural debates, a theoretical concept, a social issue, a political problem, an institutional framework (not necessarily an art institution), a community or seasonal event, a historical condition, even particular formations of desire, are now deemed to function as sites.<sup>16</sup>

This is not to say that the parameters of a particular place or institution no longer matter, because site-oriented art today still cannot be thought or executed without the contingencies of locational and institutional circumstances. But the *primary* site addressed by current manifestations of site specificity is not necessarily bound to, or determined by, these contingencies in the long run. Consequently, although the site of action or intervention (physical) and the site of effects/reception

14. The exhibition “Arte Joven en Nueva York,” curated by José Gabriel Fernandez, was hosted by Sala Mendoza and Sala RG in Caracas, Venezuela (June 9–July 7, 1991).

15. This fourth site, to which Dion would return again and again in other projects, remained consistent even as the contents of one of the crates from the Orinoco trip were transferred to New York City to be reconfigured in 1992 to become *New York State Bureau of Tropical Conservation*, an installation for an exhibition at American Fine Arts Co. See the conversation, “The Confessions of an Amateur Naturalist,” in *Documents* 1/2 (Fall/Winter 1992), pp. 36–46. See also my interview with the artist in the forthcoming monograph, *Mark Dion* (London: Phaidon Press, 1997).

16. See the round-table discussion “On Site Specificity,” in *Documents* 4/5 (Spring 1994), pp. 11–22. Participants included Hal Foster, Renée Green, Mitchell Kane, John Lindell, Helen Molesworth, and myself.

*Mark Dion. On Tropical Nature. Top to bottom: in the field near the Orinoco River Basin, 1991 (photo: Bob Braine); installation at Sala Mendoza, Caracas; materials reconfigured for New York State Bureau of Tropical Conservation, installation at American Fine Arts Co. 1992 (photo: A. Cumberbirch).*





(discursive) are conceived to be continuous, they are nonetheless pulled apart. Whereas, for example, the sites of intervention and effect for Serra's *Tilted Arc* were coincident (Federal Plaza in downtown New York City), Dion's site of intervention (the rain forest in Venezuela or Sala Mendoza) and his projected site of effect (the discourse of nature) are distinct. The former clearly serves the latter as material source and "inspiration," yet does not sustain an indexical relationship to it.

James Meyer has distinguished this trend in recent site-oriented practice in terms of a "functional site": "[The functional site] is a process, an operation occurring between sites, a mapping of institutional and discursive filiations and the bodies that move between them (the artist's above all). It is an informational site, a locus of overlap of text, photographs and video recordings, physical places and things. . . . It is a temporary thing; a movement; a chain of meanings devoid of a particular focus."<sup>17</sup> Which is to say the site is now structured (inter)textually rather than spatially, and its model is not a map but an itinerary, a fragmentary sequence of events and actions *through* spaces, that is, a nomadic narrative whose path is articulated by the passage of the artist. Corresponding to the pattern of movement in electronic spaces of the Internet and cyberspace, which are likewise structured to be experienced *transitively*, one thing after another, and not as synchronic simultaneity,<sup>18</sup> this transformation of the site textualizes spaces and spatializes discourses.

A provisional conclusion might be that in advanced art practices of the past thirty years the operative definition of the site has been transformed from a physical location—grounded, fixed, actual—to a discursive vector—ungrounded, fluid, virtual. But even if the dominance of a particular formulation of site specificity emerges at one moment and wanes at another, the shifts are not always punctual or definitive. Thus, the three paradigms of site specificity I have schematized here—phenomenological, social/institutional, and discursive—although presented somewhat chronologically, are not stages in a linear trajectory of historical development. Rather, they are competing definitions, overlapping with one another and operating simultaneously in various cultural practices today (or even within a single artist's single project).

Nonetheless, this move away from a literal interpretation of the site and the multiplicitous expansion of the site in locational and conceptual terms seems more accelerated today than in the past. And the phenomenon is embraced by many artists and critics as an advance offering more effective avenues to resist revised institutional and market forces that now commodify "critical" art practices.

17. James Meyer, "The Functional Site," in *Platzwechsel*, exhibition catalogue (Zurich: Kunsthalle Zurich, 1995), p. 27. A revised version of the essay appears in *Documents 7* (Fall 1996), pp. 20–29.

18. Despite the adoption of architectural terminology in the description of many new electronic spaces (Web sites, information environments, program infrastructures, construction of home pages, virtual spaces, etc.), the spatial experience on the computer is structured more as a sequence of movements and passages, and less as the habitation or durational occupation of a particular "site." Hypertext is a prime example. The (information) superhighway is a more apt analogy, for the spatial experience of the highway is one of transit between locations (despite the immobility of one's body behind the wheel).

In addition, current forms of site-oriented art, which readily take up social issues (often inspired by them), and which routinely engage the collaborative participation of audience groups for the conceptualization and production of the work, are seen as a means to strengthen art's capacity to penetrate the sociopolitical organization of contemporary life with greater impact and meaning. In this sense the possibilities to conceive the site as something more than a place—as repressed ethnic history, a political cause, a disenfranchised social group—is a crucial conceptual leap in redefining the “public” role of art and artists.<sup>19</sup>

But the enthusiastic support for these salutary goals needs to be checked by a serious critical examination of the problems and contradictions that attend all forms of site-specific and site-oriented art today, which are visible now as the art work is becoming more and more “unhinged” from the actuality of the site once again—unhinged both in a literal sense of physical separation of the art work from the location of its initial installation, and in a metaphorical sense as performed in the discursive mobilization of the site in emergent forms of site-oriented art. This “unhinging,” however, does not indicate a retroversion to the modernist autonomy of the siteless, nomadic art object, although such an ideology is still predominant. Rather, the current unhinging of site specificity is reflective of new questions that pressure its practices today—questions engendered by both aesthetic imperatives and external historical determinants, which are not exactly comparable to those of thirty years ago. For example, what is the status of traditional aesthetic values such as originality, authenticity, and uniqueness in site-specific art, which always begins with the particular, local, unrepeatable preconditions of a site, however it is defined? Is the artist's prevalent relegation of authorship to the conditions of the site, including collaborators and/or reader-viewers, a continuing Barthesian performance of “death of the author” or a recasting of the centrality of the artist as a “silent” manager/director? Furthermore, what is the commodity status of anti-commodities, that is, immaterial, process-oriented, ephemeral, performative events? While site-specific art once defied commodification by insisting on immobility, it now seems to espouse fluid mobility and nomadism for the same purpose. But curiously, the nomadic principle also defines capital and power in our times.<sup>20</sup> Is the unhinging of site specificity, then, a form of resistance to the ideological establishment of art or a capitulation to the logic of capitalist expansion?

#### *Mobilization of Site-Specific Art*

The “unhinging” of site-specific art works first realized in the 1960s and '70s is a separation engendered not by aesthetic imperatives but by pressures of the

19. Again, it is beyond the scope of this essay to attend to issues concerning the status of the “public” in contemporary art practices. On this topic, see Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996).

20. See, for example, Gilles Deleuze, “Postscript on the Societies of Control,” *October* 59 (Winter 1992), pp. 3–7; and Manuel Castells, *The Informational City* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

museum culture and the art market. Photographic documentation and other materials associated with site-specific art (preliminary sketches and drawings, field notes, instructions on installation procedures, etc.) have long been standard fare of museum exhibitions and a staple of the art market. In the recent past, however, as the cultural and market values of works from the 1960s and '70s have risen, many of the early precedents in site-specific art, once deemed so difficult to collect and impossible to reproduce, have reappeared in several high-profile exhibitions, such as "l'art conceptuel, une perspective" at the Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris (1989), "The New Sculpture 1965–75: Between Geometry and Gesture" (1990), and "Immaterial Objects" (1991–92), both at the Whitney Museum.<sup>21</sup>

For exhibitions like these, site-specific works from decades ago are being relocated or refabricated from scratch at or near the location of their representation, either because shipping is too difficult and its costs prohibitive, or because the originals are too fragile, in disrepair, or no longer in existence. Depending on the circumstances, some of these refabrications are destroyed after the specific exhibitions for which they are produced; in other instances, the re-creations come to coexist with or replace the old, functioning as *new* originals (some even finding homes in permanent collections of museums).<sup>22</sup> With the cooperation of the artist in many cases, art audiences are now offered the "real" aesthetic experiences of site-specific copies.

The chance to re-view "unrepeatable" works such as Serra's *Splash Piece: Casting* (1969–70) or Alan Saret's *Sulfur Falls* (1968) offers an opportunity to reconsider their historical significance, especially in relation to the current fascination with the late 1960s and '70s in art and criticism. But the very process of institutionalization and the attendant commercialization of site-specific art also overturns the principle of place-boundedness through which such works developed their critique of the ahistorical autonomy of the art object. Contrary to the earlier conception of site specificity, the current museological and commercial practices of refabricating (in order to travel) once site-bound works make transferability and mobilization new norms for site specificity. As Susan Hapgood has observed, "the once-popular term 'site-specific,' has come to mean 'movable under the right circumstances,'"<sup>23</sup> shattering the dictum "to remove the work is to destroy the work."

The consequences of this conversion, effected by object-oriented *decontextualizations* in the guise of historical *recontextualizations*, are a series of normalizing reversals in which the specificity of the site is rendered irrelevant, making it all the

21. For an overview of this situation, see Susan Hapgood, "Remaking Art History," *Art in America* (July 1990), pp. 115–23, 181.

22. "The New Sculpture 1965–75: Between Geometry and Gesture," at the Whitney Museum (1990) included fourteen re-creations of works by Barry Le Va, Bruce Nauman, Alan Saret, Richard Serra, Joel Shapiro, Keith Sonnier, and Richard Tuttle. Le Va's re-creation of *Continuous and Related Activities: Discontinued By the Act of Dropping* from 1967 was then purchased by the Whitney for its permanent collection and subsequently re-installed in several other exhibitions in many different cities. With some of these works there is an ambiguous blurring between ephemerality (repeatable?) and site specificity (unrepeatable?).

23. Hapgood, "Remaking Art History," p. 120.



easier for autonomy to be smuggled back into the art work, with the artist allowed to regain his/her authority as the primary source of the work's meaning. The art work is newly objectified (and commodified), and site specificity is redescribed as the personal aesthetic choice of an artist's *stylistic* preference rather than a structural reorganization of aesthetic experience.<sup>24</sup> Thus, a methodological principle of artistic production and dissemination is recaptured as content; active processes are transformed into inert objects once again. In this way, site-specific art comes to *represent* criticality rather than perform it. The "here-and-now" of aesthetic experience is isolated as the signified, severed from its signifier.

If this phenomenon represents another instance of domestication of vanguard works by the dominant culture, it is not solely because of the self-aggrandizing needs of the institution or the profit-driven nature of the market. Artists, no matter how deeply convinced their anti-institutional sentiment or adamant their critique of dominant ideology, are inevitably engaged, self-servingly or with ambivalence, in this process of cultural legitimation. For example, in March 1990 Carl Andre and Donald Judd both wrote letters of indignation to *Art in America* to publicly disavow authorship of two sculptures attributed to each of them that were included in a 1989 exhibition at the Ace Gallery in Los Angeles.<sup>25</sup> The works in question were re-creations: Andre's 49-foot steel sculpture *Fall* from 1968 and an untitled iron "wall" piece by Judd of 1970, both from the Panza Collection. Due to the difficulties and high cost of crating and shipping such large-scale works from Italy to California, Panza gave permission to the organizers of the exhibition to refabricate them locally following detailed instructions. With the works being industrially produced in the first place, the participation of the artists in the refabrication process seemed of little consequence to the director of the Ace Gallery and to Panza. The artists, however, felt otherwise. Not having been consulted on the (re)production and installation of these surrogates, they denounced the refabrications as a "gross falsification" and a "forgery," despite the fact that the sculptures appeared identical to the "originals" in Italy and were reproduced as one-time exhibition copies, not to be sold or exhibited elsewhere.

More than merely a case of ruffled artistic egos, this incident exposes a crisis concerning the status of authorship and authenticity as site-specific art from years ago finds new contexts in the 1990s. For Andre and Judd, what made the refabricated works illegitimate was not that each was a reproduction of a singular work installed in Varese, which in principle cannot be reproduced anywhere else anyway, but that the artists themselves did not authorize or oversee the refabrication in California. In other words, the re-creations are inauthentic not because of the missing site of its original installation but because of the absence of the artist in the process of their (re)production. By reducing visual variations within the art work to a point of obtuse blankness, and by adopting modes of

24. This was the logic behind Richard Serra's defense of *Tilted Arc*. Consequently, the issue of relocation or removal of the sculpture became a debate concerning the creative rights of the artist.

25. See March and April issues of *Art in America*, 1990.



*Faith Wilding. Crocheted Environment (Womb Room). Reconstituted installation at the Bronx Museum. 1995. (Photo: Becket Logan.)*

industrial production, Minimal art had voided the traditional standards of aesthetic distinction based on the handiwork of the artist as the signifier of authenticity. However, as the Ace Gallery case amply reveals, despite the withdrawal of such signifiers, authorship and authenticity remain in site-specific art as a function of the artist's "presence" at the point of (re)production. That is, with the evacuation of "artistic" traces, the artist's *authorship* as producer of objects is reconfigured as his/her *authority to authorize* in the capacity of director or supervisor of (re)productions. The guarantee of authenticity is finally the artist's sanction, which may be articulated by his/her actual presence at the moment of production-installation or via a certificate of verification.<sup>26</sup>

While Andre and Judd once problematized authorship through the recruitment of serialized industrial production, only to cry foul years later when their proposition was taken to one of its logical conclusions,<sup>27</sup> artists whose practices are based in modes of "traditional" manual labor have registered a more complex understanding of the *politics* of authorship. A case in point: for a 1995 historical survey of feminist art entitled "Division of Labor: 'Women's Work' in Contemporary Art" at the Bronx Museum, Faith Wilding, an original member of

26. Sol LeWitt, with his *Lines to Points on a Six-Inch Grid* (1976) for example, serialized his wall drawing by relinquishing the necessity for his involvement in the actual execution of the work, allowing for the possibility of an endless repetition of the same work reconfigured by others in a variety of different locations.

27. See Rosalind Krauss, "The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum," *October* 54 (Fall 1990), pp. 3-17.

the Feminist Art Program at the California Institute of the Arts, was invited to re-create her room-sized site-specific installation *Crocheted Environment* (also known as *Womb Room*) from the 1972 *Womanhouse* project in Los Angeles. The original piece being nonexistent, the project presented Wilding with a number of problems, least of which were the long hours and intensive physical labor required to complete the task. To decline the invitation to re-do the piece for the sake of preserving the integrity of the original installation would have been an act of self-marginalization, contributing to a self-silencing that would write Wilding and an aspect of feminist art out of the dominant account of art history (*again*). But on the other hand, to re-create the work as an independent art object for a white cubic space in the Bronx Museum also meant voiding the meaning of the work as it was first established in relation to the site of its original context. Indeed, while the cultural legitimation as represented by the institutional interest in Wilding's work allowed for the (temporary) unearthing of one of the neglected trajectories of feminist art, in the institutional setting of the Bronx Museum, and later at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, *Crocheted Environment* became a beautiful but innocuous work, its primary interest formal, the handicraft nature of the work rendered thematic (feminine labor).<sup>28</sup>

But even if the efficacy of site-specific art from the past seems to weaken in its re-presentations, the procedural complications, ethical dilemmas, and pragmatic headaches that such situations raise for artists, collectors, dealers, and host institutions *are* still meaningful. They present an unprecedented strain on established patterns of (re)producing, exhibiting, borrowing/lending, purchasing/selling, and commissioning/executing art works in general. At the same time, despite some artists' regression into authorial inviolability in order to defend their site-specific practice, other artists are keen on undoing the presumption of criticality associated with such principles as immobility, permanence, and unrepeatability. Rather than resisting mobilization, these artists are attempting to reinvent site specificity as a *nomadic* practice.

#### *Itinerant Artists*

The increasing institutional interest in site-oriented practices that mobilize the site as a discursive narrative is demanding an intensive physical mobilization of the artist to create works in various cities throughout the cosmopolitan art world. Typically, an artist (no longer a studio-bound object maker, primarily working on-call) is invited by an art institution to execute a work specifically configured for the framework provided by the institution (in some cases the artist may solicit the institution with a proposal). Subsequently, the artist enters into a contractual agreement with the host institution for the commission. There follows repeated visits to or extended stays at the site; research into the particularities of

28. For Faith Wilding's description of this dilemma, as well as her assessment of recent revisits of 1960s feminist art, see her essay "Monstrous Domesticity," in *MEANING*, no. 18 (November 1995), pp. 3–16.





*Christian Philipp Müller. Illegal Border Crossing  
between Austria and Czechoslovakia.  
(Austrian contribution to the Venice Biennale.) 1993.*

the institution and/or the city within which it is located (its history, constituency of the [art] audience, the installation space); consideration of the parameters of the exhibition itself (its thematic structure, social relevance, other artists in the show); and many meetings with curators, educators, and administrative support staff, who may all end up “collaborating” with the artist to produce the work. The project will likely be time-consuming and in the end will have engaged the “site” in a multitude of ways, and the documentation of the project will take on another life within the art world’s publicity circuit, which will in turn alert another institution for another commission.

Thus, if the artist is successful, he or she travels constantly as a freelancer, often working on more than one site-specific project at a time, globe-trotting as a guest, tourist, adventurer, temporary in-house critic, or pseudoethnographer<sup>29</sup> to São Paulo, Munich, Chicago, Seoul, Amsterdam, New York, and so on. Generally, the *in situ* configuration of a project that emerges out of such a situation is temporary, ostensibly unsuitable for re-presentation anywhere else without altering its meaning, partly because the commission is defined by a unique set of geographical and temporal circumstances and partly because the project is dependent on unpredictable and unprogrammable on-site relations. But such conditions, despite appearances to the contrary, do not circumvent the problem of commodification entirely because there is a strange reversal now wherein the artist approximates the

29. See Hal Foster, “Artist as Ethnographer,” in *The Return of the Real* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996) on the complex exchange between art and anthropology in recent art.

“work,” instead of the other way around as is commonly assumed (that is, art work as surrogate of the artist). Perhaps because of the “absence” of the artist from the physical manifestation of the work, the *presence* of the artist has become an absolute *prerequisite* for the execution/presentation of site-oriented projects. It is now the *performative* aspect of an artist’s characteristic mode of operation (even when collaborative) that is repeated and circulated as a new art commodity, with the artist functioning as the primary vehicle for its verification, repetition, and circulation.

For example, after a year-long engagement with the Maryland Historical Society, Fred Wilson finalized his site-specific commission *Mining the Museum* (1992) as a temporary reorganization of the institution’s permanent collection. As a timely convergence of institutional museum critique and multicultural identity politics, *Mining the Museum* drew many new visitors to the Society, and the project received high praise from both the art world and the popular press. Subsequently, Wilson performed a similar excavation/intervention at the Seattle Art Museum in 1993, a project also defined by the museum’s permanent collection.<sup>30</sup> Although the shift from Baltimore to Seattle, from a historical society to an art museum, introduced new variables and challenges, the Seattle project established a repetitive relationship between the artist and the hosting institution, reflecting a broader museological fashion trend—commissioning of artists to re-hang permanent collections. The fact that Wilson’s project in Seattle fell short of the Baltimore “success” may be evidence of how ongoing repetition of such commissions can render methodologies of critique rote and generic. They can easily become extensions of the museum’s own self-promotional apparatus, and the artist becomes a commodity with a purchase on “criticality.” As Isabelle Graw has noted, “the result can be an absurd situation in which the commissioning institution (the museum or gallery) turns to an artist as a person who has the legitimacy to point out the contradictions and irregularities of which they themselves disapprove.” And for artists, “[s]ubversion in the service of one’s own convictions finds easy transition into subversion for hire; ‘criticism turns into spectacle.’”<sup>31</sup>

To say, however, that this changeover represents the commodification of the artist is not completely accurate because it is not the figure of the artist per se, as a personality or a celebrity à la Warhol, that is produced/consumed in an exchange with the institution. What the current pattern points to, in fact, is the extent to which the very nature of the commodity as a cipher of production and labor relations is no longer bound to the realm of manufacturing (of things) but defined in relation to the service and management industries.<sup>32</sup> The artist as an

30. See Fred Wilson interview by Martha Buskirk, in *October* 70 (Fall 1994), pp. 109–12.

31. Isabelle Graw, “Field Work,” *Flash Art* (November/December 1990), p. 137. Her observation here is in relation to Hans Haacke’s practice, but is relevant as a general statement concerning the current status of institutional critique. See also Frazer Ward, “The Haunted Museum: Institutional Critique and Publicity,” *October* 73 (Summer 1995), pp. 71–90.

32. See Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

overspecialized aesthetic object maker has been anachronistic for a long time already. What they *provide* now, rather than *produce*, are aesthetic, often “critical-artistic,” services.<sup>33</sup> If Richard Serra could once distill artistic activities down to their elemental physical actions (to drop, to split, to roll, to fold, to cut, etc.<sup>34</sup>), the situation now demands a different set of verbs: to negotiate, to coordinate, to compromise, to research, to organize, to interview, etc. This shift was forecasted in Conceptual art’s adoption of what Benjamin Buchloh has described as the “aesthetics of administration.”<sup>35</sup> The salient point here is how quickly this aesthetics of administration, developed in the 1960s and ’70s, has converted to the administration of aesthetics in the 1980s and ’90s. Generally speaking, the artist used to be a maker of aesthetic objects; now he/she is a facilitator, educator, coordinator, and bureaucrat. Additionally, as artists have adopted managerial functions of art institutions (curatorial, educational, archival) as an integral part of their creative process, managers of art within institutions (curators, educators, public program directors), who often take their cues from these artists, now function as authorial figures in their own right.<sup>36</sup>

Concurrent with, or because of, these methodological and procedural changes, there is a reemergence of the centrality of the artist as the progenitor of meaning. This is true even when authorship is deferred to others in collaborations, or when the institutional framework is self-consciously integrated into the work, or when an artist problematizes his/her own authorial role. On the one hand, this “return of the author” results from the thematization of discursive sites, which engenders a misrecognition of them as “natural” extensions of the artist’s identity, and the legitimacy of the critique is measured by the proximity of the artist’s personal association (converted to expertise) with a particular place, history, discourse, identity, etc. (converted to thematic content). On the other hand, because the signifying chain of site-oriented art is constructed foremost by the movement and decisions of the artist,<sup>37</sup> the (critical) elaboration of the project

33. Andrea Fraser’s 1994–95 project in which she contracted herself out to the EA-Generali Foundation in Vienna (an art association established by companies belonging to the EA-Generali insurance group) as an artist/consultant to provide “interpretive” and “interventionary” services to the foundation is one of the few examples I can think of that self-consciously play out this shift in the conditions of artistic production and reception both in terms of content and structure of the project. It should be noted that the artist herself initiated the project by offering such services through her “Prospectus for Corporations.” See Fraser’s *Report* (Vienna: EA-Generali Foundation, 1995).

34. Richard Serra, “Verb List, 1967–68,” in *Writings Interviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 3.

35. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, “Conceptual Art 1962–1969: From the Aesthetics of Administration to the Critique of Institutions,” *October* 55 (Winter 1991), pp. 105–43.

36. For instance, the “Views from Abroad” exhibition series at the Whitney Museum, which foregrounds “artistic” visions of European curators, is structured very much like site-specific commissions of artists that focus on museum permanent collections as described above.

37. According to James Meyer, a site-oriented practice based on a functional notion of a site “traces the *artist’s* movements through and around the institution”; “reflect[s] the specific interests, educations, and formal decisions of the producer”; and “in the process of deferral, a signifying chain that traverses physical and discursive borders,” the functional site “incorporates the body of the artist.” Emphasis added. See Meyer, “The Functional Site,” pp. 29, 33, 31, 35.



inevitably unfolds around the artist. That is, the intricate orchestration of literal and discursive sites that make up a nomadic narrative *requires* the artist as a narrator-protagonist. In some cases, this renewed focus on the artist leads to a hermetic implosion of (auto)biographical and subjectivist indulgences, and myopic narcissism is misrepresented as self-reflexivity.

This being so, one of the narrative trajectories of all site-oriented projects is consistently aligned with the artist's prior projects executed in other places, generating what might be called a fifth site—the exhibition history of the artist, his/her vitae. The tension between the intensive mobilization of the artist and the re-centralization of meaning around him/her is illustrated by Renée Green's 1993 *World Tour*, a group re-installation of four site-specific projects produced in disparate parts of the world over a three-year period.<sup>38</sup> By bringing several distinct projects together from "elsewhere," *World Tour* sought to reflect on the problematic conditions of present-day site specificity, such as the ethnographic predicament of artists who are frequently imported by foreign institutions and cities as expert/exotic visitors. *World Tour* also made an attempt to imagine a productive convergence between specificity and mobility, where a project created under one set of circumstances might be redeployed in another without losing its impact—or, better, finding new meaning and gaining critical sharpness through re-contextualizations.<sup>39</sup> But these concerns were not available for viewers whose interpretive reaction was to see the artist as the primary link between the projects. Indeed, the effort to redeploy the individual site-oriented projects as a conceptually coherent ensemble eclipsed the specificity of each and forced a relational dynamic between discrete projects. Consequently, the overriding narrative of *World Tour* became Green's own creative process as an artist in and through the four projects. And in this sense, the project functioned as a fairly conventional retrospective.

Just as the shifts in the structural reorganization of cultural production alter the form of the art commodity (to services) and the authority of the artist (to "reappeared" protagonist), values like originality, authenticity, and singularity are also reworked in site-oriented art—*evacuated from the art work and attributed to the site*—reinforcing a general cultural valorization of places as the locus of authentic experience and coherent sense of historical and personal identity.<sup>40</sup> An instructive

38. The installation consisted of *Bequest*, commissioned by the Worcester Art Museum in Massachusetts in 1991; *Import/Export Funk Office*, originally shown at the Christian Nagel Gallery in Cologne in 1992 and then re-installed at the 1993 Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art; *Mise en Scène*, first presented in 1992 in Clisson, France; and *Idyll Pursuits*, produced for a group exhibition in 1991 in Caracas, Venezuela. As a whole, *World Tour* was exhibited at The Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles in 1993, then traveled to the Dallas Museum of Art later the same year. See Russell Ferguson, ed., *World Tour*, exhibition catalogue (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 1993).

39. This endeavor is not exclusive to Green. Silvia Kolbowski, for instance, has proposed the possibility of working with sites as generic and transferability as specific. See her "Enlarged from the Catalogue: The United States of America," in *Silvia Kolbowski: XI Projects* (New York: Border Editions, 1993), pp. 34–51.

40. This faith in the authenticity of place is evident in a wide range of disciplines. In urban studies, see Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995). In relation to public art, see Ronald Lee Fleming and Renata von Tscherner, *PlaceMakers: Creating*

example of this phenomenon is “Places with a Past,” a 1991 site-specific exhibition organized by Mary Jane Jacob, which took the city of Charleston, South Carolina, as not only the backdrop but a “bridge between the works of art and the audience.”<sup>41</sup> In addition to breaking the rules of the art establishment, the exhibition wanted to further a dialogue between art and the sociohistorical dimension of places. According to Jacob, “Charleston proved to be fertile ground” for the investigation of issues concerning “gender, race, cultural identity, considerations of difference . . . subjects much in the vanguard of criticism and art-making. . . . The actuality of the situation, the fabric of the time and place of Charleston, offered an incredibly rich and meaningful context for the making and siting of publicly visible and physically prominent installations that rang true in [the artists’] approach to these ideas.”<sup>42</sup>

While site-specific art continues to be described as a refutation of originality and authenticity as intrinsic qualities of the art object or the artist, this resistance facilitates the translation and relocation of these qualities from the art work to the place of its presentation, only to have them *return* to the art work now that it has become integral to the site. Admittedly, according to Jacob, “locations . . . contribute a specific identity to the shows staged by injecting into the experience the uniqueness of the place.”<sup>43</sup> Conversely, if the social, historical, and geographical specificity of Charleston offered artists a unique opportunity to create unrepeatable works (and by extension an unrepeatable exhibition), then the programmatic implementation of site-specific art in exhibitions like “Places with a Past” ultimately utilize art to *promote* Charleston as a unique place. What is prized most of all in site-specific art is still the singularity and authenticity that the presence of the artist seems to guarantee, not only in terms of the presumed unrepeatability of the work but in the ways in which the presence of the artist also *endows* places with a “unique” distinction.

Certainly, site-specific art can lead to the unearthing of repressed histories, provide support for greater visibility of marginalized groups and issues, and initiate the re(dis)covery of “minor” places so far ignored by the dominant culture. But inasmuch as the current socioeconomic order thrives on the (artificial) production and (mass) consumption of difference (for difference’s sake), the siting of art in “real” places can also be a means to *extract* the social and historical dimensions *out* of places to variously serve the thematic drive of an artist, satisfy institutional demographic profiles, or fulfill the fiscal needs of a city.

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*Public Art That Tells You Where You Are* (Boston, San Diego, and New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981). See also Lucy Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: The Sense of Place in a Multicultural Society* (New York: The New Press, forthcoming in 1997).

41. See *Places with a Past: New Site-Specific Art at Charleston’s Spoleto Festival*, exhibition catalogue (New York: Rizzoli, 1991), p. 19. The exhibition took place May 24 to August 4, 1991, with site-specific works by eighteen artists including Ann Hamilton, Christian Boltanski, Cindy Sherman, David Hammons, Lorna Simpson and Alva Rogers, Kate Ericson and Mel Ziegler, and Ronald Jones. The promotional materials, especially the exhibition catalogue, emphasized the innovative challenge of the exhibition format over the individual projects, and foregrounded the authorial role of Mary Jane Jacob over the artists.

42. *Ibid.*, 17.

43. *Ibid.*, 15.

Significantly, the appropriation of site-specific art for the valorization of urban identities comes at a time of a fundamental cultural shift in which architecture and urban planning, formerly the primary media for expressing a vision of the city, are displaced by other media more intimate with marketing and advertising. In the words of urban theorist Kevin Robins, "As cities have become ever more equivalent and urban identities increasingly 'thin,' . . . it has become necessary to employ advertising and marketing agencies to manufacture such distinctions. It is a question of distinction in a world beyond difference."<sup>44</sup> Site specificity in this context finds new importance because it supplies distinction of place and uniqueness of locational identity, highly seductive qualities in the promotion of towns and cities within the competitive restructuring of the global economic hierarchy. Thus, site specificity remains inexorably tied to a process that renders particularity and identity of various cities a matter of product differentiation. Indeed, the exhibition catalogue for "Places with a Past" was a "tasteful" tourist promotion, pitching the city of Charleston as a unique, "artistic," and meaningful place (to visit).<sup>45</sup> Under the pretext of their articulation or resuscitation, site-specific art can be mobilized to expedite the *erasure* of differences via the commodification and serialization of places.

The yoking together of the myth of the artist as a privileged source of originality with the customary belief in places as ready reservoirs of unique identity belies the compensatory nature of such a move. For this collapse of the artist and the site reveals an anxious cultural desire to assuage the sense of loss and vacancy that pervades both sides of this equation. In this sense, Craig Owens was perhaps correct to characterize site specificity as a melancholic discourse and practice,<sup>46</sup> as was Thierry de Duve, who claimed that "sculpture in the last twenty years is an attempt to reconstruct the notion of site from the standpoint of having acknowledged its disappearance."<sup>47</sup>

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*The bulldozing of an irregular topography into a flat site is clearly a technocratic gesture which aspires to a condition of absolute placelessness, whereas the terracing of the same site to receive the stepped form of a building is an engagement in the act of "cultivating" the site. . . .*

44. Kevin Robins, "Prisoners of the City: Whatever Can a Postmodern City Be?" in *Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location*, ed. Erica Carter, James Donald, and Judith Squires (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1993), p. 306.

45. Cultural critic Sharon Zukin has noted, "it seemed to be official policy [by the 1990s] that making a place for art in the city went along with establishing a marketable identity for the city as a whole" (Zukin, *The Culture of Cities* [Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1995], p. 23).

46. Addressing Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* and the *Partially Buried Wooden Shed*, Craig Owens has made an important connection between melancholia and the redemptive logic of site specificity in "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism," *October* 12 (Spring 1980), pp. 67–86.

47. Thierry de Duve, "Ex Situ," *Art & Design* 8, no. 5/6 (May–June 1993), p. 25.



*This inscription . . . has a capacity to embody, in built form, the prehistory of the place, its archeological past and its subsequent cultivation and transformation across time. Through this layering into the site the idiosyncrasies of place find their expression without falling into sentimentality.*

—Kenneth Frampton<sup>48</sup>

*[T]he elaboration of place-bound identities has become more rather than less important in a world of diminishing spatial barriers to exchange, movement and communication.*

—David Harvey<sup>49</sup>

It is significant that the mobilization of site-specific art from decades ago is concurrent with the nomadism of current site-oriented practices. Paradoxically, while foregrounding the importance of the site, they together express the dissipation of the site, caught up in the “dynamics of deterritorialization,” a concept most clearly elaborated in architectural and urban discourses today.

Within the present context of an ever-expanding capitalist order, fueled by an ongoing globalization of technology and telecommunications, the intensifying conditions of spatial indifferentiation and deparicularization exacerbate the effects of alienation and fragmentation in contemporary life.<sup>50</sup> The drive toward a rationalized universal civilization, engendering the homogenization of places and the erasure of cultural differences, is in fact the force against which Frampton proposes a practice of Critical Regionalism as described above—a program for an “architecture of resistance.” If the universalizing tendencies of modernism undermined the old divisions of power based on class relations fixed to geographical hierarchies of centers and margins, only to aid in capitalism’s colonization of “peripheral” spaces, then the articulation and cultivation of diverse local particularities is a (postmodern) reaction against these effects. Henri Lefebvre has remarked: “[I]nasmuch as abstract space [of modernism and capital] tends towards homogeneity, towards the elimination of existing differences or

48. Kenneth Frampton, “Towards a Critical Regionalism,” in *The Anti-Aesthetic*, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, Wash.: Bay Press, 1983), p. 26.

49. David Harvey, “From Space to Place and Back Again: Reflections on the Condition of Postmodernity,” text for UCLA GSAUP Colloquium, May 13, 1991, as cited by Hayden, *The Power of Place*, p. 43.

50. See Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1991); David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990); Margaret Morse, “The Ontology of Everyday Distraction: The Freeway, the Mall, and Television,” in *Logics of Television: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, ed. Patricia Mellencamp (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 193–221; Michael Sorkin, ed., *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space* (New York: Noonday Press, 1992); and Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Theory* (London: Verso Books, 1989). For a feminist critique of some of these urban spatial theories, see Rosalyn Deutsche, “Men in Space,” *Strategies*, no. 3 (1990), pp. 130–37, and “Boys Town,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 9 (1991), pp. 5–30. For a specific critique of Sorkin’s position, see my “Imagining an Impossible World Picture,” in *Sites and Stations: Provisional Utopias*, ed. Stan Allen and Kyong Park (New York: Lusitania Press, 1995), pp. 77–88.

Group Material. DaZiBaos. Poster project at Union Square, New York. 1982.



peculiarities, a new space cannot be born (produced) unless it accentuates differences.”<sup>51</sup> It is perhaps no surprise, then, that the efforts to retrieve lost differences, or to curtail the waning of them, become heavily invested in reconnecting to “uniqueness of place”—or more precisely, in establishing authenticity of meaning, memory, histories, and identities as a *differential function* of places. It is this differential function associated with places, which earlier forms of site-specific art tried to exploit and the current incarnations of site-oriented works seek to re-imagine, that is the hidden attractor in the term site specificity.

It seems inevitable that we should leave behind the nostalgic notions of a site as being essentially bound to the physical and empirical realities of a place. Such a conception, if not ideologically suspect, often seems out of synch with the prevalent description of contemporary life as a network of unanchored flows. Even such an advanced theoretical position as Frampton’s Critical Regionalism seems dated in this regard; for it is predicated on the belief that a particular site/place exists with its identity-giving or identifying properties always and already *prior* to what new cultural forms might be introduced to it or emerge from it. In such a pre- (or post-) poststructuralist conception, all site-specific gestures would have to be understood as reactive, “cultivating” what is presumed to be there already rather than generative of new identities and histories.

51. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 52.

Indeed the deterritorialization of the site has produced liberatory effects, displacing the strictures of fixed place-bound identities with the fluidity of a migratory model, introducing the possibilities for the production of multiple identities, allegiances, and meanings, based not on normative conformities but on the nonrational convergences forged by chance encounters and circumstances. The fluidity of subjectivity, identity, and spatiality as described by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their rhizomatic nomadism,<sup>52</sup> for example, is a powerful theoretical tool for the dismantling of traditional orthodoxies that would suppress differences, sometimes violently.

However, despite the proliferation of discursive sites and “fictional” selves, the phantom of a site as an actual place remains, and our psychic, habitual attachments to places regularly return as they continue to inform our sense of identity. And this persistent, perhaps secret, adherence to the actuality of places (in memory, in longing) is not necessarily a lack of theoretical sophistication but a means for survival. The resurgence of violence in defense of essentialized notions of national, racial, religious, and cultural identities in relation to geographical territories is readily characterized as extremist, retrograde, and “uncivilized.” Yet the loosening of such relations, that is, the destabilization of subjectivity, identity, and spatiality (following the dictates of desire), can also be described as a compensatory fantasy in response to the intensification of fragmentation and alienation wrought by a mobilized market economy (following the dictates of capital). The advocacy of the continuous mobilization of self- and place-identities as discursive fictions, as polymorphous “critical” plays on fixed generalities and stereotypes, in the end may be a delusional alibi for short attention spans, reinforcing the ideology of the new—a temporary antidote for the anxiety of boredom. It is perhaps too soon and frightening to acknowledge, but the paradigm of nomadic selves and sites may be a glamorization of the trickster ethos that is in fact a reprisal of the ideology of “freedom of choice”—the choice to forget, the choice to reinvent, the choice to fictionalize, the choice to “belong” anywhere, everywhere, and nowhere. This choice, of course, does not belong to everyone equally. The understanding of identity and difference as being culturally constructed should not obscure the fact that the ability to deploy multiple, fluid identities in and of itself is a privilege of mobilization that has a specific relationship to power.

What would it mean now to sustain the cultural and historical specificity of a place (and self) that is neither a simulacral pacifier nor a willful invention? For architecture, Frampton proposes a process of “double mediation,” which is in fact a double negation, *defying* “both the optimization of advanced technology and the ever-present tendency to regress into nostalgic historicism or the glibly decorative.”<sup>53</sup> An analogous double mediation in site-specific art practice might mean finding a terrain between mobilization and specificity—to be *out* of place

52. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

53. Frampton, “Towards a Critical Regionalism,” p. 21.



Gabriel Orozco. Isla dentro de la isla  
(Island into the Island). *New York 1992*.



with punctuality and precision. Homi Bhabha has said, “The globe shrinks for those who own it; for the displaced or the dispossessed, the migrant or refugee, no distance is more awesome than the few feet across borders or frontiers.”<sup>54</sup> Today’s site-oriented practices inherit the task of demarcating the *relational specificity* that can hold in tension the distant poles of spatial experiences described by Bhabha. This means addressing the differences of adjacencies and distances *between* one thing, one person, one place, one thought, one fragment *next* to another, rather than invoking equivalencies via one thing *after* another. Only those cultural practices that have this relational sensibility can turn local encounters into long-term commitments and transform passing intimacies into indelible, unretractable social marks—so that the sequence of sites that we inhabit in our life’s traversal does not become genericized into an undifferentiated serialization, one place after another.

54. Homi K. Bhabha, “Double Visions,” *Artforum* (January 1992), p. 88.

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TEN

## The Artist as Ethnographer?

Hal Foster

My title is meant to evoke "The Author as Producer," the text of which Walter Benjamin first presented at the Institute for the Study of Fascism in Paris in April 1934. There, under the influence of Berthold Brecht and Russian revolutionary culture, Benjamin (1978) called on the artist on the left "to side with the proletariat."<sup>1</sup> In vanguard Paris in April 1934 this call was not radical; the approach, however, was. For Benjamin urged the "advanced" artist to intervene, like the revolutionary worker, in the means of artistic production—to change the "techniques" of traditional media, to transform the "apparatus" of bourgeois culture. A correct "tendency" was not enough; that was to assume a place "beside the proletariat." And "what kind of place is that?" Benjamin asked, in lines that still scathe. "That of a benefactor, of an ideological patron—an impossible place."

Today there is a related paradigm in advanced art on the left: the artist as ethnographer. The object of contestation remains, at least in part, the bourgeois institution of autonomous art, its exclusionary definitions of art, audience, identity. But the subject of association has changed: it is now the cultural and/or ethnic other in whose name the artist often struggles. And yet, despite this shift, basic assumptions with the old productivist model persist in the new quasi-anthropological paradigm. First, there is the assumption that the site of artistic transformation is the site of political transformation, and, more, that this site is always located *elsewhere*, in the field of the other: in the productivist model, with the social other, the exploited proletariat; in the quasi-anthropological model, with the cultural other, the oppressed postcolonial, subaltern, or subcultural. Second, there is the assumption that this other is always *outside*, and, more, that this alterity is the primary point of subversion of dominant culture. Third, there is the assumption that if the invoked artist is *not* perceived as socially and/or culturally other, he or she has but *limited* access to this transformative alterity, and, more, that if he or she *is* perceived as other, he or she has *automatic* access to it. Taken together, these three

assumptions lead to another point of connection with the Benjamin account of the author as producer: the danger, for the artist as ethnographer, of "ideological patronage."<sup>2</sup>

A strict Marxist might question this quasi-anthropological paradigm in art because it tends to displace the problematic of class and capitalist exploitation with that of race and colonialist oppression. A strict poststructuralist would question it for the opposite reason: because it does *not* displace this productivist problematic enough, that is, because it tends to preserve its structure of the political—to retain the notion of a *subject* of history, to define this position in terms of *truth*, and to locate this truth in terms of *alterity*. From this perspective the quasi-anthropological paradigm, like the productivist one, fails to reflect on its *realist assumption*: that the other, here postcolonial, there proletarian, is in the real, not in the ideological, because he or she is socially oppressed, politically transformative, and/or materially productive.<sup>3</sup> Often this realist assumption is compounded by a *primitivist fantasy*: that the other has access to primal psychic and social processes from which the white (petit) bourgeois subject is blocked.<sup>4</sup> Now, I do not dispute that, in certain conjunctures the realist assumption is proper and the primitivist fantasy is subversive. But I do dispute the automatic coding of apparent difference as manifest identity and of otherness as outsidership. This coding has long enabled a cultural politics of *marginality*. Today, however, it may disable a cultural politics of *immanence*, and this politics may well be more pertinent to a postcolonial situation of multinational capitalism in which geopolitical models of center and periphery no longer hold.<sup>5</sup>

The primitivist fantasy was active in two precedents of the quasi-anthropological paradigm in contemporary art: the dissident Surrealism associated with Georges Bataille and Michel Leiris in the late 1920s and early '30s, and the *négritude* movement associated with Leopold Senghor and Aimé Césaire in the late 1940s and early '50s. In different ways both movements connected the transgressive potentiality of the unconscious with the radical alterity of the cultural other. And yet, both movements came to be limited by this very primitivist association. Just as dissident surrealism explored cultural otherness only in part to indulge in a ritual of self-othering, so the *négritude* movement naturalized cultural otherness only in part to be constrained by this second nature. In quasi-anthropological art today this primitivist fantasy is only residual. However, the realist assumption—that the other is *dans le vrai*—remains strong, and often its effect, now as then, is to *detour* the artist. What I mean is simpler than it sounds. Just as the productivist sought to stand in the reality of the proletariat only in part to sit in the place of the patron, so the quasi-anthropological artist today may seek to work with sited communities with the best motives of political engagement and institutional transgression, only in part to have this work recoded by its sponsors as social outreach, economic development, public relations . . . or art.

This is not the facile complaint of personal co-optation or institutional recuperation: that the artist is only tactical in a careerist sense, or that the museum and the

media absorb everything in pure malevolence (indeed we know they cannot). Rather my concern is with the *structural effects* of the realist assumption in political, here quasi-anthropological, art, in particular with its siting of political truth in a projected alterity. I mentioned the problem of automatic coding of artists vis-à-vis alterity, but there are additional problems here as well: first, that this projection of politics as other and outside may detract from a politics of here and now. And second, since it is in part a projection, this outside is not other in any simple sense.

Let me take these two problems one at a time. First, the assumption of outside-ness. If it is true that we live today in a near-global economy, then a pure outside can no longer be presupposed. This recognition does not totalize the world system; instead, it specifies resistance to it as an immanent relation rather than a transcendental one. And, again, a strategic sense of complex imbrication is more pertinent to our postcolonial situation than a romantic proposal of simple opposition.<sup>6</sup> Second, the projection of alterity. As this alterity becomes always imbricated with our own unconscious, its effect may be to “other” the self more than to “selve” the other. Now it may be, as many critics claim today, that this self-othering is crucial to a revised understanding of anthropology and politics alike; or, more circumspectly, that in conjunctures such as the surrealist one the troping of anthropology as auto-analysis (as in Leiris) or social critique (as in Bataille) is culturally transgressive, even politically significant. But there are obvious dangers here as well. Then as now such self-othering easily passes into self-absorption, in which the project of “ethnographic self-fashioning” becomes the practice of philosophical narcissism.<sup>7</sup> To be sure, such reflexivity has done much to disturb reflex assumptions about subject positions, but it has also done much to promote a masquerade of the same: a vogue for confessional testimony in theory that is sometimes sensibility criticism come again, and a vogue for pseudoethnographic reports in art that are sometimes disguised travelogues from the world art market. Who in the academy or the art world has not witnessed these new forms of *flânerie*?

What has happened here? What misrecognitions have passed between anthropology and art and other discourses? One can point to a whole circuit of projections and reflections over the last decade at least. First, some critics of anthropology developed a kind of artist-envy (the enthusiasm of James Clifford for the juxtapositions of “ethnographic surrealism” is an influential instance).<sup>8</sup> In this envy the artist becomes a paragon of formal reflexivity, sensitive to difference and open to chance, a self-aware reader of culture understood as text. But is the artist the exemplar here, or is this figure not a projection of a particular ideal ego—of the anthropologist as collagist, semiologist, avant-gardist?<sup>9</sup> In other words, might this artist-envy be a self-idealization? Rarely does this projection stop there, in anthropology and art, or, for that matter, in cultural studies or new historicism. Often it extends to the *object* of these investigations, the cultural other, who also reflects an ideal image of the anthropologist, artist, critic, or historian. To be sure, this pro-

jection is not new to anthropology: some classics of the discipline (e.g., *Patterns of Culture* by Ruth Benedict) presented whole cultures as collective artists or read them as aesthetic “patterns” of symbolic practices. But they did so openly; current critics of anthropology persist in this projection, only they call it demystification.<sup>10</sup>

Today this envy has begun to run the other way too: a kind of ethnographer-envy consumes artists. Here as well they share this envy with critics, especially in cultural studies and new historicism, who assume the role of ethnographer, usually in disguised form—the cultural-studies ethnographer dressed *down* as a fellow fan (for reasons of political solidarity—but with what social anxieties!); the new-historicist ethnographer dressed *up* as a master archivist (for reasons of scholarly respectability—to outhistorian the historians).<sup>11</sup> But why the particular prestige of anthropology in contemporary art? Again, there are precedents of this engagement: in Surrealism, where the other was figured as the unconscious; in *art brut*, where the other represented the anticivilizational; in Abstract Expressionism, where the other stood for the primal artist; and variously in the art of the 1960s and '70s (the Primitivism of earthworks, the art world as anthropological site, and so on). But what is particular about the present turn? First, anthropology is prized as the science of *alterity*; in this regard it is second only to psychoanalysis as a lingua franca in artistic practice and critical discourse alike.<sup>12</sup> Second, it is the discipline that takes *culture* as its object, and it is this expanded field of reference that post-modernist art and criticism have long sought to make their own. Third, ethnography is considered *contextual*, the rote demand for which contemporary artists share with many other practitioners today, some of whom aspire to fieldwork in the everyday. Fourth, anthropology is thought to arbitrate the *interdisciplinary*, another rote value in contemporary art and theory.<sup>13</sup> Finally, fifth, it is the *self-critique* of anthropology that renders it so attractive, for this critical ethnography invites a reflexivity at the center even as it preserves a romanticism of the margins. For all these reasons rogue investigations of anthropology, like queer critiques of psychoanalysis, possess vanguard status today: it is along these lines that the critical edge is felt to cut most incisively.

This turn to the ethnographic, it is important to see, is not only an external seduction; it is also driven by forces immanent to advanced art, at least in Anglo-American metropolises, forces I can only sketch here. Pluralists notwithstanding, this art has a trajectory over the last thirty-five years, which consists of a sequence of investigations: from the objective constituents of the art work first to its spatial conditions of perception, then to the corporeal bases of this perception—shifts remarked in minimalist work in the early 1960s through conceptual art, performance, body art, and site-specific work in the early '70s. Along the way the institution of art could no longer be described simply in terms of physical space (studio, gallery, museum, and so on): it was also a discursive network of other practices and institutions, other subjectivities and communities. Nor could the observer of art be delimited only phenomenologically: he or she was also a social subject defined in various languages and marked by multiple differences (sexual, ethnic,



and so on). Of course these recognitions were not strictly internal to art. Also crucial were different social movements (feminism above all) as well as diverse theoretical developments (the convergence of feminism, psychoanalysis, and film; the recovery of Gramsci; the application of Althusser; the influence of Foucault; and so on). The important point is that art thus passed into the expanded field of culture that anthropology is thought to survey.

And what are the results? One is that the ethnographic mapping of a given institution or a related community is a primary form that site-specific art now assumes. This is all to the good, but it is important to remember that these pseudoethnographic critiques are very often commissioned, indeed franchised. Just as appropriation art became an aesthetic genre, new site-specific work threatens to become a museum category, one in which the institution *imports* critique for purposes of inoculation (against an immanent critique, one undertaken by the institution, within the institution). This is an irony *inside* the institution; other ironies arise as site-specific work is sponsored *outside* the institution, often in collaboration with local groups. Here, values like authenticity, originality, and singularity, banished under critical taboo from postmodernist art, return as properties of the site, neighborhood, or community engaged by the artist. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with this displacement, but here too it is important to remember that the sponsor may regard these "properties" as just that—as sited values to develop.<sup>14</sup> Of course the institution may also exploit such site-specific work in order to expand its operations for reasons noted above (social outreach, public relations, economic development, and art tourism).<sup>15</sup> In this case, the institution may displace the work that it otherwise advances: the show becomes the spectacle where cultural capital collects.

I am not entirely cynical about these developments. Some artists have used these opportunities to collaborate with communities innovatively: for instance, to recover suppressed histories that are sited in particular ways, that are accessed by some more effectively than others. But I am skeptical about the effects of the pseudoethnographic role set up for the artist or assumed by him or her. For this setup can promote a presumption of ethnographic authority as much as a questioning of it, an evasion of institutional critique as often as an elaboration of it.

Consider this scenario, a caricature, I admit. An artist is contacted by a curator about a site-specific work. He or she is flown into town in order to engage the community targeted for collaboration by the institution. However, there is little time or money for much interaction with the community (which tends to be constructed as readymade for representation). Nevertheless, a project is designed, and an installation in the museum and/or a work in the community follows. Few of the principles of the ethnographic participant-observer are observed, let alone critiqued. And despite the best intentions of the artist, only limited engagement of the sited other is effected. Almost naturally the focus wanders from collaborative investigation to "ethnographic self-fashioning," in which the artist is not decentered so much as the other is fashioned in artistic guise.<sup>16</sup>

Again, this projection is at work in other practices that often assume, covertly or

otherwise, an ethnographic model. The other is admired as one who plays with representation, subverts gender, and so on. In all these ways the artist, critic, or historian projects his or her practice onto the field of the other, where it is read not only as authentically indigenous but as innovatively political! Of course, this is an exaggeration, and the application of these methods has illuminated much. But it has also obliterated much in the field of the other, and in its very name. This is the opposite of a critique of ethnographic authority, indeed the opposite of ethnographic method, at least as I understand them. And this "impossible place" has become a common occupation of artists, critics, and historians alike.

#### NOTES

1. The fact that Stalin had condemned this culture by 1934 is only one of the ironies that twist any reading of "The Author as Producer" (Benjamin [1934] 1978) today (to say nothing of "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" [Benjamin 1968]). My title may also evoke "The Artist as Anthropologist" by Joseph Kosuth (1975), but our concerns are quite different.

2. This danger may deepen rather than diminish for the artist perceived to be other, for he or she may be asked to assume the role of native informant as well. Incidentally, the charge of "ideological patronage" should not be conflated with "the indignity of speaking for others." Pronounced by Gilles Deleuze in a 1972 conversation with Michel Foucault, this taboo circulated widely in American criticism of the left in the 1980s, where it produced a censorious silent guilt as much as it did an empowered alternative speech. See Foucault (1977:209).

3. This position is advanced in an early text by the figure who later epitomized the contrary position. In the conclusion of *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes writes:

There is therefore one language which is not mythical, it is the language of man as a producer: wherever man speaks in order to transform reality and no longer to preserve it as an image, wherever he links his language to the making of things, metalanguage is referred to a language-object, and myth is impossible. This is why revolutionary language proper cannot be mythical. ([1957] 1972:146)

4. This fantasy also operated in the productivist model to the extent that the proletariat was often seen as "primitive" in this sense too.

5. For a related discussion of these problems, see Foster (1993).

6. It is in this sense that critics like Homi Bhabha have developed such notions as "third spaces" and deferred times.

7. James Clifford develops the notion of "ethnographic self-fashioning" in *The Predicament of Culture* (1988), in part from Stephen Greenblatt (1980). This source points to a commonality between the critique of ethnography in new anthropology and the critique of history in new historicism (on which more below).

8. Clifford also develops this notion in *The Predicament of Culture*: "Is not every ethnographer something of a surrealist, a reinventor and reshuffler of realities?" (1988:147). Some have questioned how reciprocal art and anthropology were in

the surrealist milieu. See, for example, Jean Jamin (1986) and Denis Hollier (1992).

9. Is there not, in other words, a poststructuralist projection akin to the structuralist projection critiqued long ago by Pierre Bourdieu in *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique* (1972)?

10. Incidentally, this artist-envy is not unique to new anthropology. It was at work, for example, in the rhetorical analysis of historical discourse initiated in the 1960s. "There have been no significant attempts," Hayden White wrote in "The Burden of History" (1966), "at surrealistic, expressionistic, or existentialist historiography in this century (except by novelists and poets themselves), for all of the vaunted 'artistry' of the historians of modern times" (White 1978:43).

11. Obviously there are other dimensions of these crossings-over, such as the curricular wars of the last decade. First some anthropologists adapted textual methods from literary criticism. Now some literary critics respond with pseudoethnographies of literary cultures. In the process some historians feel squeezed on both sides. This is not a petty skirmish at a time when university administrators study enrollments closely—and when some advocate a return to the old disciplines, while others seek to recoup interdisciplinary ventures as cost-effective moves.

12. In a sense, the *critique* of these two human sciences is as fundamental to postmodern discourse as the *elaboration* of them was to modern discourse.

13. Louis Althusser (1990:97) writes of interdisciplinarity as "the *common theoretical ideology* that silently inhabits the 'consciousness' of all these specialists . . . oscillating between a vague spiritualism and a technocratic positivism."

14. I am indebted in these remarks to my fellow participants in "Roundtable on Site-Specificity," *Documents* 4 (1994): Renee Green, Mitchell Kane, Miwon Kwon, John Lindell, and Helen Molesworth. There Kwon suggests that such neighborhood *place* is posed against urban *space* as difference against sameness. She also suggests that artists are associated with places in a way that connects identity politics and site-specific practices—the authenticity of the one being invoked to bolster the authenticity of the other.

15. Some recent examples of each: social outreach in "Culture in Action," a public art program of Sculpture Chicago in which selected artists collaborated with community groups; economic development in "42nd Street Art Project," a show that could not but improve the image of Times Square for its future redevelopment; and recent projects in several European cities (e.g., Antwerp) in which site-specific works were deployed in part for touristic interest and political promotion.

16. Consider, as an example, one project in "Project Unité," a show of site-specific works by some forty artists or artist groups within the Le Corbusier Unité d'Habitation in Firminy, France, in summer 1993. In this project, the neo-conceptual duo Glegg and Guttman asked the Unité inhabitants to contribute favorite cassettes toward the production of a discothèque. The tapes were then edited, compiled, and displayed according to apartment and floor. The sociological condensation in this facilitated self-representation is extraordinary.

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## ***What do Artists Know?***

***Beyond a wide range of material practices, histories and techniques, concepts and theoretical frameworks, artists are trained to use a unique set of skills, process, and methodologies. These include:***

- **Synthesizing diverse facts, goals, and references – making connections and speaking many “languages”. Artists are very “lateral” in their research and operations and have great intellectual and operational agility.**
- **Production of new knowledge as evidenced by the 100+ year history of innovation and originality as a *top criterion***
- **Creative, in-process problem solving and ongoing processes, not all up-front creativity: responsivity.**
- **Artists compose *and* perform, initiate *and* carry-thru, design *and* execute. This creates a relatively tight “feedback loop” in their process.**
- **Pro-active not re-active practice: artists are trained to initiate, re-direct the brief, and consider their intentionality.**
- **Acute cognizance of individual responsibility for the meanings, ramifications and consequences of their work. (The down side of this is that artists are not always team-oriented or willing to compromise due to the high premium placed on individual responsibility and sole authorship.)**
- **Understanding of the language of cultural values and how they are embodied and represented – re-valuation and re-contextualization.**
- **Participation and maneuvering in non-compensation (social) economies, idea economies, and other intangible values (capital).**
- **Proficiency in evaluation and analysis along multiple-criteria -- qualitative lines, qualitative assessment. Many are skilled in pattern and system recognition, especially with asymmetrical data.**
- **Making explicit the implicit -- making visible the invisible.**
- **Artists do not think outside the box-- *there is no box.***



Marc Fischer

Recently I received an email from a student in Ireland. He had discovered an interview in which I discussed an old project that sounded extremely similar to something he had been working on for a year and was about to exhibit. This discovery sent him into a “mini-crisis” and he wrote to see if I might share my thoughts on the situation.

I sent this student printed materials from my work, as I strongly feel that artists who are doing similar work should make an effort to know each other, share knowledge and perhaps even work together. There is no reason why two variations of the same idea can't happily co-exist. So much of the way that the art world is structured favors competition. Grants are competitive. Art schools stage student competitions. Students compete for funding. Hundreds compete for a single art school teaching position. Professors compete with other professors. Artists compete with artists – stealing ideas instead of sharing them, or using copyright laws to guard against thoughtful re-use. Artists compete for shows in a limited number of exhibition spaces instead of finding their own ways to exhibit outside of these competitive venues. Artists conceal opportunities from their friends as a way of getting an edge up on the capital-driven competition. Gallerists compete with other gallerists and curators compete with curators. Artists who sell their work compete for the attention of a limited number of collectors. Collectors compete with other collectors to acquire the work of artists.

This is a treadmill made from decomposing shit that is so devoid of nutrients that even its compost won't allow anything fresh to grow. We need something better to run on. Some artists are bypassing competitive approaches in their practice, suggesting possibilities for a different cultural climate. Since the 1960's, numerous artists have made works that take the form of strategies, proposals, gestures and instructions. While these works are not usually presented as invitations for others to reinterpret, making variations in a similar spirit still has the potential to yield rewarding results. Ideas are not necessarily used up just because they have entered the art historical canon (and many good projects



Céline Duval and Hans-Peter Feldmann, from the *cahier d'images* publication series. (undated)

remain unfamiliar to most audiences). This older soil remains fertile for new plantings.

More art projects could be created with the built-in understanding that they can be freely re-made or given a new twist by others in the future – like classical music compositions that still get played two hundred years after the composer died. Take the example of the late composer John Cage's three movement composition “4' 33'''”. It was first performed by David Tudor in 1952. This work has since been given many reinterpretations over the years by artists as diverse as Frank Zappa, The BBC Symphony Orchestra and The Melvins. The work finds new meaning with different performers, contexts, times and places. Redundancies, repetitions and overlaps are often neglected because they complicate the bigger picture and show art to be the much larger social mess that it really is. We don't have to run away from repetitions.

Since 2001, the Philadelphia-based collaborative group Basekamp has been doing lectures, discussions, events and project planning around the theme of redundancy in the visual arts. Late last year they co-organized an event series titled “Making Room for Redundancy” with Lars Fischer (no relation to the author). They have been



## Blunt Art Text (B.A.T.) #2, April 2006

Marc Fischer

dreaming up and building models for terminals where the viewer could enter an idea and see all of the overlapping permutations of how it has been explored before. Basekamp recently gave a lecture titled simply "I am a Collaborative Artist" at the Infest: Artist-Run Culture conference in Vancouver. For artists who are open to working with others, such conferences can be a good place to strengthen or develop new friendships, fueling new collaborations or broader inclusion in pre-existing projects.

Another mutually-supportive practice: the French artist Céline Duval enjoys a prolific collaboration with the German artist Hans-Peter Feldmann, who is about thirty years her senior. This began when Céline contacted him wanting to help with raw material for his work and now they publish books together. They collaborate on equal footing despite large differences in age, experience and success in the art world. The viewer must untangle the mingling voices in these co-authored works, ask questions, or just accept the hybrid and enjoy the resulting complexity.

Making participatory artworks can open up your practice and build a loose community in the process. Since 1997, Chicago-based artist Melinda Fries has been running the website [ausgang.com](http://ausgang.com). Ausgang is essentially an artwork in web form that contains the work of various contributors (many of whom are not artists). Melinda creates categories that are of personal interest (examples: "Living Situations", "Things In The Road", "Bus Stories"). Contributors then flesh out these themes by submitting stories, images, or projects that are suitable for the web. The site is updated seasonally. Melinda's project is enriched and expanded by others and the contributors get a platform for their work that will be seen by many viewers. The people who participate often send out emails promoting the site and their contributions that are included. The site is not a flimsy catch-all for anything and everything. Melinda functions as an editor, but she allows a very broad range of ways for one to participate. In the interest of disclosure, I contribute to [ausgang.com](http://ausgang.com) regularly, but perhaps you should too?

While there is a joy in finding people with shared affinities, establishing communication and friendships with artists who have shared interests and ideas is not a retreat from the challenge of making tough critical art. Who better to kick your ass a little than your collaborators? The disposable, vague, or one-liner qualities in so much recent art reveals a lack of sufficient peer-to-peer ass-kicking. Collaborative projects by their nature insist on constant feedback and criticism

Arguing against competition is not necessarily a vote in favor of an idealized world of shiny happy people holding hands - some of the most productive collaborations can have a lot

of tension and disagreement. The fascinating documentary "Some Kind of Monster" shows Metallica band members and co-founders James Hetfield and Lars Ulrich in exchanges that are sometimes so lacking in civility that at one point Ulrich is reduced to getting in Hetfield's face and screaming: "FUUUUCCCCKKKK!!!" In an additional scene on the DVD, Ulrich admits: "I'm afraid of changing what has worked. Twenty years of hatred sold one hundred million records." One of the great tempestuous working relationships in film history was that of director Werner Herzog and actor Klaus Kinski. In Herzog's documentary "My Best Fiend", Kinski's behavior on the set during one film was so angering that the director seriously contemplated murdering him. When Klaus Kinski wrote his autobiography, he reportedly gave Herzog advance notice that he was going to trash the director in the book because he felt that attacking his friend would lead to increased sales. The two even collaborated in their mutual infuriation with each other but clearly, and more importantly, they pushed each other to perform better and make more ambitious and passionate films.

How can we build a stronger network among people with shared interests and values? In a recent talk that we hosted at Mess Hall in Chicago, curator Nato Thompson brought up the impressive and widespread networks that the hardcore punk music scene has crafted, where a band has a place to play and crash in nearly every major town. This is something he longs to see happen for experimental art and cultural practices in every part of the U.S. - particularly those areas that are culturally under-served. An audience member noted, however, that part of what enabled the hardcore scene to do this so effectively is that there is a shared language that is easier to understand. People seem able to grasp the terms and aesthetics more easily. Music can circulate quickly and simply. It often has a bracing, visceral and emotional power; heady forms of art and critical theory are generally a little less catchy. You could listen to eight hardcore songs in the time it takes to read this essay.

Some online communities show promise. For the past couple years I've been frequenting a particularly hyperactive online music discussion group for obscure loud rock. The number of times the distant feel of the Internet breaks out into the real world on some of these sites is uncountable. When people attend concerts together often the next morning one person will write about it and another will post the photos they took and it all gets shared with thousands who couldn't be there. I've been offered places to stay in numerous cities based purely on my taste in music, received un-requested packages of CDs and have been loaned books through the mail. A band had their van and equipment stolen, so one forum member named Foetuscide quickly set up a Paypal account that people could donate to. When Foetuscide



Werner Herzog, still from *My Best Fiend*, 1999

was left homeless by Hurricane Katrina, people started sending her money at the Paypal account she originally created for the band. There has been endless support for a board member named EvilFanny who had to undergo brain surgery. A discussion thread about the merits of old Slayer and Celtic Frost records can happily share space with a thread where EvilFanny asks other board members if they know anything about going on Long Term Disability.

While these big online communities are messy and filled with more than their share of knuckle-draggers, sexists, homophobes and right wing morons, the generosity of participants can be breathtaking. The challenge for artists who want to build supportive networks like this is to find communication strategies that can help them connect to each other with the passion that music fans across the globe excel at. We need to make our emails to strangers whose art and ideas we care about resonate with that obsessive nerdy excitement that music geeks generate in their sleep. Art blogs are popping up all over Chicago but I have yet to see any become a truly action packed, socially dynamic online community where artists, curators, viewers, writers and every other kind of participant mixes it up and generates ideas that take real hold in the world. One of the oldest Chicago-centric discussion forums, Othergroup.net, sometimes goes for a month without a single post.

In order for critical and experimental art networks to become stronger, and for audiences to grow, artists need to expand the range of ways we operate. When artists work with others, they complicate their practice and these collaborations often enrich everything they do. They organize shows and events that include other artists, write about other people's work and assist people with their creative endeavors. There is no reason why more artists – including those who have comparatively solitary studio practices, can't cultivate those skills in order to work more effectively with other people.

In the process, they learn to write, organize, publish, curate, educate and do anything else necessary to bolster support and dialogue for the ideas they value. More than anything, they learn to take the initiative and build something larger than themselves. In the 1970's, 80's and early 90's, artists could do this work on the government's dime at NEA-funded not-for-profit Alternative spaces. Now that the money is gone and most of those spaces are no longer in existence, new methodologies need to be worked out. We need each other more than ever.

Working with others not only opens the individual artist to the resources, skills, criticisms, and ideas of their collaborator(s), but also frequently to those of the collaborator's peer group or network. This inevitably creates a larger audience for the finished work and sows the seeds for future collaborations with an even greater variety of people. Creating opportunities for others always results in more personal opportunities. When it becomes clear that you operate from a place of generosity, people become more generous with you -- sometimes offering things like free use of equipment, huge discounts on printing and even free use of a storefront in Rogers Park (the location and arrangement that has kept Mess Hall going for over two years now). This approach may not result in a vacation home in Malibu or the opportunity to snort lines of coke off of prostitutes' asses with Jörg Immendorf, but is that really the reason you became an artist in the first place?

Working toward a global network where one creates opportunities and, in turn, can respond to limitless opportunities without the pressure to compete, allows for a more generous, diverse and open art practice. In these ways, one can break the isolation of being alone, defending a head-full of secret studio realizations that some kid in Ireland has probably already figured out anyway.

*Note: In the spirit of this essay, a number of collaborators provided feedback. Thanks to: Brett Bloom, Melinda Fries, Terence Hannum, Brennan McGaffey, Scott Rigby and Dan S. Wang.*

# JOIN THE **COMMUNITY**



# 4

## Observations on Collective Cultural Action

After reviewing the current status of the U.S. cultural economy, one would have to conclude that market demands discourage collective activity to such a degree that such a strategy is unfeasible. To an extent, this perception has merit. Financial support certainly favors individuals. In art institutions (museums, galleries, art schools, alternative spaces, etc.), the Habermas thesis, that Modernity never died, finds its practical application. In spite of all the critical fulminations about the death of originality, the artist, and the rest of the entities named on the tombstones in the Modernist cemetery, these notions persist, protected by an entrenched cultural bureaucracy geared to resist rapid change. If anything, a backlash has occurred that has intensified certain Modernist notions. Of prime importance in this essay is the beloved notion of the individual



artist. The individual's signature is still the prime collectible, and access to the body associated with the signature is a commodity that is desired more than ever—so much so that the obsession with the artist's body has made its way into “progressive” and alternative art networks. Even “community art” has its stars, its signatures, and its bodies. This final category may be the most important. Even a community art star must do a project that includes mingling with the “community” and with the project's sponsor(s). Mingling bodies is as important in the progressive scene as it is in the gallery scene. This demand for bodily commingling is derived from the most traditional notions of the artist hero, as it signifies an opportunity to mix with history and interact with genius.

The totalizing belief that social and aesthetic value are encoded in the being of gifted individuals (rather than emerging from a process of becoming shared by group members) is cultivated early in cultural education. If one wants to become an “artist,” there is a bounty of educational opportunities—everything from matchbook correspondence schools to elite art academies. Yet in spite of this broad spectrum of possibilities, there is no place where one can prepare for a collective practice. At best, there are the rare examples where teams (usually partnerships of two) can apply as one for admission into institutions of higher learning. But once in the school, from administration to curriculum, students are forced to accept the ideological imperative that artistic practice is an individual practice. The numerous mechanisms to ensure that this occurs are too many to list here, so only a few illustrative examples will be offered. Consider the spatial model of the art school. Classrooms are de-

signed to accommodate aggregates of specialists. Studios are designed to accommodate a single artist, or like the classrooms, aggregates of students working individually. Rarely can a classroom be found that has a space designed for face-to-face group interaction. Nor are spaces provided where artists of various media can come together to work on project ideas. Then there is the presentation of faculty (primary role models) as individual practitioners. The institution rewards individual effort at the faculty level in a way similar to how students are rewarded for individual efforts through grades. Woe be to the faculty member who goes to the tenure review board with only collective efforts to show for he/rself. Obviously, these reward systems have their effect on the cultural socialization process.

On the public front, the situation is no better. If artists want grants for reasons other than being a nonprofit presenter/producer, they better be working as individuals. Generally speaking, collective practice has no place in the grant system. Collectives reside in that liminal zone—they are neither an individual, nor an institution, and there are no other categories. Seemingly there is no place to turn. Collectives are not wanted in the public sphere, in the education system, nor in the cultural market (in the limited sense of the term), so why would CAE be so much in favor of collective cultural action?

Part of the answer once again has to do with market demands. Market imperatives are double-edged swords. There are just as many demands that contradict and are incommensurate with the ones just mentioned. Three examples immediately spring to mind. First, the market wants individuals with lots

of skills for maximum exploitation—it's a veritable return to the "renaissance man." An artist must be able to produce in a given medium, write well enough for publication, be verbally articulate, have a reasonable amount of knowledge of numerous disciplines (including art history, aesthetics, critical theory, sociology, psychology, world literature, media theory, and history, and given the latest trends, now various sciences), be a capable public speaker, a career administrator, and possess the proper diplomatic skills to navigate through a variety of cultural subpopulations. Certainly some rare individuals do have all of these skills, but the individual members of CAE are not examples of this category. Consequently, we can only meet this standard by working collectively.

Second is the need for opportunity. Given the overwhelming number of artists trained in academies, colleges, and universities over the past thirty years, adding to what is already an excessive population of cultural producers (given the few platforms for distribution), the opportunity for a public voice has rapidly decreased. By specializing in a particular medium, one cuts the opportunities even further. The greater one's breadth of production skills, the more opportunity there is. Opportunity is also expanded by breadth of knowledge. The more one knows, the more issues one can address. In a time when content has resurfaced as an object of artistic value, a broad interdisciplinary knowledge base is a must. And finally, opportunity can be expanded through the ability to address a wide variety of cultural spaces. The more cultural spaces that a person is comfortable working in, the more opportunity s/he has. If designed with these strategies in mind, collectives can configure themselves to ad-

dress any issue or space, and they can use all types of media. The result is a practice that defies specialization (and hence pigeonholing). CAE, for example, can be doing a web project one week, a stage performance at a festival the next, a guerrilla action the next, a museum installation after that, followed by a book or journal project. Due to collective strength, CAE is prepared for any cultural opportunity.

Finally, the velocity of cultural economy is a factor. The market can consume a product faster than ever before. Just in terms of quantity, collective action offers a tremendous advantage. By working in a group, CAE members are able to resist the Warhol syndrome of factory production with underpaid laborers. Through collective action, product and process integrity can be maintained, while at the same time keeping abreast of market demand.

These considerations may sound cynical, and to a degree they are, but they appear to CAE as a reality which must be negotiated if one is to survive as a cultural producer. On the other hand, there is something significant about collective action that is rewarding beyond what can be understood through the utilitarian filters of economic survival.

### **Size Matters: Cellular Collective Construction**

One problem that seems to plague collective organization is the catastrophe of the group reaching critical mass. When this point is reached, the group violently explodes, and little or nothing is left of the organization. The reasons for hitting this social wall vary depending on the function and in-



tention of the group. CAE's experience has been that larger artists'/activists' groups tend to hit this wall once membership rises into the hundreds. At that point, a number of conflicts and contradictions emerge that cause friction in the group. For one thing, tasks become diversified. Not everyone can participate fully in each task, so committees are formed to focus on specific tasks. The group thus moves from a direct process to a representational process. This step toward bureaucracy conjures feelings of separation and mistrust that can be deadly to group action, and that are symptomatic of the failure of overly rationalized democracy. To complicate matters further, different individuals enter the group with differing levels of access to resources. Those with the greatest resources tend to have a larger say in group activities. Consequently, minorities form that feel underrepresented and powerless to compete with majoritarian views and methods. (Too often, these minorities reflect the same minoritarian structure found in culture as a whole). Under such conditions, group splintering is bound to occur, if not group annihilation. Oddly enough, the worst-case scenario is not group annihilation, but the formation of a Machiavellian power base that tightens the bureaucratic rigor in order to purge the group of malcontents, and to stifle difference.

Such problems can also occur at a smaller group level (between fifteen and fifty members). While these smaller groups have an easier time avoiding the alienation that comes from a complex division of labor and impersonal representation, there still can be problems, such as the perception that not everyone has an equal voice in group decisions, or that an individual is becoming the signature voice

of the group. Another standard problem is that the level of intimacy necessary to sustain passionately driven group activity rarely emerges in a mid-size group. The probability is high that someone, for emotional or idiosyncratic reasons, is not going to be able to work with someone else on a long-term basis. These divisions cannot be organized or rationalized away. Much as the large democratic collective (such as WAC) is good for short-term, limited-issue political and cultural action, the mid-size group seems to function best for short-term, specific-issue cultural or political projects.

For sustained cultural or political practice free of bureaucracy or other types of separating factors, CAE recommends a cellular structure. Thus far the artists' cell that typifies contemporary collective activity has formed in a manner similar to band society. Solidarity is based on similarity in terms of skills and political/aesthetic perceptions. Most of the now classic cellular collectives of the 70s and 80s, such as Ant Farm, General Idea, Group Material, Testing the Limits (before it splintered), and Gran Fury used such a method with admirable results. Certainly these collectives' models for group activity are being emulated by a new generation. However, CAE has made one adjustment in its collective structure. While size and similarity through political/aesthetic perspective has replicated itself in the group, members do not share a similarity based on skill. Each member's set of skills is unique to the cell. Consequently, in terms of production, solidarity is not based on similarity, but on difference. The parts are interrelated and interdependent. Technical expertise is given no chance to collide and conflict, and hence social friction is greatly reduced. In addition, such structure allows

CAE to use whatever media it chooses, because the group has developed a broad skill base. Having a broad skill base and interdisciplinary knowledge also allows the group to work in any kind of space.

Solidarity through difference also affects the structure of power in the group. Formerly, collective structure tended to be based on the idea that all members were equals at all times. Groups had a tremendous fear of hierarchy, because it was considered a categorical evil that led to domination. This notion was coupled with a belief in extreme democracy as the best method of avoiding hierarchy. While CAE does not follow the democratic model, the collective does recognize its merits; however, CAE follows Foucault's principle that hierarchical power can be productive (it does not necessarily lead to domination), and hence uses a floating hierarchy to produce projects. After consensus is reached on how a project should be produced, the member with the greatest expertise in the area has authority over the final product. While all members have a voice in the production process, the project leader makes the final decisions. This keeps endless discussion over who has the better idea or design to a minimum, and hence the group can produce at a faster rate. Projects tend to vary dramatically, so the authority floats among the membership. At the same time, CAE would not recommend this process for any social constellation other than the cell (three to eight people). Members must be able to interact in a direct face-to-face manner, so everyone is sure that they have been heard as a person (and not as an anonymous or marginalized voice). Second, the members must trust one another; that is, sustained collective action requires social intimacy and a belief that the other mem-

bers have each individual member's interests at heart. A recognition and understanding of the nonrational components of collective action is crucial—without it, the practice cannot sustain itself.

The collective also has to consider what is pleasurable for its members. Not all people work at the same rate. The idea that everyone should do an equal amount of work is to measure a member's value by quantity instead of quality. As long as the process is pleasurable and satisfying for everyone, in CAE's opinion, each member should work at the rate at which they are comfortable. Rigid equality in this case can be a perverse and destructive type of Fordism that should be avoided. To reinforce the pleasure of the group, convivial relationships beyond the production process are necessary. The primary reason for this need is because the members will intensify bonds of trust and intimacy that will later be positively reflected in the production process. To be sure, intimacy produces its own peculiar friction, but the group has a better chance of surviving the arguments and conflicts that are bound to arise, as long as in the final analysis each member trusts and can depend on fellow members. Collective action requires total commitment to other members, and this is a frightening thought for many individuals. Certainly, collective practice is not for everyone.

### **Coalitions, Not Communities**

While cellular collective structure is very useful in solving problems of production, long-term personal cooperation, and security (for those involved in underground activities), like all social constellations, it has its limits. It does not solve many of the prob-



lems associated with distribution, nor can it fulfill the functions of localized cultural and political organizations. Consequently, there has always been a drive toward finding a social principle that would allow like-minded people or cells to organize into larger groups. Currently, the dominant principle is “community.” CAE sees this development as very unfortunate. The idea of community is without doubt the liberal equivalent of the conservative notion of “family values”—neither exists in contemporary culture, and both are grounded in political fantasy. For example, the “gay community” is a term often used in the media and in various organizations. This term refers to all people who are gay within a given territory. Even in a localized context, gay men and women populate all social strata, from the underclass to the elite, so it is very hard to believe that this aggregate functions as a community within such a complex society. To complicate matters further, social variables such as race, ethnicity, gender, education, profession, and other points of difference are not likely to be lesser points of identification than the characteristic of being gay. A single shared social characteristic can in no way constitute a community in any sociological sense. Talking about a gay community is as silly as talking about a “straight community.” The word community is only meaningful in this case as a euphemism for “minority.” The closest social constellation to a community that does exist is friendship networks, but those too fall short of being communities in any sociological sense.

CAE is unsure who really wants community in the first place, as it contradicts the politics of

difference. Solidarity based on similarity through shared ethnicity, and interconnected familial networks supported by a shared sense of place and history, work against the possibility of power through diversity by maintaining closed social systems. This is not to say that there are no longer relatively closed social subsystems within society. Indeed there are, but they differ from community in that they are products of rationalized social construction and completely lack social solidarity. In order to bring people together from different subsystems who share a similar concern, hybrid groups have to be intentionally formed. These groups are made up of people who are focusing their attention on one or two characteristics that they share in common, and who put potentially conflicting differences aside. This kind of alliance, created for purposes of large-scale cultural production and/or for the visible consolidation of economic and political power, is known as a coalition.

CAE has supported a number of coalitions in the past, including various ACT UP chapters and PONY (Prostitutes of New York), and has organized temporary localized ones as well. One of the problems CAE had with such alliances was in negotiating service to the coalition while maintaining its collective practice. Coalitions are often black holes that consume as much energy as a person is willing to put into them; hence membership burnout is quite common. CAE was no exception. After a few years of this variety of activism, members were ready to retreat back into less visible cellular practice. CAE began looking for a model of coalition different from the single-issue model.

One potential answer has come by way of CAE's affiliation with Nettime.\* Nettime is a loosely knit coalition of activists, artists, theorists, techies, collectives, and organizations from all over Europe and North America that have come together for reasons of *generalized* support for radical cultural and political causes. It has approximately seven hundred members, and has existed in various forms for about six years. Nettime functions as an information, distribution, and recruitment resource for its members. The core of its existence is virtual: Member contact is maintained through an on-line list, various newsgroups, and an archive. In addition, the coalition holds occasional conferences (the first two, Metaforum I and II, were held in Budapest in 1995 and 1996; Beauty and the East was held in Ljubljana in 1997), produces and contributes to the production of cultural projects (such as Hybrid Workspace at Documenta X), acts as a resource for various political actions, and produces readers and books from its archive (the most recent being *README: ASCII Culture and the Revenge of Knowledge*).

From CAE's perspective, one of the elements that makes Nettime a more pleasurable experience is that unlike most coalitions, it is anarchistic rather than democratic. Nettime has no voting procedures, committee work, coalition officers, nor any of the markers of governance through representation. Hierarchy emerges in accordance with who is willing to do the work. Those who are willing to run the list have the most say over its construction. At

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\*The description of the Nettime coalition given in this essay is solely from CAE's perspective. It was not collectively written nor approved by the Nettime membership.

the same time, the general policy for coalition maintenance is “tools not rules.” Those building the virtual architecture govern by providing space for discussions that are not of general interest to the entire list. They also direct the flow of information traffic. Whatever members want to do—from flame wars to long and detailed discussions—there is a place to do it. For events in real space, the primary rule of “those who do the work have the biggest say” still applies. Indeed, there is considerable room for exploitation in such a system, yet this does not occur with much frequency because members have sufficient trust in and allegiance to other members; the coalition as a whole won’t tolerate system abuse (such as spamming, or self-aggrandizing use of the list); and there is a self-destruct fail-safe—members would jump ship at the first sign of ownership and/or permanent hierarchy.

Perhaps the real indicator of the congeniality shared by Nettime members is its cultural economy. Nettime functions as an information gift economy. Articles and information are distributed free of charge to members by those who have accumulated large information assets. Nettimers often see significant works on the intersections of art, politics, and technology long before these works appear in the publications based on money economy. For real space projects, this same sense of voluntarism pervades all activities. What is different here from other cultural economies is that gift economy is only demanding on those who have too much. No one is expected to volunteer until they suffer or burn out. The volunteers emerge from among those who have excessive time, labor power, funding, space, or some combination thereof, and need to burn it off to return to equilibrium. Consequently, activity



waxes and wanes depending on the situations and motivations of the members.

CAE does not want to romanticize this form of social organization too much. Problems certainly occur—quarrels and conflicts break out, enraged members quit the list, and events do not always go as expected. However, Nettime is still the most congenial large-scale collective environment in which CAE has ever worked. The reason is that this loose coalition began with the romantic principle of accepting nonrational characteristics. It believed that a large collective could exist based on principles of trust, altruism, and pleasure, rather than based on the Hobbesian assumption (so typical of democratic coalitions) of the war of all against all, which in turn leads to a nearly pathological over-valuation of the organizational principles of accountability and categorical equality. Nettime functions using just one fail-safe system—self-destruction—and it thereby skips all the alienating bureaucracy necessary for managing endless accountability procedures. If Nettime self-destructs, all members will walk away whole, and will look for new opportunities for collective action. An alliance with the temporary is one of Nettime's greatest strengths.

### **Final Thought**

Although they are in a secondary position in terms of cultural organizational possibilities, cells and coalitions still present a viable alternative to individual cultural practices. Collective action solves some of the problems of navigating market-driven cultural economy by allowing the individual to escape the skewed power relationships between the individual

and the institution. More significantly, however, collective action also helps alleviate the intensity of alienation born of an overly rationalized and instrumentalized culture by re-creating some of the positive points of friendship networks within a productive environment. For this reason, CAE believes that artists' research into alternative forms of social organization is just as important as the traditional research into materials, processes, and products.

## **The Artist as Producer in Times of Crisis**

Okwui Enwezor

On April 27, 1934 Walter Benjamin delivered a lecture at the Institute for the Study of Fascism in Paris. In the lecture, "The Author as Producer", Benjamin addressed an important question that, since, has not ceased to pose itself, namely to what degree does political awareness in a work of art become a tool for the deracination of the autonomy of the work and that of the author?

Benjamin's second point was to locate what a radical critical spirit in art could be in a time of such momentous, yet undecided direction in the political consciousness of Europe: between the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and the productivist model of artistic practice it instantiated and the storms of repression unleashed by fascism and Nazism in Western Europe. In a sense, Benjamin's lecture addressed the question of the artist's or writer's commitment under certain social conditions. This would lead him to ask "What is the attitude of a work to the relations of production of its time?" Georg Lukács posed a similar question in his 1932 essay "Tendency or Partisanship?".

The conditions of production of the time was the struggle between capitalism and socialism as the driving force behind modern subjectivity. It is my intention in this lecture to extend the questions raised by these two thinkers and apply them to the critical context of contemporary culture today. Ever more so, Benjamin and Lukács are not only relevant, but crucial to understanding a visible turn that has become increasingly evident in the field of culture at large, that is the extent to which a certain critical activism in contemporary art has become a way to pose the questions raised seventy years ago anew through collective practices. My focus is not on activism per se, but on work driven by the spirit of activism that bear direct relationship to Benjamin's and Lukács's essays. To that end, recent confrontations within the field of contemporary art have precipitated an awareness that there have emerged in increasing numbers, within the last decade, new critical, artistic formations that foreground and privilege the mode of collective and collaborative production. Is this return an acknowledgment of the repressed memory of a social unconscious? Is the collectivization of artistic production not a critique of the poverty of the language of contemporary art in the face of large scale commodifications of culture which have merged the identity of the artist with the corporate logo of global capitalism?

These questions shadow the return of collectivity in contemporary artistic practice and in so insistent a manner, across a broad geographic area that to ignore the consequences is to miss the vital power of dissonance that is part of its appeal to the contemporary thinkers and artists who propose collectivity as a course artistic work. Of course, we need not to be reminded that there is nothing novel about collectivity in art as such. It's been a crucial strategy of the avant-garde throughout the 20th century. Therefore, a proper understanding of collectivity today would have to be traced through its affinities with past examples. This story belongs to the history of modernism proper. The position of the artist working within collective and collaborative processes subtend earlier manifestations of this type of activity throughout the 20th century.

Collectivity performs an operation of irruption and transformation on traditional mechanisms and activities of artistic production which locates the sole figure of the individual artist at the center of authorship. Under the historical conditions of modernist reification, collective or collaborative practices (that is the making of an artwork by multiple authors across porous disciplinary lines) generate a radical critique of artistic ontology qua the artist and as such also questions the enduring legacy of the artist as an autonomous, individual within modernist art. This concerns the question of the authenticity of the work of art and its link to a specific author. However, there is a level at which the immanence of this discourse is also evidenced in the critique of the author in postmodernism.

On both levels, I would argue that the anxieties that circumscribe questions concerning the authenticity of either the work of art or the supremacy of the artist as author are symptomatic of a cyclical crisis in modernity about the status of art to its social context and the artist as more than an actor within the economic sphere. This crisis has been exceptionally visible since the last decade of the twentieth century. The political climate of the current global imperium adumbrates it further. If we look back historically collectives tend to emerge during periods of crisis; in moments of social upheaval and political uncertainty within society. Such crisis often forces reappraisals of conditions of production, reevaluation of the nature of artistic work, and reconfiguration of the position of the artist in relation to economic, social, and political institutions.

There are two types of collective formations and collaborative practices, that are important for this discussion. The first type can be summarized as possessing a structured *modus vivendi* based on permanent, fixed groupings of practitioners working over a sustained period. In such collectives, authorship represents the expression of the group rather than that of the individual artist. The second type of collectives tend to emphasize a flexible, non-permanent course of affiliation, privileging collaboration on project basis than on a permanent alliance. This type of collective formation can be designated as networked collectives. Such networks are far more prevalent today due to radical advances in communication technologies and globalization. However, we shall trace the emergence of the artist as producer in times of crisis by first linking up with modernism.

In collective work we witness how such work complicates modernism's idealization of the artwork as the unique object of individual creativity. In collective work we also witness the simultaneous aporia of artwork and artist. This tends to lend collective work a social rather than artistic character. Consequently, the collective imaginary has often been understood as essentially political in orientation with minimal artistic instrumentality. In other instances shared labor; collaborative practice; the collective conceptualization of artistic work have been understood as the critique of the reification of art and the commodification of the artist. Though collaborative or collective work has long been accepted as normal in the kind of artistic production that requires ensemble work such as in music, in the context of visual art under which the individual artistic talent reigns such loss of singularity of the artist is much less the norm, particularly under the operative conditions of capitalism.



## Democracy, Invisibility, and the Dramatic Arts

Emily Roysdon

published in LTTR 1, 2002

hello, my name is emily roysdon

I've recently become obsessed with the idea of being a Special Guest Star. a champion of multiple celebratory performances. to drop in, play the role, make the moves and then entertain another engagement. It sounds pretty good, and well suited to my excitable recently transient life. But it's also attractive because it would allow me to move between the many subject positions that I imagine myself to occupy. With the diversity of venue and audience I could find myself responding to multiple titles and satisfying a variety of requests. This movement is precisely what I desire.

What is exhibited in this fantasy is the possibility of performing and articulating the movement between static choices of identity. It's the movement, all about the action of not quite specifically all the time one or the other, that I hope to articulate here. In essence, a fluidity of names and gestures. outfits and pleasures. spaces and meanings. that allow people to encounter their desire (in the pervasive Lacanian sense of the word) in new and unexpected ways over and over again and again.

These moves and performances. the over and over agains. I want them to exist in the public sphere. The sliding and shifting a dance. Certainly to be seen, an invisible dance from name to name. My invisibility a commitment to movement. An unending non-teleological way to inhabit my subjectivity that refuses boundaries and denies expectation.

I move through. think through invisibility for a multitude of reasons. its versatile, its familiar, its personal, and its productive. It's often been our studio, the place where a lot of our art has come from. And it's also been our meeting ground, as a lot of alliances have been made from invisible territories. I want to imagine these places, the unseen productive holes that we frequent, as democratic spaces. The public, our public. as a democratic community with the fullest glory of this often perverted word as a basis of understanding our private and public performances of agency, identity, and subjectivity.

I realize I have begun to speak of we. of our. Please allow me to imagine myself with a team, although I am quite aware that this could be a private exercise. And in continuing this exercise, I think it would be beneficial if I made clear the terminology.

**Democracy**- a genuine commitment to equality, freedom of association, critical thought, accountability of rulers to citizens (i love eqbal ahmad), and performance of our own agency

**Invisibility**- 1. An underappreciated state of luminous existence 2. the first stage in the blocking of identification that produces the impulse to struggle and resistance 3. a theory of sliding signifiers

**Dramatic arts**- our lives, our products. The drawings films styles songs and moves made by and for throngs of youthfull perverts of all ages.

I am hoping to argue for a complex and contradictory definition of invisibility. A definition that acknowledges the many contemporary and historical struggles to emerge into visibility. Understanding that visibility is often vocabulary, and to receive declared economic human and social rights one must check boxes, pass tests, answer questions, and articulate positions, I see how this formulation may seem to threaten the program which has hitherto been activated to procure these rights. For yes, some advancements have been made. Some people are able to assert their rights, incorporate their vocabulary, and build their boundaries. These articulations, these definitions have been useful and helped to illuminate certain choices but they should not be fixed for eternity. The way meaning is inscribed in our lives, the way we become what we are named, requires that we recognize and mis-recognize our attributes with productive stimulating language. By constantly re-inscribing ourselves we are calling out our democratic commitments. Invisibility becomes the freedom to associate, it becomes the dramatization of our rights. Performance requires a disappearance. It is an action, or series of events that then disappears, becomes invisible. The subsequent documentation becomes just that, a document of a once visible happening. Our lives (hello team) are dramatic. Queer lives are performative. Often by choice, but also as a result of occupying the position of outsider or other, in the web of signifier/signified. In many theories of identification, one is only aware of their positive qualities by their assessment of what they are not. The 'way in which I appear likeable to myself' is thus defined through my relationship to the Other. The contingency of this relationship makes the movement between signifiers even more potent as a political

strategy. The image and name to which people identify is mobilized under the gaze of the Other. A slide that destabilizes and pleads for reiteration.

As we have learned, we are constantly performing and repeating the ways in which we appear likable to ourselves. This action, this moving towards a complete image of self is movement into. an emergence from. A perpetual emergence produces excess. Our excessive identities produce products. And in this repetitive production we become our own surplus value. Our labor is invested in criminal capitol. Our gestures, when productive, produce excess.

The structure into which we insert our bodies and our products requests our visibility. It and They are interested in us as consumers. That means they are interested in all our relationships and our self-image. Sexing enters the economy. Excesses become official. And as they name us, they try to incorporate. Again I move through invisibility. I attempt to resist assimilation through perpetual movement. But the traces remain and I will emerge again.

But for now, let me return to my unseen hole. My imaginary democratic enclave. A fragrant comfortably light place where our pictures parts songs and sexes can be delighted over. I would like it if we all moved towards this place. I do not know that we will arrive, but as we approach. as we become. our transmorphic pieces about (I do love moves don't I) pieces about. As we approach we are aware of the other side. The side where some vocabulary became vernacular. Where some excessive products got incorporated. This liminal boundary of authenticity. of mastery, of passing, of individuality and of legitimacy is the space where I think our democratic commitments can become dances (I'm romantic). Moving over and between these borders I wonder where my subtlety ends and a boundary begins. Does my product move with me, am I visible between, have I met the requirements for citizenship or residency. Do I have enough of the required characteristics to be a threat? an ally?

I am beginning to see just how dramatic it all really is. Making boundaries is politics, crossing them is drama. My imaginary hole has let me consider productivity, and I have produced a document. a record of performance, and verification of drama. I have officially become a constituent of the dramatic arts. My theatre, my public, maybe now I'm a Special Guest Star. But probably not yet. I must emerge again. I will need more product, and for this I seek the comfort of the velvet curtain. Backstage, the invisible heart of productivity. Behind the curtains the costumes get changed, utterances are perfected, shoulders rubbed (yes, we've all been backstage). Brushing between the curtains front to back, to enter and dazzle. A new person each time. Image transformed by wardrobe, vocabulary, and audience participation.

This show is almost over. We've spent enough time rehearsing and room needs to be made for the next wave. But as we rush out into the world, I encourage us to not produce this show as a narrative. Experimental dramas sometimes work you know, and then there could be room for sub-texts on peoples demanding rights, and artists getting a living wage for their labor. There could be SGS's, operatic interludes, lingual transgressions, and commitments from the audience. Personally, I'm ready to roll over and reconsider my excessive productivity. My not quite enough, upsidedown, invisible, slow productivity. what a title. my dramatic arts.

# Plausible Artworlds



## 2010 Schedule

- Week 52 – Dec 28: [Public Collectors & Against Competition](#)
- Week 51 – Dec 21: [IRWIN](#)
- Week 50 – Dec 14: [Mildred's Lane](#)
- Week 49 TUESDAY – Dec 7: [Abriendo Caminos / La Comunitaria TV](#)
- Week 49 SUNDAY – Dec 5: [Sunday Soup](#)
- Week 48 – Nov 30: [kuda.org](#)
- Week 47 – Nov 23: [Urban Tactics / Atelier Autogéré d'Architecture](#)
- Week 46 – Nov 16: [Ontological Walkscapes](#)
- Week 45 – Nov 9: [Cittadellarte](#)
- Week 44 – Nov 2: [Spontaneous Vegetation](#)
- Week 43 – Oct 26: [A Constructed World](#)
- Week 42 – Oct 19: [Periferry](#)
- Week 41 – Oct 12: [KEIN](#)
- Week 40 – Oct 5: [StrataSpore](#)
- Week 39 – Sep 28: [Ultra-red](#)
- Week 38 – Sep 21: [Groundswell Collective](#)
- Week 37 – Sep 14: [Internacional Errorista](#)
- Week 36 – Sep 7: [Post autonomy](#)
- Week 35 – Aug 31: [Sewing Rebellion](#)
- Week 34 – Aug 24: [Nomoola](#)
- Week 33 – Aug 17: [Pad.ma](#)
- Week 32 – Aug 10: [E.A.T. \(Experiments in Art and Technology\)](#)
- Week 31 – Aug 3: [b.a.n.g. lab](#)
- Week 30 – July 27: [The Think Tank that has yet to be named](#)
- Week 29 – July 20: [Centro de Investigaciones Artísticas](#)
- Week 28 – July 13: [Miss Rockaway Armada](#)
- Week 27 – July 6: [Design Studio for Social Intervention](#)

Week 26 – June 29: [Art Work](#)  
Week 25 – June 22: [Dark Matter Archives & Imaginary Archive](#)  
Week 24 – June 15: [Free Art License](#)  
Week 23 – June 8: [Biosphere 2](#)  
Week 22 – June 1: [Machine Project](#)  
Week 21 – May 25: [byproducts](#)  
Week 20 – May 18: [Beyond Participation: Toward Massively Collaborative Worlds of Art](#)  
Week 19 – May 11: [Democratic Innovation](#)  
Week 18 – May 4: [FEAST](#)  
Week 17 – Apr 27: [Homeworks Forum](#)  
Week 16 – Apr 20: [Collective Foundation](#)  
Week 15 – Apr 13: [Loveland](#)  
Week 14 – Apr 6: [freenode](#)  
Week 13 – Mar 30: [n.e.w.s. paid usership](#)  
Week 12 – Mar 23: [Au travail / At Work collective](#)  
Week 11 – Mar 16: [Groups & Spaces](#)  
Week 10 – Mar 9: [Community Museum Project](#)  
Week 9 – Mar 2: [Orgacom](#)  
Week 8 – Feb 23: [A School of Decreative Methodologies](#)  
Week 7 – Feb 16: [Artist Placement Group \(@ Basekamp & Apexart\)](#)  
Week 6 – Feb 9: [Teaching Artist Union and School of the Future](#)  
Week 5 – Feb 2: [Reinigungsgesellschaft](#)  
Week 4 – Jan 26: [Continental Drift through the Midwest Radical Cultural Corridor](#)  
Week 3 – Jan 19: [House Magic: The European squatted social centers movement](#)  
Week 2 – Jan 12: [The Library Of Radiant Optimism For Let's Remake The World](#)  
Week 1 – Jan 5: [The Public School and AAAARG.org](#)

Stay tuned for upcoming monthly schedule.

## About Plausible Artworlds 2010

Plausible Artworlds is a project to collect and share knowledge about alternative models of creative practice. From alternative economies and open source culture to secessions and other social experiments, Plausible Artworlds is a platform for research and participation with artworlds that present a distinct alternative to mainstream culture.

The aim of the project is to bring awareness to the potential of these artworlds as viable “cultural ecosystems” that provide both pedagogical and practical solutions to a range of emergent socio-cultural challenges. We view Plausible Artworlds as an opportunity to discuss the interdisciplinary role of artist as creative problem solver and the expanding notion of what an artworld looks and feels like.

The project currently offers a weekly public potluck hosted at Basekamp in Philadelphia, during which open informal discussions are held with invited artists, writers, curators and anyone interested. The project is also compiling a collaborative publication from research, conversations and projects connecting with the Plausible Artworlds initiative.

## Participate

We invite participation by sharing your stories about the Plausible Artworlds you are creating in your own community. We want to know what this artworld looks like, what it smells like and what kinds of impacts it is motivating. Send us text, send us a photo or video and send us your ideas about a Plausible Artworld you wish existed. Propose a project or ask for help on an existing one.

Our plan for this year is in process. We have slots open for our potluck and a collaborative workshop and exhibition space available for use. If you want to get involved, get in touch with us!

- Propose a Potluck Topic or Guest
- Learn how to “tune” in or visit the Basekamp space in person!
- Submit your ideas and stories about a Plausible Artworld
- Start a project at Basekamp



[Contact »](#)

[More information »](#)

Plausible Artworlds is a project organized by Basekamp and Stephen Wright, and has been funded by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage through the Philadelphia Exhibitions Initiative.



Critical comment. Professor Anthony Dunne's *Placebo* project included a sofa that contained this shield against electromagnetic radiation. The furniture was put into use by ordinary families and served as a critical comment on the technology we surround ourselves with.  
Photo: Jason Evan

# Critical Design as Constructive Provocation

Critical design is not a new invention. But it is highly topical. With the global climate issues topping the agenda and the complexity of the global market as a condition for even the most mundane activity, there is a renewed need to question the current state of the world. And critical design will do just that. But can critical design also be used as a tool in the design process, or will it lose its bite if an attempt is made to tame it?

By Trine Vu

Chairs made of second-hand clothes from homeless people. Cow patties in an installation with a PH designer lamp in the home of a poor African family. A bench in the silhouette of a swastika. A sofa with an electromagnetic shield adopted by an average family. And a soft drink to improve the lives of guarana growers in Brazil.

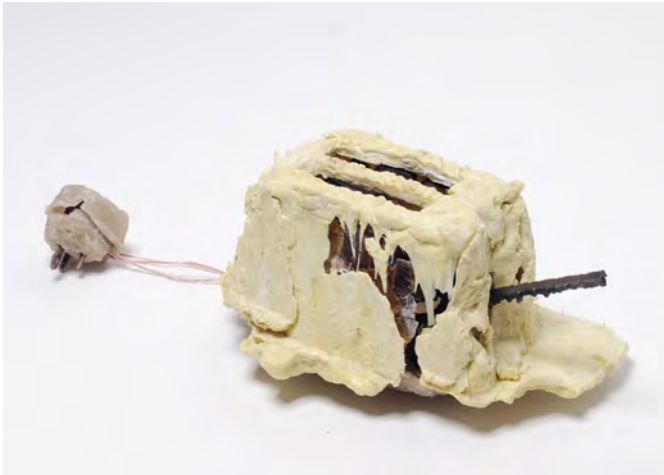
Critical design has many faces and often finds itself in the border land between art and design.

## The Burning Issues of Our Times

It is not a new invention, but the current climate challenges, society's growing complexity and increasing globalisation have led to a growing interest in making a difference in the world, and that has brought critical design to the fore once more.

Tau Ulv Lenskjold, a Ph.D. scholar at The Danish Design School, teaches critical design and design theory. In his Ph.D. project he explores design as a critical practice – how designers can work with critical design and bring it into the real world.

He studies the critical practice through work analyses of various types of design products and design objects and case-studies based on interviews and observations of the ways in which designers, artists and activists use design methods and strategies.



Complex products. Student Thomas Thwaites wanted to demonstrate how complex even the most commonplace objects are today. He therefore constructed a toaster from scratch relying entirely on hand tools and pre-industrial methods.

Photo: Daniel Alexander

“We are currently facing a number of big issues that have made it increasingly important to relate to the state of the world. That involves how we’re going to solve the climate problems, and whether we should be taking part in the excessive production that’s taking place. Globalisation is an important perspective for critical design, because it is an example of the growing complexity of the world around us,” says Tau Ulv Lenskjold and explains that while design is by definition aimed at fixing problems, critical design is aimed at questioning the present conditions.

### Design Should Do More Than Just Simplify the World

Another reason why critical design has taken on renewed relevance over the past 10-15 years, according to Tau Ulv Lenskjold, is that there is currently a strong general focus on design. Design is often expected to provide solutions and help simplify the world in order to make it more rational, as this is seen as auspicious in itself.

“In a Danish context, the functional and rational always take precedent. But in my opinion, that is a discourse that critical design ought to challenge,” says Tau Ulv Lenskjold.

### A Critical Comment

To illustrate how critical design can challenge the current state of affairs and spark debate about the way we organise our societies, Tau Ulv Lenskjold mentions a concept design by the Dutch design firm Droog with chairs made from second-hand clothes from homeless people and benches shaped like swastikas.

“This is about as close as we get to examples of critical design that can be used in the real world. They’re intended as design, not art, because they preserve the functions of a chair and a bench, and because they’re available in the market rather than merely put on display in a museum. Unlike art, design has an obligation to take an interest in the practical use of things,” he explains and offers another example of the use of critical design to shine a critical light on the way we live:

In the *Placebo* project, one of the founders of the concept of critical design, Professor Anthony Dunne of the Royal College of Art in London, offered a critical comment on the vast amounts of technology we surround ourselves with in everyday life by creating a series of furniture with “special features”, including a table with a built-in compass and a sofa with a shield against electromagnetic fields. Dunne had ordinary families live with the furniture for a while, and afterward he interviewed them about the experience. The purpose of the experiment was to take conceptual design out of the galleries and into everyday life in order to

make people reflect, in particular, on the invisible electromagnetic waves from the technology we bring into our life.

In the project *What if*, which was on display in 2009 at The Science Gallery in Dublin, Ireland, design student Thomas Thwaites set out to build an ordinary toaster from scratch. The resulting toaster, says Tau Ulv Lenskjold, resembled something that was made of play-dough and stopped worked after about 10 minutes. His point was to demonstrate how complex even everyday products are today.

“Critical design points to things in contemporary society that we otherwise tend to have a blind spot for,” Tau Ulv Lenskjold adds.

### Critical Design Makes the Invisible Visible

Andreas Rumpfhuber is an architect and design researcher based in Vienna, Austria. He took his Ph.D. from the Danish Centre for Design Research in 2009 and is currently organising a series of seminars on critical design in Vienna. Among other aspects, he studies the political dimension of design and architecture, including what happened to architecture when the office landscape was invented and became the norm in workplaces the world over.

He also thinks that there is good reason for the renewed interest in critical design. As an example of the use of critical design for provocation he mentions the *Supergas* project by the Danish artists group Superflex.

Here an installation with a huge balloon full of animal waste is hooked up to the well-known PH designer lamp to deliver lighting to a poor African family, thus highlighting both global inequality and climate problems.

“Any good design contains a certain portion of critique. The main purpose of critical designs is to make the invisible visible by showing us something we didn’t know existed,” says Andreas Rumpfhuber.

### Design on the Activist Agenda

Many of the critical design projects are experimental, but critical design can also take the form of something as commonplace as a soft drink.

With the energy soft drink Guarana Power the Danish artists group Superflex is trying to create a new platform for guarana growers in the Amazonian jungle in Brazil to sell their crops at a fair price.

“Here critical design is used in an activist attempt at promoting a cause, as the project is a reaction to Coca Cola’s near-monopoly on the guarana production – this is reflected, for exam-

ple, in the way that Superflex plays with a modified Coca-Cola logo in the design on the bottles,” Tau Ulv Lenskjold explains.

### Critical Design as a Tool

Perhaps critical design can be used for other purposes beyond questioning the present conditions. Tau Ulv Lenskjold explains that critical design can be used as a tool in ordinary design processes, where it may serve as a sort of constructive provocation.

“User-involving design processes typically have a great emphasis on reaching consensus, which means there’s often a risk of picking the easy solutions, so the outcome of the design process tends to conform to the lowest common denominator. Here it may be an advantage to use critical design as a provocation to make people leave their comfort zone and dare to think outside the box in order to find a better solution to the design problem,” says Tau Ulv Lenskjold.

Andreas Rumpfhuber, on the other hand, does not think that critical design is an appropriate design tool.

“The problem is that you can’t control creativity. In order to be critical, you have to take yourself out of the game. When multinational corporations use hackers to check their security, then who’s serving whom? It’s the same thing with critical design: When every company around the corner is asking designers to take a critical look at their product to maximise their turnover – who is serving whom? The moment that critical design turns mainstream, it loses its soul,” Andreas Rumpfhuber argues.

Critical design. The Dutch designer Richard Hutten’s *S(h)it on it* (a bench in the shape of a swastika) was designed as a statement against fascism. People sit on it with their backs towards another.

Photo: Rene Koster



### DANISH CENTRE FOR DESIGN RESEARCH

The Danish Centre for Design Research DCDR comprises the design researchers at the Aarhus School of Architecture, The Danish Design School, Kolding School of Design and the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture. The DCDR aims to contribute to establishing a strong design research environment in Denmark and to strengthen the exchange of knowledge about design research and facilitate the identification of potential areas of collaboration for researchers, schools and enterprises, on a national as well as an international level.

### The Concept of Critical Design

The concept of critical design was first used in Anthony Dunne’s book *Hertzian Tales* from 1999. Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby, his partner in the design firm Dunne & Raby in London, are often credited with creating the concept.

Critical design uses design objects and experiments to offer criticism or comments on social conditions while also exploring the boundaries of design.

Critical design often finds itself in a grey zone between art and design but differs from art on several counts, among them its accessibility to a wider audience.

Over the years, critical design has been used in activism and for political purposes, in Denmark with the artists group Superflex as one of the examples.

Critical design also explores the borderland between design and science by creating design fiction – a sort of future scenarios for alternative applications of design in both technological and social contexts.

Critical design can also take on a broader scope, for example with the use of sustainable materials to demonstrate a critical stance.

#### Additional reading

Tau Ulv Lenskjold’s research profile: <http://www.dcdr.dk/uk/Menu/Research/Researchers/The+Danish+Design+School/Tau+Ulv+Lenskjoeld>.

Andreas Rumpfhuber’s seminar series in Vienna about critical design: <http://expandeddesign.com/>.

Article about Andreas Rumpfhuber’s Ph.D. dissertation, *Immaterial Labour Poses New Challenges for Architecture*, *Mind Design* #19, May 2009: <http://www.dcdr.dk/uk/Menu/Update/Webzine/Articles/Immaterial+Labour+Pose+s+New+Challenges+for+Architecture>.

Superflex’ Gurana Power project: <http://thepowerfoundation.org/>.

Superflex’ Supergas project: <http://www.supergas.dk/>.

Thomas Thwaites’ The Toaster Project: <http://www.thomasthwaites.com/the-toaster-project/>.

Anthony Dunne’s The Placebo Project: <http://www.dunneandraby.co.uk/content/projects/70/0>.

Dunne and Raby’s definition of critical: <http://www.dunneandraby.co.uk/content/bydandr/13/0>.

Keywords: critical design, design process, art and design, globalisation, design theory, creativity, society, future

### MIND DESIGN

Mind Design, DCDR Webzine is published once a month and features articles and interviews about current Danish and international design research. Mind Design aims to present design research and research findings from researcher to researcher as well as from researchers to design practitioners in general. The webzine is free of charge. Please see [www.dcdr.dk/uk/minddesign](http://www.dcdr.dk/uk/minddesign).

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## Services: A working-group exhibition

*Andrea Fraser*

1993 saw a sudden rush of exhibitions not particularly well defined or consistent except for the fact that they either called for artists to generate new work for specific situations or showcased the results of work undertaken in such a fashion. This form of artistic activity began, very loosely and at first only for practical purposes, to be referred to as a project; artists were being invited to "do a project for" a particular exhibition. Sonsbeek in Arnhem; Unité, an exhibition organized in the uninhabited half of a Le Corbusier public housing building in Firminy; Kontext Kunst at the Neue Galerie in Graz; On taking a normal situation, the exhibition for Antwerp '93 at the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst; Sculpture Chicago; and Viennese Story at the Wiener Secession consisted entirely of "project-work", while the Whitney Biennial and the Venice Biennial included a number of artists working in along similar lines. At the same time, many of the artists participating in these exhibitions also felt an increase in invitations to do individual projects with organizations.

In the fall of 1993, I began meeting with Michael Clegg, Mark Dion and Julia Scher in New York to discuss the problems that we and artists we knew encountered while participating in the exhibitions of the previous year. These problems ranged from the very practical "problem of getting paid" to experiences of censorship and concerns over the loss of autonomy. In addition to being expected to undertake site-specific projects for little or no fee, artists were routinely expected to design invitations, posters, advertisements and catalogs, write catalog texts or prepare sections of catalogs without compensation. Artists with policies not to undertake projects without receiving a fee, were treated as "difficult" and set against other artists in exhibitions. Sometimes artists were promised fees, only to be told after the exhibition opened that those fees were considered part of the project budgets and had already been used up in production. Artists' budgets were suspended when their process oriented projects took longer to complete than the duration of the temporary exhibitions they were commissioned for. Artists returned to exhibition sites a few weeks after the opening to find that their works were not maintained, not functioning, or even had been removed. Or, at the end of exhibitions, curators de-installed projects without consulting the artist, effectively destroying them. Or at the end of exhibitions, organizations refused to return de-installed materials. Artists undertook transitory projects to find out after the shows came down that they had no rights to the documentation produced by the organizations (or had to pay for access to it). Or, after clearly stating research requirements and critical orientation in the proposal, projects were canceled midway when the material became too sensitive or difficult. Or, curators claimed the right to review and edit material prior to presentation.

In addition to these specific experiences, there was a general problem: at the end of a very active year of producing work for well publicized and prestigious exhibitions, many of the artists participating found themselves exhausted and in debt. The institutional and critical support of which so many exhibitions should be evidence not only did not translate into material or even adequate practical support, but in many ways functioned to limit such support. It was as if many of us were being expected to work in two jobs: one for compensation, the other on a voluntary basis. The work - both in the sense of labor and art products - we did for the specific sites and situations defined by curators often either could not be transferred to the art market or could so only at the expense of seriously misrepresenting the project's principles. Sometimes this was an intended effect of the nature of the projects themselves, particularly when the projects functioned to develop a process with no material form. Even when project results took a material form, the more specific the work was

to its site or situation - and, thus, the more successful it was - the more of its meaning, relevance and interest would be lost outside of the context for which it was produced.

While many of these problems obviously stemmed from a lack of material support for project work, critical acceptance had created a demand for projects by cultural organizations, that was clearly not only a demand for particular individual artists. This demand provided project artists with the prospect of a certain leverage and for the possibility of acting collectively to use this leverage, to represent and safeguard our material interests as well as our interest in fostering conditions conducive to the development of what we believed was an important form of artistic activity.

The artists meetings in the fall of 1993 produced a questionnaire on preferred working conditions sent out to thirty-some artists who engage in project work. Our intention was to create a data-base that would provide artists with more confidence in making certain demands and which could also serve as the foundation of a general contract to be developed by a larger group we hoped to convene. At the same time, Helmut Draxler and I began to develop our proposal for Services.

Services was conceived as an on-going project. Its manifestation at the Kunstraum der Universität Lüneburg was to be the first of what we hoped would be bi-annual meetings sponsored by different contemporary art organizations. The meetings and its accompanying installation - which we called a "working-group exhibition" - would be the basis for a continuing forum at which artists and curators involved with project work could develop a framework for their activities that would integrate the practical and the theoretical, encompassing material and political as well as artistic concerns. The documentation of historical and contemporary activity collected to support these discussions, along with videotapes of the meetings themselves, would grow into an easily copied and distributed archive made available through the installations accompanying the working-group discussions - all of which were to contain photocopying machines - and afterward maintained by the various sponsoring organizations. The installation would also circulate by itself between working-group sessions and to organizations without the resources to sponsor meetings. In addition, we hoped a bi-annual publication could be generated containing summaries or edited transcripts of working-group discussions along with presentations of the related historical material collected for the installations.

After completing the proposal and confirming participants, Helmut Draxler and I wrote up a working group program and invited participants to select one session at which to make a short, informal presentation. These presentations were not to be complete descriptions of projects, but were to focus on the problems or solutions a particular project posed for the conditions indicated by the session's topic. Participants were also asked to bring documentation of projects they intended to discuss as contributions to the installation. A few artists who were not able to participate - Mark Dion, Group Material, Louise Lawler and Julia Scher - also contributed material. Instead of complete documentation of particular projects we requested specific materials: the letter of invitation or initial proposal; the contract or letter of agreement; and summary documentation of the project itself. The aim of this selection was to put the project in the context of the relations under which it was undertaken, so as to be able to consider how either those relations may have determined the development of the project or, conversely, how the project influenced the relations in which it was produced.

Like this contemporary material, the historical material collected in the installation was oriented toward a re-integration of the issues and strategies developed by artists with the conditions and relations of artistic production. The historical material focused primarily on the activities of the Art Workers Coalition (AWC) in New

York between 1969 and 1973. The AWC was probably the most significant post-war American attempt by artists to collectively redefine both the material conditions of their practices and its social function - particularly in terms of relations to public and private art presenting organizations. Many of the policy changes the AWC pressed museums for - free admission, equal representation of artists, museum professionals and patrons on museum boards, royalties paid to artists when their work is exhibited, and substantial representation of minority artists in collections and exhibitions were never realized. The AWC did however spur the development of community cultural centers, artist-run exhibition spaces, and political and activist art practices - particularly institutional critique. It also, through a resistance to feminist issues, contributed to the emergence of an independent women's art movement. Guidelines for museum presentation, contracts for commercial art galleries and the re-sale of art work developed by the AWC were presented as possible models for project contracts. The possible influence of the AWC's demands on the emergence of the artist's fee - and thus on the development of art practice as service provision - was also considered.

In addition to the material on the AWC, the historical portion of the installation also included documentation of the conciliation of Hans Haacke's 1971 Guggenheim show; documentation of the groups Artists Meeting For Cultural Change, Fashion Moda and Internationales Künstlergremium; and texts and documentation of works by artists such as Michael Asher, Christian Boltanski, Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren and the Guerrilla Art Action Group.

The working-group meetings and installation in Lüneburg were to function as a model, not only for Services as an on-going project but also for the role of exhibitions and art presenting organizations relative to project based practices. In this sense, Services was motivated both by a critique of exhibitions and symposia and by the project work itself for an alternative to art organizations defined by their functions as exhibitors of art objects.

The problem which many artists engaged in project work are confronted with when invited to participate in exhibitions is that many projects do not exist as objects or as installations possible to reconstruct. Services addressed this "problem" as a problem, not of projects, but of exhibitions as such. To the extent that exhibitions demand objects (or environments) to be encountered in a physical form, they marginalize practices which are not production based. Given the fact that more and more artists profess to be engaged in issue based work, there seems to be an increasingly insupportable contradiction between the concerns of artists and the objects they produce for display in art exhibition spaces.

What can art exhibition be if not an occasion to encounter works of art in their physical or temporal form? While video tapes provided Services with a temporal dimension that "justified" its existence as an exhibition (rather than just a publication), our interest was in trying to introduce a physical dimension which would revolve not around art objects but around the social interactions the space would become a frame for. The table around which the working-group met remained in the space for people to use while reading and talking about the documentary material they could take down from the pin-board walls. In this sense, we hoped that the working group sessions and the video tapes of them would function to initiate continuing discussions among those using the space during the course of the installation.

From conception it was clear that Services would only be appropriate for organizations established to serve artists and other art professionals - cultural constituencies - and not for organizations addressing themselves to the "general public". Introducing this distinction as a consideration in artistic and curatorial activity was one of the underlying premises of Services.

Most contemporary art exhibitions, regardless of their sponsoring organizations, tend to conceive the function of purveying information about contemporary artistic activity to a "general public" more or less as an end in itself. Beyond this level of information, the question of what, specifically, particular artists or works can provide particular audiences is rarely addressed. When it is addressed, it is often on a level of content which misrecognizes the fact that the knowledge of contemporary art codes required to apprehend that content is not distributed equally and may not be a possession of the very people who are supposed to be served by the work. Many of the artists and curators involved in Services try to deal with this problem either by attempting to by-pass art sites and art codes (along with art objects), or by addressing them reflexively, as such - in either case, taking the site of the work rather as a means to intervene in a range of social experiences of immediate relevance to particular audiences. If these strategies become the mode of addressing the "general audience" of such organizations as municipal museums and public art commissions, or the specific communities accessible through them, what of the cultural constituencies' institutions such as ICAs and Kunstvereine are founded to serve? Services offered one response to this question: turn the exhibition into a forum for addressing issues of immediate practical concern to the art professionals and art students who constitute the primary audience of cultural constituency organizations.

In proposing this function for cultural constituency organizations, Services also, implicitly, constituted a critique of the group exhibition and the public symposium as mechanisms through which such organizations attempt to fulfill their mission. The misrecognition of specialized audiences inherent in programs conceived as purveyors of information to a "general public", effectively limits those programs to functioning as sites of symbolic struggles among producers. To the extent that programming is not determined by immediate concerns for particular audiences, that "general public" is reduced to no more than adherents, subscribers and investors that art professionals compete for in struggles for legitimacy and prestige. Every public juxtaposition of individual artistic positions on panels and in shows which invites viewers to compare, contrast and judge artists against each other reinscribes artists and works in this competitive structure, reducing them at the same time - regardless of intended effects - to their formal or strategic differences.

What did Services accomplish? Re-reading the proposal, what appears most obvious is what Services did not accomplish. Services did not result in any particular resolutions on the practical problems encountered by artists engaging in project work. Nor did it produce a general contract, a policy, or an association which could lobby for the interests of project artists. Services did not come to any conclusions on questions of the threat posed to artistic autonomy by professionalization or by the construction of cultural organizations as "clients". Nor did Services get to the root of conflicts among artists, curators, cultural organizations and audiences. Services was not, through the material collected for the installation, able to provide a coherent history of the transformation of relations among artists, curators and cultural organizations; of the professionalization of curating; of the artists' fee or of the role particular phenomena played in such developments. Finally, Services did not establish the meaning or relevance of the concept of service provision for contemporary artistic practice.

Were these the aims of Services? In a retrospect which maybe influenced as much by revision as by reflection I would say they were not, at least, the projects' primary goals. The goal of Services was finally much more simple and in my mind fundamental; something which is, further, the condition of the accomplishment of all these other aims. More than a forum for any of the specific issues introduced in the proposal, Services was conceived as a model for an alternative to what appeared to us to be the available sites within the field of art. I would say now that the creation of such an alternative is not external to the issues introduced in the proposal. Rather, it is the condition for their accomplishment.



Above all, Services was a response to what I see as a very basic problem: almost all of the available sites in the field of art, both physical and discursive, are fundamentally oriented toward the production of belief in the value of various forms of cultural production - artistic and critical; that is, toward legitimation. One could say that all exhibitions, whether in commercial or non-commercial spaces, construct their visitors as potential collectors. More precisely, they construct their visitors as people who will or will not invest their economic, cultural or social capital in particular practices. Similarly, the addressees of art magazines and symposia tend to be constructed as subscribers or potential subscribers, not of publications or events, but to the positions taken by writers and speakers. The point here is not to construct an opposition between promotion and critique. The point is that there are almost no sites within the artistic field in which producers address each other as producers according, not to the intellectual or artistic positions they take on cultural issues, but to the positions they occupy within a field of cultural production as determined by the social conditions of that field and the social relations which structure it. The absence of such sites has the effect, not only of ensuring the atomization of producers in competitive struggles for professional legitimacy, but also of limiting the development of a framework in which the function and effect - not only the symbolic value - of artistic practices can be evaluated.

In a certain way I would say that the fundamental ambition of Services was to create a forum in which participating artists and curators, as well as visitors to the installation, would reflect on project work specifically - as well as art practice generally - not only in terms of symbolic systems, thematized or formalized, but also in terms of the conditions and relations which determine them and which they may resist or reproduce. The practical problems which arise as a result of project work, and the clear relation between those problems and the strategies of individual works, created a basis for such reflection. And that reflection, in turn, would be the condition of achieving a meaningful resolution of practical problems.

It may seem obvious that any effort by artists and curators to resolve their practical problems would require that they address each other as producers according to the common practical problems they endeavor to resolve. What may be less obvious is that many of those problems themselves stem from, not the absence of such forums as such, but from the structure which prevents them from developing the orientation of artistic sites toward the function of legitimation. The reluctance of organizations to provide adequate fees, for example, can be seen to stem from the fact that most cultural institutions still see their role as being one of identifying, publicizing and consecrating artistic tendencies - a service from which artists should later profit, with the help of gallerists, through the sale of thus legitimized work.

The project Services had two basic motivating circumstances. One was explicitly stated in the proposal and dealt with in the working group discussions: the practical and material problems encountered by artists engaged in project work. The other was never explicitly stated but was, perhaps even more fundamental, determining the form of the project as well as the material collected for the installation: that is, the absence of sites within the artistic field in which cultural producers address each other as producers. Most of the aspects of the project introduced in the proposal may not have been developed or accomplished. The historical material gathered for the installation may have been inconclusive. The concept of Services itself was never really even discussed. Yet despite all of these apparent failings I would say the project was a success. It exists as a model for a forum which is, I believe, the condition of possibility for the accomplishment of these other aims. In retrospect I would say that this could only ever have been its objective goal.

[from: Beatrice von Bismarck, Diethelm Stoller, Ulf Wuggenig (eds.), *Games, Fights, Collaboration. Das Spiel von Grenze und Überschreitung*, Stuttgart: Cantz 1996]

Betty T. Kao  
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2011

## Art vs. Commodity

Once upon a time, a cave man with his developing brain, sought to communicate an idea. To make that idea last longer than a fleeting moment, to pass on information to another person, he rendered an image upon a wall. He held that image sacred, and recounted it time and time again to remember a feeling he had, to lock in an emotion that he wanted to express and share. Today art is not only a tool of personal expression, it is a commodity. People, on an individual level, seek to understand themselves and find their own place in the world. Few dare to take the brave steps of individuality, or perhaps they do not yet know how to express themselves. So they seek forms of expression that have been created by someone else that they can identify with, that confusing role is taken on by the artist. For some reason, this art, music, movie, story created by someone else rings true to a stranger, helps them learn things about themselves. However this idea of getting to know or understand thyself has turned into a commodity and a form of droning entertainment used to placate the masses. How has an act of shamanism turned into a status symbol of merchandising? Why is owning a Rembrandt an equivalent to owning a BMW? Does the owner appreciate the delicate play of light and shadow in the painting he owns, or does he merely likely to show off the signature over a dinner party prepared by illegal aliens escaping the civil war in their home country? Art is not just a commodity. It is a form of social change and needs to be remembered as such.

Art is the work of human expression. This meld of art and politics goes hand in hand. Culturally, politics and social issues effect us all. Art enables the creator to show their ideas to an audience without the artist having to be objective. Every artist has a different take on the matters they chose to express themselves in. They infuse their own opinions into the work, conveying personal feelings and emotions about the subject of the piece. Emotions can range from anger, to compassion, to delight. The artist's opinions may be different from the ones accepted by the majority of people. Non-conformity causes people to pay attention to the current issues and event; engaging the viewers in conversation and new thinking.

Art allows people to communicate with the viewer. Art conveys information. The audience is ever changing and much of art is reproducible in different forms. A person in another country could be browsing through an art book and without knowing it, be influenced by the work. To captivate an audience, the creator can instill various means. It can be an aesthetic issue, the piece can touch a nerve, the audience might react to a radical way of thought, or picture themselves in the context of the art. Either way the audience's thought is now changed, however subtly, they carry with them another

person's insight into a matter. This information can be carried in the back of the viewer's mind, or perhaps he chooses to further investigate the work and the subject.

Visual information can reach a larger audience than rhetoric alone, drawing attention even before the viewer is certain what issues are at hand. Art can take advantage of a person's senses, stopping them in their tracks. The thing that captivates the viewer can be a sound, an image, text, or a philosophy. When the audience's formal concept of art and thinking is challenged, they take a second look. The viewer does not have to be fully aware of what is taking place, nor do they have to see the entire art work to be influenced by it. Art is an extremely valuable means of conveying information, this is why it needs to be in the hands of the people, so we can express our own thoughts and concerns.

My Mother's Journey  
1997

Betty T. Kao

I see her face, contorted and perplexed.  
She's five years old,  
trudging toward an endless unlightened road,  
clutching to her mother.  
On their path they will confront rocky hills,  
and corrupt soldiers carrying sacks filled with stolen heirlooms.  
The darkness, the coldness take no excuses.  
They must go forward.  
The only directional guide is the sad movement of the herd,  
each with their own pitiful stories of:  
proud names, families, and estates left behind.  
She holds her mother's hand in a vice,  
knowing that if she is lost, she will never be seen again.  
The journey will not end there.  
Ten years later she will leave her new home in Burma,  
a land of water festivals and tranquil forests turns into  
the new upheaval of homes and mass executions;  
only to arrive in Taiwan alone, with no relatives to meet her.  
She carries the equivalent of twelve dollars.  
She will study hard to become a nurse,  
persevering even with her shattered past.  
One day a call comes, her brother has sad news of her father's death.  
She struggles on,  
forcing her own destiny

that so much has attempted to rip apart.  
Here now,  
my mother sits at home.  
It's snowing bitterly outside,  
and I don't want to go to school.  
But as she brings me hot soup,  
I remember all she has done,  
and why I will go.

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The real terror is  
that people are still  
killing other people

2001

Betty T. Kao

My brother and eldest sister came home covered in dust.

Don't turn back.  
You know what those thuds are:  
The sounds of  
bodies falling and  
the papercutconfettihooraytickettapeparade.  
Don't look on the ground.  
You know what is there:  
Scattered remains of  
your friends;  
a red high heel,  
a leather briefcase blown open,  
a clutching arm.  
Don't scream out.  
Everyone is screaming.  
No one can hear your cries.  
All you will get is  
a mouth full of ashes.



Don't breathe in this dust.  
You know what it is:  
Incinerated bodies.  
Just keep walking.  
This is Kosovo.  
This is Auschwitz.  
This is Rome.  
This is Babylon.  
This is a war.  
Where are my co-workers?

"Excuse me miss, you have to leave. There isn't enough air in our building for you, and our employees."

Good thing flower-girl didn't take that job on the 88th floor of the wtc.  
She had to be unemployed for five months after college, but  
she didn't want to get stuck in that skyscraper in case of a fire, like last time,  
that bombing.  
But who knew this would happen?  
Why are these twins so important?  
Romulus and Remus.

Who else must die?  
How many more?

My firefighters are dead,  
my love, my life,  
that piece of me is gone.  
A neighbor's son, my friend's brother-in-law, someone's husband...  
All that's left is this memory.  
And I can't hold it in my hand or  
press it close to my chest.  
I can't smell his breath.

Even in Central Park,  
this odor pervades.

All I inhale are  
dead bodies.

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Somewhere,  
Babylon.

2006

Betty T. Kao

Somewhere,  
at the existential Taco Bell of your  
soul  
lies  
an Iraqi palace lined with  
American fast food places, latrines, marines,  
and Babylon.  
Once there were roof top gardens,  
now there is double scoop chocolate ice cream with rainbow sprinkles.  
The molecules of milk roll so easily over and against each soldier's tongue.  
So far from home, it's the only thing to remind you of suckling at your mother's teat.

In a land where jasmine scented waters once wafted into the air,  
are now broken sewages for the lay person.  
They said they were there to save the children,  
instead weapons of mass seduction were forced between parched lips.

Where are we now?

There is nothing Green here, there are only more SUVs.  
The mercenaries drive these beasts,  
burning with the slick remains of fossilized extinction,  
hauling cargo of three kinds of cheese,  
pepperoni, and canned tomato sauce.  
A trek over paved roads can be more volatile than  
traveling though an isolated dune at midday.  
Guns pointed toward laissez faire.

Boom.

This man was a civilian.  
He will be wrapped tightly, and shipped home in a few days.

Arabic numbers are tumbling down, one plus one, plus one, plus one, add zero...  
into collateral damage.

Isn't this the land that god touched?

All the algorithms unfurl and tell me: this isn't the answer.

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April 28, 2011

# When Art and Energy Were SoHo Neighbors

By **MICHAEL KIMMELMAN**

London

“BACK then, people who had plans were idiots,” Laurie Anderson said. She laughed.

We were talking by phone one recent evening about what once appeared to be the end of days for New York City during the early '70s, when SoHo dawned. “Like New York, we were all broke,” she reminisced. “We thought of ourselves as workers, conquering someplace inhospitable, and we had a real sense of place.”

A show here at the Barbican Art Gallery celebrates Ms. Anderson, the artist and musician; Trisha Brown, the choreographer; and Gordon Matta-Clark, the sculptor, architect and all-around Pied Piper of experimentalism. The last of the bohemians, you might call SoHo's first settlers. With daily performances in the galleries, the Barbican revives several of Ms. Brown's dances from that time to bring back to life what is meant partly to serve as an object lesson for Britons now roiled by government belt tightening. The curator, Lydia Yee, an expatriate American, told me the other day that she imagined artists here, accustomed to years of prosperity, finding inspiration in looking back on how an earlier generation made do with less.

It's easy to overromanticize a grimy, long-lost era, but reacquainting myself with works like Matta-Clark's silent color film of himself in black tights and white gloves, a hippie [Harold Lloyd](#) shaving and showering with a garden hose while teetering beside the clock face atop the Clocktower Building in Lower Manhattan, and also with Ms. Anderson's deadpan monologue about visits to her psychoanalyst, which she delivers via a teensy video projection of herself onto a pocket-size figurine, I couldn't help wondering: What is it that makes a neighborhood, or for that matter a whole city, come together at a certain moment, culturally speaking? Why was SoHo in its early days vibrant and special in ways that, despite the art world's current money and hype, seem so hard to come by now?



Poverty isn't the answer. There was something carefree but still endearingly grave about the work that came from there then, which had nothing ultimately to do with money or the lack of it. The work ignored the old boundaries separating art from dance from music from architecture, and instead found fresh ground in the interstices between art and life.

Perhaps, somewhat mysteriously, the answer to the question has to do with, as Ms. Anderson put it, a "sense of place." Granted, you had to be young then, and now, to love all, or even most, of what came out of early SoHo; but it's not hard to admire the youthful, messianic energy that derived from the knowledge that anything was possible there because nobody was really paying very much attention. In that unregulated era Ms. Brown was able to persuade her husband to walk like Spider-Man down the seven-story facade of 80 Wooster Street strapped inside a harness, and came up with the idea of positioning a dozen dancers on adjacent rooftops stretching half a mile or so from Prince Street down to White, concocting an open-air performance for anyone who happened to notice. Ms. Anderson was meanwhile stealing naps on a bench at night court on Centre Street and in the women's bathroom in a library at Columbia University, as well as, in the middle of January, on the frozen beach of Coney Island, so that she could then document her dreams in a series of texts and photographs. Around that same time she snapped pictures of men on the street who whistled or cat-called when she passed, oddball mug shots that were also sly tributes to overlooked New Yorkers.

As for Matta-Clark, he was helping to open a groundbreaking exhibition space at 112 Greene Street, turning an industrial-waste container on the street into a maze of makeshift closet-size rooms where invited dancers and artists did impromptu performances. And he devised Food, the fabled artist-run restaurant as be-in on the corner of Wooster and Prince, which catered to young tastes for fresh produce, sushi and global cuisine at a time when salsa was an exotic seasoning in New York.

Matta-Clark also famously sliced up abandoned buildings, including an industrial shed on Pier 52, and he acquired parcels of so-called gutter space in Queens and on Staten Island — tiny, useless pieces of land, the remnants of surveying errors and zoning anomalies that New York City auctioned off to raise petty cash, which he photographed and filmed as if they were examples of found art. Like Ms. Brown on the rooftops or Ms. Anderson on the court bench, he was forever turning attention to the neglected eloquence of in-between, forlorn places, of disused and crumbling parts of the city, and the Barbican show includes photographs he also shot of corners in abandoned buildings. "Opening up view to the invisible," is how he once put it. Translated, that meant restoration and renewal: ours and

New York's.

Revivalist tastes for the '70s have helped drive up commercial demand for art from the period and inspired a glut of earnest dissertations and predictable chatter about art and social responsibility in an era of guilty consciences. Linked to this pining for some ostensibly purer time is the persistent dream of anointing a new SoHo, which for a while now has been Berlin, never mind that the streets of the German capital's former frontier neighborhoods have long been jammed with Bugaboo strollers, custom-made racing bikes and tall young fashionistas wearing clothes from Kostas Murkudis. The city grew up a while ago, as Berliners will tell you.

Maybe during the '90s it was more like nascent SoHo, but clichés die hard, and having lived in Berlin for some years now and come to feel that city's profound dignity and grace have little or nothing to do with the proliferation of art galleries and all the blather about the capital of cool, I am struck by one obvious difference from New York's downtown scene 40 years ago.

SoHo then was a genuine community, a world within the art world, nested inside the larger world of the city. Berlin, for all its glories and advantages, has become, in terms of art, a pit stop on the global caravan. For better and worse, its cultural circles are in large part made up of transients who don't necessarily speak the language and who live on top of the city. They're there for the cheap rents, studio space, parties and one another.

So were many of SoHo's early residents, no doubt, but ones like Matta-Clark, Ms. Anderson and Ms. Brown were also tightly bound up with New York as a source of inspiration and a permanent home. "Not no place," Ms. Anderson also said to me when we spoke about the neighborhood, and this link to place also explains why the era became a heyday for site-specific art.

It's striking how many works in the Barbican take inspiration from the grid of New York, twisting and turning the city streets like blocks of a Rubik's Cube. Ms. Brown talks about her work in terms of pure movement, but "Floor of the Forest" has dancers crawling in and out of shirts and pants hung on a grid of ropes, like clothes on a clothesline. "Walking on the Wall" gets her dancers to do just that, on gallery walls above the heads of visitors, with disorienting effects not so different from Matta-Clark's collaging of sliced and diced buildings.

The grid had obviously been important to earlier generations of New York artists, just as the

flotsam and jetsam of the city had been to older Fluxus artists. But for the settlers of SoHo it helped inspired the creative rebirth of a neighborhood.

In the show's catalog Philip Ursprung, a professor from Zurich, notes how civic renewal during the early '70s also prepared the ground for the neighborhood's eventual demise as an art center. Sushi and the open kitchen at Food foretold a lifestyle that would "by the late 1980s, oust from the area the very people who had transformed it," he writes. Matta-Clark's gutter space acquisitions anticipated the craze for property that would soon overtake the city.

I love Berlin, very much. But its beauty, in some measure, has to do with its failure across two centuries to become the great European metropolis it always aspired to be. It remains, despite its history, a city forever on the verge, in a state of becoming, like the young people who now flock to it, and today it seems more anxious to become SoHo in the '80s than SoHo in the '70s. Lately, in the former East Berlin, a private club for upwardly mobile art types, of the sort that used to be anathema to Berliners, has opened. It's called (albeit after London's identically named neighborhood, not New York's) Soho House. The club could be anywhere in the world, anywhere the new rich live. That's its point.

Attributing symbolic meaning to the club may be a stretch, but what good experimental art came from the early days of New York's SoHo had little to do with the climate of upward mobility, not because artists back then weren't ambitious, which they were, but because there seemed to be nowhere in particular to go. The work was engaged with what was at hand, namely a downtrodden slice of the city, because that's all artists had at the time. And it turned out to be plenty.

"I still live a few blocks away," Ms. Anderson told me about SoHo, before we wrapped up our conversation. "I go to a really great cheese shop in the neighborhood, but otherwise I don't go there much anymore. My friends don't live there now. I got a studio recently in Brooklyn, which reminds me a little of what it was like back then."

She fell silent.

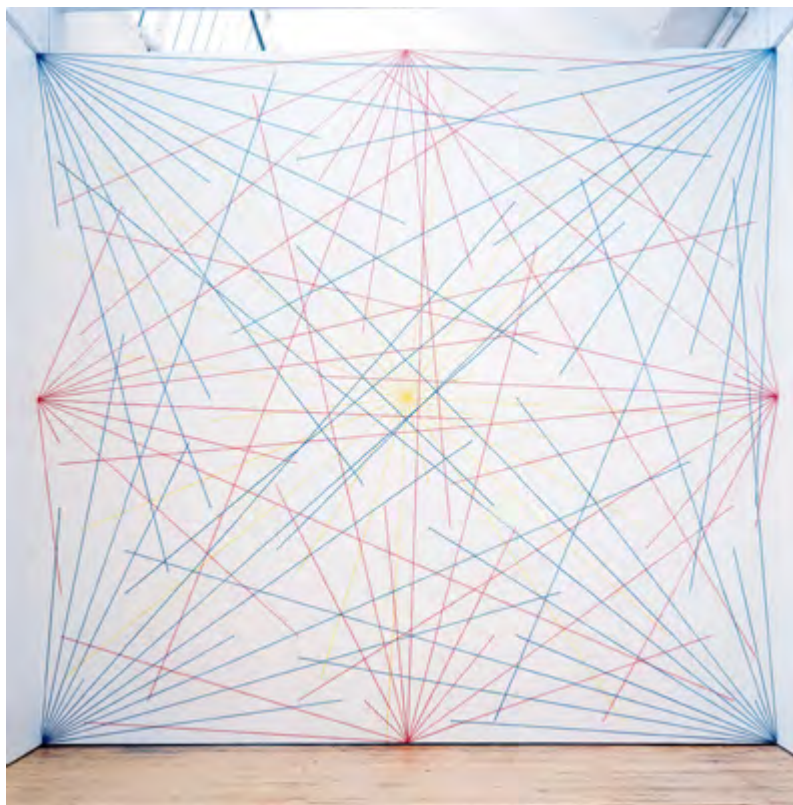
"I was lucky," she decided. "It was a weird time, which I haven't really seen again."

April 2008

# Modest Proposals

JOE SCANLAN

*Industry, commercialism and the bourgeois are very much with us. This whole notion of trying to form a cult that transcends all this strikes me as a kind of religion-in-drag, you might say. I'm just bored with it, frankly.* —Robert Smithson<sup>1</sup>



**Sol LeWitt, *Wall Drawing #273: Lines to points on a grid*, 1975**, water-soluble crayon on wall. Installation view, Dia:Beacon, New York, 2007. Photo: Bill Jacobson.

**AS THE LAWRENCE WEINER RETROSPECTIVE** at the Whitney Museum fades to white under multiple coats of Kilz and latex paint, and his various exuberant ephemera take up residence at LA MoCA before wending their way back to their rightful property owners; as Tate Modern and the ICA London emerge from momentary spells of whispered headlines, random sketching, streams of consciousness, and face slapping; as New York's New Museum concludes its vestigial assault on the Work of Art, not to mention the etiquette of proper spacing, and as visitors to the new building experience the worst case of buyer's remorse since the reopening of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; as the Metropolitan Museum's Dutch paintings readjust to the staid organizing principles of artist's name, date, and genre rather than hanging according to who bought what from whom (on whose advice) and resold it to so-and-so, who then donated it to the Met; and as the scent of modesty—prosaic, charcoal filtered, crystalline—emanates from the 2008 Whitney Biennial, now is as good a time as any to talk about money.

Not money in the massive, toxic sense that characterizes most mentions of it in the context of art, but money in the modest, expansive, nurturing sense that allows artists to pursue their work in its variegated forms. Any discussion of the global economy as a whole would be practically useless if it started from the assumption that General Electric and Sony and Microsoft were the only entities worth talking about, so one has to wonder how illuminating discussions of artists and money can be when they are almost always limited to superlative cases like Damien Hirst and Takashi Murakami



and Jeff Koons—limited that is, to whatever artworks accrue the most zeros in the preproduction, postauction universe. These artists, like Microsoft, are what an economist would call mature companies in established markets, meaning that everything that might be dynamic about them, and the effect that dynamism had on the market, has already happened. The bulk of their efforts are now dedicated to protecting their brands and inserting them into all available markets, from key chains to plaza sculptures. As in art, in economics the perpetual discovery and implementation of new materials, new technologies, and new business strategies—the sum effect of which Austria-born economist Joseph Schumpeter termed *creative destruction*<sup>2</sup>—have a ruthless, catalytic effect on all businesses, regardless of their age and size. In Schumpeter’s characterization, young, nimble, and/or eccentric enterprises present greater growth opportunities than do older, established firms because they are better positioned to adapt to the changes that their very existence brings forth. Key to Schumpeter’s vision of annihilating progress, though, is his observation that the race does not always go to the biggest or most capitalized competitor; rather, exclusive businesses like corner grocers and custom snowboard manufacturers can thrive no matter their size or technical prowess, simply because their operations are too small and incremental to bear the brunt of creative destruction’s perennial force. Schumpeter writes: “A system—any system, economic or other—that at *every* given point of time fully utilizes its possibilities to the best advantage may yet in the long run be inferior to a system that does so at *no* given point of time, because the latter’s failure to do so may be a condition for the level or speed of long-term performance.”<sup>3</sup> This notion of long-term, inefficient, but ultimately superior performance applies exactly to the kind of artists I want to discuss. Not artists who, at every moment, maximize their capitalization and production and exposure, but artists who manage to make a living by minimizing those things, thereby expanding the value system of art and, by extension, the aesthetic of what “making money” looks like—the kinds of actions it might embody and the forms it might take.

In the course of doing so, however, I will need to loosen up several myths that have stunted many recent discussions of artists and money: (1) that art produced in factories is more explicitly (and critically) about money because it expends materials and labor in more obvious ways than art produced in a studio or on a laptop; (2) that money is only interesting in large sums; and (3) that if production only happens in factories and money is only interesting in large sums, then any less than spectacular pursuit of money by an artist must be a kind of death (not worthwhile, a self-imposed drudgery, etc.) or pornography (a willingness to do anything for a little money, no matter how degrading) or both, clearly distasteful and beneath the nobler pursuits of beauty and politics and thought.

Obviously, we can attribute the first myth to Warhol. Now, I admire Andy Warhol, but I think there is little about his oeuvre or his approach to making art that is of use to profit-minded artists now. The idea of art being made in a factory might have been a radical concept in the ’60s, but we would do well to remember that corporations at that time were already in the process of making Warhol-type factories obsolete, as labor pressures, environmental regulations, and supply-chain logistics rendered archetypal factory production untenable. Factories require preplanning, capitalization, operation, security, and maintenance. In a word, overhead: costs to be borne by the factory owner, be it General Electric or Takashi Murakami. Minimizing overhead is essential to creating the physical and mental spaces—the margins—from which an artist’s delightful, unforeseen profits can spring. Conceptual art exemplified this break from factory production in that, wittingly or not, its various approaches entailed such radical (and profitable!) new business strategies as mass customization, data mining, value adding, and inventory velocity. Conceptual art traded the efficiency of manufacturing as many identical things as possible up front (and then transporting, displaying, storing, and insuring them until people could be persuaded to buy them) for the efficiency of not making anything until somebody wants it and will assume production costs. There is no better example of this than the wall drawings of Sol LeWitt.



Cover of Laurie Anderson's album *Big Science* (Warner Bros., 1982).

Last year, during the months of dismay and recovery that followed the news of LeWitt's death, an amazing thing happened: Brand-new works by the artist sprang up all around the world, beautiful, vast, delicate images pulled from manila folders and executed to plan as if part of a vast file-sharing festival. Whereas the value of a typical artist's work lies in the sensibility and rarity of his or her personal output, the value of LeWitt's wall drawings is that they can be made by many people in many places, simultaneously and repeatedly, without LeWitt needing to be present and with no appreciable loss of quality. For a long time (and still), artists made money from their art by having its value understood as an object to be possessed, usually in exchange for money. Thereafter, both the cash and the artwork are subject to their respective markets, the vagaries of history, and either an increase or decrease in value. LeWitt's wall drawings forestall this linear fate by shattering the irreversible moment of exchange: He never really has to surrender his product and is never really paid in full. In any wall drawing, the network of idea, institution, local draftsmen, and LeWitt (if not in body, then in spirit) determines the value of the work, a value that does not rest on any one substantiation but gets remade and recalibrated over time. Which is not to say that distribution and profit margin were LeWitt's guiding principles, but that his instinct for how an artwork might "be" in the world embodies a fundamental shift in how and where we assign value. Like the best aspects of the Internet economy, LeWitt's starburst *Wall Drawing #273: Lines to points on a grid*, 1975, collects and makes sense of diverse points in space without privileging any of them, creating value (and income) out of the relations between things rather than out of the things themselves.

I think all artists choose to work the way they do because they believe it presents their best chance to achieve the level of income that will allow their art to become an all-encompassing way of life. This does not mean getting rich so much as simply selling enough work for the prospect of making new work to become a self-fulfilling cycle of affirmation, a kind of fiduciary peace of mind, like being the only baker in Thorstein Veblen's country town.<sup>2</sup> For such artists, money does not instill the want of more money but rather the desire to make new work, which, in time, generates more money. It is a simple distinction that usually bears itself out in the art that a particular desire generates: Artists who want to get rich want money for what its accumulation represents to others;

artists who want peace of mind want money for what it makes possible for themselves. Make no mistake—all artists want money, even if they already have piles of it, because nothing is more affirming than the approval of a market, *the* market, any market. Artists who claim otherwise either have not yet realized what they want to do, have not yet found the right market for their work (and university art departments, nonprofit institutions, and government granting agencies are markets as well), or, most likely, have not yet persuaded any market, commercial or otherwise, to expand the definition of what it buys and sells.

When you grow up working-class in a remote place and have ambitions of becoming an artist—despite the fact that the nearest art museum is an hour away, the nearest contemporary art venue three hours, and you’ve never actually seen a work of art in person—knowing how to “be” an artist, let alone how to make a living as one, is a daunting enigma. As a college student, then, discovering artists like LeWitt, Weiner, Michael Asher, Adrian Piper, Hamish Fulton, and Laurie Anderson is a revelation because they demonstrate ways of being an artist other than making paintings or the sculptures that go in front of buildings—which you could never get your head around practically, could never visualize yourself doing, and were never really interested in doing in the first place, but that was the job description as it presented itself in Columbus, Ohio, and it sure beat farming and factory work. Discovering Anderson’s *Big Science* LP was what changed everything: art for \$7.99! And not only that, the whole record sounded as if it had been conceived, written, and produced in one well-equipped studio apartment. That idea—of how and where and at what expense art could be produced—was just as meaningful as the record itself. Then, as now, choosing six or seven exact words to be painted on the wall, or going for a walk, or playing the violin in public while standing on a block of ice until it melts, sounded like admirable occupations, lovely trades. Why not celebrate that about them in addition to their critical and conceptual accomplishments? In fact, why not celebrate that tradesman’s genius as a critical accomplishment in itself?



**David Hammons, *Phat Free*, 1995–99**, still from a color video, 5 minutes 2 seconds.

Because doing so would mean confronting art’s final taboo, *class*, a subject that no one, regardless of background, wants to unpack, least of all artists, who never dare broach the subject out of fear that exposing the one mortal truth about their work—how much money they make from it—would annul whatever else they like to think their work is about. Likewise, art historians, curators, and critics—who as a group seem invested in protecting art from the corruption of finance—are reluctant to discuss the possibility that the modern progenitors of the kind of contemplative, nonproductive view of art that they prefer (Charles Baudelaire, Gertrude Stein, Marcel Duchamp,

Walter Benjamin) were able to behave accordingly in part because their industrious families had already amassed enough capital to guarantee their unencumbered ruminations. And so, unable to imagine an alternative, we tacitly acknowledge the vitality of money in public on the condition that it remain suppressed, like blood in the veins, constantly circulating but to be hinted at only upon the death of an ancestor or the occasional blush.

Like the struggle between entrenched power and grassroots change that epitomizes this year's presidential campaign, the violent emergence and stealth occlusion of class in art was nascent in 1968. The various revolutions of that fateful year institutionalized a kind of critical contempt for any artist openly seeking to earn a living from his or her work. In the reification of that politic, many artists who, for economic reasons, work on a small scale, use consumable materials, attempt alternative distribution strategies, or move to marginal locales have fallen prey to an insidious strain of art criticism that can see their production only in negative terms, that is, as a critique of the mainstream commodity makers and of money in general—the pursuit of it, and the capitulations to both consumption and spectacle that invariably follow. From this point of view, all portable, ephemeral, or otherwise modest artworks, by the likes of Rashawn Griffin and Mitzi Pederson or Trisha Donnelly and Tino Sehgal, are to be understood solely in relation to the big commodity makers and only as a reaction against them, as *de rigueur* dematerialization. Of the original generation of critical revolutionaries, only Lucy Lippard has recanted (and thirty years ago, at that), writing, "Some of the blame for this situation must fall on those who, like myself, had exaggerated illusions about the ability of a 'dematerialization of the art object' to subvert the commodity status and political uses to which successful American art has been subjected since the late 1950s. It has become obvious over the last few years that temporary, cheap, invisible or reproducible art has made little difference in the way art and artists are economically and ideologically exploited and that it can hardly be distinguished in that sense from Cor-Ten steel sculptures and twenty-foot canvases."

Many critical artists (myself included) would agree. They understand that they could never exist outside or above the market but that their only viable option is to try to shape the kind of market they want to inhabit. Weiner, for one, has never critiqued the market by refusing to make commodities, as the lenders' names on his current retrospective's wall labels make abundantly clear. Rather, he has critiqued the market by making commodities in forms that it did not yet know how to evaluate. That we now do know the value—both financial and intellectual—of Weiner's work is a testament to how much his participation in the market transformed the range of what it was willing to take seriously. Consequently, I understand artists' motives as being quite different from those usually imputed to them, and although I do not speak for everyone, I am confident I represent a large demographic when I say that two of the most specious motives ever attributed to artists are the critiques of authorship and of the artwork as a salable commodity. Interesting concepts, certainly, useful for papering over a lot of otherwise callow and mendacious art, but debilitating to any citizen of a liberal, capitalist democracy in which name recognition is essential to the reception and purchase of an artist's work, whatever form it might take. Unfortunately, from 1968 until your reading of this sentence it has been very, very hard to change the subject from an irrelevant class struggle that condemns artists to a state of purity or poverty or both to an appreciation of agile, realist, freelance artists plying their trade in an information economy.

Twenty-five years ago this winter, David Hammons appeared on Cooper Square in New York with some snowballs for sale. However well made they were, selling snowballs was not then, nor is it now, a lucrative enterprise. Nonetheless, Hammons has done just fine managing that and other sundry skills, the most profitable of which may be his ability to capture the attention of gadabout curators through the refined art of ignoring them (another lovely trade). As competitive as he is economical, Hammons refuses to commit to any endeavor unless he believes he can be the best at it, and his genius, like that of Weiner and Agnes Martin, lies in his ability to invent desire for skills no one else thought worthwhile to perform—for example, kicking the bucket. Hammons's 1995–99

video *Phat Free*—a pun on both black culture’s love of largeness and white culture’s obsession with losing weight—is a protracted meditation on the fact that no matter what you choose to do in life, you are in some way killing yourself, so you might as well be good at it, enjoy it, and not give a damn what anyone else thinks. The video begins with a dark screen and the audio plays alone. When an image finally does appear, about halfway through the five-minute loop, what sounded like a clothes dryer tumbling a crescent wrench turns out to be Hammons kicking a bucket down the street. It’s interesting. The sound of the metal bucket coming into contact with the uneven sidewalk is joyfully calamitous, and Hammons is quite adept at keeping the eccentrically shaped vessel on a fairly straight course. That passersby pay him no mind is only a testament to his skill. After crossing the street and heading back in the other direction, the camera zooms in, and Hammons ups the ante. Having allowed the bucket to loll to a dead stop, he places his foot on the rim, presses down firmly, and then flips the vessel into the air, where it turns over once before landing in his outstretched hand, like a top hat of Fred Astaire’s. Then the screen goes black, the audio comes back to the fore, and Hammons kicks the bucket all over again.



**Jérôme Bel, *Pichet Klunchun and Myself*, 2005.** Performance view, Dance Theater Workshop, New York. Photo: Julieta Cervantes.

I like thinking that Hammons stumbled on his bucket-kicking skill while on the way to doing something else—making art by more usual methods, perhaps—since smart people allow themselves to be inspired by those in-between moments when they are not making art at all. In such a state of mind, the avoidance of convention and the necessity of living can become a kind of rock and a hard place, a pressure point capable of squeezing out some pretty inventive work.

This past February, the Sadler’s Wells Theatre in London revived nearly all of Jérôme Bel’s dances, including *Pichet Klunchun and Myself* (2005), an arch and entertaining parable in which the two choreographers act out an inquisitive kind of cultural anthropology. It is a trademark of Bel’s thinking that a given thing—a pop song, the stage, an “exotic” person—can be taken so literally as to be crushed under the weight of its own familiarity, and Bel makes as many diamonds as he does bits of gravel with his exhilarating, pressure-packed approach. There is much about *Pichet Klunchun and Myself* that will raise eyebrows—the entire scenario, in fact. The choreography starts with the stage empty except for two ordinary metal chairs facing each other, placed about fifteen feet apart. Klunchun, from Thailand, is in the left chair. His hair is close-cropped; he is barefoot, and dressed in lean, lightweight clothes. His only props are two clear plastic bottles of water with the labels removed. Bel, from France, is in the right chair. He is scruffy and unkempt, dressed in shoes engineered well beyond any use he will have for them and baggy pants with many pockets of the same ilk. His props are a white MacBook Pro and a power strip with the cables streaming



offstage. East meets West? Bel's character goes first and proceeds to ask Klunchun's character a few perfunctory, INS-type questions, before delving into the exactitude of classical Thai dance.

As the performance progresses, many grand assumptions are framed but left unstated—for example, that monarchy breeds virtuosity and that democracy breeds amateurism. At one point, after Klunchun has demonstrated a fraction of what appears to be the infinite symbolic subtlety of Thai movement (Klunchun is absolutely mesmerizing, even in demonstration), he asks Bel to show off some of his own choreography. Bel proceeds to stand, walk to the rear of the stage, and gape about for several minutes in silence, as if waiting for a bus. Stunned, Klunchun asks why anyone would pay to see such a thing. Bel shrugs. After making passing reference to *The Society of the Spectacle* and the panoply of available entertainment he would like to avoid, Bel avers (and here I am paraphrasing) that “in the West, it is the job of a contemporary artist to represent their lived reality as accurately as possible. And since reality is something to which we have no direct access but in fact, at every moment, are living, then spending money to see one of my productions is an investment in the future, in the continual substantiation of the unknown.” Soon after, in response to Klunchun's wish for another example, Bel dies a slow, collapsing, very unswanlike death while lip-synching Roberta Flack's “Killing Me Softly.” It brings down the house.

Bel is not shy about the market he inhabits, nor is he ashamed that he has to inhabit one at all, whether it comprises the French government, commissioning agencies, paying customers, or some Venn diagram of all three. Instead, he seems content (well, as content as a French poststructuralist choreographer can be) that there are two or three hundred people on a given night who want to be part of his demographic. And if someone looking for *Showgirls* or even Paul Taylor wanders in off the street and accidentally surrenders £12, then so be it. Maybe they'll realize they got their money's worth anyway and will want to join Bel's circle, too. At that moment, Bel's infuriating and cathartic responses to any artist's two most basic questions—“What do I want to do?” and “Where will my money come from?”—bloom into a homeopathic approach to market behavior that anyone could aspire to.

*Joe Scanlan is a New York-based artist and an associate professor at Yale University.*

## NOTES

1. Moira Roth, “An Interview with Robert Smithson (1973),” in *Robert Smithson*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2004), 85.
2. Joseph Schumpeter, “Chapter VII: The Process of Creative Destruction,” in *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1942), 81–86.
3. Schumpeter, 83.
4. See “Part III: The Country Town,” in Veblen's *Absentee Ownership: Business Enterprise in Recent Times: The Case of America*, first published in 1923. Reprinted in *What Veblen Taught: Selections from the Writings of Thorstein Veblen* (New York: The Viking Press, 1936), 394–422. In this modest book, Veblen focuses on the peculiar exceptions to typically capitalist market competition that exist in the isolated conditions of a country town, the most prevalent being that monopolistic practices are tolerated by all members of the community because each of them provides a good or service that no one else does. Lack of competition causes prices to be higher, but it also forces a broader range of essential products to be made available. For example, if the town is not large enough to support two bakers, then an aspiring businessperson might decide to open a yoga studio instead.
5. Lucy Lippard, “The Structures, the Structures and the Wall Drawings, the Structures and the Wall Drawings and the Books,” in *Sol LeWitt*, exh. cat. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1978), 27.

<http://artforum.com/inprint/issue=200804&id=19749&pagenum=0>

Joshua Simon

# Neo- Materialism, Part One: The Commodity and the Exhibition

01/07

e-flux journal #20 — november 2010 Joshua Simon  
Neo-Materialism, Part One: The Commodity and the Exhibition

It is perfectly understandable that the dandy, the man who is never ill at ease, would be the ideal of a society that had begun to experience a bad conscience with respect to objects. What compelled the noblest names of England, and the regent himself, to hang on every word that fell from Beau Brummell's lips was the fact that he presented himself as the master of science that they could not do without. To men who had lost their self-possession, the dandy, who makes of elegance and the superfluous his *raison d'être*, teaches the possibility of a new relation to things, which goes beyond both the enjoyment of their use-value and the accumulation of their exchange value. He is the redeemer of things, the one who wipes out, with his elegance, their original sin: the commodity.

– Giorgio Agamben<sup>1</sup>

In recent years, in addition to critiques of the market and of the cycles of exploitation enacted by commodity exchange, a new set of sensibilities has been introduced in critical contemporary art, dealing with the ways in which the commodity and its surrounding economy activate us. One can say that the commodity is only really true to itself as art, and thus the exhibition becomes a format that enables us to see the commodity as it is. In order to understand objects, we must first acknowledge that every artwork is first and foremost a commodity.

In his three-part essay "Art and Thingness," Sven Lütticken examines the art object as a transient object subjected to commodification through a series of processes.<sup>2</sup> Among the many virtues of the text is how Lütticken points out a shift in the object right from the start: "'Things' are no longer passively waiting for a concept, theory, or sovereign subject to arrange them in ordered ranks of objecthood."<sup>3</sup> To my mind, however, this impressive survey neglects to examine the commodity as an entity prior to the art object, as the thing that precedes any object, including art objects.

Following the Marxian analysis of the commodity, my essay will focus on contemporary art objects within the framework of the exhibition – a form of seeing that allows an encounter with the art object as commodity. Even when artists, curators, critics, and spectators opt for an intimate, narrative, symbolic, critical, or any other understanding of objects, in an exhibition objects nevertheless converse in the language of commodities. While formalistic analysis reveals that this non-literal

language involves materials, colors, shapes, scale, and composition, what is it exactly that the objects say?

In the section of *Capital* titled “The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof,” Marx demonstrates that the commodity is a materialization of our social relations:

A commodity appears, at first sight, a very trivial thing, and easily understood. Its analysis shows that it is, in reality, a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties. So far as it is a value in use, there is nothing mysterious about it, whether we consider it from the point of view that by its properties it is capable of satisfying human wants, or from the point that those properties are the product of human labor. It is as clear as noon-day that man, by his industry, changes the forms of the materials furnished by Nature, in such a way as to make them useful to him. The form of wood, for instance, is altered, by making a table out of it. Yet, for all that, the table continues to be that common, every-day thing, wood. But, so soon as it steps forth as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than “table-turning” ever was.<sup>4</sup>

According to Marx, the commodity is comprised of two values: use value and exchange value. But there is a third, intrinsic value that stems from exchange value, and it is here that the total and unconditional interdependency between commodities is found. The commodity is the thing that always feels at home. Whereas man suffers from a folkloristic and identity-dependent conception of foreignness, acquaintance, history, tradition, and alienation, and plants and animals have difficulty acclimatizing, the commodity is a mode of being that is free of all these. It is first and foremost a presence.

### **Their World, Not Ours**

Maybe the time when we will be able to discuss this civilization of private property in the past tense is just around the corner, but for now it is still present in all its extremes. Private property remains the cornerstone of an all-encompassing liberal concept of our civilization, and it is the key to understanding our relations with each other and with objects, as well as between objects. It is a conceptual framework based on

negation, on exclusion – something can be mine only if it excludes others who might otherwise own it. Yet the logic of ownership that has guided our understanding of the world of things no longer answers to the challenge. Most commodities live longer than their creators and consumers alike – for even a simple plastic bag will outlive us all many, many times over. As commodities ourselves, even our bodily organs can outlive us. Therefore, as all objects that enter into this world are commodities, we must realize that this is not our world, but rather theirs. We dwell in the world of commodities.

In Michael Bay’s blockbuster film *Transformers* (2007), beings from another planet fight for control of Earth. As the mythology in the film has it, these beings arrived on Earth in search of a new planet to settle; upon arrival, considering how to properly disguise themselves, the aliens concluded that cars and weapons comprised the main forms of existence on the planet, and they proceeded to assume those forms. While on one level this can be taken as a mere fiction, the number of cars in the world now approaches two billion, and countries such as Germany produce more cars in a year than newborn babies. Can anyone blame the Transformers for seeing Earth as a planet of cars, and not of humans?

Guy Ben-Ner’s video *Stealing Beauty* (2008), shot without permission in IKEA stores across the world, focuses on private property’s relation to the family. In the video, Ben-Ner, his wife, and his two children inhabit IKEA’s various domestic settings as if they were in their own home. While shoppers pass through the frame, a series of domestic scenarios play out. The son is caught stealing in school and the father (who masturbates compulsively) offers the son a lesson in moral conduct by explaining the concepts of private property, family, and value. While Ben-Ner’s son washes dishes in a display sink with invisible (but audible) water, his daughter reads from Friedrich Engels’ *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*:

So, the original meaning of the word family, first coined in Ancient Rome, did not have the sentimental and domestic meaning we attach to it today. For the Romans the word “family” did not even refer to the married pair and their children, but to the slaves. “Famulus” means a domestic slave. “Familia” means the total number of slaves belonging to one man. This was the new Roman social organism whose head, the father, ruled over wife, kids, and slaves. And thus, transition into full private property was accomplished parallel with transition to monogamy. The single family

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became the economic unit of society. Sentimentality and love came only later, to seal the deal.

The liberal view of the tension between commodification and family is not the point, of course. Following Marx and Engels, Ben-Ner sees private property as the very basis of the family. For him, the family feels no aversion to living in an IKEA store; rather, it is already there. Standardized consumption outlets such as IKEA answer to the same ancient logic from which the family originates. Richard Hamilton's sarcastic question, "Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?" is answered by Ben-Ner, who states that our homes are not ours to begin with – we inhabit the world of another. IKEA's objects do not furnish our world, we dwell in theirs.

Guy Ben-Ner's interest in objects and their function has appeared and reappeared throughout his work. Video works such as *Berkeley's Island* (1999), *Moby Dick* (2000), *Household* (2001), *Elia* (2003), *Treehouse Kit* (2005), *I'd Give It To You But I Borrowed It* (2007) include, among other things, a kitchen that becomes the deck of a ship and a desert island, a fridge that becomes a book, a crib that

transforms into a prison, a table that changes into a chair, a man that becomes an ostrich, objects that become a bicycle, IKEA furniture that turns into a tree. These are turns from the linguistic to the economic that require a change in the position of the subject: it is no longer humans that conduct things; rather, humans are conducted within them. *Stealing Beauty* ends with the two children addressing the camera directly with the following speech:

Children of the world, unite. Release the future from the shackles of the past. My peers, it is our time to steal. Not in order to gain property but in order to lose respect for it. Property is like a ghost. You cannot possess it without being possessed by it. Steal and let others steal. Let property move freely from place to place so it will not haunt your home. Steal from the local supermarket. Steal from the city! Steal from the state! Steal from your parents! And above all, don't accept inheritance – steal it. Rob your parents and rid yourself of promises you will have to keep. Children of the world, unite. Release the future from the shackles of the past.

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Guy Ben-Ner, *Stealing Beauty*, 2007. Screen capture single channel video, color with sound, dvd 17' 40", courtesy of Postmasters gallery, New York.

Private property is the basic category of civilization, and it is through inheritance that private property is passed on, thus creating its own history of civilization. Freedom from property and inheritance can free us from this history and present the prospect of a new civilization, with the relation to, and between, objects remaining a primary anchor. For the purposes of tracing our understanding of objects today, however, it is important to understand the category of private property to be an insufficient one.

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after, and watching over them.

If we examine historical events in relation to the commodity, they can reveal an alternate history. For example, we find that the French Revolution, as a revolutionary demand for private property to answer the bourgeois call *Laissez passer! Laissez faire!*, was also a demand for the free passage of commodities through trade. In the spirit of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (1789), in which private property is a sanctified right (according to article XVII in the declaration), commodities blow with the wind, and every place is their home.<sup>6</sup> And unlike people, commodities such as cars, trains, and airplanes are allowed smoother, and quicker, passage.

Another example can be found in the European Union, which we usually regard as dating back to the European Economic Community. But if we look again at the events during and following World War II, we find that, contrary to the common belief that the unification of Europe started with the Treaties of Rome in 1957 – signed by the leaders of France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, The Netherlands, and Luxembourg as a result of the scars of World War II – the union was born, from the perspective of the commodity, in the Vichy government's collaboration with the Nazis in June 1940, when France and Germany worked together for the first time after generations of hostility. Customs regulations were softened, since part of France was occupied by the Nazis and another part was collaborating with them. With the termination of World War II, the relationship simply continued. Thus the commodity teaches us history – the provocative truth it tells us is that the European Union is also a continuation of the collaboration between the Nazis and the Fascists. And insofar as people now have free passage, they are sentenced to be led only as commodities: right of passage is given to them either as members of a workforce or as tourists. The familiar question “business or pleasure?” comes to stand for the limited categories through which movement in the world is allowed.

Everything that comes into this world does so as a commodity. The world belongs to the commodity, not to us. And today it would be hard to deny that we have more intimate relations with commodities than we do with each other. On a social level, the commodity can be considered part of a networked economy of exploitation: from design and creation, through marketing and distribution, to consumption and waste. According to Marxian tradition, the fetishism of commodities empties them of meaning, hiding the real social relations invested in them through human labor. This allows the imaginary, ideological, and symbolic social relations to be,



Patek Philippe ad.

A well-known advertisement by luxury wristwatch-maker Patek Philippe seems to suggest a way into the paradox of ownership and inheritance by identifying the explicit tension between the existence of the object and the ownership of it:

You never actually own a Patek Philippe.  
You merely look after it for the next generation.<sup>5</sup>

By consecrating inheritance, the advertisement asserts that nothing can be owned – only looked after. Not only can we no longer believe in the myth of ownership, but we also require a new ethics for using objects – for taking care, looking



in Sut Jhally's terms, "injected into the construction of meaning."<sup>7</sup> Jhally maps the new meanings advertising produces through commodity fetishism in four successive religious stages: 1) utility/idolatry, in which commodities are freed from being merely utilitarian things; 2) symbolization/iconology, in which commodities serve as abstract representations of social values; 3) personification/narcissism, in which they are intimately connected with the world of interpersonal relations; and 4) lifestyle/totemism, in which the first three stages merge to define the group under a singular lifestyle.<sup>8</sup>

Money is the ultimate representational system of value in this civilization. Marx has demonstrated that it is through the objective symbol of money value that commodity fetishism conceals labor, and thus social relations. In spite of the fact that the producer's labor is the source of the commodities' value, within the context of the market the producer thinks of the fruit of his or her own labor as a consumer would – as objects to be bought and sold. In this way, the commodity echoes the workers' silence. As David Harvey puts it, "capital is not a thing, but rather a process in which money is perpetually sent in search of more money."<sup>9</sup> As an object, then, the commodity materializes labor as capital – operating as both thing and process. The universality of money becomes easily exchanged for the particularity of the commodity. But when the commodity's particularity must be converted into the universality of money, things become much more problematic.<sup>10</sup> Interestingly enough, the commodity actually loses its money value at the moment of payment – as soon as the commodity is purchased, it is on its way to becoming waste.

According to Marx, the commodity must have human labor invested in it. But although it is the result – and the reflection – of social relations, the commodity, be it goods or services, fetishizes itself through the equivalence of money value, presenting itself as a relation between objects – kicking men out of the equation, so to speak. But in a consumer economy in which cause and effect can no longer be traced – for example, when there are more commodities than human beings – we can no longer believe that commodities are mere materializations of our social relations. While they may still be this, they also have a social life of their own that has included us in it.<sup>11</sup> Marx's quote above seems to suggest that we are actually a materialization of *their* relations. Consider our bodies – blood sugar levels, kidney stones, cholesterol levels, or cancerous pollution. In our relations with commodities, we no longer have the ability to decide between

production or consumption, improvisation or function, profit or loss. It is in this way that, as part of the social relations that materialize within it, the commodity gains a life of its own – beyond even the means of its invention: design, manufacturing, production, marketing, shipment, disposal, and evacuation.

### The Exhibition

In his seminal 1967 essay "Art and Objecthood," Michael Fried recognized the Minimalist ("literalist," according to Fried) object's tendency towards anthropomorphism. It is an art object that aspires to be a subject associated with the viewer's space, that has a presence equal to that of man in the space:

literalist art stakes everything on shape as a given property of objects, if not indeed as a kind of object in its own right. It aspires not to defeat or suspend its own objecthood, but on the contrary to discover and project objecthood as such.<sup>12</sup>

Paradoxically, it is the critical tools used by formalists (and those leaning towards mysticism in all things) that allow for an entry point into the language of things. It is taken for granted that art objects speak – with us and amongst themselves. Neo-materialist formal languages center on questions of material, shape, volume, scale, composition, and authorship only through the commodity character of objects. But at the end of the day, literalist/minimalist attempts maintain the logic of cause and effect, the duality of object and subject. They tell us that the artist created an object aspiring to a presence equal to that of the viewer. Whereas Minimalism is anthropocentric, commodities exist prior to the viewer and to the artist.

Beyond being a narrative and an event, the exhibition is a form of exiting. As soon as you enter an exhibition, you walk through it as if you were on your way out. In this sense, the exhibition and the commodity share an allegorical relation. When we wish to describe what is being exhibited, we usually use the words "object," "piece," "artifact," "thing," "product," and even "commodity." One's preference depends on the discourse to which the description belongs. "Object" is used commonly in contemporary art, as it is regarded as intrinsically constitutive of subjects. "Object" is an interesting word, for in Hebrew it means "will" (*chefetz* – similar to "having an objective" in English). "Piece" is also common in this context, as it introduces a maker, a master of that piece, suggesting the thing to be passive and transparent, a mere projection of its maker's intention. "Thing" is used mainly in relation to a

mute presence that calls for contextualization. “Product” refers to a process of creation, bringing with it an impression of finality, a *fait accompli*. And “artifact” relates to an outcome or a residue. “Commodity” is used primarily in the context of a critique of the market, but I believe that this term should include all of the terms mentioned above.<sup>13</sup> In a world where everything is already a commodity, “object” and “thing” are in this respect terms that attempt to cleanse the commodity of the chains of its birth, thus hiding its history and the means by which it appears in the world.

In this prefabricated world, one can claim that all things are commodities: objects, land, air, garbage, debt, action, and so forth. And the double-sided nature of the exhibition can also be understood in terms of the commodity – like the commodity, the exhibition is dependent yet independent, it is social and yet it is indifferent, it is inside us yet it is not of us.<sup>14</sup> Objects in an exhibition are characterized by a suspended duration of being, allowing them an existence beyond use and exchange value. As both a retinal and non-retinal viewing mechanism, the exhibition embodies a much wider aesthetic experience that allows us to view commodities as they are. More than in any other context, commodities are most true to themselves as art.

x

*To be continued in “Neo-Materialism, Part Two: The Unreadymade.”*

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Joshua Simon is a curator and writer based in Tel Aviv-Jaffa. The three-part essay published on e-flux journal is a section from his upcoming book on Neo-Materialism. Simon is co-founding editor of *Maayan Magazine* and *The New&Bad Art Magazine* and he is the editor of *Maarvan (Western) – New Film Magazine* all based in Tel Aviv-Jaffa. Currently, he is a PhD candidate at the Curatorial/Knowledge program at the Visual Cultures department, Goldsmiths college, University of London. He is the editor of *United States of Israel-Palestine* forthcoming in the *Solution* series by Sternberg Press. Among his poetry projects are *Red: Anthology of Hebrew and Arabic Class Poetry* (May Day 2007), and *Out! Against the Attack on Gaza* (Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Beirut and Cairo, 2008-2009). He is the co-editor of the book of censored exhibition *The Aesthetics of Terror* (Charta Art Books, 2009). Select curatorial projects include: *Sharon* (Tel Aviv 2004), *Blanks* (CCA, Tel Aviv 2005), *The Rear – the first Herzliya Biennial of Contemporary Art* (2007), *Come to Israel, It’s Hot and Wet and We Have The Humus!* (Storefront for Art and Architecture, NYC 2008), *Internazionale!* (The Left Bank – Israeli Communist Party Culture Club, 2008) *The Invisible Hand* (Sommer Contemporary Art, 2009). His latest curatorial project *The Unreadymade* opens at FormContent, London UK on December 3rd 2010.

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1  
Giorgio Agamben, *Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture*, trans. Ronald L. Martinez (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 48.

2  
See Sven Lütticken, "Art and Thingness, Part One: Breton's Ball and Duchamp's Carrot," *e-flux journal*, no. 13 (February 2010); "Art and Thingness, Part Two: Thingification," *e-flux journal*, no. 15 (April 2010); and "Art and Thingness, Part Three: The Heart of the Thing is the Thing We Don't Know," *e-flux journal*, no. 16 (May 2010).

3  
Lütticken, "Art and Thingness, Part One" and W. J. T. Mitchell *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005), 112.

4  
Karl Marx, "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof," in *Capital* (1867), available at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch01.htm%23S4> (accessed June 29, 2010).

5  
I thank Noam Yuran for drawing my attention to this ad.

6  
See Georges Lefebvre, "The Bourgeois Revolution," in *The French Revolution*, vol 1, trans. Elizabeth Moss Evanson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 102–116.

7  
Sut Jhally, *The Codes of Advertising: Fetishism and the Political Economy of Meaning in the Consumer Society* (New York: Psychology Press, 1990), 51.

8  
*Ibid.*, 201–202.

9  
David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital: And the Crises of Capitalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 40.

10  
Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital*, 106.

11  
See for example Arjun Appadurai's notion of the anthropology of things in "Commodities and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3–64

12  
Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," in *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 151.

13  
My aim here is to preserve the

Marxian notion that to some extent, the commodity has a mind of its own, and that this "mind" is actually what we see in the exhibition. For a critical analysis of use value and exchange value, and fetishism in relation to labor, see the chapter "Fetishism and Ideology" in Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, trans. Charles Levin (New York: Telos, 1981), 88–101. For a discussion of various "pure" and "loose" definitions of the commodity between exchange and value, see Arjun Appadurai, "Commodities and the Politics of Value."

14  
Jean Baudrillard describes commodities as seductive yet lacking desire. See Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, trans. Philippe Beitchman and W. G. J. Niesluchowski (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2008).

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Paul O'Neill & Mick Wilson (Eds.)

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# **INTRODUCTION**

Paul O'Neill & Mick Wilson

Contemporary curating is marked by a turn to education. Educational formats, methods, programmes, models, terms, processes and procedures have become pervasive in the praxes of both curating and the production of contemporary art and in their attendant critical frameworks. This is not simply to propose that curatorial projects have increasingly adopted education as a theme; it is, rather, to assert that curating increasingly operates as an expanded educational praxis. It is this proposition — that curating, and art production more broadly, have produced, undergone or otherwise manifested an educational turn — to which the authors gathered in this volume have been invited to respond.

As will become clear, this is a profoundly contested proposition; the credibility, significance and critical currency of the proposed turn is disputed across the texts assembled here. Indicative of this contestation is Marion von Osten's assertion that 'we must be somewhat sceptical with regard to the 'educational turn' [...] in terms of [...] displacing the real questions of knowledge economies and cognitive capitalism'.<sup>(1)</sup> Our purpose in preparing this volume has been to critically describe, locate, reflect upon, think through and, ultimately, to trouble this mooted turn to educational models and practices in recent curatorial and artistic practice.

Initial talk of an educational turn was prompted by the widespread adoption of pedagogical models, as problematised through various curatorial strategies and critical art projects. Discussions, talks, symposia, education programmes, debates and discursive practices have long played a supporting role to the exhibition of contemporary art, especially in the context of museums, biennials and, more recently, art fairs. Historically, these discussions have been peripheral to the exhibition, operating in a secondary role in relation to the display of art for public consumption. More recently, these discursive interventions and relays have become central to contemporary practice; they have now become the main event. However, these discursive productions are not only pervasive; increasingly, they are framed in terms of education, research, knowledge production and learning. Furthermore, in many instances, there is a pronounced impulse to distance these platforms from the established formats of museum education and related official cultural pedagogies. This is not simply a reinstatement of the curator as an expert charged with educating a public about the content of a given collection,

1. See 'Twist and Shout: On Free Universities, Educational Reforms and Twists and Turns Inside and Outside the Art World' in this volume. [pp. 271–284].

but rather a kind of ‘curatorialisation’ of education whereby the educative process often becomes the object of curatorial production.

Projects which manifest this engagement with educational and pedagogical formats and motifs have been divergent in terms of scale, purpose, modus operandi, value, visibility, reputational status and degree of actualisation. They include Daniel Buren and Pontus Hultén’s *Institut des Hautes Études en Arts Plastiques*, 1996; the ‘Platforms’ of *Documenta 11* in 2002; the educational leitmotif of *Documenta 12* in 2007; the unrealised *Manifesta 6* experimental art school as exhibition and the associated volume, *Notes for an Artschool*; the subsequent *unitednationsplaza* and *Night School* projects; *protoacademy*; *Cork Caucus*; *Be(com)ing Dutch: Eindhoven Caucus*; *Future Academy*; *The Paraeducation Department*; ‘Copenhagen Free University’; *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y.*; *Hidden Curriculum*; Tania Bruguera’s *Arte de Conducta* in Havana; *ArtSchool Palestine*; *Brown Mountain College*; *Manoa Free University*; and *School of Missing Studies*, Belgrade. Given the volume of work available for discussion in terms of art as educational praxis, this is a very short list. However, it hopefully indicates the broad distribution of the work under consideration.<sup>(2)</sup>

The escalation in discursive events has also been at the centre of new and experimental, though often short-lived, institutional models.<sup>(3)</sup> Adopting a counter-institutional ethos, these discursive productions often implement a durational dialogical process, along the informal lines of

2. In identifying a broad list of examples, we are conscious of not beginning with a delimited category, such as that developed by Kristina Lee Podesva who proposed that ‘education as a form of art making constitutes a relatively new medium. It is distinct from projects that take education and its institution, the academy, as a subject or facilitator of production’. Drawing on research in the Copenhagen Free University and elsewhere, Podesva itemises ten characteristics and concerns across a spectrum of education-as-medium projects. These include: ‘A school structure that operates as a social medium’; ‘A tendency toward process (versus object) based production’; ‘An aleatory or open nature’; ‘A post-hierarchical learning environment where there are no teachers, just co-participants’; ‘A preference for exploratory, experimental, and multi-disciplinary approaches to knowledge production’; ‘An awareness of the instrumentalisation of the academy’. See Kristina Lee Podesva, ‘A Pedagogical Turn: Brief Notes on Education as Art’. *Filip*, 6. 2007 [<http://filip.ca/content/a-pedagogical-turn>]. It is also worth looking at Anton Vidokle’s ‘Incomplete Chronology of Experimental Art Schools’. *Notes for an Art School*. International Foundation Manifesta. 2006. p. 19.

3. Examples include programmes by Maria Lind at Kunsverein München; Catherine David at Witte de With in Rotterdam; Maria Hlavajova at BAK in Utrecht; Nicolas Bourriaud and Jérôme Sans at Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Vasif Kortun at Platform Garanti Contemporary Art in Istanbul; and Charles Esche’s museum model at Rooseum in Malmö. Esche described his model operating as ‘part community centre, part laboratory and part academy’. See [[http://www.republicart.net/disc/institution/esche01\\_en.htm](http://www.republicart.net/disc/institution/esche01_en.htm)]. Other ‘new institutional’ precedents from the 1990s include Künstlerhaus Stuttgart (under Ute Meta Bauer, then Nicolaus Schafhausen), Arteleku in San Sebastián (Santi Eraso), CAC in Vilnius (Kestutis Kuizinas, along with Deimantas Narkevicius and Raimundas Malašauskas) and Shedhalle in Zürich (Ursula Biemann).

Socratic *elenchus* rather than prescriptive 'schooling' or 'explication'. In other words, they seem to seek not the masterful production of expertise and the authoritative pronouncement of truth but rather the coproduction of question, ambiguity and enquiry, often determined by the simple contingencies of where people happen to begin a conversation.

Many of these exemplary projects and tendencies are explored and discussed by the authors in this publication. For several of the authors gathered here, these primarily function as points of departure for performative or polemical texts which themselves refuse a masterful discourse of explication in an attempt to honour the ethos of counter-institutional and counter-hegemonic practices of dissent and emergence. In a countervailing tendency, some authors have elected to focus on micro-practices, within formal education or within the development of institutional off-site projects, in which questions of site, public, community and education converge. These texts often diverge not only in terms of genre, criticality and authorial voice but also in terms of the broader universe of discourse posited. This dispersion of positions has been retained, and we have not imposed a superstructure of sub-sections to domesticate the discordances.

In developing this anthology, we conducted a series of seminars and public discussions in London,<sup>(4)</sup> Dublin<sup>(5)</sup> and Venice,<sup>(6)</sup> which readily identified several points of contention, notably the very impulse to name something as seemingly unitary and all-inclusive as an educational turn. Many of the contributors to this volume begin by problematising these very terms and, indeed, this is indicative of the urgency with which the question of non-instrumentalised, emancipatory and critical cultural practices are approached against a political background increasingly dominated by rhetorics of culture-as-service, knowledge production, the creative economy, immaterial labour and educational outcomes. This is

4. 'You talkin' to me? Why art is turning to education' was a roundtable discussion that took place on 14 July 2008 at the ICA, London. The discussion was organised by Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson and speakers included Dave Beech, Liam Gillick, Andrea Phillips, Sarah Pierce and Adrian Rifkin. An edited transcript of the discussion has been published in Mark Sladen *et al.* (eds.), *Nought to Sixty*. ICA. 2009.

5. 'Ambivalent Ruins: Anniversaries in art education' was a roundtable discussion that took place on 26 September 2008 at the Graduate School of Creative Arts and Media in Dublin. Speakers included Maeve Connolly, Andrea Phillips, Declan Long, Glenn Loughran and Martin McCabe. See [[http://gradcam.ie/speaking\\_matters/ambivalent\\_ruins.php](http://gradcam.ie/speaking_matters/ambivalent_ruins.php)].

6. 'Of publics, pedagogies and academies: a conversation in a garden' was a roundtable discussion that took place on 5 June 2009 at the Irish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. Speakers included Francis Halsall, Mick Wilson, Fiona Kearney and Declan Long. See [[http://www.gradcam.ie/speaking\\_matters/pedagogy\\_venice.php](http://www.gradcam.ie/speaking_matters/pedagogy_venice.php)].



perhaps especially so given that such rhetorics go relatively un-interrogated within mainstream debate and policy discourses.

Arguably, the 'turn' as a rhetorical device for positing a particular moment of re-alignment is hackneyed, somewhat superficial and all too easily commodified.<sup>(7)</sup> On the other hand, the term is useful for suggesting a logic of development that can be both autonomous and heteronomous; it can name a process of change that can be intrinsic or extrinsic or both; it can name an evolving process without inevitably constructing a radical or over-blown discontinuity; and this verbal noun can usefully posit a processual dynamic rather than a fixed condition or stable state. With this rhetoric, there is also an invocation of flux and the shifting of territories, stabilities and normative positions. One contributor summarily captures the torsion of the term when he asserts:

The trope of 'turn' as in 'educational turn' could certainly garner the kind of academic attention that 'takes account', i.e. collects all the traces/evidences of the allegedly 'educational' without noticing what goes on beyond the chosen paradigm. The claims for 'turns' (visual, pictorial, spatial) clearly tend to be reductive and exclusive. However, one could consider them to be of heuristic value as well. Their mere existence and career as tropes generate moments and constellations that make apparent the need for a more differentiating and discerning perspective.<sup>(8)</sup>

In our original formulation of the brief for this volume, the term 'pedagogy' was more prevalent than that of 'education'; over time, however, this primacy was reversed. Unlike the term pedagogy — etymologically, the art of teaching the child — education does not privilege the

7. Rhetorically, the figure of the 'turn' may be connected with a range of imagery pertaining to the path, to conversion and to reversal. The philosophical currency of the term may be attributed to Kant's description of his critical philosophy in terms of a 'Copernican turn'. (For an interesting discussion of the 'turn' metaphor see Kojin Karatani, *Transcritique: On Kant and Marx*. MIT Press. 2003. p.23.) This has been greatly reinforced by Heidegger's *kehre* and by discussions of the by-now-commonplace (although variously construed) linguistic turn. However, in a range of English expressions, such as 'as it turned out', 'things took a turn' and 'a turn up for the books', there is general application of turning as an image of happenstance and contingency. Julia Kristeva's playful etymology of 'revolt' suggests another dimension to the rhetoric of 'turning' as a matter of circular movement and by extension, temporal return, but also as a matter of 'overturning' an established order. (See Julia Kristeva. *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis, Volume 1*. Columbia University Press. 2000. pp. 1-3.)

8. See Tom Holert's contribution to this volume, 'Latent Essentialisms: An Email Exchange on Art, Research and Education'. [p.320-328].

theme of teaching over that of learning and, unlike pedagogy (with its complementary construct, andragogy), education is not etymologically posited upon the adult/child distinction. However, the contemporary semantic resonance of both these terms is rich and overlapping and, as such, both seem adequate to the purpose of initiating a broad critical exchange within which greater clarity can emerge as writers re-negotiate the terms of their invitation to contribute. It is a welcome feature of this book that many contributors provide a further consideration of these and related terminologies as they rehearse their perspective on these issues.

Any attempt to name a particular moment of cultural practice faces a number of risks and possible pitfalls. On the one hand, in mobilising the heterogeneous list of curatorial projects cited above, and naming these as evidence of an educational turn (and further identifying many of these as speculative, open and emancipatory instances of cultural pedagogy), there is a risk of blunting critical analysis by too crude a generalisation. On the other hand, by isolating these developments from broader tendencies (say, within mass media, formal education or broader cultural politics), there is a risk of de-contextualising or reifying these practices.

It may be that, by aligning these practices and projects in terms of the educational or the pedagogical, we are failing to attend to another, and more primary, line of analysis, such as the discursive. Many of these practices are consistent with an appeal to discursive models within curatorial practice (a development especially noticeable since the mid-1990s) which might, perhaps, have been recommended as the better path of analysis and critical reflection. Mindful of these risks, however, we have sought not only to combine a variety of critical positions (some polemical; some reflective), but also to bring together a number of different genres (the academic essay, the performative and/or poetic statement of position and the dialogical exchange). In doing so, we have tried not to 'place under erasure' (to use a familiar critical idiom) the pronounced resistance to critical (and institutional) recuperation voiced by several contributors.

Education has historically been an intensely contested category. It has been a key site for social, political and economic conflict, as evinced by the conservative assaults on public education throughout the Anglophone world of the past several decades. While earlier conflicts substantially played out over content and purpose (epitomised by various

wars over curriculum and canon), education has more recently been globally re-engineered as a sector of the service economy and a space of private enterprise. Thus, the widely referenced Bologna Declaration, the process of alignment of higher education across Europe, does not primarily propose an international homogenisation of curricula and programme content or a standardisation of ‘outputs’, but rather an inter-operability of service provision and a system of exchange equivalence for ‘outcomes’ – a common market. Arguably, attacks on public education are simultaneously mobilised as attacks on ‘public’ provision in what is seen as an expanding market full of (private) profit potential and as attacks on a basic notion of what ‘education’ should be. The informal education sector and the less widely acknowledged cultural pedagogies of mass media<sup>(9)</sup> have increasingly come to play an important role in the re-engineering of the state educational apparatus and in providing countervailing and divergent norms of education. Contemporary contests over the nature, role and purpose of education are deeply marked by longstanding disputes about the ends of education. Many of the practices cited in this volume are configured precisely so as to resist easy assimilation to these pre-established terms of debate, but many also exist within the orbit of formal educational provision.

Many contributors present a strong critique of formal and state educational policies and practices. Again, this is apparent in recurring references to the Bologna process. Some contributors have voiced a strong resistance to reading current art-as-education in relation to the landscape of higher education, asserting that we miss ‘the productive potential of this educational turn’ when ‘we pivot our observations around formalised encounters like art education and we enlist what we know’.<sup>(10)</sup> On the other hand, it is notable that many protagonists in these conversations are attached to formal academic programmes, whether as students, researchers, educators or visiting professors (often as precarious academic labourers). Yet other contributors to the debate have specifically cited art as education as a way of critiquing existing dispensations within higher education:

9. See Dave Beech’s contribution to the current volume, ‘Weberian Lessons: Art, Pedagogy and Managerialism’. [pp.47–60].

10. Sarah Pierce, ‘We Spoke About Hippies’. *Nought to Sixty: 60 Projects 6 Months*. ICA. pp. 246–247. See also [<http://www.ica.org.uk/We%20spoke%20about%20hippies,%20by%20Sarah%20Pierce+17747.twl>].

In exhibitions and biennales in recent years there has been a move towards including quasi-educational projects – not as add-ons but as an integral part of artistic production. By default this has exposed even more clearly the fact that today we encounter an art school system that generally does not reflect the potential of cultural practice.<sup>(11)</sup>

While many contributors concur in their wholehearted critique<sup>(12)</sup> of the Bologna process in terms of its prescriptive outcomes for the 'good' subject that should be engendered by education, some are concerned, implicitly or explicitly, with the formation of counter-subjects or participant-citizens. Other contributors are profoundly unwilling to foreclose on the modes of subjectivity that might emerge in these radically open transactions of do-it-yourself learning. (Unsurprisingly, this latter position correlates strongly with a resistance to the very impulse to fix a cultural moment as *the* educational turn.) What is striking about the multiple conjunctions of curating and education discussed in this volume is the way in which both practices are so often construed in a processual mode, eschewing the foreclosure of ends. They converge, rhetorically at least, in valuing the emergent and as yet undisclosed; they speak of potential. Emphatically resisting the pre-determination of outcomes, these practices attempt to reject a normative production of the 'good' subject as cited above. This is not, however, necessarily true in all cases, and herein lies another field of tension.

Curating offers a different kind of challenge when it comes to orientating the discussion. In prioritising curating, the brief invited contributors to address a spectrum of practice that could not be reduced to exhibition production or cultural event management. Many anthologies and historical surveys have appeared which foreground the diversity of curating styles, forms and practices to have emerged in the past twenty years, a particularly important example being the archive at the heart of Barnaby Drabble and Dorothee Richter's ongoing project, *Curating Degree Zero*.<sup>(13)</sup> Having moved, since the late 1960s, from an activity

11. Liam Gillick, 'The fourth way'. *Art Monthly*. No. 320. October 2008. p.320.

12. It is perhaps worth noting that the critique of the Bologna Process is a point of divergence between the two editors. For one perspective on this, see [[http://gradcam.ie/public/qa\\_elia\\_public.pdf](http://gradcam.ie/public/qa_elia_public.pdf)]. For an important recent discussion of the broad issues at play here, see Dieter Lesage, 'The Academy is Back: On Education, the Bologna Process, and the Doctorate in the Arts'. *e-Flux Journal*. No. 4. 2009 [<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/45>].

13. For a full list of contributors to the project, its touring history, a detailed bibliography and a statement by the curators, see [<http://www.curatingdegreezero.org>].

primarily involved with organising exhibitions of discrete artworks to a practice with a considerably extended remit, contemporary curating may be distinguished from its precedents by an emphasis upon the framing and mediation of art and the circulation of ideas around art, rather than on its production and display.<sup>(14)</sup>

In acceding to this expanded reading of curating, which includes exhibition-making, discursive production and self-organisation, we aim to resist the tendency to privilege (and police) the boundaries between the *internal* organisation of the work of art — as enacted by the artist, producer or author and the techniques concerned — and its *external* organisation, through different modes of distribution, reproduction and/or dissemination. In doing so, we are interested in curating as a wide-reaching category for various organisational forms, co-operative models and collaborative structures within contemporary cultural practice. The significance of curating for the current discussion is primarily as it pertains to the organisation of emerging and open-ended cultural encounter, exchange and enactment — and not the supposed authorial primacy of the curator.<sup>(15)</sup>

Clearly, posited in this way, curating may not be reduced merely to the administrative, the managerial, the exhibitionary, the spectacular or the thematic co-ordination of disparate or convergent works. Curating, in this sense, is ‘processual’ rather than ‘procedural’ or instrumental. Rather than deploying a means-ends rationality, the processual mode entails both means and ends, however they may emerge in the flow of activity. The processual mode is not linear, nor are its ends foreclosed; there is no imperative to achieve an exhaustive disclosure of final meaning, value or purpose. It is in this sense that a processual activity may be radically undermined by a bureaucratic instrumentalism or a narrow accountancy of ‘quality’.

Of course, there is a risk that the procedural/processual distinction, thus construed, may be mobilised merely at a rhetorical level and

14. Paul O'Neill. *The Culture of Curating, Curating Culture(s)*. MIT Press, forthcoming.

15. Elsewhere, we have expanded on this question of curating as a model of ‘emergence’ that engenders new practices, the production of new meanings, values and kinds of relationships. Emergence, in this sense, ‘is not the mere appearance of novelty: it is the site of dialectical opposition to the dominant — the promise of overcoming, transgressing, evading, renegotiating or bypassing the dominant — and not simply delivering more of the same under the blandishments of the “new”’. See Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, ‘Emergence’. Sladen *et al.* op cit. pp.241 – 245. See also Raymond Williams, ‘Dominant, Residual and Emergent’. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford University Press. 1986. pp. 121 – 126. [Orig. 1977] This articulation of curating with the emergent is motivated by a wish to foreground the critical and transformative potential of the extra-exhibitionary dimension in much recent work.



deployed to insulate our cultural undertakings from a broader critical accountability without substantively altering business-as-usual in project development and delivery. These last two terms — development and delivery — are, of course, already redolent of an instrumental and procedural ethos, while the processual terms of 'emergence' and 'adaptation' are perhaps all too readily consonant with the organic and the vitalist. As always, rhetoric, can work both sides of the room. The possibility of business-as-usual — jostling for symbolic capital in the reputational economy of cultural entrepreneurship — being dressed up as emancipatory, or open-ended, practice is a recurring concern in many of the contributions to this volume. There is a refrain of anxiety across several of the texts assembled here, about the possibility of bad faith, on our own part and on the part of others. This has prompted some contributors to work critically against any hegemonic move to institute a new orthodoxy or to construct a 'movement'. We share this anxiety, but we also believe in the potential of intersubjective critique.

It is notable that, across the various texts gathered here, there is also an uneven engagement with precedent in terms of artwork as alternative cultural pedagogy. Some Anglo-American precedents that have achieved high visibility might include, for example, Martha Rosler's *If You Lived Here...*; Group Material's *Democracy*; <sup>(16)</sup> the *Hirsch Farm Project*; Tim Rollins and 'the Kids of Survival'; Adrian Piper's 'Funk Lessons'; the work of John Latham and the Artist Placement Group; General Idea; the Independent Group and those other aspects of conceptualism that Michael Corris has referred to as an 'Invisible College in an Anglo-American world' <sup>(17)</sup>. This is not to suggest that these earlier programmes are of a piece with current projects. Rather, it is to point out the recurrent appeal to alternative educational formats as critical cultural practice characterises a broad terrain of 20th century art. The specificity of current models may, in part, proceed precisely from this displacement of art precedents in favour of an appeal to non-art traditions of micro-political mobilisation and intervention. It is notable that, within these debates, certain authors' names have great currency — Rancière, for example, and, to a lesser

16. Brian Wallis (ed.) *Democracy: A Project of Group Material. Dia Art Foundation: Discussions in Contemporary Art Number 5*. Bay Press / Dia Art Foundation. 1990.

17. See Michael Corris (ed.) *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth, and Practice*. Cambridge University Press. 2004. Of course, Joseph Beuys' *Free International University*, established in his Düsseldorf studio in 1973, is a prominent precedent from outside the Anglo-American sphere and one which is regularly cited.

extent, Freire and Illich – while other names are much less prevalent than one might expect given the priority accorded to education and critical cultural practice within their work, such as Badiou or Giroux or Apple. Again, this reinforces the sense that there is a specificity to the current moment that warrants unpacking rather than reification.

The editorial premise for *Curating Subjects* (2007), the preceding volume in this series, informed the development and trajectory of this current project. The introduction of that earlier volume noted that: ‘In the end, anthologies are similar to exhibitions. They are testing sites that evolve through variable degrees of dialogue [...] and self-determined modes of resistance’.<sup>(18)</sup> This observation applies *a fortiori* to *Curating and the Educational Turn*, which seeks to build upon the work of that earlier project. While the bulk of the material presented here has been specifically commissioned for this book, a small number of the texts have been reproduced from other sources, often in modified form. These include Irit Rogoff’s key text, ‘Turning’, significantly expanded since its first appearance in *e-Flux Journal*; Uta Meta Bauer’s ‘Education, Information, Entertainment’, an early and pivotal text on developments in higher arts education in the German-speaking context; Stewart Martin’s critical contribution to the *Documenta 12* magazines project; William Kaizen’s catalogue essay on the educational work of Rainer Ganahl; and Sarah Pierce and Annie Fletcher’s concise context-setting introduction to the *Paraeducation* project. We were keen to integrate these texts within the book project as a whole, because of the different ways in which they establish a framework and context for broader issues that resonate across the newly commissioned essays and texts. We are extremely grateful to all the authors represented here, who have so critically and passionately engaged with the project, whether by originating new material specifically for this anthology, as the majority have done, or by generating revised versions of earlier texts in the handful of instances indicated above.

The editorial strategy has, to some degree, been to forfeit the teacher’s masterful and taxonomising voice. Our reasoning has been that the book should function as a heteroclite production that does not pretend to produce the final authoritative word, but rather acts as a relay in an ongoing, dispersed multiplicity of conversations and practices. In terms of the editorial choices made in commissioning a range of artists,

18. Paul O’Neill (ed.), *Curating Subjects*. Open Editions and de Appel. 2007.

curators, critics and educators, we sought to engage the key protagonists in recent debate and practice; however, there are inevitably omissions in this regard. Our aspiration is that the volume in your hands will help to grow a range of conversations and reflections on contemporary cultural pedagogies within the field of curating and beyond.

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**TO WHOM THE PAST NO  
LONGER, AND NOT YET  
THE FUTURE, BELONGS:  
A RESPONSE TO A LETTER**

16 Beaver Group

Dear Beaver Group

I am just going to write everything here that is currently on my mind... so my apologies if this letter appears unclear, chaotic and grammatically incorrect. I saw you both (Ayreen and Rene) for the first time a few months ago in Vienna at a symposium and I was 'smashed up' (of course, I mean this in a good way). My point is:

I saw you.

I heard you.

And, afterwards, when I was researching the background of 16 Beaver, the material I found wasn't even close to matching my understanding of *what* you are up to; but the most interesting thing that was missing for me in the limited information available was *how*... how you go about doing what you do.

And, even if I lived in NY, I probably wouldn't have time to come to your talk on Monday, maybe my kid would get sick or I would have to go to work (I'm being pragmatic here in involving my personal circumstances because there is no other way than this to get real). So, although I know that you are very, very busy, I think that it would be really great to see some of your discussions on youtube (?) or somewhere else in the netuniverse. It would be good to be able to ask some questions (there are always more questions to be asked after one has had a little sleep and a little time to consider things) and this would also provide an important opportunity for people (I'm sure that I'm not the only one who wants this) to be constantly informed and continuously involved, not to mention all your friends from former projects who would be glad to see what you are up to now.

On another issue, I couldn't find any photo-documentation of the 16 Beaver projects online. Vienna is the city where I work; it is my primary work base (like any other student, in any other city, in any other part of the world). That 'click' - that online access to your material - would provide for the permanent possibility of extending and directing my own education, informed by my own sense of quality and value. Everyone knows that academic education is really more about luck than choice, so it's important to have a way out of the local scene without having to travel all the time to each destination where something is happening. Even more importantly, your work has a greater and more serious potential to act as a mentor for informing others' future approaches to constructing an activist-art-intellectual identity (but I don't mean here to propose some



kind of 'guru' thing). Sorry if this message is too long and thank you for your time...

Love, respect & friendship  
Nina

Dear Nina,

I am not sure if, by writing back, I can respond directly to what you are asking and describing in your letter. When I write 'respond', I want to acknowledge the responsibility implicit in a response. And, replying responsibly, I would write 'no.' It would be my responsibility to respond 'no.' 'No, I do not know.' 'No, it would not be responsible to respond.'

But, alternatively, like you, I could also start by writing everything that is on my mind.

I am not an artist and you are not young, and I could be younger than you and, anyway, we may both be swimming in the same sea. We could both be having similar problems paying the rent, hating capitalism, trying to discover or invent more interesting situations, *with* others, unafraid of loneliness, but more interested in things held in common, rejecting as politics what is normally called politics, believing that life... no! insisting that life, can be much more than what is generally referred to by that word.

But maybe I could try something more abridged. And so, if not everything, then at least I can say something.

My first problem would be to avoid assuming the tone, or position, of someone who *knows*.

So, I write to you, first and foremost, as an equal, not as the one who knows.

The first lesson I learned from reading Jacques Rancière's *Ignorant Schoolmaster* is that the master is versed in the art of creating distance. So, I will admit that I am as distant as you, and as close as you. In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, the master (or explicator) is the one who initially establishes a distance, positioning the disciples as helpless, needing assistance, only to then bring them slowly nearer, abolishing that same distance she or he created. It is a game, or theatre, of exhibiting mastery, thus exerting power and influence and possibly inducing dependence. This theatre can also be connected with what

Michel Foucault refers to as *games of truth* because this mastery and knowledge have an intrinsic relation to power; the one who establishes and determines a discourse on truth is one who vies for power.

So, on the one hand, I want to respond to your letter. And, on the other, I must contend with how not to reproduce the figure of the master-director-father-figure-truth-sooth-sayer-guru you refer to.

But, a truth does not have to be something that we can simply learn, nor something a 'master' transfers to a 'disciple.' It can be a process in which thought, sensation and activity connect, come together. In this sense, a truth is discovered, produced in our encounter with things, situations, relations, ideas, events which constitute, inform our subjectivity and, at the same time, gain in significance/profundity in our fidelity to them. *A truth isn't a view on the world; a truth is something that keeps us tied to it in an irreducible way.*

I am not writing about *the* truth, but *a* truth, which remains singular and not at all relative.

I started this letter by expressing my ambivalence about responding and, ironically, in a short span, I am indicating what a relation to truth could be. But, maybe all of this is to say that the question of pedagogy must wrestle with a relation to truth. What kind of truth and what kind of knowledge? Where does one find it? What are the relations of power that this relation to truth produces? And how can one begin to imagine a communication of knowledge, of experience, of a truth that does not reproduce the same power relations that one finds in universities or academies of learning?

I will write more soon.

Sincerely,  
Simone

Dear Nina,

As I mentioned a few days ago, I have been wrestling with a relation to truth which would be open, singular, not relative, and remain tied to the world.

In that regard, I have been reading more closely Walter Benjamin's essay on the storyteller. At the beginning of the last century, Benjamin already identifies a depleting relation to the truth. He argues that the

language of information and the news replaced the less immediately verifiable truth accessible in storytelling. Storytelling, for Benjamin, is a form of communicating experience. I don't want to assign any specific competence to myself or to artistic practice in general, but I am interested in the multiple forms of communicating experiences. No doubt, the pedagogical moment can be one such moment. One aspect of how the truth functions in the storyteller's story is that the truth is not explicit and it remains open to the listener to find for herself.

I am interested in situations which bring us into contact with, and tie us to, the world in a more interesting way? Here, 'tying us to the world' would not be a process of bringing us down under the weight and rule of gravity. It would allow us, in our stead, in our creativity, to also touch the potentiality of a different life. Our ability to play and bring seemingly untouchable things (norms, rules, laws, values, traditions) into a sphere of *our own making* is necessary. It is one way to understand how things change.

The lightness that is not yet ours must become ours. But when this lightness is interesting, it is tied to the world, it plays with it, re-imagines it, un-hinges it.

Today, those situations which can connect sensation, experience, thought, work, activity are precisely what seem to be denied.

Extreme forms of privation still exist today. And every form of so-called 'immaterial labour' hides very material processes and regimes. At the same time as people are being removed from the land they occupy through various processes of speculation, there are still entire peoples who are denied the ability to travel freely, to be citizens with equal rights as others in a place of their choosing. And there are classes of people, living within the wealthiest countries, denied movement simply by economic limitations, by virtue of a poverty that is often linked to centuries of exploitation, dispossession and domination.

And yet, contemporary forms of control are not always experienced as denial of access. On the contrary, in the so-called free corners of the world, people are told: explore your sexuality, your liberation, your ethnicity, your education, your political convictions, your ecological concerns, as long as it remains confined to its place, not interfering with the pervading political-economic order, nor the logic of self-gain and consumption which increasingly pervades every sphere of life. Moreover, this would almost seem to be a strategy to make sure that:

What we learn is separated from what we experience.

What we do is separated from what we think.

What we subjectively feel is separated from collective and political questions.

Take, for example, feelings of apathy, of impotence, sadness or what is referred to as depression or generalised anxiety. Consistently, individuals are pathologised, their emotions and sensations separated from political and social causes and implications. The stresses of the cognitive work sphere are totally disconnected from the stresses deployed on the bodies of factory workers. In this way, a political question, a common question is privatised. Instead, the one who suffers is told that, even if millions feel the same way, it is within them; they are alone and the great solution is to consume their way out of it through products called medication.

Our very experience of sensations is compartmentalised into distinct zones of illness, entertainment, taste. Rather than seeing sensation as a zone of indiscernability between subject and object, a process of becoming, it is packaged as a moment of individuated pain (as in the earlier example) or pleasure, a diversion from the serious matters of 'work' and 'productivity.' Whether it be sex, a film, a voyage, a book, a meal – in each case, an opportunity to connect how we think, how we feel, how we live, and what we desire in this life remains set apart and disconnected. An opportunity to make use of something, to create a situation is channelled into a realm of consumption. It is a pervasive logic of separation which operates from the most intimate scales to those much larger ones, separating what happens in our everyday life from the various forms of violence and dispossession next door.

Instead, everything is channelled into simple refrains like, 'did you or did you not get your money's worth?'

Even what was previously referred to as our 'marginal life', the life after work, after our share of 'productivity', is today mobilised into the heart of the global economy. If generosity and the spirit of sharing can be commodified and exploited then they are to be championed (consider the endless web utilities that are privately owned, profess community, yet mobilise and channel people's 'non-productive' time into new forms of labour extraction and productivity). And if this generosity takes place in a spirit of sharing freely, working against the privatisation and commodification of knowledge, against the production of a false scarcity, then it might be criminalised or vilified.

More disturbingly, these realms are never to be connected and seem only to take place individually; they are individuated, take place when one is on one's own, in one's own quarters, halves, fractions, divisions. This generates a kind of calculus that always leads to losses, minus signs proliferating, boom or bust, minus, minus, minus.

Thinking of a different life, I am reminded of another conception of 'truth game' that Foucault would later take up and refer to as 'Parrhesiastic Games.' These would, indeed, be games in which a 'master' would encourage a 'disciple' to play with her/himself. But, instead of disclosing a truth to others, the student would be encouraged to disclose the truth to herself. *Parrhesia* would be an art, or technique, that would have 'to be learned by *mathesis* and *askesis* – by theoretical knowledge and practical training.' These exercises would be, in Foucault's own terms, a kind of 'aesthetics of the self. One can comport oneself towards oneself in the role of a technician, of a craftsman, of an artist, who – from time to time – stops working, examines what he is doing, reminds himself of the rule of his art, and compares these rules with what he has achieved thus far.'

This was the pedagogical relation as proposed by figures like Seneca, Serenus, and Epictetus. This problematisation of truth through the figure of the self is interesting especially when it appears that, today, it is precisely this self (isolated and disconnected from the widest sense of an ecology) which needs to be problematised.

I will write some more thoughts in the coming days.

For now, goodnight.

Simone

Dear Nina,

The sky is clear today here in Brooklyn, and it has been a very unusual morning for me since I got woken up at 6:00 by the heater in my apartment. This apartment, in a building that was recently sold to a new landlord (a term which retains the implicit violence of ownership and property, of lording over another, of being someone's lord, associated with medieval serfdom, but also seen today as civil, acceptable, normal and commonplace) who is keen on getting me out of here. I live in a neighbourhood that



has increasingly become popular for young people and artists but also for real estate developers.

I have been reading the letters of Rainer Maria Rilke to a young poet. A friend who was visiting from Italy years ago gave it to me; the pages have already turned brown over time. I was impressed by the time and dedication that Rilke is giving to this young poet. In the first letter, he tells him to stop asking whether his verses are good enough, to stop seeking out magazines for publishing, to stop comparing his poems to others and, furthermore, to stop being upset when certain editors reject his work. He simply advises him to be himself.

But how can one be oneself. How can one 'go into oneself' as Rilke advises?

It seems to me, that such a journey into oneself would only be effective if one were to find a light at the end of that tunnel. It would be a light that would undo this self. And by submerging into this light, the self would look something like a surface upon which many different lines would be drawn, traces, movements made, orders imposed, cracks, fissures, ruptures, revolts even, explosions, gaping holes, infinite, occasional tremors, hiccups, whispers, screams, stutters, capable of forming various assemblages with other bodies, languages, machines... Here, the self would maintain a relation to a life that is always present and running parallel to the one we call ours, without subject or object, marked only by events, singular, yet tied to a world, material and immanent, open-ended, in the middle, in the process of becoming. It would be an impersonal, improper life (abstaining from the 'proper' of property), a life not quite ours, a body not properly ours, *a* life, *a* home, *a* thought, not *the* life, *the* home, *the* thought. A life of impropriety, a life without property.

Improperly yours,  
Simone

Dear Nina,

I feel that, in my last letters, I might have risked going further away from the questions you are asking. I wanted to return to the question of schooling, of education, of pedagogy implicit in your letter because it is a critical point of reflection. I often ask myself: can't schools and universities, for instance, be a place in which people can question this

shared world? Can't they be places in which an engaged dialogue takes place between people with different backgrounds, classes, experiences, desires?

Clearly, the question of pedagogy cannot be separated from the most urgent ecological, social, cultural, political and economic questions we confront today. Any interrogation of these issues remains tied to the question of pedagogy. Indeed, pedagogy is at the heart of these questions.

One of the more illuminating texts for me in this regard has been an early essay by Walter Benjamin, written in 1914-1915 and entitled 'The Life of Students.' Benjamin introduces his text by arguing against a concept of history which puts its faith in the infinite extent of time. It is a concept of history marked by a certain rush, or speeding, towards the future. Within this logic, the future could not come any sooner, as far as this society is concerned. But the shape of this future is never in question; it is presented simply as an inevitability. And, in this conception of history, the present seems to be an afterthought or something merely to be digested or sacrificed for the sake of progress. The contradictions for our contemporary culture begin here, since co-existing with this call of progress is an irreversible short-sightedness in relation to the social and natural ecology of this earth. And, in this respect, it seems we are confronted with a sacrifice of both the present and the future. And it remains unclear; a sacrifice for what?

Analytically, however, as Benjamin argues, 'this condition cannot be captured simply in pragmatic descriptions of details (the history of institutions, customs), and so on, in fact, it eludes them.' It is in the desire to address this very condition that Benjamin begins his text on the life of students. He writes: 'It is worth taking the trouble to describe the contemporary significance of students and the university, of the form of their present existence, only if they can be understood as a metaphor, as an image of the highest metaphysical state of history.'

But what is this image of the highest metaphysical state of history today? Is it an image of one day in which everyone will have equal access to knowledge, to the same technologies, to the same debt instruments, to the same holidays, to the same anti-depressants, to the same stores, the same gadgets, the same voluntary servitude...? Obviously, that day to come is in the not too distant, yet always elusive, future. Meanwhile, in this image, the present inequalities seem only an aberration, the price

to be paid to reach that day of 'equality.' And, somehow, only the inequalities of the so-called market will provide this equality.

It is a farce and it would appear that at no time has that farce been more readily visible than today – the day which reveals that the economic forces which increasingly dictate and govern our movements and possibilities are in the hands of a very limited elite who speak in the language of a specialised knowledge and competence as fictitious as the capital with which they speculate. This is a lying, incompetent elite that does not even work in the interest of their stupid corporations, but only themselves and their richest benefactors.

It is within this context of lies, incompetence, deception and games of truth that I place myself and interrogate my actions. And I am not ready to sacrifice the present for some inarticulate 'one day.'

In his letters, Rilke advises the young poet to ask himself in the stillest hour of his night: '*must* I write?' And if the answer rings out in assent, *I must*, then his whole life must become a sign and witness to this impulse. And as if one had never tried before, to try to say what he sees, what he feels, what he loves and what he lacks. I am trying to write to you what I see, what I lack and possibly to infer what I love.

Rilke also advises the young poet not to write love poems, but to rescue himself from the general themes and write about what his everyday experience offers him. If the everyday seems poor, he should not blame it but blame himself that he is not enough of a poet to call forth its riches. However, if out of all this going in and out of oneself, *poems* come, then he would see these as a piece of his life and as a voice coming from it. Thus, outside validations will not matter any more: 'A work of art is good if it has arisen out of necessity. That is the only way you can judge it.'

I don't know if you or I can reconcile Rilke's advice with the questions I am raising, but it would seem to me that questions of necessity as well as desire are critical here. Whose desire and of what nature this necessity? Collectively, it would appear that one task of the coming political struggles will be to reorientate the very coordinates of necessity and desire.

Hope to write more soon,  
Simone

Dear Nina,

What I wrote to you yesterday seemed to have a relation to how 16 Beaver came together, and I thought it might be interesting to share some fragments of that experience.

When several of us first started reading texts together and inviting people to share their research and questions, there was no need to call it a school, an artwork, an artists' collective or anything in particular. It seemed that this act of naming would only throw people into a situation of identifying themselves as students/teachers, administrators/directors, artists/non-artists, spectators/lecturers, participant/audience, insider/outsider, invited/uninvited, etc. A name might have given it a certain legibility and sensibility, for people to more quickly identify or categorise it within a series of gestures, problematisations, discourses, institutions etc., possibly giving it a certain degree of immediate efficacy. But, for our purposes, it seemed that such an act would also risk delimiting what it could be or become for each participant. Schools and educational programmes are terminal. And the date of termination is often not of our choosing. One is a student then one becomes a 'professional' or maybe a 'teacher' or maybe unemployable. We wanted none of those titles. We cared for none of those ascriptions, descriptions or conscriptions.

We knew that there were things we could learn from each other across generations, across 'disciplines.' In fact, I personally felt a need to collectively discover ways of breaking those disciplinary constraints - constraints that were keeping experiences and research, which could have practical or useful implications, too easily confined in a rarefied, untouchable or unreachable place. These are the same constraints which effectively deny individuals the opportunity to see connections between struggles, between different practices, contexts and experiences. There was a sincere interest to embody our politics; to connect what we read to our lived reality; to compare what we thought against the reality we were being asked to live. How, for instance, could we continue to talk abstractly about political issues without also seeking to connect with individuals who could meet us, confront us with a lived experience and help us critique existing terminologies and constructions?

So, we shared books, shared our interests in them and this later evolved into sharing our work, our questions and our friends.

It felt necessary to make our space as open as we could, because everything around us was exclusive. We wanted an open place of

learning, of sharing, but also a space which could potentially become something more. There would be no professors and no students. A study or residency programme continuous with life, which could become a theatre group, a filmmaking co-op, an autonomous place of learning, a commune, an infrastructure for developing dissident thought and for inspiring new forms of collective processes. It would become a horizontal space to give one another time, allowing different levels of engagement and involvement, a challenge to capitalist ideology, a reevaluation of artistic practice toward an immeasurable horizon of a contestable present.

Even as I write this, I ask myself how to also assert that what we have done was nothing exceptional; this was a simple, modest, everyday practice, which took very little resources other than our time, labour, and thought. It may appear exceptional to some, simply because to be social today, to share time with strangers, to cultivate a collective, public intellectuality resists the dominant ideology, which asserts that each person is self-interested and that human relations are either of the order of exploitation or without value.

I have a friend visiting, so will have to resume later.

Best,  
Simone

Dear Nina,

Today I was standing on the waterfront overlooking the city. I turned back toward Brooklyn where the new high rises are going up right beside me. I thought if only someone could hang a banner reading 'greed kills', I would be happy. I then doubted my desire, knowing full well that this gesture would not suffice. Then I looked at the sky and noticed that the clouds overhead were moving and began to think how clouds are always moving yet, often when we look at the sky, we tend to fix them, as if in *stasis*. There must be some lesson in that, I thought.

Somewhere within the questions you ask are questions I have been asking myself. What, exactly, was I learning in all those years of learning? If education is made to empower people, how is it that it seems to produce ever greater complicity in a mad world? And if the problem lays inherently in this *explicative order*, what exactly am I doing in these letters to you? And aren't art and philosophy both equally versed in



making a viewer/reader take a distance on the things she thinks she knows too well? How is this distance, produced by philosophers or artists, different from the distance produced by the schoolmaster? And just what is this letter I am writing and has it not been written a million times before?

Soon,  
Simone

Dear Nina,

Today I trace the blueprint of one, two, three, four, and many more letters that were written to a dear and a young artist. They may not be as useful to you as they were for me, in that they helped me to determine what this unease was that overtook me once I started writing this series of letters to you. As always, language is ahead of us and here is the result:

Dear Young Artist,

situation, ~~succeed~~, courage, ~~future~~, responsibilities, ~~successful~~, ~~outstanding~~, ~~yourself~~, society, culture, ~~survive~~, ~~exchanged~~, society, society, ~~repay~~, studio, ~~exchanged~~, ~~museums~~, ~~collectors~~, ~~purchased~~, value, ~~valuable~~, thinking, expression, ~~marketable~~, ~~conversion key~~, ~~talent~~, sensitivity, environment, restructures, translating thoughts, language of art, ~~goals~~, ~~lofty~~, ~~market~~, ~~results~~, ~~commodity~~, ~~sold~~, ~~sell~~, ~~sell~~, ~~sell~~, ~~sell~~, ~~sell~~, prefer, ~~to be~~, broad, problems, experience, ~~studied art~~, major, condition, knowledge, sensibility, ~~financial~~, ~~family~~, background, ~~strengths~~, ~~limitations~~, transformed, useful, transforms, strength, ~~conservative~~, education, ~~Western~~, ~~America~~, linguistic, adaptation, ~~naturally~~, ~~predisposed~~, ~~inadequacy~~, ~~utilise~~, perspective, language, ~~barriers~~, ~~plight~~, problem, creation, majority, ~~careers~~, ~~mainstream~~, ~~jobs~~, ~~costs~~, living, wasting, time, creating, art, ~~treasure~~, ~~system~~, work, ~~worry~~, ~~talent~~, ~~museums~~, ~~curators~~, ~~artists~~, ~~anxious~~, interesting, ~~good~~, ~~exhibition~~.

Success.

Dear Young Artist,

lucid, ~~envious~~, poetic, ~~list~~, things, remember, ~~path~~, ~~yelling~~, urgency, ~~drive~~, ~~bus~~, forget, ~~bottom~~, ~~heap~~, ~~victim~~, ~~artist~~, ~~studio~~, ~~isolation~~, ~~objects~~, imagination, nothing, ~~critics~~, ~~curators~~, ~~historians~~, art, ~~history departments~~, ~~museums~~, libraries, ~~magazines~~, ~~auction~~, ~~galleries~~, ~~enterprise~~, creative, ~~studio~~, ~~arrogance~~, true, ~~sanctuary~~, ~~illusions~~, ~~business~~, ~~businesses~~, character, changes, destroy, create, ~~marketplace~~, spiritually, power, dance, ~~wolves~~, door, familiar, ~~fairs~~, ~~museum~~, spent, centuries, rejuvenated, ~~demoralised~~, ~~support~~, ~~fellow~~, ~~peer~~, events, ~~celebrate~~, marginalised, ~~support~~, ~~foundation~~, generosity, ~~biographies~~, narratives, beyond, conditions, particular, ~~great~~, fulfill, paraphrase, life, long, ~~race~~, ~~sprint~~, ~~rich~~, life, ~~measures~~, ~~fame~~, ~~financial~~, question, ~~young~~, leg, ~~yourself~~, ~~career~~.

Best.

Dear Young Artist,

~~painter~~, ~~school~~, ~~museum~~, class, paintings, waiting, ~~commercial~~, ~~career~~, touch, motivation, process, becoming, feet, change, transformation, ~~boss~~, ~~control~~, ~~good~~, requires, ~~isolation~~, partner, ~~family~~, life, well, ~~eventually~~, ~~selling~~, ~~evil~~, ~~natural~~, soul, ~~earning~~, anything, ~~wrong~~, ~~many~~, ~~attention~~, friends, ~~envious~~, forgive, feelings, ~~human~~, worlds, ~~trends~~, ~~money~~, ~~fame~~.

You are already ~~succeeding~~ just by attempting.

Young artist to be,

~~should~~, ~~grandiose~~, future, ~~success~~, ~~ambitions~~, ~~goals~~, game, childhood, dreamt, ~~collections~~, rigorous, prepare, way, left, felt, mysterious, ~~authorities~~, ~~forces~~, ~~control~~, exercises, learned, anything, ~~prayer~~, nothing, toward, ~~shut~~, ~~up~~, ~~grade~~, ~~unreliable~~, ~~unacceptable~~, ~~surrender~~, chance, ~~alone~~, ~~angry~~, ~~bitter~~, important, concrete, ~~lessons~~, ~~learn~~, pass, ~~information~~, reasons, particular, share, knowledge, ~~identity~~, ~~appeal~~, ~~genuine~~, ~~reservations~~, chance, ~~barely~~, experiencing, ~~symptoms~~, ~~withdrawal~~, ~~drugs~~, trip, reality, ~~confusion~~, ~~trauma~~, art, ~~schools~~, ~~crack~~, dens, ~~hazy~~, fog, dialogue, critique, ~~achievements~~, amplified, believe, value, friends, supportive, ~~stuff~~, incessant, ~~chatter~~, ~~sober~~, world, outside, cares, ~~win~~, ~~attention~~, ~~span~~, ~~allotted~~, recognition, ~~celebrity~~, ~~narrow~~, ~~inhale~~, ~~bullshit~~, ~~blow~~, out, ~~rehabilitate~~, ~~recognising~~, ~~delusions~~, ~~recovery~~, ~~successful~~, ~~career~~, artist, nobody, ~~undersized~~, ~~ego~~, game, everything, OK, subjects,

matter, magicians, shamans, prophets, seers, transfigure, ~~common place~~, ~~recognisable~~, isolate, re-contextualise, shift, scale, shift, material, invert, ~~status~~, art, relationship, ~~power~~, ~~money~~, inherent, attribute, ~~studio~~, all, that, you, can, be, ~~Marcel Duchamp~~, ~~studio~~, laboratory, ~~synthesise~~, ~~synthesise~~, ~~synthesise~~, force, forms, incompatible, ~~ambition~~, ~~achieve~~, ~~domain~~, compare, ~~claims~~, ~~privileged~~, ~~status~~, distinguish, ~~crowd~~, social, political, economic, circumstances, makers, laboured, African, ~~American~~, ~~Whites~~, institutional, ~~structure~~, artist, ~~business~~, ~~professional~~, accountant, longevity, achievement, timetable, career, success, time, heart, integrity.

Sincerely.

Dear Young Artist,

~~New York~~, ~~complex~~, beautiful, amazing, ~~brutal~~, love, others, ~~guarantees~~, ~~success~~, ~~rewards~~, ~~recognition~~, drawn, life, ~~indifferent~~, world, pleasure, sensual, kinetic, smell, sight, life, miraculous, contradiction, all, ~~New York~~, Los Angeles, Mexico City, community, inspire, inform, ~~fear~~, ~~fear~~, ~~fear~~, ~~control~~, stop, erosion, human, rights, ~~tool~~, ~~oppressor~~, ~~fear~~, ~~warning~~, veil, ~~afraid~~, 1968, change, crossing, boundaries, breaking, merging, turning, backward, dialogue, artists, musicians, dancers, filmmakers, now, ~~fantastic~~, ~~communication~~, share, ~~show~~, learn, others, ~~exchange~~, centre, shifted, ~~Paris~~, ~~New York~~, ~~centre~~, ~~New York~~, ~~rush~~, precarious, ~~marketplace~~, find, time, take, chance, ~~gamble~~, dangerous, interesting, beautiful, playing, ~~safe~~, repeating, gestures, thank, you, answer, work, work, care, work.

Sincerely.

Dear Young Artist,

~~participate~~, integrity, ~~success~~, relationship, art, ~~Bard College~~, desire, ~~Chelsea~~, shift, explore, world, culture, ~~medium~~, ~~self~~, communicate, language, perception, observation, understanding, emotional, mental, ~~answer~~, ~~answer~~, ~~fun~~, ~~talent~~, almost, convincing, motives, ~~quest~~, ~~ambition~~, problem, ~~adhere~~, ~~money~~, ~~market~~, ~~influence~~, ~~motives~~, ~~decisions~~, voice, ~~self~~, finding, final, ~~moral~~, dilemma.

Good luck and best wishes.

Dear Young Artist,

career, money, painted, married, children, difficult, advice, art, fame, fortune, cannot, not, talent, obsession, New York, LA, Köln, London, money, talented, obsessed, solution.

Yrs in art.

Dear Young Artist,

misjudge, integrity, freedom, participated, art, world, solo, résumé, dance, memorabilia, curator, career, launched, community, dancers, composers, artists, afford, time, possible, economics, New York, real estate, success, invited, respect, peers, pressure, saleable, lacking, unfettered, oblivious, monetary, 1960, 1964, diaspora, geographically, professionally, institutionalise, movement, emphasise, fervour, delay, professionalism, chance, time, experiment, risks, play, art, school, launching, pads, careers, polish, challenge, self-critical, peers, banded, cooperative.

Best of luck.

Dear Young Artist,

nice, scepticism, schools, lived, heart, heart, try, short, sweet, obvious, points, New York, sacrifice, game, live, work, studio, premature, success, recognition, world, early, success, capitalism, creepy, dealers, integrity, freedom, career, thirty, years, thirty, months, real, solitary, loneliness, studio, hours, learn, obsessed, studio.

Let's get back to work.

Dear Y.A.,

integrity, freedom, humanity, intellectuality, money, fame, fortune, money, ask, ask, yourself, imagine, writers, distribution, publishing, write, ways, contribute.

Everything else follows.

Good luck to us.

Dear Young Artist,

woman, students, female, decades, harder, ~~rewards~~, ~~guys~~, colour, difficulties, ~~advise~~, ~~instead~~, activist, ~~artist~~, injustice, 1985, activists, artists, pie, ~~pie~~, over, women, artists, colour, say, ~~galleries~~, ~~white~~, ~~males~~, ~~ladder~~, ~~museums~~, ~~auctions~~, worse, fields, ~~system~~, ~~manufactures~~, scarcity, work, endures, ~~calculate~~, ~~embarrass~~, humiliate, necessary, ideas, diversity, toilet, stalls, ~~museums~~, ~~galleries~~, women, women, ~~postcards~~, ~~postcards~~, ~~system~~, change, activism.

Go Ape with us.

Dear Young Artist,

~~painting~~, social, community, intuition, ~~taste~~, high, ~~art~~, read, ~~obsolete~~, ~~audience~~, energy, fail, learned.

Good luck.

Dear Young Artist,

friends, ~~right~~, ~~quality~~, work, China, Japan, ~~United States~~, ~~part-time~~, ~~restaurant~~, ~~goal~~, ~~survival~~, creativity.

Yours.

Dear Young Artist,

confusing, ~~armed~~, ~~confidence~~, ~~inflated~~, time, ~~studio~~, art, life, inextricably, failure, avant-garde, free, ~~discover~~, matters, ~~exciting~~, ~~challenging~~, ~~invigorating~~, ~~commerce~~, relations, ~~among~~.

Love.

Dear Young Artist,

~~sad~~, difficult, ~~New York~~, ~~warn~~, into, ~~studio~~, ~~self-protective~~, ~~shrewd~~, ~~galleries~~, ~~museums~~, ~~auction~~, colour.

I wish you all the best. Be true to your work and try not to take the pits and valleys of the art world personally.



Dear Young Artist,  
~~coolest, career, visualise, thoughtless, I'm going to run like hell with the ball.~~

Best Regards.

Beloved 'Young' Artist,  
grandmother, cleaned, house, jewish, Modernist, camps, learned, duChampian, struggle, Achoice, Articulation, blackness, attachment, criticality.

Love.

Dear Young Artist,  
in, abstract, relation, streets, water, air, land, cities, urbanism, scales, public, democracy, public, meaning, public, relationship, changing, world, 1960s, 70s, entity, bigger.

~~Believe in yourself and work your ass off.~~

In response to fellow artist:  
necessities, configuration, public, conversation, times, question, living, society, product, dependent, powers, that, be, sphere, what, to, say, where, not, sense, meaning.

Yours in art.

To a Young Artist,  
~~48, 30, 50~~, magic, interesting, beautiful, mysterious, junk, junk, confusion, confusion, beautiful, beauty, relax, inspiration, decision, ~~success~~.

I love you!

Dear Young Artist,  
integrity, freedom, participate, integrity, freedom, integrity, freedom, integrity, freedom, integrity, kill, kill, everything, integrity, freedom, thought, integrity, lie, yourself, why, convictions, guide, action, coherence, harmony, beliefs, emotions, actions, conflict, intuition, integrity, freedom,

self-knowledge, self-control, self-discovery, self-expression, ~~success~~, difficult, uncooperative, inflexible, self-destructive.

Good luck.

Dear Young Artist,  
time, off, travel, university, education.

Sincerely.

Dear Young Artist,  
possibilities, Shakespeare, Spencer, Milton, girl, no, wholeheartedly, wholeheadedly, Negative, Capability, uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, foreign, language, people.

With best wishes.

XB, GA, EM, KJM, JJ, SS, JB, YR, TN, JD, GG, AK, CGQ, JS, HP, JM, WPL, MLU, LW, YO, AP, JB, JG.

Dear Nina,

You write, and this shows that the space around you is beginning to grow vast. And if what is near you is far away, then your vastness is already among the stars and is very great; be happy about your growth, in which of course you can't take anyone with you, and be gentle with those who stay behind...

There is the relation of thought and reality in the process of problematisation. And that is the reason why I think that it is possible to give an answer – the original, specific and singular answer of thought – to a certain situation.

But what is this certain situation? What are we to problematise? Maybe I am on the verge of truly problematising pedagogy...

'I' in these letters is me and another one or the other does not really matter. But I am definitely not exactly and not the only one addressed by, 'Dear Beaver Group.' I am part of the 16 Beaver Group, I identify with, and share a lot of time with, many others who are involved.

By chance you met me in Vienna and it was nice meeting you and I hope to meet and discuss more in this coming year.

Best,  
Simone

# ALTERNATIVE ARTECONOMIES

**BEFORE**

Nobody  
remembers  
everything



54

TIMETABLE PROJECT:

# National Association of Artists' Organizations

VINCE LEO

Minneapolis, August 1990

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1905\_\_\_\_\_ A group of socialists and trade unionists meet in **Chicago** and organize the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Based on principles of class conflict and on-the-job actions, the IWW recruits unskilled workers, immigrants, non-whites, women, and migrant workers into what they hope will become "one big union."

The Niagara Movement—a committee of African Americans led by W.E.B. DU BOIS—demands the abolition of all laws that promote racial discrimination.

1906\_\_\_\_\_ Race riots in **Atlanta, GA** leave 21 dead. Martial law is declared.

The first major sitdown strike in the **U.S.** is called by the IWW against General Electric in **Schenectady, NY**.

**Montgomery, AL** passes the first segregationist "Jim Crow" streetcar law.

1908\_\_\_\_\_ Attorney General CHARLES BONAPARTE hires nine former secret-service agents to form a permanent Bureau of Investigation (BI).

The Eight, a group of painters led by ROBERT HENRI who had been consistently refused exhibition space because of their interest in the urban "underclass," hold a show at MacBeth Gallery, New York City.

The Society for the Prevention of Crime is formed and succeeds in banning "immoral" movies and Sunday screenings.

1909\_\_\_\_\_ The IWW publishes the *LITTLE RED SONGBOOK* "to fan the flames of discontent,"

Uprising of the 20,000: female garment workers strike in **New York City**.

After the town council in **Fresno, CA** passes a law forbidding the IWW from holding public meetings, union members and sympathizers make speeches in such numbers that the jails fill up and the city relents. The first in a series of "free speech battles."

In the wake of a violent riot in which over 2,000 African-American residents are driven from **Springfield, IL**, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is founded.

*SOLIDARITY*, the official publication of the IWW, is established in **Pittsburg, PA**. The entire staff is arrested immediately.

1910\_\_\_\_\_ In an amendment to the Immigration Act, anarchists are forbidden by law to enter the **U.S.**

The first issue of *THE CRISIS* is produced by W.E.B. DU BOIS, the NAACP's director of publicity and research.

1911\_\_\_\_\_ The Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire kills 147 workers locked in by their **New York City** employer.

*THE MASSES*, a socialist magazine, is founded. It regularly publishes illustrations and articles by JOHN SLOAN, ART YOUNG, LOUIS UNTERMEYER, and MARY HEATON VORSE.

The Carnegie Foundation for Charitable and Scholarly Endeavors is established by ANDREW CARNEGIE.

The Urban League is founded in **New York City**.

The Society of American Indians, dedicated to pan-Indianism and American citizenship for Indians, is organized.

The Ferrer Center, an anarchist organization, is organized in **New York City**. EMMA GOLDMAN, one of the group's founders, persuades ROBERT HENRI to teach painting in the educational wing of the center, known as the Modern School.

1912\_\_\_\_\_ The Association of American Painters and Sculptors (AAPS) is formed in **New York City** to promote new art and new organizations of artists.

The **U.S.** invades **Nicaragua**.

MAN RAY attends Ferrer Center art classes.

The IWW leads a successful "Bread and Roses" textile-workers strike in **Lawrence, MA**.

First appearance of IWW artist ERNEST RIEBE's comic strip *MR. BLOCK*.

The IWW holds an integrated convention in **Alexandria, LA**, purposely breaking Jim Crow laws.

1913\_\_\_\_\_ KATHERINE DREIER establishes the Cooperative Mural Workshops in **New York City** and dedicates it to working-class cultural revival.

In **Washington, DC**, 5,000 suffragists are attacked by onlookers as they march demanding a constitutional amendment giving women the right to vote.

The IWW organizes the *PATTERSON PAGEANT* in **New York City** in which 1,500 striking **Patterson** textile workers perform a play written by JOHN REED. The audience numbers over 15,000.

The AAPS organizes the *ARMORY SHOW*, introducing such artists as MARCEL DUCHAMP, ROBERT HENRI, and PABLO PICASSO to the American mass audience.

The Wilson Administration approves racial segregation of the Post Office, the Bureau of Engraving, the Census Bureau, and the Treasury.

MARGARET SANGER's *FAMILY LIMITATION*, a birth-control manual, is published by IWW-member BILL SHATOFF.

Ridgefield Colony, a summer retreat for members of the Ferrer Center, is founded in **New Jersey**.

The term "lunatic fringe" is coined by THEODORE ROOSEVELT when he observes in a letter that groups with whom he associated "have always developed among their members a large lunatic fringe."

1914 \_\_\_\_\_ ROBERT HENRI's students at the Ferrer Center include MOSES SOYER, BEN BENN, ROCKWELL KENT, and JOHN SLOAN.

The Free Theater is established at the Ferrer Center.

The National Birth Control League is founded by MARGARET SANGER.

ISADORA DUNCAN teaches dance to working-class girls at the Cooperative Mural Workshops.

JOHN SLOAN creates *CLASS WAR IN COLORADO*, a cover illustration for *THE MASSES*.

**U.S.** troops land in **Vera Cruz, Mexico**.

MAN RAY designs covers for *MOTHER EARTH*, an anarchist publication edited by EMMA GOLDMAN and ALEXANDER BERKMAN. Later that year its publication is repressed by the U.S. government.

Thirteen women and children are killed in the Ludlow Massacre after JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER and **Colorado** Governor ELIAS AMMONS order National Guardsmen to fire machine guns into striking miners' tents setting fire to the camp.

1915 \_\_\_\_\_ MARCEL DUCHAMP meets MAN RAY at the Ridgefield Colony. MAN RAY self-publishes *THE RIDGEFIELD GAZOOK*, a proto-dadaist periodical.

JOHN WEICHSEL organizes the People's Art Guild in **New York City**.

The Taos Society of Artists (TSA) holds its first meeting in **New Mexico**. The group specializes in Western views and "Indian painting."

JOE HILL, IWW songwriter and organizer, is framed and executed by **Utah** authorities.

The Ku Klux Klan (KKK)—inspired in part by the D.W. GRIFFITH film *THE CLANSMAN*, later retitled *THE BIRTH OF A NATION*—reorganizes after being granted a charter by the **State of Georgia**.

THEODORE DREISER's novel *THE GENIUS* is suppressed.

1916 \_\_\_\_\_ The Provincetown Players, including EUGENE O'NEILL, FLOYD DELL, SUSAN GLASPEL, and STELLA BALLANTYNE, emerges from the Ferrer Center Free Theater.

The first birth-control clinic is opened by MARGARET SANGER, FANIA MINDELL, and ETHEL BURNE in **New York City**.

JOHN SLOAN resigns from *THE MASSES* because of an inflexible editorial policy making captions mandatory for all illustrations.

The **U.S.** invades the **Dominican Republic**.

1917 \_\_\_\_\_ LEON TROTSKY attends ROBERT HENRI's painting classes at the Ferrer Center.

U.S. Attorney General THOMAS GREGORY sponsors the American Protective League, an organization of 250,000 members who inform on "spies and radicals."

Protesting the National Academy's exhibitions policy, JOHN SLOAN organizes the Society of Independents, whose first exhibition is unjuried and hung in alphabetical order. MARCEL DUCHAMP, a founding member of the Society, resigns after his piece *FOUNTAIN*, signed "R. Mutt," is rejected.

The People's Art Guild exhibits 300 works by 89 artists in the offices of the *NEW YORK JEWISH DAILY FORWARD*; included are ROBERT HENRI, JOHN MARIN, MARSDEN HARTEY, and CHARLES DEMUTH.

The **U.S.** enters World War I.



The Espionage Act is passed, providing for the imprisonment of anyone impeding the war effort.

The Supreme Court approves the eight-hour workday under threat of a national railway strike.

Committee on Public Information is created by executive order to control news and issue propaganda in the **U.S.**

Federal agents, prompted by the IWW's anti-war activities, raid the union's headquarters in 24 **U.S.** cities.

The U.S. Postal Service effectively shuts down *THE MASSES* by withdrawing its mailing privileges.

1918 \_\_\_\_\_ The Sedition Act is passed by Congress. It forbids speaking out against the war effort, the American form of government, the *CONSTITUTION*, or the *U.S. FLAG*.

Due to constant harassment and arrests for radical activities, the Ferrer Center and the Modern School are forced to close down **New York City** operations.

With the financial backing of GLORIA VANDERBILT WHITNEY, the Whitney Studio Club is founded in **New York City** as an artist co-op to provide for exhibition possibilities.

The TSA is commissioned by the U.S. Army to execute "range finder" paintings used by army training camps to instruct soldiers in estimating distances.

Early chapters of JAMES JOYCE's *ULYSSES*, published in the *LITTLE REVIEW*, are burned by the U.S. Post Office.

JAMES LARKIN, IWW leader, and EUGENE DEBS, Socialist Party leader, are imprisoned under the Espionage Act. Ninety five other IWW organizers are sent to prison for up to 20 years each.

QUANAHA PARKER, a Comanche chief, founds the Native American Church in **Oklahoma** to protect the ritual use of peyote.

WW I ends.

The Federal Child Labor Law is declared unconstitutional.

Troops from the **U.S.**, **Great Britain**, **Italy**, and **Canada** invade the **U.S.S.R.** in an attempt to topple the Bolshevik government.

1919 \_\_\_\_\_ MAN RAY publishes the proto-dadaist *TNT*, a "tirade against industrialists and the exploitation of workers."

J. EDGAR HOOVER becomes Special Assistant to the Attorney General in charge of counter-radical activities in the General Intelligence Division.

The American Legion is formed in **Paris**.

The League of Nations is formed; the **U.S.** refuses to participate.

An actors' strike demanding recognition of the Actors' Equity Association closes theaters in **Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, and Chicago**. The union is eventually recognized.

**New York State** public school teachers are made subject to dismissal for membership in radical organizations.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom is founded.

Race riots break out in over two dozen American cities, climaxing in **Phillips County, AR** where over 200 African Americans are killed by white mobs.

1920 \_\_\_\_\_ Planned to coincide with the second anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, a series of "Red Raids" on radical organizations is staged by federal agents. Over 10,000 people in 23 cities are arrested in one night.

After decades of struggle, the 19th Amendment, providing for women's suffrage, is ratified.

KATHERINE DREIER and MARCEL DUCHAMP form the Societe Anonyme, an international permanent collection of modern art.

1921 \_\_\_\_\_ NICOLA SACCO and BARTOLOMEO VANZETTI, two anarchists, are convicted on scanty evidence of murdering a paymaster. They are executed in 1927.

JOHN SLOAN becomes an associate member of TSA.

The Chicago No-Jury Society is founded to exhibit all artists in the **Great Lakes** region.

1923 \_\_\_\_\_ The TSA claims record profits for its members, selling paintings throughout its **U.S.** "circuit" of 13 cities.

**Oklahoma** is placed under martial law because of the terrorist activities of the KKK.

Twelve castmembers of SHOLEM ASCH's play *GOD OF VENGEANCE* are arrested at the Apollo Theater for immoral behavior.

The term "modernist" is used to oppose that of "fundamentalist" in the debate concerning the theory of evolution.

The Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau is opened by MARGARET SANGER to dispense birth control information.

The Minimum Wage Law is ruled unconstitutional.

1924\_\_\_\_\_ The Chicago Society for Human Rights is organized to press for homosexual rights.

EUGENE O'NEILL's *ALL GOD'S CHILLUN GOT WINGS*, a play about a racially mixed couple, starring PAUL ROBESON, opens at the Provincetown Playhouse.

All native-born Indians are granted American citizenship.

The Universal Negro Improvement Association is founded by MARCUS GARVEY. It advocates the return of African Americans to **Africa**.

1925\_\_\_\_\_ Forty-thousand white-robed Ku Klux Klansmen march down **Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC**.

The Socialist League for Industrial Democracy forms out of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society. JOHN DEWEY serves as president.

The John Simon Guggenheim Fellowships are established.

JOHN SCOPES is convicted and fined \$100 for teaching the theory of evolution in **Dayton, TN**.

The **U.S.** invades **Nicaragua**. An occupation force remains until 1933.

1926\_\_\_\_\_ The Dramatists' Guild is organized by playwrights as part of the Authors' Guild.

The Harmon Foundation begins the first in a series of annual exhibitions of African-American artists.

The Book-of-the-Month Club is organized and within a year claims 40,000 members.

1927\_\_\_\_\_ The TSA disbands as the demand for Western art fades.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is organized to present annual awards for noteworthy achievement in the motion picture industry.

1928\_\_\_\_\_ The Whitney Studio Galleries is formed from the Whitney Studio Club.

1929\_\_\_\_\_ The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) is conceived by three wealthy collectors—MRS. JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, MRS. CORNELIUS J. SULLIVAN, and LILLIE P. BLISS.

The Birth Control Clinical Research Center is raided by **New York City** police on a complaint by the Daughters of the American Revolution. The case is later thrown out of court.

*STRANGE INTERLUDE* by EUGENE O'NEILL is banned in **Boston**. The Theater Guild moves the play to nearby **Quincy**, where it quickly sells out.

Black Tuesday stock market crash signals the beginning of the Great Depression.

John Reed Clubs form in **Chicago, Boston, Detroit, Newark, Seattle, Portland,** and **Philadelphia** as a consequence of the Union of Writers and Artists gathering in **Kharkov, U.S.S.R.** It emphasizes "art as a social weapon."

1930\_\_\_\_\_ The Film and Photo League, as a volunteer arm of the Workers' International Relief, is founded to supply photographs and newsreel footage to workers' publications and organizations. Chapters are located in **New York City, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, San Francisco,** and **Philadelphia**.

Copies of *ULYSSES*, en route to a potential American publisher, are seized by U.S. Post Office officials.

All works by LEON TROTSKY are banned in **Boston**.

1931\_\_\_\_\_ ELIJAH MUHAMMAD forms the Nation of Islam, better known as the Black Muslims.

The Gibson Committee is formed by wealthy private citizens to provide artists with time to paint in exchange for farmwork.

The Whitney Museum of American Art opens. With the exception of its director, JULIA FORCE, the staff is made up entirely of artists.

The trial of the Scottsboro Boys, nine African-American boys accused of raping two white women, begins. It focuses attention on the racist bias of the court system.

1932\_\_\_\_\_ Unemployment in the **U.S.** reaches 13 million.

The Highlander Folk School is established near **Chattanooga, TN**.

The first art exhibit of the John Reed Clubs—*THE SOCIAL VIEWPOINT IN ART*—opens in **New York City**.

The College Art Association works with the **City of New York** to employ artists cleaning statues.

1933 \_\_\_\_\_ DIEGO RIVERA's mural *PORTRAIT OF AMERICA*, commissioned for Rockefeller Center, is covered over because it includes a portrait of LENIN.

The Public Works of Art Project (PWAP) is created to commission architects and artists to design and decorate U.S. public buildings. Within one year 4,000 artists are employed.

Federal Judge JOHN WOOLSEY lifts the ban on *ULYSSES*.

The Artists Union is formed to act as a bargaining agent for artists working on government projects. Chapters are organized in 16 cities.

1934 \_\_\_\_\_ The PWAP is accused of "communist tendencies" because murals in the *COIT TOWER, San Francisco*, include pictures of MARX's *DAS KAPITAL* and of the *WESTERN WORKER* and the *DAILY WORKER*, two radical labor newspapers.

Catholic bishops found the Legion of Decency, whose moral ratings of movies is backed up by boycotts.

PAUL CADMUS's *FLEET'S IN*, a painting of sailors fraternizing with prostitutes, is withdrawn from public display by the Corcoran Gallery at the request of the U.S. government.

The Artists Union along with the Artists Committee of Action begin publication of *ART FRONT*; writers include ELIZABETH MCCAUSLAND, HAROLD ROSENBERG, MEYER SHAPIRO, and KENNETH REXROTH.

1935 \_\_\_\_\_ Congress establishes the Works Progress Administration (WPA), funding the Federal Art Project (FAP), the Federal Music Project (FMP), the Federal Theater Project (FTP), and the Federal Writers Project (FWP).

Alcoholics Anonymous is organized in **New York City**.



The General Federation of Women's Clubs endorses a federal ruling to allow birth control literature to be delivered by mail.

Living Newspaper, a current-events documentary theater, tours the **U.S.** as part of the FTP. Early segments include *INJUNCTION GRANTED* and *ETHIOPIA*.

The BI changes its name to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

JACKSON POLLOCK joins the easel division of the WPA, where he is employed, off and on, until 1943.

The Harlem Artists Guild forms to insure African-American participation in the WPA.

John Reed Clubs disband and reorganize as the American Writers' League and American Artists' Congress.

The Community Art Centers program is begun by the WPA. Eventually there are over 100 art centers, many of which are constructed by WPA workers and staffed by FAP personnel who teach, curate, and create work.

1936 \_\_\_\_\_ The Indian Arts and Crafts Board is established by the U.S. government to recognize Native American culture.

The WPA organizes *INDEX OF AMERICAN DESIGN* to collect and disseminate ideas and works in the "popular arts."

Artists Union conventions in the East and Midwest draw thousands of participants. They demand a permanent Federal Art Project and vote to protest fascism by boycotting the *OLYMPIC ART EXHIBITION* held in conjunction with the *BERLIN OLYMPIC GAMES*.

One year after its inception, the WPA's arts projects employ 40,000 artists in public service projects nationwide.

1937 \_\_\_\_\_ In a **Flint, MI** sitdown strike, 48,000 workers occupy a GM plant for 44 days and establish the United Auto Workers as their official bargaining agent.

The Farm Securities Administration (FSA) is established. Its photographic arm will employ, among others, WALKER EVANS, DOROTHEA LANGE, MARION POST WOLCOTT, and ARTHUR ROTHSTEIN.

WPA PROJECT #891's production of MARC BLITZSTEIN's *THE CRADLE WILL ROCK* is censored by the WPA. ORSON WELLES and JOHN HOUSEMAN leave FTP and form the Mercury Theater.

The group American Abstract Artists forms in **New York City**; it is dedicated to abstraction as an antidote to nationalism and regionalism.

Ten strikers are shot dead by police in the Memorial Day Massacre at **Chicago**'s Republic Steel Plant.

Congress reduces funds to the WPA by 25 percent. Union artists protest cuts and thousands go on strike. They are all either given pink slips or docked pay.

*PINS AND NEEDLES*, a play by a group of garment workers calling themselves Labor Stage, breaks attendance records for musical comedies in **New York City**.

The Artists Union becomes CIO Local 60 of the United Office and Professional Workers of America, changing its name to United American Artists and including the Commerical Artists' and Designers' Union and the Cartoonists' Guild.

1938 \_\_\_\_\_ The Artists Union opens its own gallery in **Chicago**.

The House Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities (HUAC) is created by Congress. It immediately attacks the WPA, calling it "a hotbed of radicalism."

FTP units in 11 cities stage Living Newspaper's ONE THIRD OF A NATION, a graphic presentation of poor housing conditions in the **U.S.** During the play critics of the New Deal are quoted directly from the *CONGRESSIONAL RECORD*.

1939 \_\_\_\_\_ *CHANGING NEW YORK*, a documentary project by BERENICE ABBOTT's WPA team, is published by Dutton.

In a move designed to decrease domestic deficit financing and quiet accusations of communism and socialism leveled at the New Deal, 8,000 WPA personnel are laid off.

Sitdown strikes are declared illegal by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The House Appropriations Committee forbids the use of federal funds for theater activities, abruptly ending the FTP.

The FBI is given the permanent assignment of safeguarding the internal security of the **U.S.**

*HARLEM DOCUMENT*, a documentary project by the Photo League, is exhibited at the *SAN FRANCISCO WORLD'S FAIR*.

The Relief Bill of 1940 barely passes Congress. It requires a loyalty oath of FAP artists and specifically excludes communists from the program.

1940\_\_\_ FAP artist AUGUST HENKEL, who tells a reporter "as an artist, I'm a good bricklayer," refuses to sign the loyalty oath in the FAP contract. His murals at **Brooklyn's** Floyd Bennet Airport are taken down and destroyed.

The Lucy Flower Technical School in **Chicago** plasters over the FAP mural *WOMAN'S CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICAN PROGRESS* by EDWARD MILLMAN.

STUART DAVIS and MEYER SHAPIRO lead 30 other artists and critics who withdraw from the American Artists' Congress because it will not condemn the **U.S.S.R.**'s invasion of **Finland**. They form the Federation of American Painters and Sculptors to promote "the welfare of free and progressive art in America."

1941\_\_\_ **Pearl Harbor** is bombed. The **U.S.** declares war on **Japan**. **Germany** and **Italy** declare war on the **U.S.**

The chief of the Army Corps of Engineers endorses a plan for defense-related art projects using some WPA artists.

ANGELA CALOMIRIS is recruited by the FBI to infiltrate the Photo League.

The total number of degrees conferred by U.S. colleges in the fine and applied arts is 3,428.

1942\_\_\_ The Birth Control Federation of America becomes the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

LEE KRASNER heads a WPA team that includes JACKSON POLLOCK and BEN BENN. It makes window displays advertising war-training courses in **New York** colleges.

The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) is founded in **Chicago**, where it stages a series of restaurant sit-ins protesting segregation.

1943\_\_\_ All funding for the WPA stops, abolished by executive order.

ARSHILE GORKY's murals in **Newark** Airport "disappear" when the U.S. Army takes over administration of the site.

Lacking dues-paying members, United American Artists is forced to disband. A new group, the Artists' League of America, is organized without union affiliation.

1944\_\_\_\_ The **U.S.** ratifies the United Nations (UN) charter.

1945\_\_\_\_ WW II ends in **Europe**.

The war with **Japan** ends when the **U.S.** drops atomic bombs on **Hiroshima** and **Nagasaki**.

Members of the Artists' League of America form Artists' Equity, open only to artists with professional credentials.

1946\_\_\_\_ The U.S. State Department puts together *AMERICAN INDUSTRY SPONSORS ART*, a program in which corporate collections are used to mount exhibitions that travel to foreign countries.

The U.S. State Department finances *ADVANCING AMERICAN ART*, purchasing works from over 20 contemporary American painters. It opens in the Metropolitan Museum in **New York City** and then travels to **South America** and **Europe**.

1947\_\_\_\_ Congressman FRED BUSBEY (R-IL) calls the *ADVANCING AMERICAN ART* exhibition a "disgrace to the United States" and "infiltrated by communists." All funding is withheld.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is organized under the National Security Act.

The Photo League is placed on Solicitor General TOM CLARK's list of subversive organizations. All members are blacklisted, in effect denying them any form of meaningful employment.

The Taft-Hartley Bill is passed by Congress, preventing U.S. government employees from striking or becoming members of the Communist Party.

The NAACP presents the UN with *AN APPEAL TO THE WORLD*, a petition to end racism written by W.E.B. DU BOIS.

Congress cites the 10 screenwriters known as the Hollywood Ten for contempt after they refuse to cooperate with HUAC's attempt to blacklist "subversives" in the motion picture industry. Most serve one-year terms in prison.

1948\_\_\_\_ Two million federal employees are investigated by the FBI regarding their communist sympathies.

LLOYD GOODRICH, curator at the Whitney Museum, proposes a new arts organization—the Committee on Government and Art—to examine the feasibility of government funding of art.

1949 \_\_\_\_\_ JACOB JAVITS (D-NY) introduces a joint resolution in the House calling for a National Theater, Opera, and Ballet to be funded by the U.S. government.

Congress exempts the CIA from normal limitations on the expenditure and disclosure of funds.

1950 \_\_\_\_\_ The **U.S.** enters the Korean War as part of the UN force.

Henry Hay founds the Mattachine Society in **San Francisco**. While attempting to remain secret, the Mattachine Society provides gay men with a sense of community and presses for gay rights.

The FBI institutes the "communist infiltration program" (COMINFIL) to infiltrate the socialist and labor movements, working closely with Senator JOSEPH MCCARTHY (R-WI) and HUAC.

President TRUMAN orders the U.S. Army to seize the railroads to prevent a nationwide rail strike.

1951 \_\_\_\_\_ Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs EDWARD BARRETT declares that the **U.S.** is losing the "cultural war" with the **Soviet Union**.

The Photo League, unable to raise funds or attract new members, dissolves.

1952 \_\_\_\_\_ The CIA funds the magazine *ENCOUNTER*, published in **England** and dedicated to the idea that "cultural advancement and political freedom are interdependent."

A group calling itself Postfolks organizes a network to distribute conceptual artworks using the postal system.

The Supreme Court holds that "subversives" can be barred from teaching in the public schools.

The first year in the 71 years since records have been kept that an African American was not lynched in the **U.S.** Congress still refuses to pass anti-lynching legislation.

1953 \_\_\_\_\_ The Korean War ends.



ANN HALPRIN forms the Dancers' Workshop Company in **San Francisco**. Cooperative performances are staged with TRISHA BROWN, YVONNE RANIER, and STEVE PAXTON, often on outdoor platforms.

President EISENHOWER persuades Congress to pass a \$5 million emergency fund for cultural exchange.

MARTIN LUTHER KING is elected to head the Montgomery Improvement Association.

The Daughters of Bilitis, a lesbian organization, is founded in **San Francisco** and begins publication of *THE LADDER*.

ROSA PARKS, a **Montgomery, AL** seamstress and member of the NAACP, is arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a bus to a white rider. The African-American community of the city stages a one-day boycott that eventually grows into a movement headed up by the Montgomery Improvement Association.

1956\_\_\_\_\_ The Dallas County Patriotic Council, made up of rightwing artists, attacks *SPORT IN AMERICA*, a USIA-sponsored exhibition, because it contains work by artists linked to left-wing organizations. The Dallas Museum trustees vote to keep the exhibition in its entirety.

The Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA) opens in a piano warehouse in downtown **Winston-Salem, NC**.

The NAACP handles the legal suit of AUTHERINE LUCY, the first African-American student at the University of Alabama, after she is suspended due to campus violence.

1957\_\_\_\_\_ Arts Advisory Council legislation fails to pass Congress after WHEELER WILLIAMS, a member of the conservative American Artists Professional League, testifies to the possibility of a communist and/or modernist takeover of the council.

1958\_\_\_\_\_ The John Birch Society, a radical conservative organization, is founded by ROBERT WELCH.

Three thousand Lumbee Indians drive off a KKK demonstration in **Robeson County, NC**.

The Supreme Court rules that *ONE MAGAZINE* has a legal right to go through the mail.

1959\_\_\_\_\_ The National Conference of Artists is organized at Atlanta University to promote the work of African-American artists.

ALLAN KAPROW stages *18 HAPPENINGS IN 6 PARTS* at the Reuben Gallery in **New York City**.

1960\_\_\_\_\_ A strike by the Theater Guild closes down all theaters in **New York City**.

The Socialist League for Industrial Democracy becomes Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).

The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) is formed at Shaw University in **Raleigh, NC**.

A CIA U-2 reconnaissance plane is shot down over **Russia**.

The New York State Council on the Arts is established on a temporary basis, becoming permanent two years later.

1961\_\_\_\_\_ The Artists Tenants Association (ATA) forms in **New York City** to protest rezoning laws that threaten artists lofts.

GEORGE MACIUNAS originates Fluxus, a cooperative network of conceptual artists.

The CIA-sponsored **Bay of Pigs** invasion fails.

Secretary of Labor ARTHUR GOLDBERG settles the American Federation of Musicians' strike against the Metropolitan Opera and includes a provision for federal subsidizing of the arts.

CORE initiates "freedom rides" to desegregate interstate buses. Many buses are attacked by the KKK.

Total number of degrees conferred by U.S. colleges in the fine and applied arts is 13,612.

1962\_\_\_\_\_ President JOHN KENNEDY appoints AUGUST HECKSHER as Special Consultant to the Arts.

SDS issues *THE PORT HURON STATEMENT*, which advocates "participatory democracy."

The FBI begins a Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) in an attempt to discredit MARTIN LUTHER KING and the SCLC.

The CIA activates Operation Mongoose, enlisting Mafia hit men in an attempt to assassinate FIDEL CASTRO.

ED PLUNKETT invents the name New York Correspondance (sic) School for RAY JOHNSON's mail art network.

CESAR CHAVEZ organizes the United Farm Workers Union (UFW).

The Judson Dance Group is founded in **New York City** by members of the Dancers' Workshop. CAROLEE SCHNEEMAN's *MEAT JOY* is staged at Judson Memorial Church.

Institute of American Indian Art is organized in **Santa Fe, NM**.

Citizens for Decent Literature is formed and immediately attacks HAROLD ROBBINS's *THE CARPETBAGGERS* and HENRY MILLER's *THE TROPIC OF CANCER* as "obscene."

Artists for CORE hold its first benefit auction.

1963 \_\_\_\_\_ *THE ARTS AND THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT*, a report submitted by AUGUST HECK-SHER, recommends the formation of a National Arts Foundation.

The ATA pickets DAVINCI's *MONA LISA* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art to protest rezoning laws.

SNCC members JOHN O'NEAL and GILBERT MOSES establish the Free Southern Theater in **Mississippi**.

SNCC, SCLC, and CORE cosponsor *MARCH ON WASHINGTON*. MARTIN LUTHER KING delivers his "I Have a Dream" speech.

The AFL-CIO adopts a plan to end racial discrimination in the workplace.

Ninety commercial galleries close down in sympathy with ATA.

ROBERT FILLIOU, a Fluxus poet, coins the term *ETERNAL NETWORK*.

The *ARMORY SHOW* is re-created in its original setting.

The United Auto Workers give SDS \$5,000 to organize an Economic Research and Action Project for a poor community in **Cleveland**.

A sniper kills NAACP organizer MEDGER EVERS in **Jackson, MS**.

ROMARE BEARDEN, ALVIN HOLLINGSWORTH, and WILLIAM MAJORS form The Spiral, an African-American artists' organization, to aid the civil rights movement.

Eight senators pass HUBERT HUMPHREY's (D-MN) National Arts and Cultural Development Act by a late-night voice vote.

The Museum of African Art/Frederick Douglas Institute is founded in **Washington, DC**.

1964 \_\_\_\_\_ Public Law 88-579 is signed by President JOHNSON, creating the National Council on the Arts advisory panel made up of 24 private citizens.

CASSIUS CLAY defeats SONNY LISTON for the heavyweight title and declares himself a Black Muslim, changing his name to MUHAMMAD ALI.

JOHN SINCLAIR, MAGDALENE ARNDT, and GEORGE TYSCH form the Artists Workshop in **Detroit**.

ART KLEPS founds the Neo-American (Boo Hoo) Church, based on the use of psychedelics as a sacrament.

Congress passes the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which bars all discrimination according to gender, race, or religion.

The National Indian Youth Council sponsors "fish-ins" to protest transgressions of Indian fishing rights along rivers in the **State of Washington**.

Led by MARIO SAVIO, students at the University of California at Berkeley form the Free Speech Movement to protest the banning of political activities on campus.

MALCOLM X splits with the Black Muslims and forms the Organization for Afro-American Unity.

1965 \_\_\_\_\_ The National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act authorizes Congress to appropriate funds for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

The UFW begins its boycott of **California** grapes.

The **U.S.** invades the **Dominican Republic**.

The New York Graphic Workshop distributes the *First Class Mail Art Exhibition #1*.

Teatro Campesino is established by San Francisco Mime Troupe veteran LUIS VALDEZ in conjunction with a United Farm Workers strike in **Delano, CA**.

The first contingent of U.S. Marines lands in **Vietnam**.

Race riots in the **Watts** section of **Los Angeles** leave 35 dead and \$200 million in damages.

*END YOUR SILENCE*, a full-page ad in the *NEW YORK TIMES* sponsored by artists, protests U.S. involvement in **Vietnam** and the **Dominican Republic**.

SDS organizes the first march against the Vietnam War in **Washington, DC**.

CLYDE WARRIOR forms the National Indian Youth Council.

ROBERT LOWELL, supported by 20 artists and writers, refuses an invitation to read at the White House, citing U.S. military intervention in **Vietnam** and the **Dominican Republic**.

1966 \_\_\_\_\_ The Whitney Museum of American Art inaugurates its new building in **New York City**.

IRVING PETLIN organizes a committee of **Los Angeles** artists to finance the *TOWER FOR PEACE*, constructed by MARK DI SUVERO with work sent from artists all over the **U.S.**

The Black Panther Party (BPP) begins police surveillance in **Oakland, CA**.

The Friends of Cast Iron Architecture (FCIA) forms in **New York City**.

PETE SEEGER inspires the creation of the sloop *CLEARWATER* to clean up the **Hudson River**.

The National Organization of Women (NOW) is organized.

GEORGE MACIUNAS, with money from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Kaplan Fund, begins Fluxhous Cooperatives Inc. to renovate **SoHo (South of Houston St.)** buildings into cooperative artists lofts.

1967 \_\_\_\_\_ Total NEA funding for Visual Arts is \$735,000; 60 individual artists receive \$5,000 each.

The National Student Association admits to having received more than \$3 million from the CIA for use in overseas programs.

An American section of the Situationist International is formed in **New York City**.

Smokehouse Associates is formed by WILLIAM T. WILLIAMS and MELVIN EDWARDS to paint murals on decaying walls in **Harlem**.

The Black Nationalist COINTELPRO Group is formed at the FBI to undermine the BPP, the Republic of New Africa, and SNCC.

Over 600 artists form Angry Artists Against the War in Vietnam.



The NEA withdraws financial support from Fluxhous to instead fund the Westbeth Project, a plan to renovate a former Bell Labs building into artists' living and working spaces.

Under the aegis of the Artists and Writers Project, a 10 ft. by 120 ft. COLLAGE OF INDIGNATION is installed at Loeb Student Center, New York University.

The Artists Workshop in **Detroit** shuts down after a massive drug bust.

The Organization of Black-American Culture paints WALL OF RESPECT, a mural in **Chicago's South Side** that helps launch the contemporary mural movement.

MUHAMMAD ALI refuses to join the U.S. Army on the grounds of his religious convictions. He is convicted of draft evasion; the World Boxing Association and the New York State Boxing Commission withdraw recognition of his title.

1968 \_\_\_\_\_ The NEA helps create the American Film Institute.

GEORGE DREWERY founds Beyond Baroque in **Venice, CA** as a space for artists and writers to meet.

The White Panther Party is formed by JOHN SINCLAIR at an MC 5 recording session.

Yippies (members of the Youth International Party), led by ABBIE HOFFMAN and JERRY RUBIN, throw money from the visitors gallery onto the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

The Tet offensive, **Vietnam**.

The Mexican American Liberation Art Front is formed in **San Diego** to discuss work and organize exhibitions.

DENNIS BANKS and GEORGE MITCHELL found the American Indian Movement (AIM) in **Minneapolis**.

MARTIN LUTHER KING is assassinated. Riots break out in every major American city.

The NEA matches by one half the funding of inner-city arts programs in the 16 largest **U.S.** cities.

The Studio Museum opens in **Harlem**.

Ant Farm, an artists' collective, is created in **San Francisco** and **Houston** by CHIP LORD and DOUG MICHAELS.

Fluxhous controls 18 **SoHo** buildings but ends operations.

ROBERT KENNEDY is assassinated.

ANDY WARHOL is shot by VALERIE SOLANIS, founder of the Society for Cutting Up Men (SCUM).

Urban Planning Aid (UPA) is founded in **Boston** with funding from the Office of Economic Opportunity to give technical assistance to community activists. It helps produce over 100 videotapes before ending in 1980.

Cityarts Workshop, emphasizing murals and mosaics, is founded in **New York City**.

SDS and other groups clash with police at the Democratic National Convention in **Chicago**. U.S. Army sources later reveal that one in six demonstrators was either a member of the Chicago Police force or an undercover FBI agent.

1969 \_\_\_\_\_ The Black Emergency Cultural Coalition, led by photographer ROY DECARAVA, is formed to protest the *HARLEM ON MY MIND* exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. A series of demands are also made on the Whitney Museum, including the purchase and exhibition of more African-American artists.

Court testimony reveals that the FBI tapped MARTIN LUTHER KING's phone line.

El Museo del Barrio, featuring work by Puerto Rican artists, opens in **New York City**.

Art Workers Coalition (AWC) is founded when 300 artists meet at the School of Visual Arts in **New York City** to promote museum reform. Their list of demands to MoMA includes free admission, night hours, an artists' curatorial committee, exhibitions in African-American and Hispanic neighborhoods, and the recognition of women and minority artists.

The Weathermen faction splits from SDS.

Appalshop is founded in **Whitesburg, KY** as a joint experiment of the Office of Economic Opportunity and the American Film Institute. When sponsors terminate support, trainees establish Appalshop as an independent media arts center.

NEA grants total \$6,370,639; 30 individual artists receive \$5,000 each.

The Freedom of Information Act is passed, enabling ordinary citizens limited access to government documents.

The Black Academy of Arts and Sciences is formally established to honor and encourage contributions to African-American culture.

Women Artists in Revolution (WAR) forms in protest over the *WHITNEY ANNUAL*, which includes only 8 women out of 143 artists.

Gain Ground is opened by ROBERT NEWMAN in **New York City** with performance and installation works by VITO ACCONCI, ELEANOR ANTIN, DAN GRAHAM, and others.

Black Panther FRED HAMPTON is murdered in an FBI/COINTELPRO raid in **Chicago**.

HOLLY SOLOMON opens 98 Greene Street with performances and installations by GORDON MATTA-CLARK, ROBERT KUSHNER, TAYLOR MEAD, WAYNE COUNTY, and others.

The AWC forces the Metropolitan Museum in **New York City** to postpone the opening of *NEW YORK PAINTING AND SCULPTURE 1940-1970*, in observance of the moratorium on the Vietnam War.

The AWC decides against starting an alternative system of galleries and opts to affect MoMA by placing an artist at the trustee level.

After unremitting police harassment, a group of transvestites spark several days of rioting at the Stonewall Bar in **New York City**. Stonewall Unions—gay political organizations—begin to form across the **U.S.**

The first National Chicano Youth Conference is held in **Denver**, where the concept of Aztlán—a Chicano nation—is conceived.

The AWC publishes poster *Q. AND BABIES TOO? A. AND BABIES TOO*, to protest the **My Lai** massacre in which hundreds of Vietnamese civilians were murdered by American troops.

The Guerilla Art Action Group (GAAC) removes MALEVICH's *WHITE ON WHITE* from a MoMA wall and replaces it with a manifesto calling for MoMA to: 1) sell one million dollars of artwork and redistribute the money to the poor; 2) decentralize; 3) close until the end of the Vietnam War.

An organization calling itself Indians of All Tribes occupies **Alcatraz Island** in protest over broken treaties.

Black & Red begins a publishing project in **Detroit**. Among their first publications is GUY DEBORD's *SOCIETY OF THE SPECTACLE*.

1970 \_\_\_\_\_ U.S. forces invade **Cambodia**. In the demonstrations that follow, four students are killed at Kent State University in **Ohio**, and two are killed at Jackson State University in **Mississippi**.

The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), a network of community self-help organizations, forms its first chapter in **Little Rock, AR**.

Contradiction, the first of the pro-situationist groups in the **San Francisco Bay** area, is formed, followed by Negation and Diversion.

Galeria de la Raza begins storefront exhibitions of the work of Chicano artists in **San Francisco's Mission District**.

The New York Art Strike is formed when Art Workers Coalition, Guerilla Art Action, and Art Workers United stage a sitdown strike at the Metropolitan Museum of Art to protest war, racism, sexism, and repression. They later decide to boycott the *VENICE BIENNALE*.

The first *EARTH DAY* demonstrations are organized to protest ecological pollution.

The Gray Panthers are organized to protect the rights of senior citizens.

The Workshops category, providing funding to artists' organizations, becomes part of the NEA Visual Arts Program.

Artists and Writers Protest Against the War in Vietnam and the AWC begin a letter-writing campaign to PABLO PICASSO, asking that he withdraw *GUERNICA* from MoMA to protest American involvement in **Vietnam**.

The UFW forces grape growers to sign union contract after a five-year struggle.

As the result of a COINTELPRO scam, JOHN SINCLAIR, head of **Detroit's** White Panther Party, is sentenced to nine and one half years in maximum security prison for the possession of two marijuana cigarettes.

*THE PEOPLE'S FLAG SHOW*, held at the Judson Church in **New York City**, is closed and its organizers found guilty of flag desecration.

JEFFREY LEW opens 112 Greene Street.

MoMA's KYNASTON MCSHINE organizes *INFORMATION*, an exhibition of conceptual art, which quickly becomes a forum for protesting the U.S. presence in **Vietnam**.

The Basement Workshop, an Asian-American artists' organization, is founded in **New York City**.

The Los Angeles Council of Women Artists is formed to protest the Los Angeles County Museum's ART AND TECHNOLOGY exhibition, which includes no women.

AIM occupies the MAYFLOWER II on **Thanksgiving Day**.

Women Students and Artists for Black Liberation, led by FAITH RINGGOLD, protest the all-white-male composition of Art Strike's COUNTER-BIENNALE to be held in **New York City**.

GORDON MATTA-CLARK digs a hole in the basement of 112 Greene Street and plants a cherry tree.

JUDY CHICAGO founds the first feminist educational program for women in art at California State University, Fresno.

The Chicago Mural Group forms.

A panel appointed by President JOHNSON to investigate obscenity and pornography issues its final report urging the repeal of virtually all obscenity laws.

1971 \_\_\_\_\_ NEA funding reaches \$15 million.

The Supreme Court overturns MUHAMMAD ALI's conviction.

Los Toltecas en Aztlan opens Centro Cultural de la Raza in **San Diego**.

The Black Emergency Cultural Coalition organizes a prison art program.

In response to lobbying by the Congressional Black Caucus and community activists, the NEA begins making grants through a new Expansion Arts Program for community-based arts activities.

The Republic of New Africa calls for an independent black nation composed of five southern states.

West-East Bag (WEB) forms to construct a nationwide network of women artists.

**New York** Governor NELSON ROCKEFELLER orders state troopers to storm Attica prison after talks over hostages break down. A total of 31 prisoners and nine hostages are killed.



Artists Space opens at the Committee for Visual Arts in **New York City**.

ELEANOR ANTIN begins *100 BOOTS*, a mail art project about the travels of 100 boots.

F-Space Gallery opens in a shopping mall in **Orange County, CA**.

The Citizens' Commission to Investigate the FBI breaks into FBI headquarters in **Media, PA** and makes public evidence of COINTELPRO activities. COINTELPRO shuts down.

HANS HAACKE's exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum is cancelled because HAACKE's *SHALOPSKY ET. AL. MANHATTAN REAL ESTATE HOLDINGS, A REAL-TIME SOCIAL SYSTEM, AS OF MAY 1, 1971*. deals with "specific social situations" not considered art.

CARL ANDRE exhibits a row of squares on the floor of 112 Greene Street.

People United to Save Humanity (PUSH) is founded by JESSE JACKSON.

The Supreme Court rules that the *NEW YORK TIMES* can publish the *PENTAGON PAPERS*, a top-secret Defense Department document leaked by DANIEL ELLSBERG.

Guerrilla Art Action Group begins mail art project in which they send instructions to Nixon Administration officials (To NIXON—*REPEAT ALOUD "EAT WHAT YOU KILL"*).

ALANNA HEISS produces a three-day art festival under the ramps of the Brooklyn Bridge. Participants include CARL ANDRE, SOL LE WITT, MABOU MINES, RUDY BURCHARDT, and GORDON MATTA-CLARK.

Short Term Activities Grants program is initiated by the NEA to fund "individual artists or groups engaged in process and performance art activities, technological art, artist-generated exhibitions, and cooperative ventures."

Total number of degrees conferred by U.S. colleges in the fine and applied arts is 41,368.

1972 \_\_\_\_\_ NEA funding reaches \$29,750,000.

The Visual Studies Workshop in **Rochester, NY** begins publication of *AFTERIMAGE*, a magazine dedicated to video, independent film, photography, and artists' books.

ALLANA HEISS begins the Institute for Art and Urban Resources under the funding umbrella of the Municipal Art Society, using a **Coney Island** warehouse for exhibitions.

After consistent criticism by two PBS news shows—*THIRTY MINUTES WITH* and *WASHINGTON WEEK IN REVIEW*—President NIXON vetoes the entire Corporation for Public Broadcasting budget.

Point Blank, a group of situationists, detourns the U.C. Berkeley student newspaper, printing the *LAST DAILY CAL*.

JUDY CHICAGO, SUZANNE LACY, MIRIAM SHAPIRO, and others take over a run-down house in downtown **Los Angeles** and transform it into an installation piece titled *WOMANHOUSE*.

VITO ACCONCI presents *SEED BED* at Sonnabend Gallery, **New York City**. Spectators walk over a ramp in the gallery while ACCONCI masturbates underneath.

The NEA funds the first Art Critics Fellowships, administered by the Visual Arts Program; 10 critics receive \$3,000 each.

AIR and SoHo 20, women's cooperative galleries, are established in **New York City**.

*SOHO ARTS FESTIVAL FOR MCGOVERN*, a benefit for the Democratic presidential candidate, is held in **New York City**.

The FBI infiltrates AIM.

*ARTS*, *ARTFORUM*, *ART IN AMERICA*, and *ART NEWS* all donate space to the NEA to advertise its grants.

Self-Help Graphics, a Chicano arts organization and workshop, is founded in **East Los Angeles**.

ADRIAN PIPER constructs a series of performances in which she takes on an alter ego—*MYTHIC BEING*—a young black male totally conditioned by race relations in the **U.S.**

The pesticide DDT is banned.

NEA Short Term Activities grants total \$73,000 and include grants for several artist-run organizations.

1973\_\_\_\_\_ The NEA initiates Workshops subheading of the Public Art Program to facilitate funding "alternative spaces."

The Vietnam Peace Agreement is signed in **Paris**.

The Inner Cities Mural Program is discontinued at the NEA.

Kearny Street Workshop, an Asian-American community arts center, is founded in **San Francisco**.

CHRIS BURDEN buys air time on **Los Angeles** TV, "advertising" himself as a conceptual artist.

The Supreme Court "legalizes" women's right to reproductive freedom in Roe v. Wade.

Womanspace Gallery opens in the Women's Building in **Los Angeles**.

**New York** artists reproduce a revolutionary mural from **Chile** to protest the CIA sponsored overthrow of Chilean President SALVADORE ALLENDE.

*NEW YORK CORRESPONDANCE SCHOOL SHOW*, curated by RAY JOHNSON and MARCIA TUCKER, opens at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Demanding guaranteed work or pay, dancers strike the New York City Ballet.

The New York Correspondance School dies with a "dead letter" to the obit column of the *NEW YORK TIMES*.

Artists Space, dedicated to showing undiscovered artists, opens up at **15 Wooster Street** in **New York City**, under the direction of HELENE WEINER.

Museum workers at MoMA go on strike.

FCIA succeeds in having **SoHo** rezoned City Landmark Status, closing it off to high-rise development.

NAME Gallery opens in **Chicago**.

AIM occupies **Wounded Knee**. General ALEXANDER HAIG directs the U.S. Army invasion. Hundreds of casualties are suffered by AIM members.

MARGO ST. JAMES organizes Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics (COYOTE), a prostitutes' rights group.

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) is enacted by Congress, providing federal public employment to chronically unemployed groups including artists. Starting full-time salary is \$10,000 per year.

The American Psychiatric Association overturns its 100-year-old position and declares that homosexuality is not a disease.

The Boston Women's Health Book Collective publishes the first edition of *OUR BODIES, OURSELVES*.

1974 \_\_\_\_\_ The **San Francisco** group Negation stages all night graffiti blitzes, employing slogans like *MURDER THE ORGANIZERS OF YOUR BOREDOM*.

CHRIS BURDEN has pins stuck into his body while performing *BACK TO YOU* at 112 Greene Street.

In **Montague, MA**, SAM LOVEJOY topples a weather-monitoring tower erected in preparation for a Northeast Utilities nuclear reactor, claiming it was an act of civil disobedience.

Artpark, a publicly funded state park dedicated especially to outdoor and environmental sculpture, opens in **Lewistown, NY**.

Los Angeles Institute for Contemporary Art (LAICA) and its publication *JOURNAL* are formed by ROBERT L. SMITH.

President NIXON resigns in light of impending impeachment hearings regarding Watergate break-ins.

The Symbionese Liberation Army kidnaps PATTY HEARST and demands \$70 in food for every needy person in **California**.

And/Or opens in **Seattle**.

The San Francisco Art Workers' Coalition is formed to make publicly supported arts institutions accountable.

The Citizens Freedom Foundation is founded to deprogram young people from cult influence.

Asian-American artists protest under-representation of Asian-American and other minority workers at the Confucius Plaza construction site in **New York City**.

Artists Space initiates *UNAFFILIATED ARTISTS FILE*, a slide file kept for visiting curators, etc.

LAURIE ANDERSON performs *DUETS ON ICE*, playing violin while standing in ice skates frozen in a melting block of ice.

CETA San Francisco announces 113 positions available to artists; 3,500 artists apply.

JEFFREY LEW initiates *GROUP INDISCRIMINATE* at 112 Greene Street, a once-a-year exhibition in which space is allotted on a first-come, first-served basis.

A shootout at the Symbionese Liberation Army Headquarters leaves six dead.

ROBERT MUFFALETTO organizes the Center for Exploratory and Perceptual Art in **Buffalo, NY**.

The FBI initiates a shootout with AIM members at **Pine Ridge**.

1975 Washington Project for the Arts (WPA) is founded by ALICE DENNEY in **Washington, DC**.

Greenpeace begins its *SAVE THE WHALES* campaign.

The Artists' Poster Committee organizes *A DECADE OF POLITICAL POSTERS 1965-1975* to benefit the Attica Legal Defense Fund.

Hallwalls is founded in **Buffalo, NY**.

Creative Time sponsors *RUCKUS MANHATTAN* by RED and MIMI GROOMS at the Ruckus Construction Company, **New York City**.

Ant Farm produces *THE ETERNAL FRAME*, a docu-drama about the KENNEDY assassination.

Movimiento Artístico Chicano (MARCH) is formed in **Chicago**.

GENO RODRIGUEZ forms the Alternative Museum, an artist-founded museum of contemporary art.

Two unsuccessful assassination attempts on President GERALD FORD. The first is by LYNETTE FROMME, an associate of CHARLES MANSON; the second is by SARA JANE MOORE, a former FBI informant.

**Detroit's** *FIFTH ESTATE*, the second oldest American underground newspaper, is revamped by an anarchist staff.

Ant Farm stages *MEDIA BURN*, driving a car through a wall of TV sets.

Minnesota Artists Exhibition Program is founded in **Minneapolis**. Once a year the entire membership meets to vote on the *LARGEST JURIED SHOW IN THE WORLD*.

1976 Franklin Furnace, dedicated to artists' books, is founded by MARTHA WILSON in **New York City**.



EMILE DE ANTONIO completes *UNDERGROUND*, a film about the Weather Underground, the focus of a huge FBI manhunt. The FBI subpoenas the film and DE ANTONIO.

Greenpeace opens a campaign aimed at ending the slaughter of baby seals by interfering with the hunt and then sending back documentation of the kills.

The Social and Public Arts Resource Center, a multicultural arts center dedicated to public art, is founded in **Los Angeles**.

Artist MICHAEL ASHER takes down all the windows and doors in the Clocktower, exposing the space to the elements.

JUDY BACA begins the *GREAT WALL OF LOS ANGELES*, a mural depicting **California's** multiracial history.

Neighborhood Art Programs National Organizing Committee (NAPNOC) is formed at an NEA Expansion Arts-funded retreat attended by some two dozen community artists at a United Auto Workers' center in **Black Lake, MI**.

Women's video groups in 14 cities exchange tapes in the *VIDEOLETTERS* project.

The Clamshell Alliance conducts nonviolent occupations at the site of the proposed Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant.

The *ART INDEX* begins using "Art Galleries—non commercial" subject heading.

1977 \_\_\_\_\_ NAME sponsors *MIDWESTERN ALTERNATIVE SPACES CONFERENCE* in **Chicago**.

Representative JACK KEMP (R-NY) introduces Multiple Purpose Arts and Humanities legislation to provide a tax credit for money donated to organizations supporting the arts and humanities.

The Heresies Collective publishes the first issue of *HERESIES MAGAZINE*.

With Department of Labor funding, NAPNOC opens offices in **Washington, San Francisco**, and **Knoxville** to study CETA community arts employment.

NEA Workshops/Visual Arts category becomes Workshops/Artists Spaces, a program "designed to encourage artists to devise modes of working together and to test new ideas." Special NEA guidelines for artists spaces are issued.

*PICTURES*, an exhibition curated by DOUGLAS CRIMP with work by JACK GOLDSTEIN, TROY BRAUNTUCH, SHERRIE LEVINE, ROBERT LONGO, and PHILLIP SMITH, opens at Artists Space, signaling the beginning of pictorial postmodernism.

Thousands of farmers drive tractors to **Washington, DC** to focus attention on the farm crisis.

FRED LONIDIER's *THE HEALTH AND SAFETY GAME*, a work about occupational health hazards, is installed at the Whitney Museum.

MARCIA TUCKER opens The New Museum in the lobby of the New School for Social Research.

WPA stages *QUESTIONS: NEW YORK MOSCOW NEW YORK MOSCOW*, a performance by DOUGLAS DAVIS (**U.S.**) and KOMAR & MELAMID (**U.S.S.R.**).

LAICA makes all of its artists panels "advisory," giving staff increased curatorial power.

Dedicated to experimental and socially conscious art, Collaborative Projects (COLAB) is founded by a group of artists in part because "The chances of a nonprofit institution getting a grant are 50 percent; an individual artist's is only three percent."

LAURIE ANDERSON performs *SONGS FOR LINES/SONGS FOR WAVES* at the Kitchen.

Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE) is organized by 13 artists. The staff of two is paid through CETA funding.

SUZANNE LACY, LESLIE LABOWITZ, and a group of women artists stage *THREE WEEKS IN MAY*, a series of public consciousness-raising performances about rape in **Los Angeles**.

Atlatl, a Native-American arts organization, is founded in **Phoenix, AZ**.

112 Greene Street organizes a *RUMMAGE SALE AND SKILLS AUCTION* to benefit the Heresies Collective.

Women and Their Work is organized in **Austin, TX**.

1978 Cincinnati Artists Group Effort (CAGE) is founded, operating without a space for over two years.

JENNY HOLZER produces *TRUISMS*, a window display for Franklin Furnace.

CETA, whose annual budget reaches \$75 million, funds over 10,000 artists and over 600 projects in 200 locations nationwide.

The Cultural Affairs Division of the State Department merges with the United States Information Agency, creating the International Communications Agency.

**Love Canal** is declared an ecological disaster area by President JIMMY CARTER.

*HARRISBURG*, a **Pennsylvania** community-run magazine, publishes a fictional account of a disaster at the local Three Mile Island Nuclear Power Plant. Later that year, WALTER CREITZ, president of Metropolitan Edison Corporation, complains to the Department of Labor, which promptly cuts off all CETA funding to the magazine.

WPA organizes a *PUNK ART* exhibition.

The American Indian Community House Gallery/Museum is founded in **New York City**.

Fashion Moda is founded in the **South Bronx** to sponsor neighborhood art programs.

Nine hundred eleven people commit mass suicide in JIM JONES's People's Temple Settlement in **Guyana**.

112 Greene Street is forced to relocate because of soaring **SoHo** real estate costs.

In **Chicago**, WARD CHRISTENSEN and RANDY SEUSS create the first computer bulletin board (BBS).

The first *TAKE BACK THE NIGHT* marches are organized to demand women's rights to safety in the street.

The New York State Assembly threatens to end CAPS funding because of the artist's book *SEX OBJECTS*, partially funded by CAPS funding and held by some members of the assembly to be objectionable.

*THE NEW ARTSSPACE*, the first national conference of alternative visual arts organizations, is held at LAICA. LAWRENCE WEINER is the only unaffiliated artist invited to be a panel participant; 100 **Los Angeles** artists protest the lack of individual artist representation.

*MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING* between the NEA, the NEH, and the State Department's International Communications Agency. Agency staff members are invited to observe closed peer panels and NEA National Council meetings.

CEPA develops *PORTRAIT OF BUFFALO* and *BUFFALO'S HISTORIC PAST* with CETA funding.

1979 \_\_\_\_\_ HANNA WILKE performs *THE STATE OF NUDITY IN THE U.S.* at the WPA.

P.S. 1 initiates a fundraising program in which works donated by artists are sold to corporate clients.

NAPNOC's Department of Labor funding is cut off, closing all offices. The board decides to reorganize and develop a stronger national communication network among community-based artists.

A shootout in **Greensboro, NC** between KKK and anti-Klan protestors leaves five demonstrators dead and five wounded.

Over 200,000 march in **Washington, DC** for gay rights.

Group Material, an artists' collective dedicated to cultural activism, is founded in **New York City**.

Bread and Roses, a cultural project of the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees, is organized in **New York City**.

CINDY SHERMAN exhibits self-portraits at Hallwalls in **Buffalo**.

Several artists' organizations administer CETA money for artists who are given a salary to work in their studios creating art for government offices.

Action against Racism in the Arts protests the exhibition *NIGGER DRAWINGS* at Artists Space.

A major nuclear accident occurs at Three Mile Island power plant near **Harrisburg, PA**.

*THE DINNER PARTY*, a feminist collaboration organized by JUDY CHICAGO, opens at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

1980 \_\_\_\_\_ Workshops/Artists Spaces category is renamed Artists Spaces; 98 organizations receive \$919,000 in grants.

FBI initiates ABSCAM, a sting operation in which FBI agents pose as Arab sheiks and offer bribes for political favors.

HELENE WEINER opens Metro Pictures, a commercial gallery in **SoHo** exhibiting many of the artists previously exhibited at Artists Space, all of whom are interested in an exploration of media representations.

The Committee Against Fort Apache is organized in the **Bronx** to oppose racial stereotypes in the film *FORT APACHE, THE BRONX*.

Individual Artists of Oklahoma is founded in **Norman, OK**.

The Heritage Foundation publishes *MANDATE FOR LEADERSHIP*, a blueprint for the newly elected Reagan Administration's policies.

DAVE FOREMAN and four others form Earth First!, a radical environmentalist group.

COLAB members organize *THE REAL ESTATE SHOW*, illegally squatting in a vacant city-owned building on **New York City's Lower East Side**.

Political Art Documentation/Distribution (PAD/D), an artists' resource and networking organization, is formed in **New York City** by LUCY LIPPARD, IRVING WEXLER, and GREG SHOLETTE, among others.

The American Indian Art Museum in **Santa Fe, NM** mounts *YEARS OF PROTEST*, an exhibition of Native American work from the '60s and '70s.

1981 \_\_\_\_\_ RONALD REAGAN becomes president of the **U.S.**

Unemployment in the **U.S.** reaches 4.6 million; 30 banks fail; a deep, international depression begins.

*NAPNOC NOTES* features an article entitled *FREEDOM AND DIVERSITY*, introducing the idea of cultural democracy, soon to be the title of the organization's publication.

CAGE organizes *OUT ART*, an exhibition of gay and lesbian work.

Movimiento Artístico del Río Salada (MARS) is founded in **Phoenix, AZ**.

President REAGAN fires over 10,000 members of the striking Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO). The strike was called to protest six-day work weeks, inadequate equipment, and poor grievance procedures.

President REAGAN issues an executive order authorizing the CIA and the FBI to reinstitute domestic intelligence operations.

The AFL-CIO centennial poster is designed by ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG.

The Reagan Administration proposes to rescind \$32 million of already appropriated NEA funds, but the measure is defeated in Congress.

Fun Gallery and 51X open on **New York City's Lower East Side**. By 1983 there are 25 commercial galleries in the area and real estate speculation begins to drive old residents from the neighborhood.



President REAGAN names FRANK HODSOLL chairman of the NEA.

*REPORT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE ON THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES* recommends that the NEA's current structure of granting be maintained, but also recommends a stronger Federal Arts Council.

*ART PAPERS*, a magazine based in **Atlanta, GA**, begins publishing the newsletter *ARTSPACE NEWS*.

The Art Critics funding category, under fire because of "Marxist" tendencies, is suspended by NEA staff in response to the Reagan Administration's proposed 50 percent cut in funding.

The WPA begins its *STREETWORKS* program of public art— "guerilla works in non-art settings."

The Cherry Creek Theater Group hosts *THE GATHERING* in **St. Peter, MN**, a national convention of over 500 progressive artists.

The Justice Department announces plans to seek a reversal of Supreme Court decisions on affirmative action and freedom of reproductive choice.

*BEYOND SURVIVAL: NEW ARTSSPACES II* conference is funded by the NEA and held in **New Orleans** to "explore the peculiar situation of the new artsspace as it approaches institutionalization." Over 70 organizations participate. A key issue is the hierarchy set up between organizations run by administrators and those run by artists.

*MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY WEEKLY REPORT* cites the first AIDS death.

DEE DEE HALLECK begins *PAPER TIGER TELEVISION*, a public access TV show that debunks the media. The first guest is HERBERT SCHILLER, who "reads" the *NEW YORK TIMES*.

JOHN W. HINKLEY, acting out a scenario from the movie *TAXI DRIVER*, attempts to assassinate President REAGAN.

Processed World Collective is founded and begins publication of *PROCESSED WORLD* magazine.

KRZYSZTOF WODICZKO projects a giant image of shaking hands onto a building at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

President REAGAN successfully proposes eliminating CETA public service employment programs, responsible for an estimated \$200 million in jobs nationwide. Current arts workers are fired even before REAGAN's first budget is passed, since the Department of Labor rules that funds already committed can be used to pay unemployment benefits.

President REAGAN approves paramilitary and covert action to topple the Sandinista government of **Nicaragua**.

KEITH HARING executes his first chalk graffiti drawings in **New York City** subways.

Coca-Cola agrees to put \$34 million into African-American businesses as a result of a national boycott by PUSH.

The Equal Rights Amendment, guaranteeing women equality under the CONSTITUTION, fails ratification.

Total number of degrees conferred by U.S. colleges in the fine and applied arts is 49,108.

1982 \_\_\_\_\_ Massive plant closings occur throughout the **U.S.**

The Gay Men's Health Crisis Center is organized in **New York City** to help fight the spread of AIDS.

**New York City's** Metropolitan Transit Authority rejects an anti-REAGAN poster by MICHAEL LEBRON titled *TIRED OF THE JELLY BEAN REPUBLIC?*

The National Association of Artists' Organizations (NAAO) is incorporated with 100 founding members from across the **U.S.** following the *NEW ARTSSPACES III* conference held at the WPA.

The Association of American Cultures (TAAC) is formed to support culturally diverse arts through networking, increased public visibility, participation in government policy-making, and implementation of ongoing programs.

A British team discovers a gaping hole in the ozone layer above **Antarctica**.

Over half a million demonstrators march in **New York City** for a nuclear freeze. Artists for Nuclear Disarmament is formed to create events and art for the march.

The *VIETNAM MEMORIAL* to U.S. soldiers killed or missing in the Vietnam War is dedicated in **Washington, DC**.

The J. Paul Getty Museum becomes the largest endowed museum in the world when it receives \$1.1 billion from the Getty estate.

Greenpeace produces a 60-second TV spot of a fashion show in which a profusely bleeding fur coat splatters spectators.

NAAO adopts a 15-percent-minority exhibition guideline as an affirmative action program during the *CULTURAL DIVERSITY CONFERENCE* held at DiverseWorks in **Houston**.

The Guerilla Girls, an anonymous women's collective, is established to combat sexism and racism in the art world.

*VIDEO REFUSES* opens at the Lab in **San Francisco** as a protest of the *SAN FRANCISCO VIDEO FESTIVAL*.

*VIETNAM AND ITS AFTERMATH* opens at Nexus Art Center in **Atlanta**.

*THE WELL (WHOLE EARTH 'LECTRONIC LINK)*, an online telecommunications service, begins operations. It hosts *ACEN (ARTCOM ELECTRONIC NETWORK)* the largest BBS dedicated to art information and issues.

After the second day of mass sabotage, 4,000 Jeep workers are sent home in **Toledo, OH**.

The U.S. withdraws from the World Court after that body orders the U.S. to stop its secret war against **Nicaragua**.

JOHN MALPEDE creates the Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD), a performance workshop of and for the homeless.

Gunshots are fired through the window of Supreme Court Justice HARRY BLACKMUN, principle author of the *Roe v. Wade* opinion.

Meatpackers Local P-9 strikes the Hormel plant in **Austin, MN** after Hormel management asks for employee concessions despite posting record profits.

Members of The Order, a white supremacist group, are indicted for conspiracy and racketeering charges.

1986 \_\_\_\_\_ *INSIDE OUT: PHOTOGRAPHS FROM LIERTON*, an exhibition of photographs made by prison inmates, is shown at Firebird Gallery in **Alexandria, VA**.

BRIAN WALLIS curates *DAMAGED GOODS: DESIRE AND THE ECONOMY OF THE OBJECT* at The New Museum. Many of the same artists appear in *ENDGAME: REFERENCE AND SIMULATION IN RECENT PAINTING AND SCULPTURE*, organized by **Boston's** Institute of Contemporary Art.

MIKE ALEWITZ oversees the painting of an anti-management mural on Meatpackers Local P-9 headquarters in **Austin, MN**. It is immediately covered over.

U.S. warplanes bomb **Libya**.

The Meese Commission issues a report linking sexual imagery with sexual behavior and calling for stricter regulations on the distribution and sale of erotic materials.

The Supreme Court rules that homosexual relations, even in private between consenting adults, are not protected by the *CONSTITUTION*.

NAAO's UNTITLED conference is held at Hallwalls and CEPA in **Buffalo**.

*PELICULAS: ARCHIVES OF LATIN AMERICAN CONFLICT 1889- 1940*, a film by DEE DEE HALLECK, PENE BENDER, and ROBERT SUMMERS, is refused funding by the NEA because it lacks "aesthetic quality."

Dead Kennedys lead singer JELLO BIAFRA is tried for obscenity charges in **Los Angeles**.

JACKIE PRESSER, president of the Teamsters Union, admits being an informant for the FBI.

The U.S. government's secret deal to illegally send weapons to **Iran** in return for the freeing of American hostages is made public. Later it is discovered that profits from this sale were illegally diverted to the CIA-backed Contras.

HOWARD GRIFFITH, a 23-year-old African American, is murdered by 12 white youths in **Howard Beach, NY**.

The NEA grants 129 artists' organizations a total of \$1,874,500. NAAO receives \$20,000.

1987 \_\_\_\_\_ *SURVEILLANCE* exhibition opens at LACE. The catalog includes directions on how to gain access to materials under the Freedom of Information Act.

AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) is organized by LARRY KRAMER in **New York City**. The group's first demonstration takes place on **Wall Street** and targets the Federal Drug Administration and Burroughs Wellcome Pharmaceuticals for the high cost and monopolization of AZT production.

Greenpeace volunteers cling to the U.S.S. Texas to call attention to the possible presence of nuclear weapons on the ship.

The Supreme Court rules that any foreign film entering the **U.S.** that could possibly sway public opinion must carry a "political propaganda" disclaimer.

The Guerilla Girls receive the "Susan B. Anthony Award" from the New York State Chapter of the National Organization of Women.

The *UNCENSORED* exhibition opens at Spaces, **Cleveland**.

The Guerilla Girls organize *GUERRILLA GIRLS SPEAK BACK TO THE WHITNEY* at the Clocktower in **New York City**.

The Center for Arts Criticism is defunded by the NEA, ending all direct federal support to critics.

The New York Stock Market crashes in a record one-day decline.

Five hundred thousand participate in the *NATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN MARCH* on **Washington, DC**. *THE NAMES PROJECT*, a cooperatively constructed quilt commemorating those dead from AIDS, is displayed.

FRANK HODSOLL vetoes a project by JENNY HOLZER and others in which electronic billboards flashing messages would be stationed in front of the White House, the Supreme Court, and the Capitol Building.

Art Against AIDS forms in **New York City** to raise money for AIDS research.

KEITH PIASECZNY and MARILYN ZIMMERMAN organize the Urban Center for Photography in **Detroit**. They begin *DEMOLISHED BY NEGLECT*, a project targeting political inaction in **Detroit's** inner city.

*SILENCE=DEATH* posters, protesting government inaction on the AIDS epidemic, begin to appear in **New York City**.

One hundred five artists' organizations receive a total of \$1,793,000 from the NEA. NAAO receives \$10,000.

ELIZABETH SISCO, LOUIS HOCK, and DAVID AVALOS create bus posters that read *WELCOME TO AMERICA'S FINEST TOURIST PLANTATION* during Super Bowl week in **San Diego**.

WILLIAM OLANDER offers The New Museum's window space to ACT UP, which produces an installation titled *LET THE RECORD SHOW*. The artist collective Gran Fury emerges from the project.



The Center for Constitutional Rights releases documents that prove the FBI carried out surveillance of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), SCLC, and other groups opposed to the Reagan Administration's support of the Contra War in **Nicaragua**.

Following a debate between Senator JESSE HELMS (R-NC) and Senator EDWARD KENNEDY (D-MA), Congress defeats an amendment calling for restrictions on sexually explicit representations in AIDS-education materials issued by the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

The Detroit Council of the Arts demands the Urban Center of Photography return its \$3000 grant on the grounds that the group was "defacing public property"—stapling photographs onto condemned buildings.

Art Against AIDS stages art auctions in **New York City** and **Los Angeles**.

MICHAEL TIDMUS's BBS artwork *HEALTH AND MORALITY: A DESULTORY DISCOURSE* goes online.

The fifth NAAO conference is held at LACE, **Los Angeles**.

Scriptwriters in the Writers Guild of America strike for 22 weeks over residuals and script control.

Group Material produces *INSERTS*, a collection of one-page projects by artists, and distributes it as an advertising supplement in the *NEW YORK TIMES*.

ACT UP shuts down the Federal Drug Administration in **Washington, DC**. Later that year they leaflet a Mets game at Shea Stadium with information on condoms.

Neoists stage *FESTIVALS OF PLAGIARISM* in **San Francisco, Madison, WI**, and **London**.

The FBI instigates the Library Awareness Program, requesting librarians to monitor library use and inform the FBI about potential Soviet spies.

ACT UP "zaps" NICHOLAS NIXON's MoMA exhibition *PICTURES OF PEOPLE* for its unsympathetic portrayal of people with AIDS.

The NEA demands the return of grant money from *RED BASS*, a journal based in **New Orleans**, after it publishes an issue entitled *FOR PALESTINE* that includes work by NOAN CHOMSKY, SUE COE, EDWARD SAID, and EQBAL AHMED, among others.

The NEA grants 105 artists' organizations a total of \$1,793,000. NAAO receives \$25,000 from the NEA to support a national conference, regional conferences, related publications, board meetings, and the bi-monthly *BULLETIN*.

1989 — Art Strike Committees (established in **New York City, San Francisco, Baltimore,** etc.) call for an *ART STRIKE*, which is to begin in 1990 and last three years.

*ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM: THE MISSING LINK*, an exhibition of nine African-American abstract expressionists from the '40s and '50s, opens at the Jamaica Arts Center, Queens, NY.

ERIC BOGOSIAN's performance piece *TALK RADIO* becomes the basis for a Hollywood film directed by OLIVER STONE.

The Guerilla Girls create poster work for *WHAT DOES SHE WANT?*, an exhibition of feminist art organized by the First Bank System's Division of Visual Arts using works from the bank's collection.

EMILE DE ANTONIO completes *MR. HOOVER AND I*, a film about his 10,000-page file at the FBI.

The Supreme Court takes a first step toward overturning *Roe v. Wade* when it upholds a **Missouri** law forbidding public facilities and employees from participating in abortion-related activities.

The FBI infiltrates Earth First! and arrests four members for attempting to disable electrical transmission lines to **Arizona's Palo Verde** nuclear power plant.

Installation Gallery commissions HOCK, SISCO, and AVALOS to create a billboard protesting San Diego City Council's refusal to name its new convention center after MARTIN LUTHER KING. The City Council votes to cut Installation's funding from \$42,000 to \$0, but is forced to back down after an intense public outcry follows the decision.

The Machinists Union strikes Eastern Airlines. When pilots and flight attendants honor the picket line, Eastern declares bankruptcy under Chapter 11 guidelines. An unsuccessful attempt by Eastern pilots to purchase the airlines follows.

The Exxon Valdez runs aground in **Prince William Sound, AK**, spilling 11 million gallons of crude oil into the bay.

The Guerilla Girls of Houston organize *ANOTHER DEAD HORSE*, an installation at DiverseWorks in which 1,000 toy gorillas portray daily routines.

*PROMISE OF PROGRESS: DIARY OF A NEIGHBORHOOD* opens the new Aljira space in downtown **Newark, NJ**. The reception features \$5 haircuts by master barber ALI MITCHEL.

United Mine Workers strike Pittston Coal Co. after Pittston demands concessions and refuses to sign an industry-wide contract.

The *PATHFINDER MURAL* is completed in **New York City**. Captioned "A World without Borders," the mural depicts a group of revolutionary leaders from MARX to MALCOLM X. It is immediately defaced.

Veterans' groups protest outside the School of the Art Institute in **Chicago** over artist DREAD SCOTT's *HOW TO DISPLAY AN AMERICAN FLAG*, in which an *AMERICAN FLAG* is laid on the ground. The **Illinois** legislature reduces grants to the school from \$130,000 to \$1.

The American Family Association calls for the ouster of federal officials responsible for the funding of the exhibit *AWARDS IN THE VISUAL ARTS* organized by the South-eastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA) because it contains ANDRES SERRANO's photograph *PISS CHRIST*.

Randolph Street Gallery presents *THE WHOLE WORLD IS STILL WATCHING* to mark the 20-year anniversary of the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

Representative DICK ARMEY (R-TX) sends a letter signed by 107 congressmen to the NEA protesting the SECCA grant and the exhibition *ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE: THE PERFECT MOMENT*, organized by the Philadelphia Institute of Contemporary Art.

The Corcoran Gallery cancels the *MAPPLETHORPE* exhibition, stating that they do not want to adversely affect the NEA's congressional support. Gay-rights activists and artists picket the museum.

The sixth NAAO conference is held in **Minneapolis**.

*ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE: THE PERFECT MOMENT* opens at the WPA. Record crowds are reported.

Art Against AIDS organizes *ART AGAINST AIDS ON THE ROAD*, a public art exhibition of signs and billboards in **San Francisco**. The project tours nationally.

The NEA appropriations bill passes the House—a \$45,000 cut (representing the total amount awarded for the SECCA and *MAPPLETHORPE* shows) is recommended.

Three thousand attend the *ANARCHISTS GATHERING* in **San Francisco**.

ACD adopts a *CULTURAL BILL OF RIGHTS*.

NAAO organizes a massive letter-writing campaign in protest over proposed NEA cuts.

The Senate adopts an NEA appropriations bill that places a five-year ban on NEA grants to SECCA and the Philadelphia ICA, transfers \$400,000 in funds from the Visual Arts Program to other categories, and adopts an amendment by Senator JESSE HELMS that bans NEA monies for "obscene or indecent" art.

The Michigan Council for the Arts approves a *DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES* that condemns censorship of the arts.

Boy With Arms Akimbo plasters prints of male nudes by JOEL-PETER WITKIN, MAN RAY, and WILHELM VON GLOEDEN to the columns of the San Francisco Federal Building.

**San Francisco's** Capp Street Gallery hosts *BORDER AXES*, an alternative information network operated by the Border Arts Workshop/Taller de Arte Fronterizo. Fax, telephone, wire service, and postal service are employed to link the Latino and Anglo-Saxon communities in cities across the **U.S.**

A compromised version of the NEA appropriations bill passes both the House and Senate with a slightly weaker version of the Helms Amendment banning obscene art. It states: "None of the funds authorized to be appropriated for the National Endowment for the Arts or the National Endowment for the Humanities may be used to promote, disseminate, or produce materials which in the judgement of the National Endowments may be considered obscene, including but not limited to depictions of sadomasochism, homoeroticism, the sexual exploitation of children, or individuals engaged in sex acts which, when taken as a whole, do not have serious literary, artistic, political, or artistic value."

JOHN FROHNMAYER is named chairman of the NEA by President GEORGE BUSH.

Visual Aids sponsors *A DAY WITHOUT ART*, a national event memorializing those dead of AIDS.

NEA chair FROHNMAYER recommends that Artists Space return NEA monies used for the exhibition *WITNESSES: AGAINST OUR VANISHING*, which deals with AIDS. Under intense pressure from the arts community, he later changes his mind and reinstates the grant.

The exhibition *A FESTIVAL OF CENSORSHIP* is held at Gallery X in **Phoenix, AZ**.

LEONARD BERNSTEIN declines his *NATIONAL MEDAL OF ARTS AWARD* in protest over the threatened defunding of the *WITNESSES* exhibition.

MARK PASCALE and DAN PETERMAN organize *THE END OF THE WEATHER AS WE KNOW IT* for the Randolph Street Gallery in **Chicago**. In the show, artists NEWTON HARRISON and HELEN MEYER HARRISON, RACHEL GREEN, JNO COOK, and others consider the possibility that the earth's climate could be permanently transformed by environmental damage.

Estimates of homeless people in the **U.S.** run as high as three million persons.

1990 \_\_\_\_\_ The *ART STRIKE* begins.

Greyhound bus drivers go on strike. When the company hires "permanent replacements" violence ensues.

The **U.S.** invades **Panama**.

The National Campaign for Freedom of Expression, an artists lobbying group, is founded in **Washington, DC**.

Congress decides to bail out the failing savings and loan industry costing U.S. taxpayers billions of dollars.

All NEA grants for 1989 restrict grantees from using funds to produce "homoerotic art," etc.

Participants in *ARTS ADVOCACY DAY* listen to speakers, lobby congressional delegates, and put on a media show in **Washington, DC**.

DENNIS BARRIE, director of the Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center, is charged with violating obscenity laws when the museum opens the *MAPPLETHORPE* retrospective.

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies backs down on its initial proposal that 60 percent of NEA funding be redistributed to state art agencies.

The New School for Social Research takes the NEA to court to test the constitutionality of its obscenity clause.

Artist DAVID WOJNAROWICZ sues the American Family Association for misusing and misrepresenting his work in its anti-NEA pamphlets.



On a tip from a photo lab, the FBI breaks into photographer JOCK STURGES's home to search for photographs made of friends and their children at a nude beach.

Right-wing editorialists ROWLAND EVANS and ROBERT NOVAK assail the work of performance artist KAREN FINLEY, resulting in her installation at Franklin Furnace being picketed. The New York City Fire Marshall closes the gallery on a technicality.

PAT ROBERTSON's Christian Coalition budgets \$200,000 for an ad campaign intended to abolish the NEA.

*THE DECADE SHOW: FRAMEWORKS OF IDENTITY IN THE 1980S* opens at The New Museum, the Studio Museum in Harlem, and the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art.

NEA chair FROHNMAYER vetoes four individual artist grants—for KAREN FINLEY, TIM MILLER, HOLLY HUGHES, and JOHN FLECK—on the grounds that their art cannot be judged on artistic merit alone but must be judged within the "political realities."

Gay/Lesbian March Activists call for a boycott of Chiquita bananas because the company's major shareholder, the LINDNER family, supports **Hamilton County's** obscenity prosecution of the Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center.

The Federal Communications Commission rules that it will enforce a 24-hour ban on the broadcasting of "indecent" programs by radio and television stations.

Hoping to avoid an NEA-type showdown with congressional conservatives, the CDC voluntarily adopts rules limiting explicit details in federally-funded AIDS-education materials.

A federal prosecutor in **Portland, MA** confiscates a photograph by WALTER CHAPPELL that shows the artist naked and holding his infant son next to his erect penis.

*IN MEMORIAM*, a window painting by CARLOS GUTIERREZ-SOLANA, is ordered covered over by **Richmond, VA's** commonwealth attorney. 1708 East Main Gallery decides to fight the order.

The House votes 297-123 to penalize the University of the District of Columbia \$1.6 million, the amount the university used to install JUDY CHICAGO's *THE DINNER PARTY*.

After a court challenge by several newspapers, NEA chair FROHNMAYER opens the National Council on the Arts grant review meeting to the public for the first time in NEA history. The council recommends that chairman FROHNMAYER stop requiring NEA-funded artists to sign anti-obscenity oaths.

**SOURCES/Writers/TIPS:** David Anger, Jacki Apple, Art in America, Robert Atkins, Paul Aurich, Judith Baca, Joellen Bard, Avis Berman, Robyn Brentano, Phillip Brookman, Helen Brunner, Linda Frye Burnham, Angela Calomiris, Eva Cockroft, Ward Churchill, Michael Crane, Douglas Crimp, Mary Delahoyd, Digest of Educational Statistics, Frank Donner, Jim Dozier, Tim Dresher, Nancy Drew, Rosalyn Deutsche, Steve Durland, Renee Edgington, The Encyclopedia of American Facts and Dates, Philip Foner, Martin Green, Michael Harwood, Marvin Heiferman, Elizabeth Hess, Gary Garrells, Martha Gever, Brian Glick, RoseLee Goldberg, Guillermo Gomez-Pena, Jan Zita Grover, Serge Guilbaut, Derek Guthrie, Michael Harwood, Marvin Heiferman, Elizabeth Hess, Patricia Hills, Abbie Hoffman, The IWW Labor Calendar 1990, Mary Jane Jacobs, Stephen Kahn, Jeffrey Kastner, Grant Kester, John Killacky, Dean Kuipers, Leslie Labowitz, Suzanne Lacy, Oliver Larkin, Gary O. Larson, Kay Larson, Toby Kleban Levine, Lucy Lippard, Fred Lonidier, Catherine Lord, Richard D. McKinzie, Milton Meltzer, James Miller, Michael Macdonald Mooney, Charlotte Murphy, Jon Naar, National Endowment for the Arts Final Reports, Doug Patterson, Jim Prigoff, Alan Parachini, Lisa Phillips, Arlene Raven, James Reed, Corinne Robins, Nancy Robinson, Donald Russell, Jr., Cara Gendel Ryan, Irving Sandler, David Skarjune, Reinhard Schultz, David and Cecile Shapiro, Jeanne Siegel, Mary Stofflet, David Levi Strauss, Athan Theoharis, The Encyclopedia of American Facts and Dates, Mark Savitt, Jason Tannen, David Trend, Anne Tucker, Tim Vander Wall, Carl Waldman, Tom Ward, Michele Wallace, Robert White, Deborah Wye

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This timetable was commissioned by the National Association of Artists' Organizations as a project for the publication *Organizing Artists*. The subsequent publication of this project as an artist's book was made possible by a Jerome Foundation Individual Artist Fellowship.

Remembering is not enough

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Art Workers should come to the SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS auditorium 209 East 23rd. Street, on Thursday April 10, between the hours of six and ten in the evening to hear and give testimony in:

AN OPEN PUBLIC HEARING ON THE SUBJECT:

WHAT SHOULD BE THE PROGRAM OF THE ART WORKERS REGARDING

MUSEUM REFORM

AND

TO ESTABLISH THE PROGRAM OF AN OPEN ART WORKERS COALITION

This hearing will be held according to certain rules. Every art worker who wishes to air his views will be permitted to make a statement of his attitudes and complaints about all art institutions and conditions, regardless of his point of view in strictly artistic matters, and regardless of his previous or actual affiliation with any art institutions or activities. All witnesses are encouraged to present their views in writing to make the task of producing a complete record of the testimony easier. Written material too lengthy to be read aloud may be inserted entire into the record. Each witness must announce or sign his name in connection with his statement. No credentials are required.

Each person who wishes to speak will be assigned, upon arrival, an approximate time for speaking. Any witness who does not wish to wait or return for his turn, may give the secretary a brief statement to be read at the appropriate time. Statements may also be read by persons other than whose signature they bear. Statements may also be made by groups provided that a member of the group signs his name. Witnesses may arrive at the meeting at any time. Additional witnesses will not be admitted to the list of speakers after nine. If there are enough additional witnesses to warrant it, another hearing will be held on the following day to complete the record of testimony.

The complete record of the proceedings of this hearing will be published and brought to the attention of all art workers and art institutions in New York City and elsewhere. An unlimited amount of copies will be made available at cost to anyone requesting them. The committee which has organized this hearing will read it carefully and prepare a report drawing conclusions from all of the testimony. This report will be freely circulated and is intended to form a solid basis for a permanent organization designed to represent the best interests of all art workers.

ART WORKERS COALITION  
Public Hearing Committee

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JEAN TOCHE'S STATEMENT TO BE READ AT THE OPEN HEARING OF THE ART WORKERS COALITION AT THE SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS ON APRIL 10, 1969

FIRST, I WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST THAT THE ACTIONS SHOULD BE DIRECTED AGAINST ALL MUSEUMS AND ALL ART INSTITUTIONS, AND ESPECIALLY AGAINST THOSE - WRITERS, CRITICS, COLLECTORS, CURATORS... - WHO DIRECT, BEHIND THE SCENES, THAT ART ESTABLISHMENT.

SECOND, I BELIEVE THAT THE OBJECTIVE SHOULD NOT BE TO OBTAIN A SERIES OF REFORMS FROM THE MUSEUMS, BUT TO GET EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE RUNNING OF THESE INSTITUTIONS IN THE SAME MANNER AS, TODAY, STUDENTS ARE FIGHTING FOR THE CONTROL OF THE SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE DIRECTORS AND CURATORS OF THE MUSEUMS HAVE NO REAL POWER, BUT MAINLY CARRY OUT THE POLICIES OF THE MUSEUMS' PATRONS.

\* \* \* \* \*

REGARDING THE STRUCTURE OF THE ART WORKERS COALITION, IT IS EVIDENT THAT WE NEED SOME KIND OF ORGANIZATION IN ORDER TO FUNCTION EFFICIENTLY. HOWEVER, I BELIEVE IT SHOULD TAKE THE FORM OF A COMMUNE, AND NOT OF AN AUTHORITARIAN CENTRALIZED HIERARCHY.

THEREFORE I WANT TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS:

1. NO LEADERSHIP AND NO HIERARCHY IN ANY FORM.
2. ALL IDEAS AND CURRENTS AMONG THE COMMUNITY MUST BE RESPECTED AND EQUALLY GUARANTEED, EVEN IF THEY REPRESENT ONLY A MINORITY OF THINKING.
3. ALL DECISIONS ARE TAKEN BY VOTE IN A PUBLIC ASSEMBLY, OPEN TO EVERYBODY, TO BE CARRIED OUT BY ACTION COMMITTEES.
4. ALL ACTION COMMITTEES ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY AND THEIR MEMBERS CAN BE REPLACED AT ANY TIME BY THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY. HOWEVER, THE ACTION COMMITTEES SHOULD HAVE A GREAT FLEXIBILITY OF ACTION, ESPECIALLY AT THE LEVEL OF EACH DISCIPLINE REPRESENTED, IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO RESPOND IMMEDIATELY TO ANY URGENT SITUATION.
5. ANYONE CAN CALL A PUBLIC ASSEMBLY AT ANY TIME, ON 24 HOUR NOTICE. THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY SHOULD MEET AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK AND, IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, FUNCTION ON A 24-HOUR BASIS.
6. ANYONE CAN ATTEND THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY, MAKE SUGGESTIONS, AND VOTE.
7. AN INFORMATION COMMITTEE SHOULD BE FORMED, FOR GENERAL RESEARCH, TO DISTRIBUTE INFORMATION, AND TO INFORM THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY OF ANY NEW DEVELOPMENTS.
8. A VIGILANCE COMMITTEE SHOULD BE FORMED, ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY AND WITH ACCESS TO ALL COMMITTEES, TO REPORT ANY ATTEMPT TO CONTROL INFORMATION OR ACTION, OR ANY ATTEMPT OF ANY KIND TO ESTABLISH AN AUTHORITARIAN DICTATORSHIP.
9. SPOKESMEN FOR THE COMMUNITY SHOULD NOT HAVE ANY POWER OF ACTION OR DECISION. THEY ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY FOR WHAT THEY SAY AND WRITE, AND THEY CAN BE REPLACED AT ANY TIME BY THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY.
10. A NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE SHOULD BE FORMED TO SUPPORT AND COLLABORATE WITH SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS OF ARTISTS, STUDENTS AND WORKERS FROM OTHER CITIES AND ABROAD.
11. AN ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE SHOULD BE FORMED TO COORDINATE ALL INFORMATION AND ACTION, AND TO PERFORM SECRETARIAL DUTIES. HOWEVER, THIS COMMITTEE SHOULD HAVE NO POWER OF DECISION.
12. A TREASURER SHOULD BE SELECTED WHO IS ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY AND CAN BE REPLACED AT ANY TIME BY THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY.
13. A LIBRARY SHOULD BE CONSTITUTED, OPEN TO ANYONE AT SPECIFIED TIMES, WITH FREE ACCESS TO ALL RECORDS OF THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY AND OTHER DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION.

\* \* \* \* \*

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TOC HE

AS TO TACTICS, OUR FIRST OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE TO FIND OUT EXACTLY WHO CONTROLS, BEHIND THE SCENES, THE POLICIES OF THE MUSEUMS AND OTHER ART ESTABLISHMENT INSTITUTIONS. WE SHOULD THEN PROCEED TO TARNISH THEIR PUBLIC IMAGE IN ORDER TO FORCE THEM TO PROVE PUBLICLY WHO THEY REALLY ARE, THAT IS, THE BOSSES OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS WHICH MANIPULATE PEOPLE AND ARE BASICALLY AT THE SERVICE OF THE REPRESSIVE FORCES OF SOCIETY. WE MUST NOT FORGET, FOR INSTANCE, THAT THE BIG BANKS OWN A GREAT DEAL OF SOUTH AMERICA AND ARE THEREFORE RESPONSIBLE FOR SOME OF THE MISERY AND SLAVERY OF THE WORKERS IN THOSE COUNTRIES. THE PATRONAGE OF THE ARTS BY SUCH INSTITUTIONS AND PERSONALITIES EXPLAINS THE VERY PROCESS OF ALIENATION OF THE MASSES BY THE ART ESTABLISHMENT, ITS USE FOR PROPAGANDA, ITS CORRUPTION, AND ITS SEGREGATION OF BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ARTISTS. WE CAN ONLY DO THIS BY DIRECT CONFRONTATION. BY DOING THIS WE WILL GRADUALLY GET THE SUPPORT OF OTHER ARTISTS AND OTHER PROGRESSIVE REVOLUTIONARY GROUPS. WE SHOULD ALSO PARTICIPATE, WHENEVER, POSSIBLE, IN THE ACTIONS OF THESE OTHER GROUPS IN ORDER TO EXPAND OUR EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH SUCH ACTIONS AND TO DEVELOP A BINDING COMMUNITY SPIRIT.

A SECOND OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE THE UNIONS OF THE MUSEUMS, WHICH ARE FASCISTIC ORGANIZATIONS AND VERY MUCH PART OF AND AT THE SERVICE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT. THEIR MEMBERS SHOULD BE PERSUADED TO IGNORE THE ARBITRARY ORDERS OF THEIR UNIONS AND TO JOIN US IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ALL ART ESTABLISHMENT ORDER, IN THE SAME MANNER AS THE FRENCH WORKERS REVOLTED AGAINST THE CGT AT THE TIME OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION LAST MAY.

A THIRD OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE THE FEDERAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WHICH FINANCE THE PUBLIC MUSEUMS. THE PROLONGATION OF THE WAR IN VIETNAM WILL HAVE, AS A DIRECT CONSEQUENCE, A CUTBACK OF FUNDS FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AS WELL AS CULTURAL FUNDS, AND THE EVENTUAL CLOSING OF ALL PUBLIC MUSEUMS. TO FIGHT FOR CONTROL OF THE MUSEUMS IS ALSO TO BE AGAINST THE WAR IN VIETNAM.

ANOTHER OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE A DIRECT PARTICIPATION OF ARTISTS IN THE ART PRESS, I.E. THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ALTERNATIVE BY ARTISTS TO WHAT THE CRITICS WRITE. THIS SHOULD LATER BE EXTENDED TO ALL THE PRESS MEDIA (DAILY PAPERS, RADIO, TELEVISION...). HOWEVER WE WILL NOT OBTAIN THAT OBJECTIVE BY CAJOLING THE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND BY HIDING WHAT WE REALLY ARE. WE MUST NOT FORGET THAT THEY ARE ON THE OTHER SIDE AND WILL ALWAYS TRY TO TWIST, IGNORE, OR DESTROY WHAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR. ON THE CONTRARY, WE MUST TRY TO INVOLVE THEM DIRECTLY IN OUR ACTIONS, THAT IS, MAKE SURE THAT THESE REPORTERS ARE NOT IMMUNE TO THE REPRESSIVE PRACTICES OF THE POLICE ANY MORE THAN WE ARE. ONLY THEN WILL THEY BE ON OUR SIDE, AS HAPPENED IN CHICAGO AND DURING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION LAST MAY.

FINALLY, WE SHOULD HAVE A GOOD SYSTEM OF COMMUNICATIONS (TELEPHONE, VOLUNTARY MESSENGERS...), ESPECIALLY IN TIMES OF CRISIS, AND WHENEVER WE EXPRESS OURSELVES WE SHOULD USE A DIRECT APPROACH, AND NOT A LITERARY ONE. (BIG POSTERS PRINTED CHEAPLY BY SERIGRAPHY WITH THE HELP OF ART STUDENTS...)

JEAN TOC HE  
APRIL 9, 1969

②



# CASTLE

2

## REMARKS TO THE PUBLIC HEARING

April 10, 1969

Art Workers' Coalition

So far,

The Coalition is the best trades union I have ever been associated with. This is an achievement only in terms of the trades union movement, which is a nineteenth century phenomenon rapidly passing out of style. The trade union is not being superseded by a more powerful agglomeration of suppressed forces. It is expiring because all of its aspirations have been achieved, on the one hand, and on the other, people now think differently than they did in the nineteenth century. At last! Some time ago, I had the idea that in the near future, workers will strike, but their strike will be a permanent one. They will say, we refuse to work under any conditions! At that time, there will be a general recognition of a situation which already exists on a broad scale. The series of factors which results in the requirement that each person ~~justify his existence~~ justify his existence in terms cast down to him by superior beings of all sorts is no longer viable. Already the question of who will be offended if people say fuck on television is imponderable. A year ago, the pope of the Roman church made a serious announcement. He said that the church heads was facing a leadership crisis which was threatening the very foundations of that institution. The implications of all early modern revolutions from the First French Revolution to the First Russian Revolution are that one set of rulers is preferable to another. The exemplary revolution which I believe ~~is~~ is indicated by our experience at the present time is a revolution of a substantially different sort. It is a revolution so broad in its implications that its success will render meaningless everything that can be expressed and recorded and published in connection with this hearing. I say this in order to indicate the scale of the proceedings in which I believe we are involved, no matter whether we like it or not.

We are speaking tonight in the auditorium of an art school which according to some predominant definitions of what a school is, is not a school at all. According to this definition, this school is a small business. It is so because the powers that be recognize the fact that this school does not do what all real schools must do—they must prepare people to live in a situation which must be described as slavery. It is a tribute to the School of Visual Arts and its owner Silas Rhoades that we are permitted to express such thoughts as we may care to make public on his premises.

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The Art Workers' Coalition, like every other worthwhile organization, had its genesis as an anecdote. Something happened, and somebody made a fuss about it. Who this was and what happened is a matter of readily available information which is of no importance. The fact that each person who is speaking here tonight has some complaints about how life is lived at present also doesn't matter. The only thing that matters is that things are going forth. People are doing somethings they want to do. All artists, even the most avaricious and status-conscious artists, realize this basic reality. As my friend Carl Andre has remarked on countless occasions, anybody who thinks we are doing all this simply for money is nuts. There are a great many easier ways to get rich. I want to speak of a level of reality in which everyone realizes that everything ~~that~~ we do is art. Those who fruitlessly oppose this view will needs be deaf to my remarks.

Through the medium of this hearing, the Art Workers' Coalition has an opportunity to redefine for a modern period the question of what the reality of art consists in. This is my personal interest in this organization. I personally detest museums, and have done for many years, but this does not lead me to expect that they can be reformed for my purposes. I simply have nothing to do with them. Those who wish to reform museums are beyond my comprehension, because I am sure that nothing that is remotely connected with museums will ever interest me.

I want to pose some questions which I think should be dealt with by this organization if it is ever to become anything more than a trade union.

HOW CAN ARTISTS DEMONSTRATE TO PEOPLE GENERALLY THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE TO JUSTIFY THEIR EXISTENCE AS SOME KIND OF A WORKER?

HOW CAN MODERN ART BE APPRECIATED BY PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT IN ON THE MAKING OF IT?

RECOGNIZING THAT ALL ART IS FRAUDULENT, WHAT KIND OF A FRAUD SHOULD BE PERPETRATED AT THIS TIME AND IN THIS PLACE?

ARE ARTISTS TODAY WILLING TO PLAN ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THEIR LIVELIHOOD WHICH CONSISTS IN THE ENTERTAINMENT OF ISOLATED RICH PERSONS?

WHAT IS THE CONSISTENCY OF THE FREEDOM WHICH ARTISTS TODAY ENJOY?

HOW CAN ART AS WE KNOW IT SURVIVE IN A TIME OF SURPASSING COLLECTIVITY WHEN AS WE ALL KNOW IT IS FOUNDED ON IDEAS OF INDIVIDUALITY, ORIGINALITY AND PRIVATE LIFE? AND IF IT CAN'T SURVIVE, WHAT FORMS CAN IT TAKE?

WHO ARE WE? WHERE DO WE COME FROM? WHERE ARE WE GOING?

It would be possible to question the implications of our existence as artists is threatened as a result of somebody's fight with a famous museum. I for one hope that we do not ignore these matters in favor of meaningless bullshit designed to improve working conditions.

(A)

Frederick Castle

840 Broadway, New York 3.

CASTLE

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3

It happens that last night I went out to have something to eat and my tape recorder and two of the tapes that I made for a performance scheduled for later tonight were stolen from my loft because I forgot to lock the door of the elevator. This experience, although I have hardly had time to assimilate its meaning, indicated to me that I should add something to this speech specifically concerning the aspect of art which is related to private property. I believe that this organization should make no attempt to enforce the ~~proprietary~~ proprietary rights which may be claimed by avaricious artists. On the contrary, artists should take the lead in declaring themselves in favour of and in league with the thieves and vandals of all sorts who are now making life difficult for people who own things, and who will soon make private property a thing of the past. In this connection, artists should renounce all claims to originality and uniqueness in their own work, and devote themselves instead to addressing and directing all the rebellious natures in society because of the privileged position which artists already enjoy, namely that of licensed disturbers of the peace.

I believe that this organization must come to grips with the profound questions which are being brought to everyone's attention so forcibly today. The implications of these events are comprehensive. Most basically I urge that artists working together should declare clearly that we are no longer the servants of the wealthy.



Frederick Castle  
840 Broadway  
New York 3.

5



"ART IS THIS INTENSE FORM OF INDIVIDUALISM THAT MAKES THE PUBLIC TRY TO EXERCISE OVER IT AN AUTHORITY THAT IS AS IMMORAL AS IT IS RIDICULOUS, AND AS CORRUPTING AS IT IS CONTEMPTIBLE. IT IS NOT QUITE THEIR FAULT. THE PUBLIC HAS ALWAYS, AND IN EVERY AGE, BEEN BADLY BROUGHT UP. THEY ARE CONTINUALLY ASKING ART TO BE POPULAR, TO PLEASE THEIR WANT OF TASTE, TO FLATTER THEIR ABSURD VANITY, TO TELL THEM WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN TOLD BEFORE, TO SHOW THEM WHAT THEY OUGHT TO BE TIRED OF SEEING, TO AMUSE THEM WHEN THEY FEEL HEAVY AFTER EATING TOO MUCH, AND TO DISTRACT THEIR THOUGHTS WHEN THEY ARE WEARIED OF THEIR OWN STUPIDITY. NOW ART SHOULD NEVER TRY TO BE POPULAR. THE PUBLIC SHOULD TRY TO MAKE ITSELF ARTISTIC."

"AN INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS TO MAKE THINGS FOR THE USE OF OTHERS, AND WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR WANTS AND WISHES, DOES NOT WORK WITH INTEREST, AND CONSEQUENTLY CANNOT PUT INTO HIS WORK WHAT IS BEST IN HIM. UPON THE OTHER HAND, WHENEVER A COMMUNITY OR A POWERFUL SECTION OF A COMMUNITY, OR A GOVERNMENT OF ANY KIND, ATTEMPTS TO DICTATE TO THE ARTIST WHAT HE IS TO DO, ART EITHER ENTIRELY VANISHES, OR BECOMES STEREOTYPED, OR DEGENERATES INTO A LOW AND IGNOBLE FORM OF CRAFT."

(6)

GREGORY BATTCOCK

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Why do we protest the Museum of Modern Art?

A private institution controlled by an un-paid board of trustees operating at the pleasure of these trustees, has enough problems in bringing art to the public, within the limits of its private institutionalized nature; ~~that~~ protest ~~is~~ has been termed unwise, ungracious, and misdirected. Well, is it?

A museum operating under ~~the~~ guidelines that served perfectly well two hundred years ago is a threat to art <sup>now</sup> ~~and~~ the museum today such as the Modern, the Whitney (god forgive us) and the Metropolitan are dangerous institutions that, in modern society, have no justifi-

cation except for the fact that they offer solace, amusement and distraction <sup>for</sup> to the very rich. That's not all they do. If it were, there would be insufficient reason to protest. <sup>Today the museum</sup> ~~They~~ actively support/antiquated values and distorted obsessions that are not simply hypocritical -- ~~whatsoever~~ -- they are oppressive, reactionary, ~~is~~ culturally debilitating and socially and aesthetically ~~dangerous~~. **NEGATIVE** ①

The simple fact <sup>is</sup> that those who control the museum -- whatever museum you care to consider -- are the superrich who control ALL legitimate communicative agencies. ~~They~~ <sup>The trustees of the museums and the associated press,</sup> direct N.B.C. and C.B.S., the New York Times, and that greatest ~~single~~ cultural travesty of modern times -- The Lincoln Center. They ~~own~~ own A.T. & T., Ford, ~~and~~ General Motors, the great multi-billion dollar foundations, Columbia University, Alcoa, Minnesota Mining, United Fruit AND AM.K, besides sitting on the boards of each others museums. ②



BATTOCK

4

Newton, Minister for Defense (I'd prefer to say "Offence") for the Black Panther Party. And this is only one instance of how art can and should begin to find its way back to the mainstream of reality and to supplying the metaphysical and practical demands of the ~~new~~ human condition rather than the psychotic caprices of the super-rich.

Since the Museum, by grace of its board of Trustees, has indirectly supported these many years the international imperialist conspir-

acy designed to ~~smother~~ smother the ~~appeals~~ appeals from ~~the~~ oppressed peoples everywhere, it is only fitting that now ~~that~~

~~that~~ we ~~we~~ realize what has been happening that we begin to make some amendments. In this view I again insist that Mr. Bates Lowry (I got this idea from Mark Rudd) incidentally) disclose his role in the worldwide imperialist conspiracy -- I am perfectly serious -- there is so much we don't know and that he could tell us -- and that he turn himself in for a trial in front of a people's tribunal. I urge this democratic peoples body assembled here to seriously consider the enormous gains toward enlightenment of <sup>our knowledge</sup> ~~the~~ ~~of the~~ ~~modern~~ /contemporary art structure, its reasons, its behaviors and the far reaching social, ~~and~~ cultural and ethical implications. In other words, I am convinced that there is a lot to learn, and trying Bates Lowry before a democratic court would be useful, practical; Neither Mr. Lowry himself, nor anyone else should have anything to fear, other than the truth and knowledge. But have we not been trained to fear, along with god almighty, just these virtues?

⑧

these facts  
 The implications of/~~this fact~~ are enormous. Do you realize  
 art loving, culturally committed  
 that it is those ~~xxx~~/trustees of the Metropolitan and Modern  
 museums who are waging the war in Vietnam? Well, they are.

They are ~~just~~ the very same people who called in the cops  
 at Columbia and Harvard; and they are justifying their sick  
 disgusting slaughtered of millions of peoples struggling for  
 independence and self-determination by their precious, conscious  
 support of ART. Anyone who lends themselves to this fantastically  
 hypocritical scheme needs their head examined.

It could be no worse if control and administration of the museum  
 were turned over to the department of defense -- if fact, it might  
 be a godd idea. As long as the museum functions under the guise  
 of an artistic and educational operation, under the control of  
 same people who ~~mix~~ con other people into  
 those ~~xxxxxx~~, robbing, oppres-

sing, burning, mameing, killing and brainwashing for them, than  
~~the~~ we must continue our protest and agitate for their/<sup>complete</sup>removal  
 from the art condition. I call upon the directors and trustees  
 of the museum to begin immediately negotiations preparatory to  
 turning the museum, lock, stock and barrel, over ~~the~~ to the de-  
<sup>then</sup>partment of defense. At least/we will ~~then~~ know where we're art.  
 in the garden of the museum,

The other day/I suggested that the ~~xxxxxx~~ art research faci-  
 lities of the museum be turned over to service in the interest of  
 the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. I've changed my  
 mind -- that's not nearly enough. I do not think it at all far-  
 fetched ~~ixxxx~~ to suggest that the museum supply <sup>up</sup>inactive  
 funds to ~~xxxxxx~~ make up the 700,00. bail bond demanded by  
 the corrupt california court for freedom pending trial of Huey ⑨

BATTOCK

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2 4

I am sick and tired of hearing how the museum cannot afford to give everyone free admission. And, probably as long as it remains a private/<sup>public</sup>institution & (a private museum is very much like a catholic university) it probably can't afford it; but why ~~in hell~~ must it remain a private institution in the first place? Is the administration exploring ways of divesting itself of ownership of the corporation? Has the government been approached to take it over? No, it hasn't. I ~~we~~ call for the resignation of all the trustees from this museum, the metropolitan and the ~~we~~ scandalously corrupt Whitney museum (I keep thinking of those chromographs they sell in conspiracy with Brentano's, ~~we~~ -- deliberately attempting to un-do what one hundred years of aesthetic cerebral labor has achieved); ~~we~~ suddenly one understands ~~we~~/perfectly well how that can drop more bombs in vietnam than have every been dropped before, anyplace.

Before we can formulate proposals for the future conduct of the museum, we must learn what they have been up to all these years. Then we must examine our own position; we are not students disrupting the university from within in, from a position of at least nominally, some authority and responsibility -- rather we are, I certainly hope, outsiders who have nothing to loose. We have truth, understanding and maybe even hope, to gain.

END.

(10)

GREGORY BATTOCK

Notes to A.W.C. at S.V.A.-April 10, 1969

- 1. No Identification with the Imperialistic Policies of the U.S. Government.
  - 2. No Taxes- A.W.C. should have an alternative to that War budget.
  - 3. No Conscription-A.W.C. should be willing to house, hide, and counsel all who would evade the Draft.
  - 4. Boycott of the Media:
    - No Reproductions,
    - No Announcements,
    - No Publicity,
    - No Reviews,
    - No Previews,
    - No Interviews,
    - No Classified Ads,
    - No Un-Classified Ads,
- REMEMBER AD\* Art should be seen and not heard ABOUT.

GERRY HERDMAN  
MINORITY "A"



From the International Liberation Front

We meet tonight, not for us alone. We wish to change policies, so that the tyranny reflected in the institutions of this nation at the present moment can never again oppress us or our children. We demand that the nepotism, favoritism and fear of innovation of the New York art world be exposed; the official avant-garde taste during these last five years of the great American military dictatorship has had the taste of a credibility gap. The revolution we seek is no more -- and no less -- than to tell the truth.

In this proposed return to democratic principles, truth telling may once again become a secondary concern of artists. The innovation and training of sensual appetites, which is the traditional concern of artists, seems a frivolity to most citizens (as it seemed to Plato) for politics seeks to subdue those conflicting appetites which are the very meat of art. But art also cannot flourish in a time of war and exaggerated tensions. The tyranny of military requirements reveals itself slowly, at first in traces of conversations, in esthetic theories which detach the spirit of the times from the events. ~~For~~ Tyranny even begins to creep through the studio doors as the artist sits alone, until the fear of a police inspector (be he from the 5th precinct or the Guggenheim foundation) paralyzes those senses essential to guide the artist's voyage of discovery.

And so we have a stake in peace for Vietnam, simply as professionals, in the fairer distribution of national resources, in the end of racist domination in the Senate, the ~~unintentional~~ seizure of the electoral processes by the people, and the establishment of a world community -- we have a stake in these ideals if only because these things would help restore that privacy which is the pre-requisite of art.

⑫





Tonight our concern is specific. The institutions responsible for setting standards directly applicable to our world of art have not only failed us, they have failed the wider community they claim to serve; these institutions have become positive weapons, a cultural ABM, of that tyranny which now oppresses all mankind with its balance of terror. We are here to help set those institutions free.

We must think in new terms. We are entering a new dimension in the space travels of this planet. Like Michaelangelo's slaves, we struggle to emerge from our unformed nature. Our past is measured by a yardstick kept at the same temperature and humidity in the Library of Congress; but our course through the stars cannot be charted by this tyranny of a computerized past. Who can best remember the measurements of the past in such travels as these? Who can bring moral accuracy to the projections of our society? Surely the better guide is not the letter of the laws of history but, rather, the spirit of tradition. We seek not only to reform the old, but to teach ourselves new uses for the old (how else can we test old ways?); the old will be forced to reform itself if it wishes merely to survive. We need completely new institutions whose measures are not yet fixed, a post-modern calculus. We wish to learn from the art which our spiritual ancestors have left us not those footnoted lessons of establishment catalogues and magazines which turn the spirit to cliché and cliché to credibility gap; we would learn those rituals which liberate the soul, those lessons which turn a collective past into the free man, which turn individuality into supreme fiction.

We begin. We sound the tocsin, and its cry already rises above the jangling voices of fear. History has for too long been written for the homeless few charged with coding the past. Their world of cowed and petty bureaucrats needs their codes, their iron glossaries of morality, in order to keep the machinery of nationalism and racism in working order. But we would not be bureaucrats. We would be free, not slaves. Already we re-write history. We offer, even to the bureaucrats, a way to escape the cages which official approval has built around them. Let Kenneth Noland and Frank Stella get out of their lackey's uniforms, let them stop serving the masters of their modern house, let them come and join us field niggers. Is it not better to be chained to poverty than to be an Uncle Tom of the soul? Is it not better to be bloody in defiance than to be praised as the artist with the purest water in his vein?

We are the revolution. We will be free, because our spirit is already free. We are the irresistible tide of the future. We remember the examples of Jan Palach and Martin Luther King in our hearts. The tide drowns even our own fears. The more we give, the more we sacrifice, the more we are. Ours is a golden dream, ours is a promised land, and we are first settlers beyond that new frontier. Our political aims are simple and sturdy: a world beyond guns, a chance to stake out our own territory in the infinite land of the soul, and the right to hope for immortality. Our artistic aim is even simpler: we want to be free.

Institutions have already begun to tremble at our mild demands, our thirteen points. Let the state wither away. We have only begun.

(14)

April 10, 1969

Do we want to concern ourselves with the administration and organization necessary in establishing a strong power block for purposes of issuing ultimatums to institutions for private satisfactions? What is truly private and personal is usually generally applicable.

The artist, nay even the non-artist knows that his destiny is his own right. The man of yesterday had only hopes for a good life. The man who now still hopes is putting his lifestyle in other's hands. Making art is the artist's responsibility; its care and exposure should be by command of its maker.

To free those energies that are otherwise diverted, the artist should be entitled to life's basic necessities: food, shelter and clothing. We can get this money from the profits of dead artists. We should demand, from exorbitantly priced works sold on the auction block, from high priced older works sold by institutions, a cut for the living. Wealthy living artists, as well as wealthy non-artists should contribute to the income of their contemporaries; not by hiring them as lackeys, but by buying their art for their own collections or buying their art to give it away as gifts to institutions or their poorer relations. A trust fund should be started whereby wealthy artists can contribute money and or a work for sale. Stipends awarded on the basis of need.

more---

Artists use their dead compatriots as heroes, to keep them company in their waiting. There is a great choice of dead heroes. I wish to keep the dead alive for the moments of waiting; and to delegate the interested living to spend time making lists of the dying. The artists needs a more viable, open, immediate situation; more opportunities to present, with dignity, the thing he is doing.

Functional Institutions are great warehouses. We should encourage them to store our works for us. The artist should not have to be his own nightwatchman. But neither do we want a dumping ground. Facilities should be available to those who wish to store large works.

The institution can provide a computer system listing all dead and living artists, with coffee table top read-outs to eliminate art book clutter. Information is not art. To experience art one has to have time for an arrested moment. The non-artist, the non-maker of art, the art lover, is a radar scan, a shopper. Provide the information and a place for people to search, to hear, to touch, when they are in their inbetween times. Find places to put art where there were none. To see art when in the inbetween times, you need to put art in the inbetween places. Call these places museums.

(16)



# BRODY

1. 8

We aestheticians can no longer contend with the social frown of isolation and alienation in an atelier existence. The milieu not only conflicts with the artists' way of living but also builds up a wall of resistance by the very nature of what the artist absorbs, reflects and symbolizes. The artist reveals and defines like a magnifying glass; defies dogma and dishonesty like a reducing glass, and ridicules the obscenity of misinformation and preconception. We are more than the media, the bridges, the catalysts: we, too, change our modes from impressions and abstraction and gray shadows into expression and concrete realism. With this plasticity we contribute toward the expanding "it" of consciousness. Each one of us has an art system of downtown and uptown, an underground; art and science, an inside and outside world in which an attempt is made to purify contamination and influence the environment.

New York City, the apex of the materialistic system, has become a desert. All of us must work for its reclamation. The American disease is affluency in a Walt Disney apparition of skyscrapers and illusionary skylarks. People struggle for summits of self in a cancer of object narcosis. The history of Western Civilization has been a mystique entertaining death, destruction and depression, counterpointed with attempts to enlighten and eliminate the causes of these negative forces. War and peace, crime and punishment is in all of us. At the end of the McLuhan age where efficiency is numbers on machines along an assembly line of axiomatic presumption, it is not necessary to repeat in series the Exodus, Plato, Sophocles, <sup>FREUD</sup> Dante or the caprichios of DeKooning anymore than we can return to cubism. The press, TV, and radio report to us murder, violence,

(17)

**BRODY**

2.

assassination, funerals, poverty and human wreckage. Mere helpless protest is not enough. We must collectively seek positive solutions and take action to overcome this propulsion through the ages. Why not start within the structure of the art community and the people of New York to strive for a new dictionary of definitions. Power, sustenance, potential, education can have a different institutional meaning. Each of us is a changing museum and our exhibition buildings should mirror the artists as well as the people of New York and the world.

We need to list the grievances, resources and sources for this endeavor and work with the entire community. Separatism is not the solution. New York City is a world collage and a cultivating center. Generations go by with only a murmur of reform. Revolution, dissent, succession, civilian war is not the solution. The artists fight alienation as well as all other groups.

The sponsors of our institutions and the artists must get together. Art should not be restricted to the galleries, the studios, the museums or the homes of the wealthy: creativity is a spiritual need for everyone.

*delete*

The city buildings and streets need to be cleaned up and painted. The people have to do it themselves but they need guidance. Historical architecture should be purchased for studio space and community workshops. Children and students should be involved and given responsibilities such as the planting and caring of flowers in the parks and playgrounds. The Museum of Modern Art should have rooms of changing shows for children and young artists and folk art.

New York City has to become the environment with radiating centers of groups of people gathered for the purpose of positive activity. This takes nothing away from the individual but should only enhance his sense of belonging and

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**BRODY**

3. . 8

productivity. The issue is not just the artist and the Museum of Modern Art; we must establish a basis for survival that is not just repetitious cannibalism.

Selma Brody

(19)

FARMAN

9

Text Prepared for the Open Hearing of the Art Workers Coalition  
New York City . April 10, 69

FARMAN ----- ART WORKER -----NEW YORK CITY

My talk is in 3 parts.  
FIRST PART;

I'd like to take advantage of this public meeting to say that I am  
leaving the Art Workers Coalition, for a few months.

My reasons are as follows;

a) That I am Tired - Having worked 3 relentless months for this  
coalition. Now I'd like to cultivate my inner life and my new  
friendships, and tend to my sexual life, which has been suffering  
from the tensions inherent in public and political engagements.

b) That at this Hearing the Art Workers Coalition, is entering  
a new phase. There are enough art workers with new ideas and  
fresh energies, to see that the Coalition , G R O W S.

In 2 or 3 months from now I'll ask to join the ranks again ,  
and hope that I will be accepted with gladness by my companions  
of today.

I also promess that if the spirit of the art workers has vanished  
away, from internal dissentions or from external pressures, I will  
do everything to Revive this Spirit of Resistance.

c) Corrollary;

All the papers, letters, documents, and addresses, in my possession  
will be available to whomever wishing copies of them. I will be  
in New York City, and I'll be happy to be usefull to any art worker  
whose needs could be sat furthered in privacy.

LONG LIVE THE ART WORKERS COALITION

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SECOND PART:

I Hate Hypocrisy.

I Hate the hypocrisy of the Establishment and I hate hypo-critical artists.

The subject of this Second Part of my Testimony is a delicate one. It pertains to VANDALISM and VIOLENCE.

In the week that followed our orderly demonstration at the Museum of Modern Art, there were several noteworthy items reported by the press. (The texts are available. New York Times). I summarize.

On April 4; Bates Lowry declared at a luncheon that most of the museums, across the land, were facing bankruptcy and closure. He appealed to corporations and businesses for assistance.

On April 6; City budget director Hayes, asked every City museum to cut down expenses by 24 per100. Meaning more than 160 art workers dismissed from their jobs and the closing of some museum wings, at a time when more diversified, and larger cultural centers are urgently needed. The cutback was termed "CATASTROPHIC" by the representative of the ~~the~~ City museums.

On April 8; Roger Stevens (National Council of the Arts), and A. Heckscher, in an interview at Sardi's, deplored the acute shortage of funds in the arts. Stevens said that he is optimistic, Heckscher said; He is very pessimistic, about the fulfillment of our cultural needs.

HEAR ME WELL. THESE CUTBACKS ARE VANDALISM.

It is irrelevant to me that ~~the~~ you cannot pinpoint the sources from which this kind of <sup>special</sup> social injustice and violence is generated. To violate the growing needs of people by cutbacks IS VANDALISM. Who gave the orders? ~~The~~ City Hall will blame Albany, Albany will blame Washington, Washington will blame Texas, and Texas will blame Hunt's tomatoes. All of this is very clever - But this will not reconcile the spirits that hunger for justice.

And my point is that Violence and Vandalism are morally justified if we are pushed against the wall.

I have lived in danger for 13 years, and for 5 years I've been protesting against the genocidal war perpetuated by the United States Government on the people of Vietnam.

Did you know that many of our Art-lovers of the establishment are also War-lovers? Sure you did. Why to think about it? because right now the Investors are most absorbed and most bedazzled by their own war and their own war technology, and people's growing need for culture, and the urgent needs of a dying democracy, are near last on the long list of priorities.

I would be sorry, please believe me, quite sorry, if a loved Masterwork, of a prominent collection, went up in flames, and was destroyed. However I would not be sorrier for this act of vandalism, more than I have been grieving for the Cruel Napalming of such monastery, the destruction of such school, or the burning of villages. Let's keep our moral values, and our judgement in a correct balance. Let the perpetrator of outbacks be warned once more, that men and women, pushed into the despair of economic slavery, have complete moral justification in their use of retaliatory violence, and ~~select~~ selective terror, to protect the rights of all individuals to be honored, and to achieve the ultimate social goals of freedom and justice. As brother Malcolm X said;  
IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO, and if, WE GO, YOU GO with us, JACK.

POWER TO ALL PEOPLE

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3

## THIRD PART;

Concerning some policies of the Museum of Modern Art.

The 1956 Change of policy.

From 1942 (643 works in catalog) to 1956 (1,360 works), during 14 years the museum aquired 717 works of art.

From 1956 to 1967( 18,451 works in the catalog) that is ,in 11 years, 17,011 aquisitions.

I salute the restraint that Alfred Barr showed in the early years of the Museum's growth.

I deplore the succesful efforts of Mrs. S. Guggenheim, of Mr. John H. Whitney and the other Greats of the City, who in order to protect their art collections from devaluation, changed the mutable policy of the Museum, into one concerned with permanence, thus transforming a living museum into a mausoleum of aquisitioness.

Childrens carnival in Harlem.

The carnival was established more than 10 years ago. It was in Brussels in 1959 . It has been to Spain and Italy. A copy of it was presented to India in 1962. WHY MUST HARLEM BE LAST? I have no words of praise for this afterthought on the part of the museum. Does the MOMA fairly represent contemporary art trends? NO.

I have yet to see Acid Art at the museum, altho this trend has been very deeply changing todays visual vocabulary. I'll wait a long time befor seeing Erotic Art, at the museum, as well as the art of the Motherfuckers, who work through leaflets and posters, and Earth Art. Of course I believe that this last trend is on its way to acceptance. Its very safe.

ART IS THE ARTIST

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING .

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# FRAMPTON, JACOBS, SNOW

10

10 April 1969

To the Public Hearings Committee  
Art Workers' Coalition

Gentlemen:

As film-makers, we wish to bring to your attention the following points concerning the Museum of Modern Art as a whole, and its Film Department in particular:

1) The Museum's repeated assertion of its own "private" nature, in reply to a variety of requests from the art community on behalf of the whole community, is socially retrograde, reminiscent of 19th Century laissez-faire arguments. That private institutions used and supported by the public have public responsibilities, is knowledge at least as old as the Sherman Act.

2) In view of its tax-exempt status as a nonprofit organization, the Museum is, like churches, quite obviously supported by the public. Therefore, like churches, it should limit its admission charge to a voluntary donation.

3) We support plastic and graphic artists in their demand that the Museum return to the terms of its 1947 agreement with the Whitney and Metropolitan Museums, whereunder work was to be sold after 20 years, the proceeds of such sales going to finance the purchase and exhibition of new works by living artists. However, we retain important reservations with respect to film. It is plain that the archival functions so admirably fulfilled thus far by the Film Dept. are in no way comparable to the formation of a permanent collection by the Fine Arts Dept, since the work of the former is to preserve for future circulation artifacts which run high risks in the present, while the latter, in an attempt to eliminate present risks, tends to limit severely the availability of works, or remove them from view entirely.

4) We demand the fullest possible autonomy for the Museum's Film Dept., consonant with the acknowledged kinship film bears to the other visual arts. The Museum at large must recognize both the separateness of film with respect to the other fine arts, and its absolute parity with them; or risk the embarrassment of being the last intellectual organism in the community to do so.

5) In line with this new departmental autonomy, and recognition of film, we demand that the Museum allocate appropriate funds to the Film Dept., to carry on its work and expand its programs.

We gloss the word "appropriate" as follows:

The Museum has reportedly admitted that the largest number of its paying visitors come to see the daily film programs. We therefore suggest that the Museum give to the Film Dept., for

(2)

by far



its own uses, all admissions paid during the sixty minutes immediately prior to each film showing, plus a portion of the total operating budget and endowment income proportionate to the number of membership cards shown during that same time period.

Of course the Department must retain the entire net proceeds of its rental program, and of all Museum publications relating to film. In addition, it must be made possible that the Department receive, for its specific use, grants, gifts and bequests, as well as a fraction of all monies left or made available to the Museum at large, in accordance with the importance of film art to the community (as evidenced by its admitted drawing power).

6) Such expanded resources should make possible the elimination of certain deficiencies and abuses, in the following respects:

6a) The Film Dept. has recently undertaken to acquire new films for its Archive. We consider this necessary and laudable. But the Dept. has been driven, unwillingly and presumably through penury, to ask for films at or near laboratory cost.

Now we are aware of the Museum's general policy of buying paintings and sculpture below market (i.e. gallery) prices, and we deplore that policy for its bumptious immaturity of viewpoint. But to ask for films "at cost" starves our persons and insults our art, however much we may admire the archival program and wish to help it--since it presumes to single us out, among all artists and indeed among all persons who perform work in our society--in questioning our right to be paid for our work at all.

Furthermore, we are thus asked to become philanthropists, benefactors of the institution, in spite of the fact that film is an art made cruelly expensive by commercial rates (tax deductible for commercial movie makers as "legitimate business expense"). As for philanthropy, that is typically an activity of persons of great means, who make no art at all.

6b) The Film Dept., desiring to show new work to the public, has been unable to pay either a nominal rental (about \$1 per minute) for the use of films shown to large paid audiences, or any honorarium to film-makers appearing personally. This must be from sheer lack of money, since members of the Department have repeatedly expressed regret over this state of affairs.

6c) In a tentative agreement of October 31, 1967 between the Film Department and the New York Film-Makers' Cooperative, the Dept. was to distribute new films under its regular rental system, on an agreeable basis of shared costs and returns. Film-makers viewed such an arrangement favorably as tending to show new work to a wide audience: film is, after all, an art to be seen and enjoyed, and not merely buried in storage vaults. However, nothing has come of that agreement--presumably because the Museum would not spare the Film Dept. funds to hold up its end of the bargain.

7) We are profoundly puzzled by the Film Department's action in arrogating to itself the privileges of a pre-selection jury for

a recent international festival, the XV Kurzfilmtage at Oberhausen, Germany. In a word, they decided who might and might not have their films shown abroad. Bearing in mind that the Museum was, in all probability, acting on a request from the festival organizers, we ask nevertheless whether the Department will attempt to pre-screen films for the next Belgian festival, for instance; and whether, had they done so for the last one, they would, in fact, have chosen the films which, at Knokke-le-Zoute, bore witness to the tremendous innovative vitality of the new American cinema.

But there is a more crucial problem hiding here.

Film festivals had their origin in a desire on the part of responsible persons of sensibility to bring new films to their own locales. Prizes were offered as bait. The films brought visitors, the visitors spent money, the innkeepers were delighted.

But now festival juries presume to judge which films are "best". In a world which let the Divine Comedy lie fallow for centuries, and lost half the work of Bach, they decide which work is to be rewarded, and which ignored.

As an institution dedicated to expounding the most advanced principles in the arts, the Museum must instigate a continuing dialogue in the film community, indeed in the whole art community, concerning whether the competitive mode is really germane to the arts.

There is a crucial distinction between the rôles of middle-man and mediator, and the Museum's usefulness to the community rests precisely upon a constant effort to maintain that distinction in critical focus.

Meanwhile, I offer for the Museum's reflection that last month, the good burghers fattened in the festival town of Oberhausen, while in America the vivid and ebullient art of film went begging. Does the Museum love the art of film as we do? Then they must perform an act of love for our art, that will somehow compare with our own in making it.

8) Finally, we wish to state, both as reminder to the Museum, and as encouragement to those working in other arts and now anxiously considering alternatives to the Museum-and-gallery hierarchy, that film-makers long ago abandoned all hope of using the established commercial channels for distribution and exhibition. We have our own cooperative distributors, our own theaters, our own publications and lecture bureau, -- but above all, our own free and uncoerced judgement of what may be done with our work, by whom, how and when. We feel that we best serve our own needs, and, ultimately, those of the community as a whole, by these means.

We have always had a school: the Museum's film department was our grammar school and university, as 42nd Street and our own Cinematheque have been our graduate school. The film department was and is unique in the world, and no one has valued the Museum more, or for better reason, than we film-makers.

What we do not have is a Museum, an impersonal public repository where our most permanent work will be maintained in trust for the whole people, to teach, to move, and to delight them:

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because we believe that art belongs to the whole people. It is part of our small permanent human wealth, since it is never diminished in use; it can be possessed only in understanding, and never through mere ownership.

So we call upon the Museum of Modern Art to become our museum, in the largest sense. As film-makers, as artists and as human beings, we cannot demand less.

Yours very sincerely,

(signed) Hollis Frampton  
Ken Jacobs  
Michael Snow

Naomi Levine

//

Oh beautiful world, oh world of so much sweetness that could be. As if it isn't enough that the laws of our archaic society bind us and prohibit joy and life. As if it isn't enough that our economic and political systems suffocate and submerge and wound all but the very, very strongest; now even those who survive and become creative artists are so bitter with envy, bitterness and aggression and "Well, let's see how I can best and only do for myself" syndrome. The rottenness is beginning to show in the creative arts too - as if all the rest isn't enough!

The spirit that existed ten to fifteen years ago in painting is fading - how people used to crowd together, even if they didn't like each other's work - they did. They tried to help each other. They came to each other's openings and shows. They became successful: the blood in them became very thin. The painter who wants to ... works things out is no longer "in". Instead of blood, it's ideas that flow in the artist's veins: it's much more profitable. "Painting" as such is said to be "dead". It's supposed to be happening, now, in film.

Well, it started to happen. About five years ago it started, every filmmaker helping the other, going to each other's shows, even helping to film. And a few still are involved with helping above and beyond anything they get paid for. Len Lye does not stand alone: there is Brakage, Nember, Breer, Gehr. These people do care and always try to help, but there are hundreds of others I know of who do not. There is not the exciting feeling of all of us being together as pioneers in a relatively new medium. We

(2b)

Naomi Levine 2

don't all get together and support each other by attending the shows. There is no allegiance to the art of filmmaking, but just to our silly selves. And it is a shame, with all the horror in our streets, our Vietnam, our racism, our economy that chokes and mutilates men's spirit, the man who is supposed to know - the Creative Artist - even he is dying. Very soon there will be no-one, no place, and no interest in film as an art, as a growing creative art.

I always believed that it was the artist who knew. But the showing of extreme self-centeredness and bitterness, this is not knowing. When the artist does completely disappear, there will be no hope left, because it is the artist, manifest in his being that expresses the joy and reality of being and feeling itself. And if those of us who are filmmakers and painters don't help each other, we will not survive. The creative artist will perish. Something must be done now.

# CARL ANDRE

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## A REASONABLE AND PRACTICAL PROPOSAL FOR ARTISTS WHO WISH TO REMAIN FREE MEN IN THESE TERRIBLE TIMES

Recently, artists, sensing that the times are out of joint, have ~~demonstrated~~ demonstrated at the Museum of Modern Art and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. They have been demanding free admission to the Modern and various actions designed to ~~assure~~ assure black artists representation in the museums.

The difficulty is that the proposals are not radical enough; <sup>if</sup> all granted, the corrupt conditions ~~in~~ in which artists work and live would not be altered.

The solution to the artist's problems ~~is~~ is not getting rid of the turnstiles at the Museum of Modern Art, but in getting rid of the art world. This the artists can easily do by trusting one-another and forming a true community of artists:

1. All artists should withdraw instantly from all commercial connections, gallery and otherwise. Gallery exhibitions must be picketed; all gallery exhibitions, all the time, until the artist exhibiting feel their shame and withdraw to join the community of artists.
2. No more "shows" and "exhibitions." Let artists show their work to their friends, and let artists see the work of their friends. But no more public exhibitions.
3. No cooperation with museums. They make "shows", get everything wrong. "Will you lend a painting?" "No." So they will borrow a painting from a person to whom an artist has sold a painting. Fine. At least the proper relations between artist and museum have been established, the proper distance between what museums do and what artists do is maintained.
4. No more "scene." No Vogue, Time, Life, Newsweek, interviews. Artists who permit themselves to be used this way are not in the true community of artists, who are universally <sup>hostile</sup> ~~indifferent~~ to such public humiliation.
5. No more big money artists. Big money artists who dont immediately sever all commercial connections and commence instantly to sell their pictures at modest and reasonable sums should be held in the utmost contempt by the community of artists.



The point is not that artists should not have a lot of money. The point is that in this society, the amount of money you get, the speed with which you get it and the amounts you get at a time go very far in determining the community toward which you will gravitate. And so big money ~~xxxxxxx~~ artists, drawing huge ~~xxxxxx~~ sums in great rushes ~~xxxxxx~~ take on the ~~ix~~ life-style and attitudes of the only other community that earns large doses of money in frantic bursts -- the entertainers. And, like the entertainers, the big-money artist soon becomes involved in fashion, in obsolescence, in a paranoid, nasty fear and hatred of the fellow behind him, and begins to live the kind of life with which entertainers have been disgusting us for several decades now.

6a. For ~~xxx~~ similar reasons, no more "young unknown artists" either.

Collectors all have a secret dream: to discover their ~~own~~ very own artist, unmentioned, unshown, unknown, and they pursue this dream vigorously and expensively. Perhaps because they doubt their taste, and are never certain that they like what they buy, or would have liked it had they come to it "on their own", they are constantly prowling the studios of young artists about whom they are told, and forever buying their work at ~~xxxx~~ prices that to both are unheard-of.

So that not an uncommon way of life among younger artists is the professional role of "young unknown artist." To such ~~xxx~~ horrors does the art world lead; these young people are, in their own way, as nightmarish as the professional transvestites one sees on 42nd Street.

When people come to town to see "unknown" artists, ~~xxxxxxx~~ there is thus an entire class of young people who are the regular itinerary. These artists never seem to become "known" and never seem to stop being "young" and "unshown." ~~Every once in a while such an artist "goes public," so to speak, but it is extraordinary for how many years such an artist will show regularly, and still be a "young, unknown artist."~~

6. People who wish to own works of art should do so by moving into and community of artists. No one should ever "represent" an artist. Artists should other artists and other collectors in a face-to-face and man-to-man way.

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7. Each artist should decide what money he needs to lead the kind of life he needs. Each artist should decide how much he needs for his food, his rent, his grass, his parties his love, his records or his books or his car or his family ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ and for helping other artists who are his friends and who dont sell. Let the artist charge so much for his work and no more. Let no one except the artist decide how much he needs to live. Collectors and sales will not disappear with the disappearance of the art world. They will ~~xxxxxi~~ simply come to the artists they admire and ask to see and purchase their work, and they will deal with the artist directly, in a human fashion.

8/ Artists should attach binding conditions to the sale of their work. Such conditions should include ~~xxxx~~ the condition that the work may not be re-sold; that upon the death (or loss of interest in the work) of the owner, the various museums have first refusal on the work of art. Should they refuse, the work may pass to the heirs of the purchaser. Another condition should be made universal and should be enforced systematically, rigorously and with a constant eye to filling loop-holes out of which the force of the condition drains: that condition is, no owner may in any way enrich himself through the possession of the work of art.

9. No more "reproductions." Reproductions lead to a false and destructive kind of "fame" which separates ~~xxxxx~~ artists from the community of artists by making them "famous" and rich. Reproductions give rise to a body of people who "know your work" without every seeing it. This is an abomination. Artists should forbid people to snap pictures of their work.

10. Let the museums alone. They are not the proper focus for artists' attentions. For better or worse, our past is there, and our standards. Museum people are a peculiar and distant breed of people; artists are not that type and couldn't do the job better if they had the chance. Artists can pressure museums -- those that wish to -- even teach them a little something now and then. But for the most part museum people are hopeless and always will be hopeless and it is best for artists to simply pay them no mind. When things are good, artists will be interested. When things are not good in the museums, they should merely be ignored. Museums will never be right: they are owned by the wrong people, controlled by the wrong people and staffed by the wrong people. But the right people are artists and artists

simply will not do that kind of work on a regular, day to day basis. This is not to say that artists should not, for example, attempt to pressure museums to collect and preserve the works of black artists. But this kind of activity is in the same nature as artists who wish to join Vietnam demonstrations or rent ~~xxxx~~ demonstrations -- ~~xxx~~ those who are interested in such things, do it.

With the elimination of the art world, there are no problems between black and white artists. Black artists simply become part of the community of artists; collectors are directed to their studios by better-selling friends; struggling black artists are helped along by their white or more successful black friends.

11. The art press should be treated like museums, and for the same reasons. If the art press is responsive to the community of artists, it will flourish. If it is not, it will wither. There is nothing, once the art world is abolished, to prevent an art press from springing up within the art community.

12. Artists should take every nickel they can get from foundations, grants, the various ways the rich have found to give away their money. Artists should constantly be demanding more and larger grants and foundations.

13. Artists should teach if they want to, and can do it right. Artists should never conform to the structure of the various educational systems which employ them. Teaching should be understood as simply moving into another community of artists, most often a younger one. If none of the younger community of artists become the artist's ~~xxx~~ friends and lovers then he is probably doing it wrong.

The immediate cause of the sense of infinite corruption, degradation and humiliation that is the normal lot of the American artist today is the art world. The proposals for behavior outlined above are neither difficult nor far-fetched -- in good part, in fact, these proposals simply describe life as it is currently lived among nine out of ten artists. One has only to observe what happens to the sense of friendship, love, fraternity and comradeship among artists as they are "picked up" by the art world & to see, instantly, that the rewards of such "success" are death and degradation. The art world is a poison in the community of artists and must be ~~abolished~~ removed by obliteration. This happens the instant artists withdraw from it.

# CARL ANDRE

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It will surely be objected that there have always been dealers, always been middle-men, always been galleries, always been big money artists and starving artists, always been "shows" and "exhibitions" and "reproductions," always been a "scene." The answer is that there may very well be all these things again. But not now. Now, this ~~XXXXXX~~ "system" has been the curse and ~~XXXX~~ corruption of the life of art in America <sup>and</sup> in the world and it must be repudiated, abandoned, crushed out like a ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ cigarette.

**(ADOPTED)**

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TO THE ART WORKERS COALITION

APRIL 1969

MICHAEL CHAPMAN

13

To whom does art belong? Art as sexuality inevitably belongs to the person who made it. Under the way we live now art as product belongs to the person who buys it, the institution that displays it, or the gallery that owns the artist. But there is another way of owning art. Art as energy source belongs to everyone who can get a look at it; (an example being the room in the de Kooning show containing Easter Monday and Gotham News and the rest. All of us who have been there own those paintings.) It seems to me that it is with this last way of owning art that the ART WORKERS COALITION is, or should be, involved. The word "workers" in the name is a hopeful sign. Under any more or less organized economic system workers contribute their labor into the process of production, and it is how that labor is used which distinguishes the system. If the basic decision is made that the artist's labor is to generate product then the actions of the AWC must follow certain lines. If the AWC decides that the artist's labor, as it relates to society, is to generate art as energy source then the group's actions must follow other, and quite different, lines; for ownership is irrelevant to art as energy source.

If the AWC accepts the idea of art as product then it must become, in effect, a labor union if it is to continue at all. Many of the original thirteen points would seem to have sprung from something like that impulse, and a generous and necessary one it is. If nothing else ever came from the AWC it would none the less be worthwhile and memorable if it convinced the Museum of Modern Art to stop charging an admission fee. But dealing from strength with museums and galleries still admits the basic fact of art as product, and this presents problems, possibly unsolvable ones, to the idea of the AWC. For the gallery and museum system forces a kind of "mercantilist" thinking on the artist whether he wants it or not. There is only so much space, so much representation, so much soft, inflationary money around. What I get I take from you. Artists are quite simply in competition with one another. And this, it seems to me, might eventually prove fatal to the AWC as a union in the ordinary sense of the word. We are all ready to sacrifice just about anything except privilege and the mercantilist sensuality of choice that is its not so secret joy.

If the AWC were to devote itself to the idea of art as energy

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source much of this tension between wish and desire might be avoided. It might even be possible to find the beginnings of a moral equivalent to privilege. The word "workers" comes up here again. Those who pass for workers in the United States, men in the UAW for instance, or longshoremen, are in a curious historical position. If imperialism is the internationalizing of the class struggle then much of the true proletariat of the United States lives in Guatemala, and Chile, and Japan, and Spain. That is to say that the American workers' class position in relation to workers of many other countries is essentially bourgeois. It may take a considerable act of imagination to see artists as being in the same class role, but to the extent that they are involved with art as product I think perhaps they are. The marriage of art and technology is being consummated in the smoldering bodies of Vietnamese peasants.

Suppose however that the AWC were to declare something like "all power to the workers". In saying this they would not need to be repeating the old slogans of art in the service ~~of~~ the revolution which seem to have produced neither good art nor any revolution at all. Rather they might be saying that art belongs to all who can grasp it and draw energy from it. What this would mean in practical terms I don't know. But realizing that this is a question to ask at all is a start. A beginning might be the setting up of a cooperative somewhat along the lines of that organized by New York's underground film-makers. The AWC could thus become a clearing house for the rental and distribution of art, and one which, like the film-makers cooperative at least in its early days, did not make value judgements on the art it handled. The New York art scene being what it is however the AWC might find itself having to make judgements on who its customers could be.

This is only the most tentative of suggestions. In fact it may all be nonsense, but if it serves to make artists think about their historical situation in New York in 1969 it will have served a purpose. If they are going to think about it I would add one further word of warning. The cry "all power to the workers" means just that, "all power" to all "workers". It does not mean that the oyster dredgers control blue points and the artists control acrylics. It means that energy flows as evenly as possible from each segment of society to all others; and when that happens the moral equivalent to privilege will have been found.

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DIXI ET SALVAVI ANIMAM MEAM



V. I. Lenin is supposed to have said "ethics is the esthetics of the future."

IN our discussions about moving things around I suggested it would be useful to define art simply as skill which is based on knowledge and practice and to say that bad art is non-art, that is, what happens when one doesn't know what one is doing. In our revolution both slaves and money will be abolished.

ARTIST workers are losers in the class-money system. In other words, as workers we are supposed to be poor. In the past our choices have been, first, to advance ourselves within the entrepreneur class by making more money thru increased and cheaper production. And second, by the surrender of a certain amount of license regarding the choice of what we do, to obtain glory from the dispensers of glory, that is, by seeking patrons from among the rich and powerful.

In society as it is now structured, in this object-oriented, industrialized, and socialized society, the problems of individual and independent art workers may phrased in this way: The problem now is one's inability to exchange a sufficient amount of objects for money sufficient to obtain the living and working conditions one desires. In other words the immediate problem of contemporary art is selling it and the foremost question is WHO WANTS IT?

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The apparent answer is several thousand rather rich people known as art collectors. They are a species of the genre which includes stamp collectors, coin collectors, and gun collectors. They have in common a perverted materialism in which the abstract and objective value, monetary worth, falsely proclaims itself to be the supposedly ancient and subjective value, beauty. Selling, even of art, is per se a social act. Where money is the source of social power, society will value all things, even art, accordingly.

The things which we make, if they are to be sold, must generally conform to international standards for currency. This means that art objects which can be ~~so easily~~ easily counterfeited are no good to a collector. It means further that art objects must be preservable, that is to say insurable, and they must be transferable or negotiable. ~~That the prime utility of collectable objects is currency~~ That the prime utility of collectable objects is currency means that these things which we make and indeed we ourselves are subject to financial manipulations which have nothing to do with art and which are not necessarily of any value to ourselves.

Art as currency is institutionalized through the policies of museums. This is inevitable. Museums are started by collectors. They are maintained by annual contributions from collectors. All objects in their permanent collections, excepting those donated by ~~art workers~~ art workers, are given by collectors or purchased from funds donated by collectors.

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In return museums provide a number of services which are

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valuable to collectors. Foremost among these services is that of certifying the authenticity and historical merit of particular art objects, namely those collectors own. In this sense each museum functions as a semi-autonomous branch bank in a world-wide system to guarantee the value of collected art. Second, museums with the collusion of the government provide collectors with a device to avoid paying taxes by treating contributions as tax deductible like a business expense. The rationale is that museums are educational institutions and the government's presumption is that any education is per se in the public interest. The fact that the educators are by and large simply our richest citizens is in no way discouraging to the government.

Third, museums, by opening themselves to the public, are able to educate non-collectors as to what their personal attitude should be vis-à-vis the private property of the rich. Namely, DO NOT TOUCH. Also, don't smoke and keep moving.

Finally, museums publicize collectors by way of admiring their collections and praising their generosity. This publicity is ~~more~~ valuable to collectors and their wives both in their own milieu and in liberal circles.

THE problem of revolutionary art workers is our inability to obtain the living conditions which we desire. In the official syntax, we lack money. I do not believe that art collectors or their museums will, even under our pressure, make any substantial contribution to the solution of this. At best they will attempt to buy off a couple of hundred art workers whose art 39 may or may not interest them.

Lee - 4

Nor will the galleries be much help toward a solution. With few exceptions, they would rather sell one thing to a rich collector for a high price than than ~~three~~ <sup>SEVERAL</sup> to the public at any price.

The solution will rather be found partly through our art, that is esthetically, and partly through political action. To the extent to which one may wish to sell what one makes, art workers will have to make an art which is appropriate to the living conditions of a vastly greater number of people than those who currently buy it. The ultimate dignity of art, as all art workers ought to know, is in making ~~it~~ art, not in owning it. What is the dignity in owning an object which is so valuable that it is worth your life to defend your possession of it? To these ends art workers ought to prohibit museums from displaying our art in such a way as to discourage ordinary people from wishing to have it. Indeed, what art workers ought to require from museums is complete license regarding the terms under which their own art is shown. That would include whether and to what extent the police should be allowed to guard it and it would include whether the public had to pay to see it and if they did who got the proceeds.

As for political action, I urge the Art Workers Coalition to support anything which tends to increase the wealth of the relatively poor, that is, which undermines the utility of money. As the motherfuckers write, "the hip revolution~~ism~~ is a product of history and exists in this time and space: It is not a replaying of 'bohemianism'; it is not an artistic 'drop-out' class open only to the bourgeoisie; it is

(AD)

not an 'elite' criticism of american culture; and it is not a harmless anomaly. The hip revolution is the product of material conditions. It grows out of a real change in economic possibilities -- technology as the tool not the rule. Man as free being confronts the possibility of being free and the mirror is shattered by ~~play~~ PLAY. Before sophisticated electronics, total unemployment was only a dream -- now it is only limited by fear and that fear becomes a new class distinction -- those who have it and those who don't." The proper goal of art workers is to include everybody. War, victory, unemployment should be our slogan.

Total communized unemployment.

Proposed rate schedule for art work rental:

first work: \$10.00 per ~~day~~ exhibition day

second work: \$5.00 " " "

each additional work: \$1.00 " " "

example:

In the exhibition Art of the Real there were 28 living artists and the exhibit was open to the public on 59 days.

28 artists - first work - 59 days:	\$16,520.
10 " * second " - " " :	2,950.
10 " - additional works- " " :	<u>590.</u>
total cost to MOMA	\$20,060.

In other words an artist with one work in exhibit would have received \$590. and an artist with two would have received \$885.

proposed terms:

- prompt payment at end of exhibit.
- applicable to all museums which charge admission on any days when admission is charged.
- Applicable only to temporary exhibits.
- applicable to all works exhibited whether they be from the permanent collection, private lenders, or the artist's gallery or studio.
- rate should be ~~xxxxxx~~ considered a minimum fee and higher rates ~~should~~ could be demanded or negotiated by artists on an individual basis

(X2)



STEPHEN Phillips

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Artists must use their art for political ends that will free the museums, as artists are now freed simply, the artists must have continued control of their work once it leaves their hands. Control, in that, the museums, galleries, and collectors listen to the artists as artists, and not as freaks for the museums, galleries, and collectors to take advantage of, and keep in a controlled back door position. One of the steps to this end is facilities. Facilities the Modern Art Museum now designs not Facilities we not only demand, but will have, facilities such as free admission, at least two days a week, perhaps tuesdays and thursdays, with the museum open at night all the time. Facilities such as space. Space for, and use by, contemporary live artists. A number of possibilities exist here. A section of the Museum could be used to put on 5 simultaneous one man shows per week, Tuesday through Sunday. That would mean at least 260 shows per year. In order to help the museum's administrative staff, let artists themselves choose who they want to show with. Another possibility, assuming the museum might not want a large invasion of artists, would be for the museum to provide a section (at least six or seven big rooms) for one artist to live in for one month. At the end of his month he could take away the things of his he wanted. Anything left would become property of the museum. The museum could not, however, remove or place his work in another location without the artists permission. Each artist would have a choice during his month, as to whether he wanted the public admitted to any, or all of his part of the museum.

Let the Museum sponsor shows in other parts of the city and country. As for example, earthworks in the parks and rivers, left shows, a giant armory show, or anything and anyplace, artists can think of.

Another possibility of artist control, outside the museum framework, would be to set up a "protective" organization. An organization that every artist would join. It would be protective, in that it would collect rents or royalties each time a work is published or shown. The money would go to the artist. Organizations have been set up to deal with royalties and rental fees in the other arts. Music for example, has protective agencies in ASCAP and BMI. Radio and television stations as well as live performances, pay for music they use whether it is rock and roll, mozart, or music concert. Performances fees and royalties are paid composers and writers. Artists get nothing.

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Stephen Phillips

43

Carl Strueckland

The young man who was here before Mr Smith, I think, more or less put into a capsule what I wanted to say. I'd like to make a proposal that Mr Battcock become the next prosecutor, the next public prosecutor, of whatever organization comes into being. I find a tremendous sadness and ~~negative~~ negative ~~mean~~ attitude among most of the people here tonight, as if they hadn't lived, as if they hadn't had fun, hadn't been alive. I suggest that we stop over-reacting to foundations, museums and such. And there's been very little talk of the complicity of so many artists. They've been part of whatever you're denouncing now. Without them it wouldn't have been possible. So I also second Mr Smith's statement: there has to be a personal revolution. There's no other revolution. And no violent overthrow of anything has ever been a true revolution. I take it you don't happen to be in tune yet.

AA

Teresa Schwartz Schwartz

17

I want to tell you about the New York Element and I'd like you to look at a copy. This is an artists' newspaper. It was started by an artists section of the Peace and Freedom Party. Then the art section disbanded because most of us felt that we didn't want to ~~be~~ be in anything as organized as a political party, and a few of us started a paper on our own. Now on the editorial board there are a couple of painters, a filmmaker and a writer and we're really an independent paper. As far as I know this is the only artists' newspaper in New York today, and it's really .....

Among the things we don't allow are any critics, and we don't have reproductions of anybody's paintings. We only let someone who's really concerned with something write in our paper... ~~(one sentence incoherent)~~

But I think you ought to use it as a place to write, if you still believe in the written word, and after you leave here tonight this ought to get around somewhere else.

We invite you to contribute. It has to be something that you know about, you're interested in and no gimmick. From our first issue, we said we'd only have people who are really involved in what they're writing about. Now we really want you to be part of this. We'd like you to write to us, we'd like you to have ... if you have thoughts about tonight, for instance, write it and send it to us.

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In 1947 the Museum of Modern Art agreed to sell all "classical" works to the Metropolitan Museum and concentrate on those that were "still significant in the modern movement". 26 works were sold at the time. The proceeds were "to be used for the purchase of more 'modern' works." The Board of Trustees reversed this enlightened policy in 1953 and decided to establish a permanent collection of "masterworks", a species of works that is impossible to define. We are witnessing the consequences of this decision today, a decision worthy of a stamp collector's mind. The Museum of Modern Art has become an art-historical mausoleum. Most of the space is taken by classical works and the majority of special exhibitions are historical exhibitions. The "masterwork" approach has resulted in timidity, conservatism, arrogance and a systematic mythologization of modern art. Consequently at the rare occasions, when contemporary works are shown, these works receive more attention, prestige and ensuing commercial value than they would have accumulated and deserved, if large contemporary exhibitions were being held continuously. Certain galleries and collectors naturally have an interest in influencing the choice of works, since such rare chances for exposure can yield sizable profits.

If the Museum of Modern Art and for that matter all museums concerned with the art of this century were seriously committed to their stated objectives they would have to do a lot of soulsearching, and <sup>an</sup> adjustment of the traditional list of priorities. This would lead to a type of museum that has little resemblance to what we know today. Artists would participate in the decision making process and be represented on the Board of Trustees. And such an institution could certainly not fulfill its job in a high-rise structure in Midtown-Manhattan, a plan the Modern is considering at present. The very idea of a skyscraper for art shows how much museum officials have lost touch with the present. A radical

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# HAACKE

18

decentralisation, a dispersal of the Museum's activities into all areas of the city and the establishment of numerous autonomous branches might be the only viable approach for the future. It is necessary to introduce a highly flexible ~~MM~~ system, able to adjust to the changing needs and not another plan for further petrification and the greater glory of the Museum's priesthood. Such a decentralization would liberate the arts from their fashionable Midtown ghetto and would open them to the communities. A relocation in cheaper neighborhoods would also contribute to desecrating the temple. As soon as Museum officials are willing to work in the various loft-districts of the city a lot of financial problems are solved.

Following the policy of 1947 the Museum of Modern Art could sell all its "classical" works to the great museums for the history of art in the country. This would provide space, a considerable amount of money and an unfamiliar urge to look out for contemporary work. There is no reason to hang on to a precious painting on 53rd Street, if it could equally be shown on Fifth Avenue and 82nd Street. On its way uptown it would have made a couple of 100 000 dollars. The money is <sup>required</sup> ~~needed~~ to fulfill the needs of the artists and the communities today and in the future. A modern museum with all its resources and political influence has the responsibility to morally and financially encourage the work of living artists, without any claim to grant a dubious stamp of approval. This entails an extensive program of sponsorship of artists, irrespective of gallery connections, as well as the additional recruitment of government and business sponsorship. Hopefully this will relieve the artists from thinking in terms of saleability of his works in the profit-oriented art market.

Modern Museums should be places that make things possible, not impossible!

Hans Haacke

April 10, 1969

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Len Lye

I approve of everything that's going on here, absolutely. Maybe it's because it's protest, and I have protested all my life, in my art, about the way society dishes it out to the artists. Now I came across a passage in Proust which explains very well, in one short paragraph, how an artist sweated it out, ate his heart out, this that and the other and nobody really knows the debt that society owes that artist. ..(incoherent) And I am here to suggest that we don't bother about that goddam museum. If you bother about it, demand the resignation of the head of it. He's not worth it. I used to admire the Museum of Modern Art, they covered a lot of ground, they did this that and the other, but the behaviour of that crowd in the face of our protest, where they got jittery and unyielding, being afraid of the trustees, no doubt ..(incoherent) So I'm not much good on this exhortation, but I'll tell you about the beginnings of this all. This a letter from Howard Wise. You'll find out why he is sorting a few things out with the Museum. It's to Mrs Elizabeth Shaw, Director of Public Relations, Museum of Modern Art.

" March 24th, 1969

re: Artists' Protest

Dear Liz:

Following our conversation after the luncheon the other day, that one or more of the five artists in my gallery who are involved with the artists protest had threatened to harm or

78 destroy works of art at the Museum, I have spoken with each



of these artists, that is Takis, Tsai, Lye, Haacke and Tom Lloyd. Each denied having made any such threat, implicit or overt. "An artist would be crazy to harm the work of another artist" was typical of their comments. These artists are not crazy. They are only frustrated by what they feel is a lack of concern on the part of the Museum for their work and their welfare. [I'll say welfare.] They feel, for instance, that there is a sort of symbiosis between the ~~xxxxxxx~~ artist and the Museum, that the artist needs the Museum for <sup>his</sup> existence, and the Museum needs the artists in order to remain alive. " It does ~~not~~ - it needs five hundred million of us. The galleries need us too.

Now I'm bellyaching about .... You can't blame the public for the kind of materialism they've all been conditioned by, and the artist's thing is private as well as public. But it's mainly through the Museum that the artist can reach the public. You see, the Museum and the galleries are made for the public. Unless we demand or request or whatever and get the Fifth Avenue business and take our work down Fifth Avenue and work out some gimmicks.

As a matter of fact I had a friend who once tried to make the Museum buy some of my stuff. This is not needed, mind you, I don't give a goddam about ~~xxxxxxx~~ museums, because they're not big enough for the kind of hunky stuff I want to do. (Anyway I've got to speed it up.)

[Continuation of letter from Howard Wise]

" ..... and group shows, that the works are properly displayed in such exhibitions. This is what started <sup>(A)</sup>

Len Eye 3

the present dialogue. .... Takis removed his work from the Machine show after he had requested that it be withdrawn and that it be replaced by a work which had been selected by the director of the exhibition in the first place, and to which he had agreed, His request was ignored<sup>M</sup> etc. etc.

Everybody bellyaches about this business of quality. Well, forget quality. Time looks after quality. The Black artists have got to leapfrog in, we've got to help them. When my mother saw me fiddling in a corner with a pencil and paper, she said, Ok, I'll see that you get drawing lessons. She gave me the feeling I could make it. She knew what I was after. So, what Black mother up in Harlem would see a kid, a little boy drawing and say 'I'm going to get you drawing lessons'. That's an aside, but the main point is the protest. I'm only here because I'm a bit of a pioneer in the kinetic routine, and I don't need the Museum of Modern Art so much.

BO NIECZKOWSKI

20

~~Minority A~~ (Minority A)

I have a little aside to Mr Farman: I'd like to say that my sexual life has never been better since the demonstration at the Museum of Modern Art. #

I speak for Minority A. Minority A is an organization that was very tentative at the small demonstration at the Museum of Modern Art. It was a little demonstration at the large demonstration at the Museum of Modern Art. In a sense the large demonstration at the Museum of Modern Art has lost a few more members, and the ~~larger~~ smaller Minority A gets, the fewer it becomes. Minority A served ~~as~~ <sup>those</sup> at that time. We intend to continue action against the gallery as well as the museums. We know both are involved in the misuse and abuse of art. We are going to use our action to form the basis for an alternative to the present inequitable system. To us in Minority A, America is a political idea and nothing else. There is no majority ethnic, cultural or racial in this country. There are only minorities. Majorities are out. The only majorities in this country are income level neighbourhood protection agencies. Income level neighbourhood protection agencies must be dispossessed of any claim to determining the nature of this land. Minorities should be concerned with only the big and general questions or be involved with those particular, manageable issues which they can resolve immediately. Minorities are not to be preempted, collected, run, produced or corrupted into any kind of consensus. The Museum of Modern Art is such a trap. It is in the middle; it has no authority. At best, its

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thoughts work out in the open. Otherwise, it takes up the rear of the gallery system. It reinforces, makes respectable, provides tenure for art?names. It protects investments, and educates by intimidation.

Minority A welcomes the idea of many small organizations with open wings, joining when we deem it's good, joining when we feel it's for the good of the whole community. Minority A

however is not to be masked by the interests served by .....

Minority A repudiates the authority of the scene. It denies the authority of art media, an inefficient record of the reality of this time. Minority A joins with those who are willing to step ~~us~~ out of their everyday pursuits to destroy the devil in the world. Until then, we will continue to exert ourselves in our local activity to get at the devil that dwells in small details.

Edwin Mieczkowski for Minority A

America is a political idea and nothing else.

There is no majority or principal ethnic, cultural or racial group determining the fate of this idea. There are only minorities. There is no consensus.

Income level neighborhood protection agencies must be dispossessed of any claim to determining the nature of this land.

Minorities should be concerned with only the big and general questions determining the fate of this land or be involved with those particular manageable issues directly at hand. Everything in the middle is a trap and not worth bothering about.

The Museum of Modern Art is such a trap. For those who see it has no authority. It performs its function by storing work out in the open. It is an essential part of the gallery system. It reinforces, makes respectable and provides tenure for art names.

Minority A repudiates the authority of the scene. It Denies the the weight given today to the role of art media - an admittedly inefficient record of the reality at this time.

Minority A joins with those who are willing to step out of their everyday pursuits to destroy the devil in the world. Otherwise we continue to exert ourselves in local activity aimed at ridding ourselves of the devil that dwells in small details.

Some points bearing on the relationship of works of art to museums and collectors:

- 1 A work of art by a living artist would still be the property of the artist. A collector would, in a sense, be the custodian of that art.
- 2 The artist would be consulted when his work is displayed, reproduced or used in any way.
- 3 The museum, collector or publication would compensate the artist for use of his art. This is a rental, beyond the original purchase price. The rental could be nominal; the principle of a royalty would be used.
- 4 An artist would have the right to retrieve his work from a collection if he compensates the purchaser with the original price or a mutually agreeable substitute.
- 5 When a work is resold from one collector to another, the artist would be compensated with a percentage of the price.
- 6 An artist should have the right to change or destroy any work of his as long as he lives.

-Some points bearing on the Museum of Modern Art and its relationship to artists and the general community:

- 1 The MOMA would be limited to collecting work no more than 25 years old.
- 2 Older work would be sold and the proceeds used to maintain a truly modern collection.
- 3 The shows should reflect an interest in and the promotion of modern works of art.
- 4 A system of branch museums would awaken interest in modern art in the communities of the city. More exhibition space would

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Article 2

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then be available and curators would be responsive to elements within the community.

5 The museum could not only purchase work but also commission works of painting, sculpture, film, dance, music and drama and use its facilities to show them.

6 The works of artists not usually shown or works of art not readily available because of size or location should be encouraged and shown.

55

The basis of most <sup>friction</sup> ~~complaints~~ between artists and museums like the Modern seems to be the conflict between the permanent collection and the loan exhibitions. Artists are reluctant to cooperate in shows when their work is not being bought, and vice versa. It seems a system guaranteed to produce ill will; everybody knows of endless individual variations on ~~this~~ <sup>the</sup> theme. They are now being amplified to an unheard-of extent by the Museum's projected "New American Painting and Sculpture" show. This will concentrate on Abstract Expressionism in the 40's and 50's and will eventually occupy a new wing. It is not a loan show, but a Museum Collection show and the artists involved are being asked to donate major works to the collection so that they will show up well in future catalogues, dissertations, books. In other words, to maintain their so-called "historical" respectability, they must be well represented in the world's best <sup>-known</sup> collection of modern art, and to be well represented they must give their major works to the Museum (if they still own them; if they don't, they're out of luck). This kind of blackmail is in many cases being leveled at artists whose work the museum ignored during the 40's and most of the 50's when prices were low; now they are asked to forgive and forget and guarantee their own place in "history". It will take a lot of guts for any of these artists to refuse to have their own room in this show and in the permanent collection; at the same time it will take a lot of the opposite to go along with such a plan. It is difficult to see why the museum did not conceive of this as a loan show rather than pretending to make an "historical" selection <sup>of</sup> ~~from~~ gift horses, but in any case it offers a perfect and timely example of the way artists are exploited.

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There seems little hope for broad reform of the Museum of Modern Art. It has done a great deal in the past and now seems to have become so large and

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unwieldy that it has outgrown its usefulness. The conventional museum is by nature too big, too bulky, too slow to keep track of and keep up with the studios in a time of such rapid change. The present policy of throwing an occasional bone to recent art is insufficient. The recent sections of both the Machine show and <sup>the</sup> Dada and Surrealism <sup>show</sup> made this obvious. When ~~it~~ <sup>the Modern</sup> attempts to rival the galleries and even the smaller museums, the result is inevitably disappointing.

What is really needed is not just an updated Monolith of Modern Art but a new and more flexible system that can adapt itself to the changes taking place today in the <sup>Factions of</sup> art itself. <sup>art</sup> All the <sup>show</sup> media have rejected traditional confines: room space, proscenium stage, academic symposia, literary readings. I would like to see the Museum of Modern Art retain its respected position as a study center for the history of modern art (and by modern art I mean art of the last 50 years or so; the older work belongs in the Metropolitan, as was originally ~~stipulated~~ stipulated by the Museum itself). The money <sup>now</sup> spent on exhibitions could be channeled into purchases, free admission for all artists, night film showings, etc. The exhibition function could be shifted to a series of smaller museums resembling branch libraries, in loft buildings or any large, simple space, each of which would naturally evolve an identity, style, and structure of its own. There is no reason why these branches should even be called Museums; they are needed more as vital community centers that would provide workshop space for experimental projects in all media, including performance, as well as space for showing art or organizing <sup>art in</sup> more open situations. The fact that this idea in one guise or another has come up several times in the last few months among poets, dancers and visual artists indicates its relevance. ✓

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Just propping up existing institutions won't do; imaginative planning is

far called for. The very loosely knit and constantly changing group that for the time being calls itself the Art Workers' Coalition may or may not be the right instrument for advancing these changes. We're still in the discussion stages. The point of an open hearing at this time is to get people thinking about change instead of continuing the personal griping and backbiting that always goes on; to crystallize and analyze the broad dissatisfaction and see where constructive energy can be directed. It has been exciting to see common ideas emerge from extraordinarily different and often conflicting esthetic positions. The reason for continuing <sup>from</sup> Takis' action, (aside from the fact that it brought up the very valid point of an artist's control over his work), was the fact ~~all~~ such trans-esthetic solidarity; the fact that there was support for further discussion despite basic disagreement with much of the first group's program. The present organization, if you can call it that, survives by its own flexibility, by its precarious ability to absorb opposing opinions. No two people involved think alike; few support all and some support none of the 13 demands drawn up by Takis and his six colleagues. No one can speak for anyone else. I for one don't think we can dictate esthetic choices to the Museum and I am against any more motley group shows as well as inclusions of any group on a separatist basis. Nevertheless the black artists and the artists without galleries have every right to speak for themselves. My own interest <sup>lies the</sup> ~~is~~ in <sup>the</sup> projection of a constructive alternative to the present situation, in increased civil rights for artists in general.

Lucy R. Lippard

(58)

Seth Siegel (RO)

I wish to speak extemporaneously about my feelings about what's going on here today, and what's been going on in the last few weeks. There seems to be a community of artists working throughout the world. There's a whole social fabric that rests very, very precariously on something we know as an art object, and art itself. I think if one wanted to describe this manifestation graphically, you would say that an art object would be a rock in a pool and ~~a~~ various functional levels going out from this rock would be dealers, critics, the museums, the <sup>mass</sup> media, a whole fabric or system, all barricading it that little object. Well ~~you~~ would see that <sup>it</sup> ~~it~~ <sup>anyone who's</sup> ~~it~~ <sup>as I am</sup> interested in my work to try and change the machinery or the context in which the art has been made and is being seen, would see that the greatest asset that artists have is their art. It would seem that for a social protest or any other type of action in withdrawing your work or setting tight controls over it, you could ~~possibly~~ achieve the goals that are being sought. I'm not in accordance with many of the goals, I'm not quite sure what some of the goals are, really, and it would seem that the Museum of Modern Art would be a very good point to focus <sup>on</sup> because..... it seems to be a very unyielding organization. Perhaps one way in which dealings with the Museum can be handled would be possibly by withholding work from exhibition, not necessarily from that museum, but countless museums around the world. It's a big question on this, to accede to the demands that are being

Seth Siegelau 2

asked. It would seem that a lot of thought should be given as to what these demands are. I've heard a broad range of demands, and there seem to be some things that are very relevant. It would seem that all this has to do, in a certain sense, with the context in which art is being seen, and the rights which the artist has in having it seen in the proper fashion. And it would seem that the art is the one thing that you have and the artist always has and which picks you out from anyone else. There's a class of human beings who ~~don't~~ make art and a class who don't, some of whom happen to be curators of museums, directors or museum trustees. This is the way your leverage lies. I would think that by using x that leverage you could achieve much greater goals than in any other ways. It's the one seemingly unique aspect of an artist, that he makes art and no-one else does.

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154-02 107th Avenue  
Jamaica, New York 11433  
3 April 1969

Mr. Bates Lowry  
Director, Museum of Modern Art  
11 East 53rd Street  
New York, New York 10019

My dear Mr. Lowry:

The Museum of Modern Art, as one of the great cultural institutions of our nation's greatest city, has a special role to play in fulfilling the needs of our citizens for full cultural identification. The measure of the responsibilities of your institution would seem to be amply recognized on the basis of your own statements relating to the goals of the Museum, expressed in your publication Toward The New Museum of Modern Art, from which I shall quote at some length in this letter.

"The Museum's national and circulating exhibitions have brought modern art to thousands of institutions in the United States and Canada. Increased funds will make possible the development of a program specifically adapted to the needs of smaller communities, and of educational institutions from which must come many of the future leaders of our country's cultural life." (17) It is from this position that more than 200 black and Puerto Rican brothers and sisters from public, private and parochial schools on the secondary school level, as well as art schools, colleges and universities of the metropolitan area, will undertake a walking tour of the Museum of Modern Art on Sunday, 13 April 1969, for the purpose of making an in-depth evaluation of the present program of the New Museum of Modern Art in terms of its adaptation to meeting and serving the needs of the "smaller communities" of black and Puerto Rican people. It is our view, in which I believe you will concur fully, that these young people, as the "future leader of our cultural life", ought to be made aware of the services of your great institution in supporting through your programs their education and careers in the arts in terms of special relevancy to them as products of a black and Puerto Rican culture. We know that you cannot fail to be pleased by their moves in this direction. We hope, then, that you will undertake to make available to us the facilities of your auditorium on that date, at any hour between, day 11:00 A.M. and 1:00 P.M., to enable us to properly orient these young people prior to the tour, without serious inconvenience to your regularly scheduled program for that day.

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Mr. Bates Lowry - 2

Because our program is one of research and evaluation, we feel we ought not to rely solely upon that visual evidence of the Museum's programs available on that day, since this might result in an unfair assumption that these represent the only such programs or the limit of such programs undertaken by the Museum, when in fact this might not necessarily be the case. Accordingly, we recognize the need of obtaining further information such as could only be furnished to us by you and your staff. We would, therefore, wish to submit to you at some time in the early future, a rather detailed questionnaire to aid us in this project. This letter will undertake to set before you the form which some of those inquiries would take.

"The New Museum of Modern Art will in fact become the only American Art Museum which, in its own field, is foremost in the world. Inevitably it will be a magnet attracting to New York from every quarter of the globe all those interested in the visual arts of our time." (16) We believe that this statement embodies a very ambitious goal and necessarily imposes upon the Museum an almost unequalled responsibility, which, we have no doubt, you are struggling most manfully to meet. We of the black and Puerto Rican community of this city share both your interest in meeting that responsibility and the responsibility of seeing that it is met. That alone, please be assured, prompts our inquiries and the suggestions which we undertake to make. For we have a very special stake in the Museum's fulfillment of its goals and its responsibilities which you cannot fail to recognize as being both exigent and legitimate. It is for this reason that we rely upon your cooperation with our project. Our black and Puerto Rican brothers and sisters in the metropolitan area, as well as throughout the country, require every encouragement in order to develop and create effectively. Above all, they require images with which they can most readily identify. They are naturally attracted to the Museum of Modern Art as a locus for cultural identification. Their hopes represent an added responsibility imposed upon your Museum and ours by the greatness of its purpose and its plans.

The old Museum had 12000 square feet of exhibition space, little or none of which was given over to cultural programs pertinent to the black and Puerto Rican cultural communities. We would not entirely agree with the argument that considerations of space alone could warrant such a sweeping omission. Be that as it may, however, we are more concerned with how much of the additional 31000 square feet of space in the New Museum is appropriated to that purpose. We certainly do not believe it unreasonable to expect and to conclude aftersome four years and a seventy-five per cent increase in the amount of exhibition space available that the space issue will be held to offer a valid explanation for failure to remedy this deficiency. This is not to prejudge the matter and conclude that it has not been remedied, or is not in the process of being remedied. Of course, we feel we can safely rely upon you to advise us of the extent

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to which the latter may be the case.

It does, however, seem more than a little conflicting with the established practice of the Museum in reserving galleries for the exhibition of the works of different cultural groups that no such wing has ever been reserved for the exhibition of works which are the product of black and Puerto Rican culture. Gallery #6, for instance, is reserved for French and Italian artists; #7 for German Expressionists; #15 for Italian Futurists. The purpose in this would seem to be to present works which bear artistic unity as to period and/or portrayal based upon features of national cultural personality. It need hardly be emphasized, Mr. Lowry, that the distinctiveness of the various cultural groups which form the cultural tapestry of our nation each demand their own spokesmen. Jackson Pollock's art would never be held to be inclusive of pre-Columbians, or of American Indians today; it is absolutely absurd to hold that it is inclusive of black and Puerto Rican culture. Were that the case, then there could be no valid objections to having Soviet artists paint America while in Kiev, or black or Puerto Rican artists depict Croatian peasant life. We know, of course, that such an idea would be dismissed as utter madness at the very least. If we want to portray Croatian culture, then we must depend upon Croatians to do it. It is no argument to submit that techniques in Croatian art have not advanced sufficiently to permit Croatian artists to paint with an accomplishment which might favorably compare with Crozco or Degas; the fact is that is we are going to portray Jugoslavia, then we must portray Croatia; and if we are going to portray Croatia, then we must portray it through the work of its own artists. We would think that sufficiently elementary. If the Museum of Modern Art does not feel that the black and Puerto Rican communities form a sufficiently important part of our nation to warrant portrayal, then it ought to say so, directly and immediately. Then, at least, we shall know -- which is not to say we do not already know -- what the issue really is.

There is, of course, the question as to whether the Museum is under any obligation, aside from considerations of artistic integrity, to present a program of cultural identification for black and Puerto Rican people. (We do not expect the argument that artistic integrity can be satisfied by total failure to do so.) It inevitably goes to the question as to how private the Museum actually is. "Gifts to the Museum of Modern Art are of course deductible for income tax purposes." (43) Tax deductions are a form of public financial support, representing, for the most part, funds which would find their way into the public coffers without this tax benefit. Since the cost of

prosecuting the war in Viet-Nam, or of putting aman on the Moon, or of flood control in the Missouri Valley, is not affected by money being donated to the Museum, such donations in fact require a redistribution of the tax burden to raise lost revenues. The Museum of Modern Art, then, is a direct beneficiary of public monies. This is not to say by an means that this is desireable; quite the contrary, it is completely desireable, provided that the Museum recognizes that it is a beneficiary and discharges its responsibility as a legatee. That responsibility comprehends public service to the Puerto Rican and black communities which support the Museum through the payment of higher tax levies.

The Museum appears to recognize this to some extent. It has established, for example, the Children's Art Carnival for the first time in Harlem. The Museum claims that the Carnival will serve 9000 children, which would be triple the average served in past years. How this is possible, aside from the doubtful accuracy of the figure, really is not nearly so important as whether or not the program satisfies the need of cummunity children for cultural identification. We submit that it does not, and that a full investigation by copetant art educators from the local community should be undertaken at the instance of the Museum to determine how it can be made to do so. Art which is not relevant is worse than no art at all; it leaves the feeling that art itself is not relevant to life, when art ought to be the highest relevancy in life.

The glaring shortcomings of the Museum vis-a-vis the black and Puerto Rican communities clearly require the setting up of a special Black Wing to enable the Museum to present a harmonized portrayal of black culture in America. There simply is no way of getting around this. Yet, we challenge the Museum to declare that it has ever sought the endowment of such a wing, as it has undoubtedly sought the endowment of a German-Autrian Wing, Dutch Wing, Parisian Wing, or other ethnically or nationally identifiable wings. We challenge the Museum to say that it has ever approached the black cultural or financial community and sought funds or other assistance for setting up a program embodying cultural identification for blacks or Puerto Ricans. We would go so far as to challenge the Museum to state that it has ever gone so far as to develop a comprehensive plan for setting up such a wing in the event that funds were provided for it.

Yet, there is little to be accomplished by remonstrating over the sins of omission and commission in this area visited upon generations of the past. What is important is that the Museum has now the opportunity to accomplish something in the way of

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Mr. Bates Lowry - 5

remedying those injustices in the present and the future. Again, we challenge the Museum to declare how it intends to go about doing so. We challenge the Museum to offer a constructive alternative to the Black Wing. We challenge the Museum to sit down with leaders of the black and Puerto Rican cultural communities and develop a comprehensive scheme to meet its responsibility in this area in the future.

We are waiting, Black and Puerto Rican children are waiting. Art is waiting. We cannot wait very much longer, Mr. Lowry. Nor can the Museum if it is not to become, as one poster at the recent demonstration rudely and indelicately suggested, the Mauseleum of Modern Art. We would like to know what plans you have for the Museum.

Very truly yours,

TOM LLOYD  
FAITH RINGGOLD

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STUDENTS AND ARTISTS UNITED FOR A MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WING FOR BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ART AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
A RESEARCH AND EVALUATION OF THE MUSEUM IN ITS DEFAULT OF CULTURAL RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PUBLIC AND CULTURAL INTEGRITY TO ITSELF AND THE ART COMMUNITY OF THIS CITY, THE NATION AND THE WORLD

INFORMATION

This form consists of Parts I and II: Part I is for you to fill in and mail to the address indicated at the bottom of the form. Part II consists of a series of questions addressed to the Museum and its staff and is to be mailed to the Museum if you believe these questions ought to be answered. Thank you for your support. Thank you for joining us in an effort to end cultural genocide practiced against blacks and Puerto Ricans at the Museum of Modern Art. Thank you for joining our fight to establish a Martin Luther King, Jr. Wing for Black and Puerto Rican Art at the Museum of Modern Art.

MR. TOM LLOYD  
154-02 107th Avenue  
Jamaica, New York  
657-6433

MRS. FAITH RINGGOLD  
345 West 145th Street  
New York, New York  
862-5876

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PART I

1. Does the regular attendance at the Museum today suggest that blacks and Puerto Ricans use, enjoy and understand the Museum's collection?  
YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ UNCERTAIN \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do any exhibitions in the galleries relate to black and Puerto Rican experience as to subject matter, means of expression, or personal identification?  
YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ UNCERTAIN \_\_\_\_\_
3. If your answer to (2) is YES, which ones?
4. Are there any publications (1st floor), films (Auditorium), or other visual aids that relate to the black or Puerto Rican experience? YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ UNCERTAIN \_\_\_
5. If so, how many films \_\_\_\_\_, publications \_\_\_\_\_, other \_\_\_\_\_?
6. Do you believe, after touring the Museum, or on the basis of your knowledge of the Museum and its programs, that a MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WING FOR BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ART would serve the purpose of genuine cultural freedom and portrayal of the culture of black and Puerto Rican people at the MUSEUM OF MODERN ART? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ UNCERTAIN \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE MAIL YOUR FILLED OUT QUESTIONNAIRE TO ONE OF THE PERSONS LISTED ABOVE. WE WILL NOT DISCLOSE YOUR NAME OR ADDRESS WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION

THANK YOU.

STUDENTS AND ARTISTS UNITED FOR A  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WING FOR  
BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ART AT THE  
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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# FAITH RINGOLD

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PART II

THIS CONSISTS OF (2) PAGES. DETACH AND MAIL TO THE ADDRESS GIVEN BELOW. PLEASE BE SURE TO FILL IN YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY AND STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

MR. BATES LOWRY, DIRECTOR  
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART  
21 WEST FIFTY-THIRD STREET  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Dear Mr. Lowry:

As a member of the interested public, I request that you forward to me at the address given above answers to the following questions at your earliest convenience:

1. Does the Museum recognize the existence of an authentic, distinct Black Art Movement?
2. If so, how has the Museum presented the body of work of this Movement in its permanent collection and national and international exhibitions?
3. Does the Museum's permanent collection of over 30,000 works of art include the works of black and Puerto Rican artists? If so, which, and how many?
4. Can the Museum claim in good faith to be a "private" institution when:
  - a. Its donated collection, endowments and deficit-erasing contributions are made possible through tax abatement on donors amounting to almost the full dollar value of such support?
  - b. It receives sizeable additional income in the form of direct public funds for so-called "free admission" and services for public school children and teachers, federal commissioning of exhibits at international exhibitions, construction of models for urban development programs, and other such schemes, as well as for sundry other publicly commissioned projects?
  - c. It invites and solicits public subscription and attendance at which admission fees are charged?
5. Does the Museum recognize this form of public financial support as imposing any obligations upon it toward the public?
6. How does the Museum provide for adequate safeguards that race plays no part in the selection of works for inclusion in its permanent collections and circulating exhibitions?
7. In view of the support of racist policies in South Africa by the investments of several corporations of prominent trustees of the Museum--David Rockefeller and the Chase Manhattan Bank, to name one--is not public credibility as to the effectiveness of these safeguards, assuming they exist, seriously weakened?
8. How does the Museum provide in its collections, exhibitions, programs, publications, and services, cultural identification for black and Puerto Rican citizens?

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9. How do such community activities as the Children's Art Carnival in Harlem provide for cultural identification for black and Puerto Rican children?
10. How does the Children's Art Carnival seriously arrive at its figure of 9000 children to be served annually in view of the average of 3000 in prior years?
11. How does the Museum decide, in a way which insures that considerations of race play no part, which works of art to accept as gifts and exhibit in its permanent collections?
12. How does the Museum define "quality" as a standard used in selecting works?
13. Would the Museum assemble a special collection for exhibition of works of black and Puerto Rican artists of "quality" lent to it for that purpose?
14. Does the Museum encourage--and if so, how--black and Puerto Rican artists in the early stages of their development in terms of providing for group presentation of their work?
15. What is the Museum's principal objection to the application of the criteria of "quality, historical significance and significance of the moment" to the selection of works by black and Puerto Rican artists?
16. Does the Museum presently have, either in operation or in advanced planning stages, a program of community workshops for black and Puerto Rican communities in order to create a liaison between the Black and Puerto Rican Art Community and the Museum in order to advance public knowledge of its development and to further acquaint the Museum with its force as an expression?
17. What are the objections to the Martin Luther King Jr. Wing for Black and Puerto Rican Art which the Museum would suggest to be most valid?
18. In what way does the Museum feel threatened by the existence of a Martin Luther King, Jr. Wing for Black and Puerto Rican Art?
19. Is it the position of the Museum of Modern Art that, in view of the Museum's cultural responsibilities to the public and the art community, that the people of the black and Puerto Rican communities should passively accept the denial to them of a Martin Luther King, Jr. Wing for the exhibition of their cultural expression?
20. What is the Museum's alternative to the Martin Luther King Wing in order to satisfy the legitimate demand of black and Puerto Rican citizens for cultural expression and identification in the Museum of Modern Art?

ER

DN

Robert Barry

Why bother with the Museum of Modern Art? Why not work outside it and leave it to those who want it. If it doesn't serve us, why not let it be.

More than any other museum, it pretends to be what it is not. It's very name "Modern" is a lie. It has failed to live up to its original promise.

The spirit of the museum and the spirit of art are two totally different conceptions. The Museum is a huge, artistically impotent superstructure of something other than art, but with great influence. Under the guise of art, and without art's spirit it is even opposed to the true art spirit. And most of all it is unfortunately mistaken for the actual reality of art.

The energies of art are subject to conscious cultivation and planning. Art is split into branches. Art becomes cultural values which must be preserved for a few and for their own sake. The Museum epitomizes what Heidegger calls: "The boundless work of dismemberment of the human spirit carried on by the practical intelligence".

As an architect, I'd like to address the artists' community. Those of us who are disturbed that the Museum of Modern Art sees fit to charge such an exorbitant admission price, rather than let the public, as well as the artists, have free access to the exhibitions, might well reflect on the extravagance with which the Museum itself was built.

When the original building was built in 1939, there was an attempt by the architects to make this building a part of the new age - the use of stainless steel and glass, neon lighting and hard crisp lines of the new esthetic of the no-nonsense international style of architecture.

Some thirty odd years later, when the Museum carried out its major expansion plans for a new wing and enlarged garden, the esthetic had changed to that of a richly embellished elegance. It was significant that Philip Johnson was selected as the architect for this new image that so completely overpowers the older building. Mr Johnson, by his own statements, sees himself as a court architect; he would prefer the role of architect to the king to that of "architect to the people". The aristocratic trustees are interested in retaining prestige and image and Mr Johnson provides the right amount of elegance, pomp and grandeur. Of course, it is not just the Museum of Modern Art that manages to squander the too-limited resources of the art world on over-embellished architecture and personal

monuments to the past. It seems as though a fight for identity has really been fought between the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum, the Guggenheim, and lest we forget our sick relations, the Huntington-Hartford Gallery of Modern Art. The incredible expenditures involved and the apparent irrelevance of this escalation of image-mongering to the requirements of art exhibitions indicates strongly to me that the trustees of these museums are extremely irresponsible. It would be better that the walls come tumbling down and the art come back to the real artistic community.

There are several questions regarding the architecture of art exhibitions which I'd like to address to the Art Workers Coalition.

1 Are buildings for the purpose of showing art really necessary, and if so, what kinds of buildings should your work be shown in?

2 In a time of open-ended activity and vitality in the world of art, should the museum be a neo-classical monument made of polished marble, granite, teak and bronze or shouldn't the museum be just as vital, open-ended and forward-looking as the art itself.

3 Why are artists as a community never consulted about the programming and design of a new exhibition facility? Why shouldn't the artists as a community develop their own alternative solutions to these extravagant museum buildings? There are no limitations to the type or size of space which might be used. I would urge the artist community to seek out like-minded architects with professional skills and talent to match the demands of today's

Wilbur Woods 3

technology and tomorrow's potential, and with the use of design workshops and open discussions, they would define new solutions to the problems of art exhibitions.

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CARTER

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April 4, 1969

AN OPEN LETTER TO TODAY'S VISITORS TO THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

A PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BLACK WING AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART IN MEMORY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

WHY A BLACK WING? MARTIN LUTHER KING MEMORIAL AT MOMA SEGREGATED BLACK

On October 30th, 1968 at the Museum of Modern Art, prominent black artists were segregated in a back room at a memorial show in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.--or rather, in contempt of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Among those black artists subjected to this humiliating, racist cultural segregation were Jacob Lawrence, Charles White, Romare Bearden, and the late Bob Thompson. No one save the three black advisors on the Committee protested this racist insult to the black cultural community, which was really the most blatant contempt for the creative struggle which permeated the life and perpetuated the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

THE WHITE CULTURAL COMMUNITY SUPPORTED WHITE RACISM IN THE NAME OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Originally the Memorial Exhibition for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had included the works of no black artists! Black artists were included for the first time as the direct result of pressure from the black cultural community. None of the white members of the Committee even recognized the racism, nor were they repelled to the point of raising their voices against this insult to the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. How, we ask, can the white cultural community survive when its leadership, in the persons of such distinguished figures as Mayor John Lindsay, Mrs. Aristotle Onassis, Carroll Janis of the Sydney Janis Gallery, Edward Fry of the Guggenheim Museum, Henry Geldzahler of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, John Gordon of the Whitney Museum, Donelson Hoopes of the Brooklyn Museum, Karl Katz of the Jewish Museum, and William S. Rubin of the Museum of Modern Art, fail to react to the Museum of Modern Art's racist treatment of black artists and blatant insult to the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.? Obviously, they either expected black artists to be segregated, or they felt such a liberal streak that they were included at all that mere relegation to a back room represented in their minds a giant stride toward tokenism at the Museum of Modern Art. More likely, they never thought anything at all which is the best way to support the racism that buried Martin Luther King. Whatever the explanation, black artists can no longer wait for MOMA's brand of integration, which is already 100 years late in coming.

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# CRUMP

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## A MESSAGE TO THE BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN COMMUNITY ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF PORTRAYING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE

### WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Although we are all members of the same human family, our experience as a people has helped to make us different from other groups, just as our individual experiences make us as individuals different from one another. That differentness is a right; it makes us who and what we are, and that differentness has a right to be respected and preserved. The differentness of other Americans is recorded and preserved in the art of their group; their children and our children see it, and this fosters identification and a sense of worthwhileness. Our children and we ourselves are entitled to this same identification, respect, and sense of worthwhileness enjoyed by others. The public vehicle for helping to sustain and encourage all of this is the museum. For people alive, developing and contributing today, the foremost vehicle in the world for telling the story of cultural contribution is the Museum of Modern Art.

### IS IT BEING DONE ?

We want you to find this out for yourselves. On Sunday, April 13th, at 12 Noon, 200 black and Puerto Rican students will assemble in the Auditorium of the Museum of Modern Art for a brief orientation on methods of evaluating whether or not the Museum of Modern Art is usefully fulfilling its obligation to portray the cultural contributions of black and Puerto Rican artists and to determine whether that portrayal could be better served by the establishment of a black and Puerto Rican wing at the Museum. Cultural leaders of the community will speak to the group. We urge you to support this work either by personally attending, or by encouraging others to attend, or both.

### WHY A SEPARATE WING?

The Museum maintains wings for the exhibition of Dutch, Russian, Italian, Austro-Germanic, and other ethnic and national cultural contributions. Blacks and Puerto Ricans amount to more than 25 million Americans--one out of every eight! Our distinctiveness as a people is clearly recognized in the many laws, practices and customs within the American society which declared and even today declare such a difference. In short, we are different for purposes of unequal treatment, but not different for purposes of equal recognition of our cultural individuality. If we are different--and we are among the first to insist that we are--then we ought to be able to present that difference through our art and other cultural contributions in a Martin Luther King, Jr. Wing of the Museum of Modern Art.

SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S RIGHT TO KNOW, ENJOY AND UNDERSTAND HIS RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE. HELP TO FREE BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ART FROM THE CULTURAL GENOCIDE PRACTICED BY THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART TODAY. WITHOUT A MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WING, BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ARTISTS WILL HAVE TO WAIT ANOTHER 100 YEARS FOR FREEDOM, IF CULTURAL GENOCIDE DOES NOT IN FACT, AS IT SEEKS TO DO, WIPEOUT OUR CULTURE ENTIRELY. BRING THIS PAPER WITH YOU TO THE MUSEUM THIS SUNDAY, OR MAIL IT TO A MEMBER OF OUR COMMITTEE!

~~For info to 36 W. 45th St., New York, N.Y.~~  
Tom Lloyd 154-02 107th Ave., Jamaica, N.Y.

STUDENTS & ARTISTS FOR A  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.  
WING FOR BLACK ART AT THE  
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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In our society artists have no power. They have no power because they are divided against themselves and fail to organize as a group. Because they have no power, they are exploited and manipulated by those who have it. In most cases, instead of objecting to or even being aware of this exploitation, they take pride in the reason for it. We are individuals, they say, we neither want nor need organization. If you are good, you will make it in spite of the disadvantages; if you do not, you can console yourself with the thought that making it is not the artist's true objective anyway.

We do not realize that we are encouraged in this rationalization by those who exploit and manipulate us. Like women, like the black people, we are fed with a careful fiction as to the nature of our wishes and our goals. How many times have the black people in the South been told that they are happier and more contented than those in the North? How many times have women been told that to do something well or even seriously will preclude a happy relationship with a man? Anything, that is, that falls outside the conventional role of woman.

For artists, if not for the public, la vie boheme, the romantic garret, the purity of poverty, the love affair with starvation may be perhaps romantic popcorn. Still overlaying it is a more serious myth. You cannot really expect to make a living from art; artists get their satisfaction from doing their work and showing it; they don't really need to be paid for it, they are already so lucky to be creative and gifted and so on.

Yet, as we all know, there is money in art; a great deal of it in fact; huge sums change hands yet somehow scarcely ever finish up in the pocket of the artist. Why should this be so?

The crux of the problem is twofold: the legal concept of art as an investment object; the social concept of art as a luxury object. Many artists have fought against this latter definition for years by changing the nature of their work; by making it too large or too ugly or too dirty or too impermanent for galleries and smart apartments. Their work has usually been domesticated in the end, however, and their protest has failed to make art a less esoteric commodity.

They should have realized that without an attack on the legal and financial structure of the art world, no democratization of the art object is possible. Without a change in these areas, art will remain a luxury and the artist a superfluity. (75)

What changes then can be made to diminish the value of art as investment and at the same time give an economic and legal power to the artist proportionate to his role of creator? I have four proposals to make:

Firstly: the greatest financial gains from art are realized by those who buy work cheap in the artist's youth and sell it dear when he is old or dead. Our objective should be to change the law so that one half of all such gains reverts to the artist, and after his death partly to ~~give~~ his descendants and partly to a central fund created for the benefit of all artists. Such a fund would provide work grants, old age and sickness benefits, help for dependents of deceased artists, legal advice service and other social benefits. In cases where gains are realized through tax losses obtained by collectors who donate work to museums, one half of such gains should also be passed on to the artist or his descendants and the fund.

We should strive to promote  
Secondly: the concept of renting art. Scales of minimum rental fees should be established, and all institutions charging admission to exhibitions should be legally obliged to pay fees to the participating artists. In the case of dead artists, fees would be paid to the fund. Public exhibitions of private collections should also return a royalty to the artist or to the fund.

Thirdly: Maximum commission rates chargeable by galleries should be established by law.

Fourthly: The reproduction of artists' work in books, magazines, on television or in films should return a royalty fee to the artist or the fund.

Some of these suggestions exist as fact in one form or another in the fields of literature and music. And although it can be objected that art is different since it is intrinsically valuable as a unique object whereas music and literature have value only in their idea and not in their physical form - yet, one can maintain that the sale of an art work conveys only the right to private and personal enjoyment thereof and not to the right to financial gain, personal publicity or public acclaim. Or at least not to these advantages without paying extra for them.

I have concentrated on economic proposals because I feel that all the frustrations ~~and~~ in relationships with galleries and landlords, museums and collectors, all the slights and inequities to which we are subjected are a direct result of our having no financial power either individually or through a representative organization. Improve our legal and economic rights and the other relationships will ~~also~~

# WHITECROSS

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also change. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ But sit on every museum committee in the world and without financial backing we will always be overruled.

I have no doubt we can bring about change, even change as drastic or even more drastic than what I am proposing here. But to do so, we must stop being brain-washed into the belief that things are for the best as they are; we must be prepared to spend time building an organization to represent us; we must be able to define our demands and research the means to carry them through to law. It ~~must~~<sup>must</sup> be quick or easy and it cannot be done only in New York City or even perhaps not only in the U.S. for the art world is international and if our reforms are to be effective, they must be applied on a global scale. It's a big job, but we can start it moving...

- 1 There is a widespread dissatisfaction about the existing state of the art world today.
  - 1.11 Galleries provide a limited forum and only one that relates to art as commodity. They are insufficient in their presentation of the range of living art: what should be seen, and when and how. Profits dictate styles.
  - 1.12 Museums, ideologically committed to living art, are more and more barricaded behind walls of institutional bureaucracy. A world of play it safe, ersatz experience, and tax free status.
  - 1.2 The artist may spend his life as a cabinetmaker, working to furnish museums. He is the weakest link in the chain of the art world, the most expendable.
  - 1.21 There is a good deal of significant work of quality which never gets above 14th Street (or 23rd or whatever), because of a market situation.
  - 2 This is a proposal for artists to merge their individual powerlessness into a community, to try having some say-so in their own destiny.
    - 2.1 One expression of this solidarity would be a center for living art, cooperatively financed, run by artists for artists to fill the gap left by the art world.
    - 2.11 Incessant of existing institutions, it would avoid becoming a downtown uptown. It would provide an alternative showing living art in a framework free of power play, property and out of the hands of profiteers. There would be no sales.
    - 2.2 Its primary purpose would be the presentation of esthetic issues as they are current, showing new concepts before they are safe, exhibited as the artist intends them to be, under his control. Exhibitors would not be limited to membership to avoid another co-op gallery situation.



- 2.21 It could show valid works in styles neglected by uptown fashion, large scale works untouched by galleries, and any form or anti-form felt to be significant but of dubious commercial value.
- 2.3 The problem of quality would be tackled by rotating juries elected by members and which would prevent power monopoly by one group. An exhibition committee could consider any proposals for exhibitions by any group whatsoever.
- 2.4 It would be a temporary project designed to last 2 or 3 years and then, to continue, it would be reorganized and restructured according to future needs. This would avoid institutionalism and make the community concentrate on the present problems which confront it.
- 2.5 It could include a broad participation in the visual arts as well as film, dance, music, etc.
- 2.6 By its independent example it might make a slight dent in policies of existing institutions with more capital but with fewer ideas.

Submitted by Steve Rosenthal  
(79) (AWC) Jetc

**THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART EXCLUDES BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ART**

The Museum is the international pace-setter of the modern art movement. Its exclusion of the work of black and Puerto Rican artists has denied them recognition, support and the impetus for development which every art school and movement requires. It stands as the redoubt of the only great cultural empire in America which, however unwittingly, perpetuates total and unrelenting racism in America. Music, dance, theatre, literature, and audio-video communications have made themselves great by enriching themselves with the cultural wealth of black and Puerto Rican heritage; they have shared the prestige of artistic regeneration through a new and dynamic cultural infusion. In order to develop as a movement, black and Puerto Rican art requires national and international exposure. Either it will receive it, or the decaying effects of a society already weighted with war and racism will crush what little hope remains that art is not indeed dead in America. But Black and Puerto Rican art are alive! In search of museum retrospectives! Of major exhibitions, international representation, and all the exposure which museum publications, commissions, grants, and sponsorship can give!

THE MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. WING WILL BE SEPARATE--BUT ONLY AS THE YOLK IS SEPARATE FROM THE SHELL. Black determination has never failed to provide creative leadership to surmount every hurdle to freedom. We cannot be free until our art is free. We would gladly be free in any way. But we have been 34 years at the Museum waiting to be free without being separate, and there have been no retrospectives for Jacob Lawrence or Romare Bearden, no publications devoted to their work, no group shows for our younger artists. If our art is not to be mixed with the art of whites, well, so be it! Give us our own wing, where we can show our black and Puerto Rican artists, where we can proclaim to the world our statement of what constitutes value and truth and the spirit of our people! Give it to us, or tell us that we have no place at all in your museums [just as we have no place in your churches and clubs and cooperatives]. Can the Museum of Modern Art at least be that honest about it? We ask Governor Rockefeller and Mr. Philip Johnson of Johnson's Wax--trustees of the Museum--to make reason prevail. We will have our art, and we will have our wing. We have our own thing to do, something that grows out of our different experience as a people, coupled with the unceasing need of black and Puerto Rican people to give reason and vitality to existence. Modern Art needs a new direction and impetus--away from the "Cool School" emphasis of use of materials in the hope of avoiding the revolution. Black and Puerto Rican Art proclaims to the world: "We are the revolution! We are 25 million strong, very much alive and very seldom cool! Our art is not dead, and we will not let it die, because to kill our art is to kill the spirit of our people! That is why we must have the Martin Luther King Wing----NOW!!!!!"

AT 12 NOON AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 21 W 53 St., in the AUDITORIUM, SUNDAY, April 13, we will conduct an evaluation of the Museum in its default of cultural responsibility to the public and cultural integrity to itself and the artistic community. TAKE PART. CARE. SAVE BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ART FROM CULTURAL GENOCIDE. SAVE AMERICAN ART FROM THE FOLLY OF RACIST SUICIDE!

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Chuck Ginnever

I'm going to forego the pages I submitted, because Bob Barry and others have said pretty much what I wanted to say. ~~Expt~~ Except that I don't quite understand why we should all be showing so much kindness to that energy trap up there. I don't see why we can lend our virility to their obvious sterility. They cannot deal with the kind of energy we as artists are involved in. They've made this quite obvious. I don't think you're going to reform them - do you know who they are, the people who're dealing with you as artists. We know what we're after. Why don't we just let them die a natural death? I don't think I'm the only artist who felt obliged to pack up and moved up... I'm living in Vermont now. The only thing I can say is that what I'd like to see happen is on May 10th and 11th come up to Vermont at my invitation and do there what you don't think you can do here. We're going to have an artists' carnival up there on May 10th and 11th in Putty, Vermont, and I want anybody who wants to come up and do anything they want to do to come up there and do it. We'll try to see that you get a sleeping bag, we'll try to see that you get a place to sleep and we'll try to feed you. I concerned myself for ten years here with the problems of getting my art shown and I'm no longer interested, and I don't see why you're all interested in that place up there.

(81)

Harvey

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This is sort of a strange event for me because I went to this school and sat in this auditorium, and every time I was here

I really don't know

what's happening here

listening to a lot of people, and I think it's about time we ~~decided~~ decided to do something other than talking. The museums and the galleries should be on their fucking knees, man and we're playing games here, talking a lot of bullshit. We've just got to like...there was this one cat who came over here and said something. He said we should all go out and we should organize and we should do it together for one reason, because we are part of a subculture. And when we get together we'll decide what we want to do. You'll decide, not the museums or the galleries. They'll just have to wait while we decide what we want to do. I think we have to organize, it's got to be loose but that's what we've got to do. On Monday we meet, we get together, we put together some sort of a resolution and we just move.

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*Invert*

THE MOBILIZATION OF CULTURE

"In both camps (Free World & Eastern) non-operational ideas are non-behavioral and subversive."

Herbert Marcuse (1963)

"Even science, especially the magnificent science of our own day, has become one element of technique, a mere means."

Mauss (N.D.) *no date*

"The aesthetic philosophy of impressionism marks the beginning of a process of complete inbreeding in art. Artists produce their works for artists, and art, that is the formal experience of the world sub specie artis, becomes the real subject of art."

Arnold Hauser N.D.

"As the unity of the modern world becomes increasingly a technological rather than a social affair, the techniques of the arts provide a most valuable means of insight into the real direction of our own collective purposes. Conversely, the arts can become a primary means of social orientation and self-criticism."

Marshall McLuhan (1948)

"...the total mobilization of all media for the defense of the established reality has coordinated the means of expression to the point where communication of transcending contents becomes technically impossible. The spectre that has haunted the artistic consciousness since Mallarme - the impossibility of speaking a non-reified language, of communicating the negative- has ceased to be a spectre. It has materialized."

Marcuse (1963)

"An army without culture is a dull-witted army, and a dull-witted army cannot defeat the enemy."

Mao Tse-Tung (1944)

"For example, if a statement on the importance of the arts to both the individual and the community were made by a person of high authority, by the President of the United States, the condition of art would be improved almost instantaneously."

Victor D'Amico (1965)

*DA MICO*

*An administrator of Art Ed. MOMA*

"We aren't going to spend a kopeck on this dog shit."

Khrushchev (1962)

~~HEWITT~~  
HEWITT

~~35~~  
35

ART AND FOOD

"Art everywhere stands in contradiction to its own ethical purposes. What are we to do? Everywhere the ethical predicament of our time imposes itself with an urgency which suggests that even the question 'Have we anything to eat?' will be answered not in material but in ethical terms."

Hugo Ball (1917)

"It is high time to recognize at last that the problems of art and stomach are very far from each other."

Malevich (1915)

"An Oldenburger has more taste than the real thing."

E. Benkert (1967)

"What is happening now is not the deterioration of higher culture into mass culture but the refutation of this culture by the reality. The reality surpasses its culture."

Marcuse

"It is harder to shout louder than the War or the Revolution."

Trotsky (1924)

THE NEW LEFT

"Cubism and Futurism were the revolutionary forms in art foreshadowing the revolution in political and economic life of 1917."

Malevich (1920)

"The prime virtue of avant-garde art used to be the ability to go against the grain of one's own time and follow one's own bent regardless of current fashion, acceptance or ideas of what art has to be. In the American art world of today, one of the few who embodies that virtue is Andrew Wyeth."

Frank Getlein (1967)

(gk)



~~BENHENT~~  
ABWTT

~~85~~  
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POSTSCRIPT

"Art always borrows its seriousness from values- religious, romantic, scientific- it fails to live up to. The formal interests of the artist and his delight in his craft set him apart from genuine holiness, love, or research. Yet when logic induces the artist to consider art capable of renewing itself by its own means he finds himself in a blind alley. Art today needs political consciousness in order to free itself from the frivolity of continual insurrections confined to art galleries and museums. The actions of society present a resistance against which modes of art can test their powers and reinstate the creation of images as a vocation of adult minds."

HAROLD ROSENBERG, December 16, 1967

signed Minority A.  
Benhent  
Herdman  
Hewitt  
Mieczkowski

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THE 1967 NEW YORK PAINTER

The 1967 Painter knows that:

Technology has triumphed

Society is becoming increasingly totalitarian

Painting is becoming increasingly free and pure

Painting no longer has a subversive function

Society accepts the painter in his role as painter

The mobilization of culture in America is as complete, and more successful, than it is in Russia

The Russians will eventually get the message that pure art threatens nothing

The American Way of accepting and using it all is much more practical

Johnson will pass; someday America will have a President who has to do the same things as Johnson, but in a very hip way

It is easier to be an artist now than it was thirty years ago

An artist has friends everywhere, and is very grateful

Museums, galleries, and dealers have been around for a long time

Artists support the Status Quo

Artists protest the War in Vietnam

Artists make the kind of art they want

This is the way it is in America in 1967.

.....

It seems to me this anxiety to become part of the establishment is not very revolutionary. The business of having works of art shown cannot be done in cooperation with any museum or the establishment. What artists need is a new society of independents, where anybody, black or white or whatever, can show his work. I believe that the overriding issue with the museum is what happens to the painting or sculpture after it gets in and is acquired by the museum. This is the crux of the problem, and I find that the museum in this regard behaves like any other (institution). In this country, under American-style capitalism, a man who owns a work has complete legal and unalterable, ~~inalienable~~, possession of it. He can hang it upside down; he can repaint any part of it; he can, if he wishes, legally destroy it totally. I do not say that the Museum does or will do these things, but what it does do with one's work is done in the same spirit of complete possession. It can place it in any kind of theme show or group show; it can make any kind of historical pattern that it pleases, without any consideration of the artists' wishes. In England and in France, the wishes of the artist, even after he has sold the work, are given more respect. What I would like to see is that the Museum respect the wishes of the artist, even if the artist is wrong. This would not only create a living relation between the museum and the artist, but the museum would become an exemplar to others and show them how they should behave to those who make the works. After all, the Museum is not an oracle of behaviour

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between itself and collectors and galleries, and the change  
in attitude would have a great effect. Collectors, ~~foundations,~~  
~~foundations,~~ government and state would pay attention and have some  
regard for the artists' wishes, if they ~~thought~~<sup>saw</sup> that the  
Museum was involved not only ~~in seeing~~<sup>in seeing</sup> that a work of art  
be preserved, but if the Museum would also have some respect  
for the artists' wishes concerning how the work be used.

(It is Newman's wish that this statement be used only in  
its entirety)

**READ BY BARBARA REISE**

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I myself have been a little critical of all this concern about the Museum, as it seems to get increasingly dull every year. And why people want to get involved in such a dull place ...Then I started thinking about it.. It's a fine idea. In the thirties and the forties ....

(~~Q~~ Interruption from floor: read a short story then.)

No, I'm not reading a short story, I'm reading my own statement. ...it was the only place in the world that you could see ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ ~~and~~ Matisse at that time, which was more interesting than what was going on in studios around 14th street. Except that + think we forget that it was never reliable as an exhibition context for America. It ~~always~~ presents European stuff. It never looked for the good stuff in the United States of America. There have been protests, you know, for twenty years about this. But I don't think that.... the problem there is that it is very dull. It's not acting as a stimulus for <sup>for art that's happening here or any place else.</sup> anything/ It's run by a lot of academic minds who're more interested in political connexions with the critics and the galleries than ~~myx~~ real understanding of art. But I don't see that replacement with this sort of capitalist political thing with politics of other specialist interest groups is an immense (improvement). I don't see that the establishment of a black wing is going to make it necessarily a more interesting place than to establish a wing for bearded artists, or women

Barbara Reise 2

artists or blond artists. And I don't think a closed system is any answer at all. And I mean Ok, what about an open system. Can we get an open system out of the Museum of Modern Art. Maybe to a certain extent we could make it open up by reevaluating itself, but I don't think that's ~~the~~ ultimately the best way. I think if we ... and it doesn't seem to have been very successful to date. Right now the security guard~~s~~, the director of security is in charge of ~~the~~ the Museum's reaction to all protest by this coaliton, and he's an ex-officer of the FBI. And the fear is such right now that tonight, in order to prevent curators at the Museum of Modern Art from attending, not necessarily speaking at, just attending this open hearing, the directors organized an obligatory dinner party. I don't think constant pressure without new ideas is going to make them change. So, Ok, what else? I'd like to see a little more competition in the capitalistic system to the Museum of Modern Art: the Whitney and the Jewish, the Guggenheim Museum don't seem to be providing it, so how about an open municipal gallery or How to finance that? and state, place. /I suggest we try to get government, ~~and~~ city ~~support~~, and ~~with~~ federal ~~and state~~ support to get both space and a measure of support to keep it going. And you could do this by something that people are trying to get together in England, that is to add a tax on sales of art in commercial galleries - they sell dead art, they don't sell much live art. But if we could have it on all art sold by dealers or galleries, then use the revenue from that to subsidise municipal or open galleries or open gallery situations, to increase direct grants to artists, we

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Barbara Reise 3

might get something else going. I'm not saying it would necessarily be better, but at least it would be a step in another direction.



APRIL 10, 1969

STATEMENT FOR OPEN PUBLIC HEARINGS,  
ART WORKERS COALITION.

FOR ME THERE CAN BE NO ART REVOLUTION  
THAT IS SEPARATE FROM A SCIENCE  
REVOLUTION, A POLITICAL REVOLUTION,  
AN EDUCATION REVOLUTION, A DRUG  
REVOLUTION, A SEX REVOLUTION OR A  
PERSONAL REVOLUTION. I CANNOT CONSIDER  
A PROGRAM OF MUSEUM REFORMS WITHOUT  
EQUAL ATTENTION TO GALLERY REFORMS  
AND ART MAGAZINE REFORMS WHICH WOULD  
AIM TO ELIMINATE STABLES OF ARTISTS  
AND WRITERS. I WILL NOT CALL MYSELF  
AN ART WORKER BUT RATHER AN ART  
DREAMER AND I WILL PARTICIPATE ONLY  
IN A TOTAL REVOLUTION SIMULTANEOUSLY  
PERSONAL AND PUBLIC.

(12) LEE LOZANO  
60 GRAND ST., N.Y.C.

April 10, 1969

The subject is the artist, the object is to make art/  
free/.

The art world stinks; it is made of people who collectively dig the shit; now seems to be the time to get the collective shit out of the system.

Where does the cycle begin? Let's begin with the individual painter or sculptor ensconces 'high' in his loft world, making his pile of shit (perhaps is he really shitting, in his mind's eye, on the world) having engested art information and raw material from the shared world, pissing his time away, the labor of his love perhaps to be redeemed, to be realized at some other time

The stuff is transformed when it is transposed into imposed 'higher' values. First, a gallery, then, perhaps a museum, and further extended by translation into the data of art information when reproduced in an art magazine; at which point the artist, seeing the transposition, is pissed off. As time is transposed, money is transposed into private worth for the artist and a 'high'/quality/for the collector and art critic in this business society. The art world is a collection of people who dig the dirt, or pay the artist to dig it for him, to get a 'piece' of the action - the games people play - for personal fun and profit ("a profitable experience"). Everybody has their private part (parts) to contribute - for the media it's just another slice of life/ entertainment.

It's time it seems to leave all this shit behind; the art world is poisoned; get out to the country or take a radical stance. (According to the dictionary, "root", the root of radical and the root of root are the same - does dirt or evil really have roots?).

Should art be a lever against the Establishment? Make art dangerous? but art is only one item among the dangerous commodities being circulated in this society and, unattractive as it may be, one of the less lethal. Withhold? - a closed system dies of suffocation.

The writer in the past has been presented with an analogous problem. All magazines in order to survive are forced to present a well-known point of view to identify readers with advertisements just as in the past the structure of the book as object functioned to re-press the author's private, interior perspective or vision of life to the private reader who has bought the unique illusion as he reads through the narrative - linear, progressive, continuous from beginning to vanishing end point - his perspective as supposed to be altered by a novel insight into the world; he is changed; in Marx, Zola and Brecht's time he hopefully motivated to change affect into effecting changes back in the outside world. Magazines - art magazines - continue this fiction of assuming private points - of - view whose sum they must assume to be the collective view of its readership and advertisers. They depend exclusively for their economic existence on selling ads to galleries for the most part. For what it's worth to the readers who will buy it, the critic who must sell it, quality in art is all that counts (time is money which counts/ man is the measure of

all things). For the writer and recently, some so-called conceptual artists, there is a simple solution: buy the ads himself - the cycle thus feeds back on itself; invest in oneself - it's a free society.

Actually, its not the artists, the galleries, the collectors, the critics or the art magazines who support the structure at all - but the United States Government = you and me - geared to corporate needs - which, through the tax structure make it profitable to run a non-profitable art "business" to by and donate "works" to museums (in the process serving the soul purpose of feeding artists and Madison Avenue types in the over-all process of making a lot of money for yourself), etc., etc..

The conceptual artist conceives of a pure art without material base, conceived simply by giving birth to new ideas - an art that ideally mean and not be of baseball or Monopoly in the den bath without ball, bat, gravity, dice or money. But it's free and like sex, with a minimum of two people (subject/object; inside/outside; ying/yang; receiver/sender; people who take pictures of each other just to prove that they really existed) anyone can play, making their rules as they go along.

The artist laboured under the myth of trying to define himself (and his time) in terms of his work - his unique contribution - his raison d'etre; rather than be defined by society in their image.

But art is inevitable part of the larger order of society, its language and world shared and interdependent with the language, "vision" and stuff of its specific Time, Life, place and function.

All human brains perceive and think partially in symbols which have a relationship to external signs available to all which reduce to various interrelated language systems which relate to the larger social order at a given moment.

What does the artist have in common with his friends, his public, his society? Information about himself, themselves and all ourselves - which is not reduced to ideas or material but shares in both categories as it has a past, present and future time/spce. It is neither subjective or objective "truth"; it simply is - it is both a residue "object" and neutral "etherial" media transcribed - transcribed upon/ translation - translating the content of single and collective man's internal and external position, work, ideas, activities.

The artist is not a machine; the artist shares in mankind's various media of expression having no better 'secrets' or necessarily being more inside or outside of things than any other person; ~~often he is more calculating; he~~ wants things to be as interesting as possible; to give and have return pleasure; to contribute to the life-enhancing social covenant. Perhaps young artists, with their new naivete have replaced the old naivete of their fathers.

My opinion (more later); we must go back to the old notion of ~~socially "good works" as against~~ the private, aesthetic notion of "good work" - i.e.: art to go public.

spoken at 9:55 at VA Open Hearing

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**CLARENCE HAGIN**

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STUDENTS AND ARTISTS UNITED FOR A MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. WING FOR BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ART AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART IN NEW YORK CITY

~~FAITH RINGGOLD 845 W 131st St NYC 662 5076~~

~~TOM LLOYD 154 022107th Avenue Jamaica NY 657 2422~~

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART EXCLUDES BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ART

The Museum is the international pace-setter of the modern art movement. Its exclusion of the work of black and Puerto Rican artists has denied them recognition, support, and the impetus for development which every art school and movement requires. It stands as the redoubt of the only great cultural empire in America which, however unwittingly, perpetuates total and unrelenting racism in America. Music, dance, theatre, literature, and audio-video communications have made themselves great by enriching themselves with the cultural wealth of black and Puerto Rican heritage; they have shared the prestige of artistic regeneration through a new and dynamic cultural infusion. In order to develop as a movement, black and Puerto Rican art requires national and international exposure. Either it will receive it, or the decaying effects of a society already weighted with war and racism will crush what little hope remains that art is not indeed dead in America. But Black and Puerto Rican art are alive! In search of museum retrospectives! Of major exhibitions, international representation, and all the exposure which museum publications, commissions, grants, and sponsorship can give!

THE MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. WING WILL BE SEPARATE--BUT ONLY AS THE YOLK IS SEPARATE FROM THE SHELL. Black determination has never failed to provide creative leadership to surmount every hurdle to freedom. We cannot be free until our art is free. We would gladly be free in any way. But we have been 34 years at the Museum waiting to be free without being separate, and there have been no retrospectives for Jacob Lawrence or Romare Bearden, no publications devoted to their work, no group shows for our younger artists. If our art is not to be mixed with the art of whites, well, so be it! Give us our own wing, where we can show our black and Puerto Rican artists, where we can proclaim to the world our statement of what constitutes value and truth and the spirit of our people! Give it to us, or tell us that we have no place at all in your museums [just as we have no place in your churches and clubs and cooperatives]. Can the Museum of Modern Art at least be that honest about it? We ask Governor Rockefeller and Mr. Philip Johnson of Johnson's Wax--trustees of the Museum--to make reason prevail. We will have our art, and we will have our wing. We have our own thing to do, something that grows out of our different experience as a people, coupled with the unceasing need of black and Puerto Rican people to give reason and vitality to existence. Modern Art needs a new direction and impetus--away from the "Cool School" emphasis of use of materials in the hope of avoiding the revolution. Black and Puerto Rican Art proclaims to the world: "We are the revolution! We are 25 million strong, very much alive and very seldom cool! Our art is not dead, and we will not let it die, because to kill our art is to kill the spirit of our people! That is why we must have the Martin Luther King Wing----NOW!!!!!"

AT 12 NOON AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 21 W 53 St., in the AUDITORIUM, SUNDAY, April 13, we will conduct an evaluation of the Museum in its default of cultural responsibility to the public and cultural integrity to itself and the artistic community. TAKE PART. CARE. SAVE BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ART FROM CULTURAL GENOCIDE. SAVE AMERICAN ART FROM THE FOLLY OF RACIST SUICIDE!

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Anita Steckel - artist

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Aside from many other ~~problems~~ and issues, which could take volumes, one which just came to my personal attention is plainly this: not one reviewer from any newspaper, not one - Times, Post, Voice or whatever - came to review my show this March.

I said to you. Man, it's one thing to view and then decide not to review. But not to have the courtesy and the sense of responsibility to at least view the work - of a third show - the first and second of which were fully reviewed by all these papers, quite favorably and at some length, leaves one with the rather strong impression that these guys are not doing their jobs. I know the cop-out is probably: "How the hell can we cover everything?"

But what is their job? Just what is their responsibility to artists who are showing? To the other artists who want to know about what's being shown and to the (you should excuse the expression) lay public. Of course they're busy men but they're either prepared to do the thing or else they are going to become a useless vestige - constantly writing about the same old favorites. The whole fucking American star system. What is this Hollywood number? What the fuck are we showing the damn stuff for in New York and paying the damn high percentages to the galleries here for if these guys are going to ignore the majority of us, and simply cater for the favored few. This is another rotten part of the art power structure and the favorites system that's going down. J'accuse baby.

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BILL GORDY

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I don't think that the Museum of Modern Art is responsible for most of the difficulties experienced by artists. I don't even think that Howard Wise should be crucified upside down, or that Leo Castelli and John Canaday should be napalmed in the sculpture garden.

I also think that black artists should expect something better than a darkies wing in the Modern. If they're good enough, would they be allowed to come out and hang with the white folks? Could people say "His skin may be black, but he paints like he's white." Would there be separate washrooms? Separate entrances, maybe? How about a wing for women? WASPS over thirty? Jewish heterosexual magic realists? The idea is degrading and unjustified on both political and aesthetic grounds. The only works that belong in a black wing of the Modern are paintings by Ad Reinhardt. A black museum is a good idea. A separate but equal WING IN Modern is a rotten one. Artist power should be able to do better than that.

TO HIS WORK

The real enemies of the artist are indifference and lack of money. Let's talk about money. It would be nice if this group could agree ~~about the artist's financial situation~~, but even if it can't, there's a good deal that artists can do to help themselves financially, ~~even~~ without new legislation., on an individual basis. The existing law of contracts allows you to sell your work with the provision that you will receive a ~~percentage~~ percentage of the profit gained from any later re-sales, a kind of commission. Perhaps the knowledge that he would benefit by later increases in value of his work would take some of the pressure off ~~an artist~~ an artist to start at the top, to become ~~a superstar~~ a superstar overnight. The art speculator is looked down on now, but let's encourage him. His trading is the only mechanism that can drive art prices up. Let speculation thrive, as long as the artist gets his cut.

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GORDY

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Legally, artists together and separately, should uphold the principle that an artist continues to own the rights to his work the way an author own a literary property. The painting or sculpture is like a manuscript; the owner can keep it, or show it to his friends, but the artist continues to hold the rights of reproduction, including the right to collect royalties if he wants them. Can we all agree on that? Other questions are more difficult. Must the artist be paid, and how much, if his work is ~~owned~~ loaned to a museum or other exhibition? Can the owner of a work destroy it if he likes?

Many rights can be had by just taking them, without asking museums, galleries, or anybody else. Artists don't have to beg for everything, even though it sometimes seems so. Let's all <sup>stop</sup> begging, even when it pretends to be ~~an~~ "demanding." At the appropriate time, I would like to see someone move that a committee be formed, with legal advice, to draft a model sales contract that secures the maximum possible control for the artist over his work. Individuals can then, if they want to, agree to sell or give up certain rights, but let's start out, from now on, ~~in a position of tenants rather than landlords~~ in the position of landlords, rather than tenants. You can have artists without museums; you can't have museums without artists.

BILL GORDY  
328 E. 89 ST

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~~Mark Di Suvero~~

There are certain things we know. Art has to be free to us. We do it, we ought to get in. That's obvious. I think that the trouble is also that the Museum doesn't care about us, which means that we're going to need to do certain things. I have certain things that I would like to do too. Vote on it. But first of all, they give millions in order to expand their real estate, but they do nothing for the artists who give their work. I think that's obvious. I think that the demands for renting, for money and so on, really smack of the art bourgeoisie. That's terrible. I think that we stand quite outside of that. There's something that we do as artists that's really revolutionary, and eventually it's going to get through to the culture. We're not a subculture, we are the culture. The way that they (run) the Museum now, they hang dead art up there for dead souls. The reason for this dead art is that we know that all art is equal, because we know the joy of making it. And that's the real moment of art. Afterwards, it's no longer your work. They deal with it, they make the money from it, they hang it on the wall. And that Museum shouldn't be called the Museum of Modern Art any more. It's lost its right to that title. It only deals with the past art. It has paintings in there of men who should be in ~~the~~ a museum that is like a historical tomb. The Museum is run by dealers; it should be run by artists, I think it's obvious that we should

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Mark De Suevero 2

tax the dead art, because that's the place where dealers make money. They're glad to see us dead. And somehow that profit should end up helping those who are alive. Now about the Black wing. I think that all artists should be in the Museum. For me, the colour of my skin is like everybody's..... the heart is the same colour, the blood is, and we know it. If we're going to allow racist ideas to come into us, then we're going to have to suffer later. I think that the black artists have been treated unfairly. I don't know what to do about it. The question is what we're going to do as far as artists acting together. Because if they break our unity, then we are, then they can cut us apart. They've done it before. There are four things, and I'd like to vote on them. We can boycott it, we can shut it down, we can change its name, and we can meet again. Ok I'd like to take a vote on the first part.

(Carl says that the meeting is on Monday. I would like to propose that these four points be voted on at the meeting.)

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# Submitted by DON BERNHOUSE FOR ARCHITECTS' RESISTANCE

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## ARCHITECTURE AND RACISM Position Paper No. 1 of The Architects' Resistance

One of the Architectural profession's most prestigious firms, Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, is putting its skills, resources, and name behind the brutal racism of South Africa. For the sake of profit, the firm is building for a government which says: "We want South Africa White . . . Keeping it white can only mean one thing, namely White domination, not leadership, not guidance,

but control, supremacy." (Prime Minister Verwoerd 1963)

Written into the laws of the Republic of South Africa this policy has kept 3 million whites the slave-masters of 11 million black Africans. This is Apartheid and S O M is helping underwrite its furtherance.

THIS IS APARTHEID	WHITE (Europeans)	BLACK (Africans)
Population (millions)	3	11
Per capita income (1959)	\$1,819	\$109
Average wage in mining (1962)	\$3,587	\$216
Ages subject to tax	21-60	18-65
Income exempt from tax	\$840	None
Education expenditure per pupil	\$182	\$18
Infant mortality per 1,000 births	27	200+
Persons in registered trade unions	340,000	None
Persons convicted of pass offenses	None	384,000

On March 21, 1960, in Sharpeville, South African police fired on a crowd of peacefully demonstrating black Africans killing 67 and wounding hundreds more. They were protesting the laws which required them to carry pass books—dog tags which label their bondage.

In the following year South Africa's economy almost collapsed after a flight of capital from the country which resulted from fear that the Sharpeville massacre might lead to bloody revolution; fear that South Africa's expulsion from the British Commonwealth might reduce profits and that the economic boycott by small nations might snowball. But the U.S. corporations rescued the economy by pouring in \$223 million *additional* investment so that by 1963 South African gold and

foreign exchange reserve had tripled to a record high—and the Apartheid regime was secured. Since then business has boomed and the strength of the white oppressors has multiplied.

And indication of the current state of the economy is the Carlton Center complex designed by S O M. It will occupy a super-block formed by five cityblocks, includes the world's tallest concrete building (for offices), a 400-bedroom hotel with 90 additional apartment suites, two department stores and parking for 3,000 cars. There will be gardens, fountains, side-walk cafes and a skating rink. The estimated cost of the project is between \$50 and \$100 Million and is the largest commercial development in Africa.

### AND SOMEWHERE AN SOM ARCHITECT IS DRAWING TWO SETS OF BATHROOMS—WHITE AND BLACK.

This project is financed by Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa, whose Director is the infamous New Jersey profiteer and multi-millionaire Charles W. Engelhard. Through various holding companies he is said to control 23 South African firms with total assets of more than \$2.57 billion. Engelhard, along with David Rockefeller's Chase Manhattan Bank, Dillion, Read & Co. and over two hundred other American Companies, have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in industrial development in South Africa.

The Carlton Center has been made possible because U.S. business continues to be attracted to South Africa by a modern, developed, industrial society with 3 million

prosperous white customers and a labour force of 11 million black africans prohibited *by law* from organizing unions, collective bargaining, striking, moving without permission, and voting. The Apartheid policy keeps the average black miner earning less than \$1 a day, while in 1962 for example, the American companies in South Africa earned \$72 million. This was easily double the 11.8 percent average profit reported by the U.S. Department of Commerce on U.S. investments in all foreign countries.

Skidmore, Owings and Merrill has climbed aboard this gravy train—a train fueled by the blood and misery of 11 million black Africans.

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We, The Architects' Resistance, say that Skidmore, Owings and Merrill's support of Apartheid reveals them for what they, and most of the architectural profession, are: unprincipled practitioners of an art for its own sake and, mainly, for the sake of profit. The pursuit of profit and fame have led SOM and most of the rest of the profession to build their monuments in reflection of their own egos—at the expense of those whose labour builds them and with small regard for those who must live with them.

SOM's other "social" works, such as their involvement in Baltimore's highway program, incriminate them. To present themselves as advocates of black American communities, no matter how up-to-date their techniques, is after South Africa, sheer, unprincipled

hypocrisy. To build for corporations whose profits come from the exploitation of oppressed masses—be they South African Blacks, Peruvian copper miners, or American Blacks; to build for Governments who maintain themselves at the price of brutal oppression and genocide—be it South Africa at Sharpeville or the U.S. in Vietnam; and to build for profiteering middlemen whose only concern with social order and for the masses' use of what is built is the profit that can be wrung: *this* is cynical, evil and dangerous. The urban crisis, the Vietnam war, the violence of a Chicago are all born of the shallow moralism typified by our profession.

We, as architects, must see ourselves as servants of the social order whose environments we form.

### TO BUILD FOR OPPRESSIVE INSTITUTIONS IS TO SUPPORT THOSE INSTITUTIONS.

We are socially responsible for our actions.

We ask architects and architectural students who cannot tolerate the role they have been asked to play to join the Architects' Resistance in our efforts to change architecture from irrelevant and oppressive profit-making to an art truly in the service of a society based on fundamental human values.

\*\*\*\*\*

The architectural profession designs a mere 10% of buildings constructed in this country. This 10% is mostly monuments built for the business world to symbolize its power and wealth and to attract more profit. It is mausoleums to house Government and its oppressive agencies. It is schools where creativity is treated as a discipline problem, and cultural differences as delinquency. It is inhuman housing built for profit, or to house those whose real neighborhoods, have fallen

before highways. It is prisons. And because we continue to see ourselves as an elite group of "artists" we keep ourselves from soiling our hands with the remaining 90% of construction that forms the grey desert out of which our sparkling monuments rise. By the creed of the AIA we must sit in our carpeted offices waiting for those who can pay our fees or who want "art" to come and accept our sculptural vision.

We live in a country where power lies in the hands of the few, and we serve those few—as the Master Builders of history served their kings. The people do not have power over the formation of their environment but must accept whatever is forced on them. We, as architects, are not taught, or even permitted, to go out to the user and apply our skills to put physical form to *his* vision. We serve only to put "aesthetic" form to the avarice and power of rulers—even those who have openly enslaved millions under Apartheid.

### THE ARCHITECTS' RESISTANCE

The Architects' Resistance has been formed so that this prostitution of the profession may be stopped and so that we may move towards a society where the power lies with the people, and where architecture is a tool of that power. We wish to find means to assist the rehumanization of society by restructuring the architectural profession to deal with living people on human terms.

Architecture is a tool for mobilizing people, for making them more aware of themselves and their human dignity. Architecture must not be the hand-maiden to the dehumanization of object-oriented capitalism. Architects must not respond to the industrialists, the financiers, the politicians, nor to the acclaim of the professional journals.

Architecture is not an abstract art existing in a social vacuum.

It is an integral part of the totality of forces molding our society; political, economic, social. It cannot continue to operate in a moral void.

The Architects' Resistance hopes to fill that void by bringing ethical and political conscience to the practice of architecture.

TAR is an action group, a communications network, a research organization. We will issue and mobilize behind future position papers on broad topics within the profession—registration, the awarding of commissions, etc. and specific instances of the misuse of our professional skills.

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**AS A PRE-CONDITION TO THE RESPONSIBLE PRACTICE OF ARCHITECTURE WE DEMAND AN IMMEDIATE END TO THE COLLUSION BETWEEN ARCHITECTURE AND RACISM. WE DEMAND:**

- that SOM and Paul Weidinger Assoc. (Engineers) immediately dissociate themselves from the Carlton Project in Johannesburg and remit all profits accrued to Black organizations in South Africa.
- that the AIA publicly and immediately censor SOM and any other firms building in South Africa and that they drop these firms from membership if they refuse to halt their operations in South Africa.
- That the AIA refuse to hold its national convention in Chicago and publicly condemn the police state tactics of Mayor Daley.

**WE URGE:**

- that all architects of conscience examine closely the nature of the work they and their firms are engaged in and resign immediately from those organizations they can no longer morally support.
- that all architecture and planning students examine their future associations very critically before entering the brothels.



For further information please contact:  
The Architects' Resistance  
c/o Renaissance  
338 E. 6th St.  
New York, New York

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## MUSEUM REFORM?

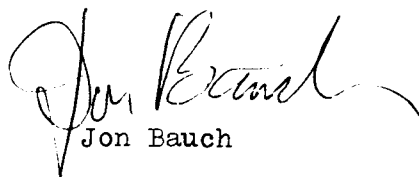
There will be much talk tonight.

It is not necessary for art workers to waste energy complaining about establishment museums, who by their very nature are unresponsive collections of art out of the past. These collections are supported by rich and powerful men who have vested interests in maintaining the statusquo.

Visual artists should take positive action and support a contemporary vision of a responsive museum. A museum without a perment collection. A museum that is interested in what the artist is creating now. A museum where the quality of its exhibitions will be determined by artists.

This museum exists. It is called "Museum, a project of living artists" and is located at 729 Broadway. It is a fledgling organization, battling the giants of the art establishment with a new concept. Museum will change attitudes with exhibitions of fresh work, not talk.

Its success will be determined by your participation.



Jon Bauch

144 E 7<sup>th</sup> St

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THREE QUESTIONS

1. Can the artist, by earning more from his work, finally prove to our society that he is a dedicated professional who works to benefit himself and his people?
  
2. Can the artist, in a Democracy, by remaining aloof from the politics of the country, hope to reap the fruits of social change?
  
3. Can the artist, by being forced to support the Establishment's mythical concept of an avant-garde delegate himself in the near future to the position of a shoe salesman?

~~Gloria Greenberg Bressler~~

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**Bruce Brown**  
(painter)  
79 St Mark's Place  
NYC

Brown

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The current status of art works as ~~commodities~~ must be changed. The values attached to commodities involve price speculation and manipulation, along with conspicuous consumption, power from market control etc. To append art with such concerns and all the social and political trivia which surround them builds a great wall between the artist and society through which precious little light is able to seep. Artists become alienated, involuted, bitter or some compromise. Let us free art from the control of the commercial middle-man so that the artist may reach out directly to the people. Artists must found their own museums, bring art to the streets, become involved with architecture and city planning - in a word, they must become the active functional visionaries of the new incoming culture, not the toadies of the upper middle class elite. We must conceive of our roles as extending beyond just the execution of private art in our studios, in the same way that the atomic research scientists should have had active concern for the moral extension of their work.

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Joseph Di DONATO

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It is not important basically who runs the Museums, since their management is a commercial venture. The artist isn't emotionally or technically equipped to run a Museum. What is important is the status of the artist within this commercial structure of Museum and Gallery complex. Place in the professional sense - representational in the sense that the artist is able to set his own criteria - his own individual criteria - (self) - what is wrong with the existing structure today is that the artist is forever being coerced and bludgeoned by the commercial galleries and their Directors, and by Art Historians running Museums to produce flamboyant and superficial "Musical Comedies" for the promotion of higher attendance records. The artist has become a dupe and is forced to run in packs - a non-professional tradesman.

It is important that we regain this lost dignity - take back that which we have relinquished to Public Relations and anti-intellectual establishment - and once again crystallize our concepts - recapture that which belongs to the Creative.

JOSEPH DI DONATO  
17 BRONXVILLE ROAD  
BRONXVILLE, NEW YORK 10708

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48 A

George Decker

**Proposal:**

A New York Biennale to be shown at the two armeries on the East side (34th and 27th St at Lexington) backed by the three museums (sponsored) and funds to be raised with the help of the museums. To include all professional artists to be screened only on basis of professionalism by known artists in their section.

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TOWARDS AN A.W.C. SHEET  
By Alex Gross

So ~~xxx~~ much has been said about the ideology of A.W.C. and about the contrast between reforming the museums on the one hand and setting up an alternate structure to them on the other, that I wonder if an important point has not been missed. It is a concrete every-day point that hits the artist in the stomach in a concrete everyday way, and I wonder if it isn't really one of the first things we should be attending to. I am speaking about the actual return an artist can expect when he sells a work of art. The museums may or may not be eventually reformed or an alternate structure may or may not eventually be set up, and certainly both are desirable, but what about the artist here and now when he sells a work of art?

Often he will not even receive that, as the gallery takes a percentage.  
L

P As things now stand, he will receive the selling price and that is the ~~end~~ of it. ~~But if the buyer~~ <sup>But if the buyer</sup> ~~resells~~ <sup>resells</sup> the work of art, it is this buyer alone who may profit from any increase ~~in~~ in price. I believe this is grotesquely unfair to the artist, and that our museums are stacked, as are ~~xxx~~ galleries and private collections, with works of art that illustrate the grotesqueness of this principle. Extreme cases where the artist is living in penury while his pictures fetch outrageous prices may be an exception, but they are by no means unknown. In any case an artist can be said to possess some sort of proprietary interest in his work even

after he has sold it. I believe the A.W.C. must give further currency to this notion and also help the artist to obtain a fairer return for his work by instituting a form which I shall refer to, for the sake of simplicity, as an A.W.C. sheet. I believe this sheet has a great role to play in the future of dealings in the art world and may serve to perpetuate the name of the A.W.C. long after the group itself has ceased to exist.

P As I see it, the A.W.C. sheet will consist of a form listing the name of the artist, the work of art, (if it has a name), a description or reproduction of this, and, most important, the name of the purchaser and the price he has paid for the work of art. At the bottom of the A.W.C. sheet will be a statement that the buyer guarantees to pay the artist a certain percentage of the profit he may make if he ever decides to resell the work of art. This statement the buyer will be required to ~~xi~~ read and sign. The percentage could vary between 10 and 33% and should perhaps be decided at future meetings of the A.W.C. or perhaps be left open for the artists and the purchaser to decide among themselves.

P Large quantities of these sheets should be printed up and the word should be spread among artists that this sheet is to serve as the standard form or at least as a model for all sales of all works of art. Obviously

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~~Obviously~~ the force of the A.W.C. Sheet will be partly symbolic and honorary at first, and it may be difficult for artists in all cases to determine if their works of art may not have been secretly or accidentally resold in distant parts of the country or the world. In the absence of a central agency handling and checking up on all works of art covered by A.W.C. Sheets, it will also be difficult to be certain that the regulations I have described ~~will~~ have been carried out ~~by~~ in all cases. In this connection I am somewhat hopeful that the mere existence of the A.W.C. Sheet may spur into existence the body necessary to enforce its provisions, and that this body will ~~be the~~ perhaps comprise the nucleus of ~~something~~ resembling the first trade union for artists in this country. I of course recognize that the great majority of artists are by nature opposed to extreme forms of organization and I very much respect this point of view myself, but these considerations do not deter me from hoping that some sort of viable authority may one day be formed to protect the rights of artists ~~in this manner~~. *and assure them a fair return for their work.*

*P* What I have described also has a second part. I have spoken of the duty of the buyer to share ~~his profits~~ with the artist when ~~reselling~~ <sup>reselling</sup> the work of art, but there is also another factor. By far the largest and most important buyers ~~and~~ of works of art are our museums. There is absolutely no reason why the museums should III

not ~~strong~~ agree to strengthen the A.W.C. principle here and now by promising to pay a percentage of the price for any work created by a living artist to the artist himself, ~~assuming~~. This would of course have to apply to all cases where the work of art was not bought directly from the artist himself. For some reason ~~very few~~ museums buy very few works of art from the artist himself. Once again a fair percentage would have to be worked out by subsequent meetings of the A.W.C., but once the percentage had been decided upon and the museums properly informed of the intentions of the A.W.C., I personally can see no reasons why the museums should not immediately agree to this A.W.C. principle.

If the museums were to disagree and refuse to adopt it, then it would seem fair to me that artists all over the country should respossess their work from museums all over the country or engage in such demonstrations, sit-ins, or other acts as seem likely to in each individual case to bring the museum in question to its senses.

What is being proposed is scarcely a ~~new~~ radical principle--it would merely reinforce what is already a relatively popular notion, that a creator should have some sort of proprietary right in his work even after he has sold it--this is almost a principle of common law. The artists can furthermore point out in their defence that they are only asking for the same return from their

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work as is received by writers, ~~and~~ composers, ~~and~~ film-makers in the form of copyrights and royalties. These groups, along with actors and theatre people in general, also have labor unions to defend their rights. Artists do not yet have any of this, and it is high time they began to work in the direction of gaining what other groups had begun to receive as much as ~~thri~~ thirty years ago. Popular feeling will very probably run highly in favor of the artists if they make this a principle plank of their platform. The direction is forward, and the time to take steps in that direction is now.

**D. Holmes**

**Statement:**

The question is: Is it possible to be joyous as an artist? Are poems and sculptures meaningful or are they on their way out - as man seems to be? The Museum of Natural History's centennial exhibition this May is called "Can man survive?"

Jack Buraham in Beyond Modern Sculpture suggests man is evolving into "an inorganic concentration of information-processing energy". Man's tools and his art works will not be extensions of himself, but the other way around.

When Lascauxian man put the imprint of his own head on the walls of the caves, it was as if he were saying: "Look, I am real. This representation of myself outside myself makes me know more strongly that I exist". "I breathe; I think; I close my eyes and see colored images; I close out sounds and imagine new ones."

What is the contemporary artist's connection to his own work? Is it important to himself, forgetting the importance it may have to others?

Takis removed his sculpture from the Museum of Modern Art because he still has a viable tie to it. Perhaps he felt there was something of his own spirit encapsulated in it. In contrast, many artists unknowingly have a lemming-like and self-destructive relationship to what they make. Or they have a ritualized relationship. The activity associated with the work may be born

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vide in appearance, but the appropriate affect and intellect are not combined to the activity.

These same artists have succumbed to the depersonalizing pressures of overpopulation; technology; and the establishment as epitomized in the museum, the gallery, and even more difficult to detect - the pressures from the group of artists to which he belongs. The following quotes appear in "The Eternal Present: the beginnings of Art" by S. Gideon:

"Art transposes man's attitude toward space, to the emotional sphere....."

"It is necessary to take action before space can become visible: it must acquire form and boundary from the hand of nature or the hand of man."

I believe that the Art Workers' Coalition must make all necessary efforts to open up new spaces for the artist. Here space is needed to celebrate being a man.

30 Catlin Avenue  
Staten Island, N.Y. 10304

**A. Huot**

Statement made in Museum of Modern Art, Saturday 22 March 1969

We are a small group from the art community who are symbolically requesting free admission for all. We are intentionally small so we can avoid any violence or vandalism. This is a peaceful demonstration. The Museum of Modern Art is notably our target. We are making these demands (5) and (13 points) on all museums where appropriate.

Here and now we are concentrating on the issue of free admission for all. We are also leafleting to call for a large demonstration.

General and short statement

I think we should continue to press for free admission to museums, also for doors open until midnight two days a week. We should support the demands of Black artists and continue to push the museums to expand their activities to all communities. In other words, the 13 demands and 5 reasons are still valid. But I feel we should begin to consider a completely different and new structure, one of our own making. I think we are essentially wasting a lot of energy, particularly on the so-called Museum of Modern Art. Rather than concentrating our efforts on minor reforms of an elitist power-oriented structure, we should move quickly to form an organization which can reflect the needs and goals of the art community as we see them now, and also attempt to anticipate the future.

I therefore propose be set up a "board" representative of the active art community, i.e. artists, art writers, museum workers, etc. to coordinate a broad variety of art activities.

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**Part 2**

**A rough idea of the selection of representatives and operation**  
This board could be elected each year at an open hearing or series such as this one. The board members would be salaried and it would be possible for them to devote ample time to their duties. The involvements of the board would range from a show of paintings by teenagers from the lower east side to earthworks in Hore Park on Staten Island. A group with an idea for a show could come to the board and the board would help find a space and help put the show together. The board would have no gallery space of its own, only office space. It would be completely flexible in the kind of material it could present.

To Whom It May Concern,

The Art Workers Coalition should demand the following as steps toward improving film activities at the Museum of Modern Art-

- 1) Replacement of Willard Van Dyke as head by Henri Langlois, head of the Cinematheque Francaise. Langlois would be asked to bring a true Cinematheque to New York, one in which artists and film lovers could become actively involved in policy decisions at the Cinematheque.
- 2) Replacement of all staff members of the Museum film department, with the exception of Adrienne Mancia, the only staff member who has evidenced a true interest in filmmaking and film as art. New staff members should include Jonas Mekas as curator of avant-garde films, Amos Vogel, curator of contemporary foreign films, and a number of consultants operating in their area of special competency.
- 3) Establishment of regional centers for film exhibition, especially a 42nd Street film house and one in Harlem, bringing black-made ~~films~~ and ~~other films~~ similar films to the black community.
- 4) Changing hours of screenings at West 53rd Street theater to coincide better with working people's hours. Better two shows at night than two shows during the day attended by Fifth Avenue secretaries and wealthy old ladies.
- 5) Expansion of Film Study Center and opening of Center to public, to afford wider access to films in the MOMA archive.
- 6) Transfer of ~~the~~ entire archive to 8mm for nationwide ~~the~~ free distribution of MOMA films.
- 7) Full cooperation of MOMA with all non-profit, educational organizations seeking to exhibit MOMA films.
- 8) Establishment of governing board in film, comprised of filmmakers, critics and other film people to oversee the activities of the film department, insuring that artists have a role in forming MOMA policy. deposit
- 9) Payment of print fees for all films taken on ~~prints~~ at MOMA.

James MacDonald

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Yvonne Kopp  
118 East 11th St  
NYC  
982-7469

51A

I would like to propose a response to the Museum of Modern Art's invitation to present a list of artists who would like to be given a chance to be "examined" by MOA directors - in hopes of exhibiting. This is in essence an empty invitation, like the one that goes "drop over sometime", an invitation which it is understood that one doesn't accept.

The MOA's invitation was a token gesture. I feel we should respond in the spirit of this hearing, as an art community.

Let us submit a list of the 50,000 working artists of the New York art community.

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I feel that the forming of the Art Workers Coalition is an important step forward and if pursued correctly will result in considerable reforms within and without the museums and other art institutions. It is particularly important that for the first time artists, writers, choreographers, filmmakers, etc. are working together towards common goals, irregardless of their individual styles or aesthetic outlooks. As one of the original supporters of Takis I have seen this movement expand and grow within a very ~~xx~~ short time. The rapid growth I take to an indication that the movement offers the very real possibility of fulfilling certain long-felt needs within the art community. I offer it my continuing support.

After this Hearing, the most important task is the formulation and adoption of a new set of demands. These new demands should then be presented to MOMA in the most dramatic way possible. Petitions must be drawn up and signed and ~~xxx~~ ads taken in the newspapers. A large list of signatures is crucial.

I would like the new demands to include:

1. one free day (to be financed by keeping the Museum open in the evening).
2. The appointment of a responsible person to handle any grievances arising from the Museum's dealings with artists.
3. The wishes of a living artist in regard to the display of his work owned by the Museum in any group show other than the permanent collection <sup>art</sup> be respected.
4. The payment of rental fees for works of art borrowed by the Museum for special shows.
5. A large, yearly show (possibly in one of the Armories), unjuried and open to all who wish to display their work.

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It is unlikely that MOMA will accept any of our new demands. If, however, they do, AWC will end as an organization unless it is understood from the beginning that AWC fills a need much larger than mere museum reform. If the Museum accepts our demands there is the danger that AWC will become an establishment "labor union" of artists. This must be avoided. AWC must draw up a list of policies that go beyond mere museum reform.

Since it is more likely that MOMA will reject our demands again, new ways of exerting pressure must be developed. We cannot merely follow the techniques of the New Left or the students. These may offer inspiration, but as artists we are in a position to provide new examples for other groups by developing more effective methods of protest.

It must be made clear that the museums now need the artists more than the artists need them. How can we make this clear? If none of the new demands are met, I suggest we consider a boycott of the museum. The effect of this, however, is contingent upon the membership strength of AWC. Artists with works on loan to the Museum can be encouraged to withdraw their works. We can also get artists to sign statements that they will refuse to loan works without rental fees.

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~, It might be advantageous to begin developing our own alternative structures. AWC should consider sponsoring a yearly, unjuried, show on its own.

John Perreault

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THE SMALL COOL TAME REVOLUTION, PROTEST AND DEMONSTRATION MARCH 30TH IN MOMA BY THE ART WORKERS COALITION MET WITH VERY LITTLE SUCCESS BY THE MUSEUM OFFICIALS. NOTHING HAS HAPPENED UP TO NOW. AND VERY LITTLE WILL CHANGE IF THE ARTISTS INTERESTED IN CHANGE DO NOT GO ABOUT IT WITH A PLAN AND CREATIVE IDEAS. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE VISUAL ARTISTS IN GENERAL ARE SLOWER THAN THE WRITERS, ACTORS, MUSICIANS AND POETS IN TRYING TO CHANGE SOCIAL CONDITIONS RELATING TO OUR SOCIETY, TO POLITICS AND TO WAR. ALL THE OTHER ARTS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE VISUAL ARTS, ARE ACTIVE IN MAKING ATTEMPTS AT CHANGE. WE HAVE OFF-BROADWAY AND OFF-OFF-BROADWAY; WE HAVE GUERILLA THEATER, STREET THEATER, LIVING THEATER, EROTIC THEATER, EROTIC LITERATURE, WILD MOVIES, UNDERGROUND PAPERS AND MAGAZINES, NUDE THEATER AND NUDE FLICKS, MULTI-MEDIA HAPPENINGS AND MULTI-MEDIA EVENTS. BUT THE GALLERIES ON MADISON AVENUE AND ON 57TH STREET AND THE MUSEUMS OF NEW YORK HAVE NOT CHANGED MUCH IN THE LAST TEN YEARS. JUST A LITTLE PLASTIC MATERIAL HAS BEEN ADDED, AND A FEW ELECTRIC LIGHTS SHINE BRIGHTLY ONCE IN A WHILE. THE EXPERIMENTAL SHOW HAD TO GO TO THE MUSEUM IN BROOKLYN, AND THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM IS IN TROUBLE NOW - A 24% CUT FOR THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR. THEY SENT OUT A LONG PRESS STATEMENT OF COMPLAINT WHICH HAS JUST ARRIVED ON MY DESK. THE CULTURAL ACTIVITIES OF THE MUSEUMS ARE FACING CUTS, BUT THE SITUATION OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (ACCORDING TO DIRECTOR BATES LOWRY IN THE NEW YORK TIMES OF APRIL 4TH) IS NOT YET CRITICAL IN COMPARISON TO THE GENERAL SITUATION ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

AWC'S DEMAND FOR A FREE VISITING DAY TO THE MUSEUM COULD EASILY BE FULFILLED; SO COULD SOME OF THE OTHER 13 POINTS. BUT THE BASIC ILLNESS OF THE ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM SITUATION AS IT IS CAN NOT BE SOLVED BY THE 13 POINTS. THE WHOLE SYSTEM IS OLD-FASHIONED AND HAS TO BE ADJUSTED TO THE NECESSITIES OF THE COMPUTER-ELECTRONIC-CYBERNETIC-SPACE AGE.

HOW THAT CAN BE ACHIEVED IS THE 69-DOLLAR QUESTION IN THE YEAR 1969. AWC HAS TO WORK ON IT TOGETHER. SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS WHO WANT TO PUSH THEIR OWN DEMANDS (ARTISTS ARE EGOMANIACS) HAVE TO BE FOUGHT FROM THE VERY BEGINNING. THE WORD "COMMUNE" COULD ALSO BE CHANGED TO "TRIBE". MAYBE IT WOULD REMOVE THE "POLITICAL" STIGMA FROM THE ART WORKERS COALITION WHICH, UNFORTUNATELY, SOUNDS LIKE A POLITICAL PARTY. ARTISTS ARE ALWAYS VERY NAIVE ABOUT POLITICS. IT'S NOT THEIR BUSINESS. THEIR BUSINESS IS ART. TO DO ART IS DIFFICULT ENOUGH. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE WHOLE TROUBLE WITH MOMA IS BASICALLY DUE TO THE DEMANDS OF THE ART PATRONS WHO HAVE THE POWER OF CONSENT TO THE AWC'S DEMANDS. IF ARTISTS DID NOT WORK, THERE WOULD BE NO ART: THAT'S A VERY SIMPLE TRUTH, ISN'T IT? THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO FIGHT FOR RIGHTS. ONE IS TO STRIKE. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT SOME OF THE ARTISTS, ESPECIALLY THE ONES WHO COULD NO LONGER DIGEST THE HUMILIATION OF THE GALLERIES (MAKING THE ROUNDS WITH SLIDES, TALKING TO GALLERY MANAGERS - I DO NOT HAVE TO GO INTO DETAIL AS EVERYONE KNOWS WHAT IT MEANS TO DO THIS TERRIBLE LEG WORK AND TO FACE THE STUPID OPINIONS OF THE INSENSITIVE, SELF APPOINTED JUDGES OF ONE'S WORK) - AS I SAID, THE ONES WHO COULD NO LONGER STOMACH THIS ROUTINE OPENED UP SHOWS IN THEIR OWN STUDIOS. OTHERS JUST FORGET ABOUT GALLERIES, JOIN THE MUSEUM FOR \$20 A YEAR, TEACH AND NEVER SHOW; OTHERS DO STREET ART. STILL OTHERS THINK, AS DOES ONE ARTIST WHO WROTE ME A FEW DAYS AGO: "IF GALLERIES AND MUSEUMS CLOSED, <sup>TOTAL</sup> IF/MILITARY RULE CAME, IT WOULD STILL GO ON BY LETTER, BY NOTEBOOK, BY PRIVATE SHOW."

IN THE CASE OF MDMA, AT LEAST TO GET THIS MUSEUM ON THE SIDE OF THE ARTISTS WHO ARE THE LAST CREATIVE FORCE IN A WORLD OF TOTAL DESTRUCTION - IF MAN DOES NOT CHANGE THE CONDITIONS ON OUR PLANET (FEAR OF ALL OUT ATOMIC WAR, POLLUTION, RACISM, CRIME) - IT SHOULD BE AGREED THAT A CHOSEN COMMITTEE OF AWC WILL BE ADMITTED TO THE POLICY-MAKING COMMITTEE OF THE MUSEUMS AND THAT THE ARTISTS WILL HAVE SOME INFLUENCE IN THE FUTURE

REGARDING SPECIAL SHOWS AND SELECTIONS OF WORKS FOR THE PERMANENT COLLECTIONS AND THE LENDING LIBRARY OF MOMA, FOR THE CHOICE OF FILMS, MULTI-MEDIA PERFORMANCES, SYMPOSIUMS AND OTHER DISCUSSIONS, LECTURES AND EVENTS.

*AN ARTIST*

AS A SEASONED REVOLUTIONARY AND ART REPORTER I HATE TO BE CALLED A CRITIC, - I DON'T THINK ANYBODY SHOULD CRITICIZE ART, OR HAS A RIGHT TO MAKE ABSOLUTE STATEMENTS ABOUT WHAT IS GOOD OR BAD IN ART. ART IS A PROCESS THAT CHANGES, AND THE ART WHICH WE <sup>W</sup>TOUGHT EXCELLENT SOMETIMES PROVES TO BE BANAL, BAD AND SHALLOW; AND THE BANAL CAN BECOME ART, - I WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST THREE IDEAS WHICH COULD BE ADDED TO THE 13 POINTS.

1. MOMA SHOULD OPEN AN INDEPENDANT EXPERIMENTAL WING. THIS WING COULD BE SITUATED ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE MUSEUM IN THE ROOM FACING 53RD STREET WITH <sup>HAS</sup>A LARGE PLATE GLASS WINDOW. HERE AN EXTRA ENTRANCE COULD BE BUILT. THIS EXPERIMENTAL DEPARTMENT WOULD BE OPEN TERRAIN WITH CHANGING EXHIBITIONS OF YOUNG EXPERIMENTERS IN THE ARTS IN EVERY POSSIBLE MEDIUM. THE ENTRANCE FEE WOULD ONLY BE FOR ALL THE OTHER DEPARTMENTS. THE NEW EXPERIMENTAL WING WOULD <sup>SERVE</sup> ~~BELONG TO~~ THE PEOPLE, THE ARTIST, THE YOUTH. ANYTHING SOLD IN IT WOULD BE PROFITABLE TO THE MUSEUM. AND MAYBE THE NEW EXPERIMENTAL ART WOULD SOONER OR LATER LIQUIDATE THE DEFICIT OF \$600,000 THAT DIRECTOR BATES LOWRY TOLD US ABOUT IN HIS STATEMENT IN THE NEW YORK TIMES. TO MAKE ROOM FOR THE EXPERIMENTAL WING, THE ART OF THE PERMANENT COLLECTION BELONGING TO THE BEGINNING OF THIS CENTURY AND TO THE END OF THE LAST CENTURY (IMPRESSIONISTS, CUBISTS, GERMAN EXPRESSIONISTS, SOME PICASSOS, LEGER, CHAGALLS) COULD BE TRANSFERRED TO THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, OR ANY OTHER MUSEUM THAT SHOWS ART OF THE PAST. IN THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, THE EMPHASIS SHOULD BE ON ULTRA-MODERN ART AND NOT ON THE ART OF YESTERDAY.

12A

MOHA AND

PROVIDE

2. AWC'S COMMUNE OR TRIBE WILL ~~NAME~~ ARTISTS TO GIVE LECTURES TO THE PUBLIC IN THE DAILY LECTURE SERIES, WHICH UP TO NOW ARE GIVEN BY LECTURERS BELONGING TO THE MUSEUM STAFF.
3. AWC'S COMMUNE OR TRIBE SHOULD ASSIST THE PATRONS, CURATORS AND MUSEUM DIRECTORS IN SELECTING THE SPECIAL EVENTS SHOWS, RETROSPECTIVES, GROUP SHOWS, ETC. AND SHOULD ALSO BE HEARD IF DECISIONS ARE TO BE MADE IN SELECTING WORK FOR PURCHASES OR FOR EXHIBITIONS IN THE LENDING LIBRARY.

I THINK THAT ONLY ARTISTS CAN REALLY JUDGE ART; THEY DO IT, SO THEY KNOW IT. ART IS CREATED BY ARTISTS, NOT BY CURATORS, HISTORIANS OR ADMINISTRATORS. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WITH THE CULTURAL EXPLOSION, THE WHOLE WEB OF THE ART-INDUSTRY WORLD, THE ART-PUBLICITY WORLD, IS TODAY MORE POWERFUL THAN THE ARTISTS THEMSELVES. THE ARTISTS ONLY DO THE THINGS; THEIR POWER IS "MINIMAL". SOMETIMES THEY GET MONEY, BUT THEY ARE MOSTLY ON THE LOSING SIDE OF THE GAME.

LIL PICARD  
APRIL 10, 1969  
ARTIST'S ART-  
REPORTER.

PETER PINCHBECK

For opening hearing record.

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One reason that so many artists have become alienated from the uptown art scene is to be found, I think, in the search for content that the artist undertakes in his work. If it does not become a form of reality, art remains only meaningless decoration or a luxury product. Now we are becoming aware that just to show work, even good work, in the galleries or museums does not change the context which has been established, ~~is~~ which treats art as commodity and/or entertainment. Also, all types of art are so widely spread that their effects cancel one another out: we end up, as it were, with no art, only "superstars". In place of ~~growth~~ <sup>growth</sup> and development, we have artificially stimulated movements which are quickly disposed of when their novelty and commercial usefulness has gone. This situation has existed since Abstract Expressionism made the uptown scene, but only now has it become apparent that organic development must take place outside of the art market. Part of the reason for this ~~is~~ is that most of the dealers, curators and critics who form the establishment have a life style which is allied to the status quo. Life style is, of course, a determinant of taste and sensibility, which in this case favors elegant decorativeness, easy solutions, and arty gestures.

/2...

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As artists are well aware, the truth is that the search for reality involves commitment and a struggle for viable form: it cannot be tied up in ~~work~~ packages and neatly labelled Pop, Op, Minimal, etc. The only solution is for each artist to understand that the art scene as it exists (and it is impossible to see how it could change) <sup>is</sup> diametrically opposed to the development of an art with valid content. We need a new beginning, difficult as this is to bring about, founded on the common bonds between artists that, freed from commercial and competitive-~~ness~~ pressures, could hopefully be the underlying basis for positive work.

Peter Pinchbeck.

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J. POUSETTE-DART

54A

Jeanne Pousette-Dart

Qualitative judgments aside, it is a fact that certain recent movements in art and music have helped to extend the public's tolerance of art forms and have contributed to an increased incorporation of art forms into everyday life. The question which must be asked is, is this extended tolerance taking place within the art world itself? Or is the mythification of art being perpetuated by an anachronistic system which is accepted as tradition?

To direct the attacks of this movement solely against the Museum is illogical and unrealistic. Both the gallery and the museum are part of a system which has lost sight of its reason for existing - to represent artists and to make art accessible - and turned into a monstrous automaton which manipulates artists as though it has forgotten it is nothing without them. The present system is parasitic, eaten through with exploitation and corruption. Only the ego of the artist permits it to exist.

4 facets of the system which must change:

1. The gallery as it exists is a business. The art product is handled in the same manner exactly as commercial products. Out of a large number of products a few are chosen by certain standards of desirability and promoted. A commercial product is desirable for obvious reasons: it tastes creamier, washes whiter, etc. In the art world standards of judgment are considerably less distinct, as they cannot be arrived at through single comparison. And the choice is not made by the consumer but by the gallery who then allows the public to select from its selection. Which brings us to a second facet which must change.

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Jeanne Patsakos-Dart 2

2 The gallery dictates taste. The public sees only what is in the gallery and the museum, which means he sees about 20% (very rough guess) of what goes on. He is not choosing first hand but second hand. This is where the gallery has its hold on the artist. But art doesn't need promotion - it only needs to be made accessible.

3 The gallery is not concerned with the rights of the artist. There is no such thing as a copyright or royalties in the art world. Someone can buy a piece from a young artist for \$200 and resell it for twice as much when he has gained a reputation and the artist makes nothing on it. He is bullied into donating works to museums in order that he be sufficiently represented. He is given nothing for reproductions of his work in magazines. A gallery, no matter how good, is exploiting the artist, unless it backs him on these rights.

4 Galleries do not bring art to people, they bring art to the rich. Go into a gallery. Tell them you are John Smith and you want to see some of so and so's work because you missed his last show. There will be little cooperation. Were you a Burton or a Kennedy and were your intent to buy, chances are you would have the ingratiating cooperation of the director himself. The fact that they sacrifice space, the single most important factor in exhibiting work, for prestigious addresses reiterates their true intentions.

Jeanne Pettit-Dart 1

54A

Alternatives to this system depend on removing the money-making orientation. Remove the middleman. Have "free" galleries run by a rotating board of directors (artists perhaps but not necessarily) who are not paid by commission but who are paid a flat salary. The expenses would be supported by a small percentage of every artist's yearly earnings.

Decentralize the gallery system by moving it into different areas. Make it more accessible to more people.

Cut museum directors and gallery directors down to what they are, custodians of art.

17-19 Elecker St, NYC.

(130)

Laura Raiken

55

Laura Raiken  
311 East 10th St  
NYC  
982-1640

Over the past year the New York Free Theater has been initiated by a group of radical artists, composers, actors and critics. Black and white artists have been working together creating a community participation theater which attempts to help the communities with whom we perform evolve a political understanding adequate to the situation we all find ourselves in, adequate to changing basic social institutions and processes.

Our experiences have been wildly differentiated, but in relation to this open hearing of the Art Workers' Coalition, I would like to raise two small issues:

- The Free Theater brings radical arts festivals into forgotten, oppressed communities, hoping to decentralize, anarchize and democratize the arts and dissolve the boundaries between art and life. Forget the museums, mass media and bureaucratized arts institutions. Abandon the totalitarian rationalization of the arts and help us as we work on the streets and in the communities of Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island. Our desire to destroy repressive arts institutions is negated by the media attention our public demonstrations direct toward them. By maintaining our focus on these institutions we waste our energies while learning only more sophisticated styles of rebellion which end in reconciling us to , and reintegrating us into these institutions.

If we wish to democratize the arts and help all of us develop our creative capacities, then let us redirect some of our energies. Let us withdraw some of our creative energies from self-referent

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groups and redirect them to the aesthetic and political growth of the mass of American citizens we usually see as helpless victims of "fascist enemies". A movement such as the Art Workers' Coalition faces the danger of becoming just one more elitist group, which in the name of liberation expropriates power for itself. We can avoid this by initiating projects throughout the country; creating a mass base of radical political and aesthetic consciousness. This is the precondition for radical social transformation.

Specifically we would welcome, as we assert our comradeship with the Art Workers' Coalition, an interfeeding with you. Join us this summer as we run workshops around the New York area. The N.Y. Free Theater is located at 87 West 3rd St, NYC, 477-0400. Please let us work together. Also a number of radical theater groups have come together to organize the Radical Theater Repertory (RTR 245 E 11th St). RTR and AWC should join together in a non-competitive coalition. We must maintain adequate communication amongst all our actions.

New York Free Theater.

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GARY SMITH

~~56~~  
56

THE LINE OF REASONING BEHIND THE ATTACK ON THE PRACTICES OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART CAN BE APPLIED TO A MORE FAR REACHING AND LOGICAL TARGET: THE ART SCHOOLS. SINCE ARTISTS AND CURATORS (ART HISTORIANS) ARE USUALLY EDUCATED IN THE SAME SCHOOLS; AND THE ART ESTABLISHMENT BEING WHAT IT IS POLITICALLY; WE <sup>generally</sup> ALWAYS HAVE THE SITUATION OF AN OLDER GENERATION OF ART HISTORIANS COMMENTING ON THE ART OF YOUNGER ARTISTS. THIS TELESCOPING SOCIAL PROBLEM OF THE GENERATION GAP IS USED POLITICALLY BY THE ART ESTABLISHMENT TO RETAIN CONTROL OF THE SCENE. AT THE SAME TIME, IT PROVIDES A DUBIOUS SOURCE OF AGGRAVATION THAT ARTISTS CAN REBEL AGAINST. WHEN AN ARTIST HAS REACHED A CERTAIN LEVEL OF REBELLION AND HAS SHOCKED ENOUGH PEOPLE, HE IS ADOPTED INTO THE ESTABLISHMENT WITH MUCH PUBLICITY LAUDING HIS COURAGEOUS AVANT GARDENESS TO BE ASSIMILATED AND FORGOTTEN WITHIN A FEW MONTHS. ONLY THOSE ARTISTS EXTREMELY AWARE OF THE FAST PACED SCENE CHANGES CAN HOPE TO STAY IN THE SPOTLIGHT FOR LONG, AND EVEN THEY EVENTUALLY APPEAR TO BE SELL-OUTS.

I WAS ONCE TOLD BY A PAINTER THAT IF YOU MAKE A GRAB FOR THE SPOTLIGHT YOU HAD BETTER MAKE SURE YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY IN CASE YOU GET IT. THIS IS IN TOTAL ERROR. ~~THERE'S A LOT OF BULLSHIT~~, BECAUSE THE SPOTLIGHT MEANS THAT SOME CRITIC OR CURATOR THINKS YOU'LL BE IN FASHION AND PLUGS YOUR WORK. SUCCESS DEPENDS SOLELY ON HOW LONG YOU CAN CAPTIVATE THAT CRITIC'S TASTE.

JUST AS THE ART SCENE IS RUN BY A COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENT DESIGNED FOR THE WEALTHY NOBLES OF THE WORLD, SO ARE THE ART SCHOOLS UNDER STRONG OUTSIDE CONTROLS.

THE SCHOOLS HAVE DESERTED ART IN MASSE AND HAVE BEGUN TO DEVOTE MOST OF THEIR EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH <sup>ART</sup> DOMINATE COMMERCIAL AND DESIGN IMAGES FOR THEMSELVES. THIS IS KEEPING IN LINE WITH FEDERAL AID PROGRAMS TO SCHOOLS OFFERING TRADE SKILLS THAT CAN PROVIDE JOBS FOR STUDENTS. MANY SCHOOLS HAVE COME TO DEPEND ON THIS MONEY FOR CONTINUED OPERATION. A FINE ARTIST IN THEIR MIDST IS AN

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(2)

ENIGMA TO THEM; A SOURCE OF DISRUPTIVE AGITATION, A POTENTIAL TROUBLE MAKER. THEY, IN THEIR LIMITED UNDERSTANDING, CANNOT CONCEIVE WHY ANYONE WOULD WANT TO "SUFFER" WITH THEIR ART WHEN THEY COULD BE LINNING THEIR POCKETS.

WHILE THE ARTIST IS BOUND ON BOTH SIDES BY THIS MORAL CONSTIPATION, HE STILL MUST CREATE HIS ART, AND HE STILL MUST EDUCATE HIMSELF. I OFFER THREE GENERAL STEPS TO TAKE TO BEGIN THE TRANSITION INTO THE FUTURE OF ART:

(I)

ARTISTS MUST WITHDRAW TOTALLY FROM GALLERY AND MUSEUM AFFILIATIONS AND BEGIN TO SET UP SECONDARY METHODS OF DEALING WITH ~~THEIR~~ ART.

(II)

BEGIN TO BREAK DOWN ~~THE~~ SYSTEM OF EDUCATION PRACTICED IN THE SCHOOLS AND CONSTRUCT NEW PLACES OF EDUCATION FOR ARTISTS. IT SHOULD BE A PLACE WHERE ALL ARTISTS ARE TEACHERS AND ALL TEACHERS ARE STUDENTS, A PLACE OF EXCHANGE, NOT GIVE AND TAKE, OF DOING NOT TELLING. IT SHOULD BE A PLACE OF COMMUNICATION NOT A SCHOOL.

(III)

ATTEMPT TO REDISTRIBUTE THE CULTURE AND GET IT OUT OF THE POPULATION CENTERS SO THAT EACH ARTIST IS FREE TO BE HIS OWN CENTER OF CULTURE AND HIS OWN SOURCE OF VALUES.

IN CONCLUSION: AMERICAN ART IS STILL VERY MUCH A REGIONAL THING--- SO MUCH SO, THAT ARTISTS HAVE TO RELEARN AND REDIRECT THEIR ART WHEN THEY CHANGE CULTURE OR POPULATION CENTERS. IT IS OUR GREAT FAILURE THAT WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO GIVE EVERY MAN A KNOWLEDGE OF HIS CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THIS CENTURY OF MASS COMMUNICATION. IT IS TIME NOW TO BEGIN USING THE ESTABLISHMENT AND THE MEDIA FOR OUR PURPOSE AND TO STOP THEIR USING OF US FOR GAIN. ~~1968 1969~~  
~~PLANNING THEIR GAMES AND GET SERIOUS FOR A CHANGE, SOMEBODY HAS TO DO THIS.~~

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~~SMITH~~

JULIUS TOBIAS

57-8

April 10, 1969

A STATEMENT AND PROPOSAL

One of the acute problems facing most artists today, simply stated, is that his chances for getting his work out, that is exhibiting his work, is very slim. The up-tight gallery situation upon which he is dependent is totally insufficient. There are just too many artists around and not enough galleries to show the work. To presume that the galleries have weeded out all the good artists from those that are not so good, in the process of selecting their stables, is for the birds. All artists have a right to show their work and should have appropriate space available to them for this purpose. Let natural selection, rather than gallery selection be the weeding out factor. The gallery situation which exists today has resulted in a surreptitious in-fighting amongst the artists jockeying for a little in-position. He has developed a secretiveness and an off-handedness that is sometimes taken for a cool. As one artist recently said, " If you have heard about it, it is already too late. What can we do to get out of this shitty situation."

To seek a solution from the present museum structure is at best a meager palliative. It won't solve anything. Most artists will be in no better position than they were before.

What we need clear and simple, is another museum; a special kind of museum devoted solely to exhibiting contemporary art works. This museum should neither buy, own, or show art collections. At this point I would like to make a proposal which follows:

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PROPOSAL

- 1) That the Museum of Modern Art, The Whitney Museum, The Guggenheim Museum, The Jewish Museum, and any other major Museum in the City of New York form a joint committee, for the purpose of raising funds, organizing, and actually taking the responsibility for the construction of a two-winged Museum
  - a) That a committee of artists and critics be created by each group respectively, to consult with and act in conjunction with the Museum committee.
  - b) That all members of this committee shall be paid for their time and effort.
- 2) That this Museum shall be "co-owned" by the respective Museums involved. That these respective Museums be responsible for directing, staffing, and maintaining the New Museum.
- 3) That this Museum shall not collect, buy, or own any art work, nor shall they exhibit any permanent collections.
- 4) That this Museum have a rotating committee or jury comprised equally of Museum Curators, Critics, and Artists, and that these rotating juries be responsible for the selection of all exhibitions.
- 5) That one wing be used solely for annual exhibitions, of which there be four or five during the course of the year. That at least two of these annuals be comprised of only artists who have not had their work shown in regular galleries or other Museums over a period of two years. That one of these annuals be in the nature of an international.
- 6) That all artists of other nationalities, residing in the United States for a short period of time, shall be eligible to exhibit their work.
- 7) That the other wing of the Museum be devoted exclusively to small select group shows from six to twelve artists. That these shows be organized in the following manner: Groups of artists be formed together on the basis of a common image, by the artists themselves. That they submit photographs, ~~or~~ slides <sup>OR STATEMENTS</sup> of their work as a group, for jury selection. That the jury select a number of these groups, that will be exhibited over a period of one year.

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TOBIAS

57.8

- 8) That all rejected groups can either re-submit the following year to a totally new jury, or can disband and reform into other groups and then re-submit.
- 9) That no artist that is shown in any of these group shows may show with any other group for that year.

Lastly, if this proposal is ever considered, that this paper shall be considered as a working paper, subject to modifications with all necessary additions and changes.

Submitted by:  
JULIUS TOBIAS, sculptor  
9 Great Jones Street  
New York, N.Y. 10012

# 982-1785

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~~Finally~~, I would like to make this ~~recommendation~~ recommendation:  
 through high school - or even up to twenty five  
 that all children ~~under sixteen~~ years of age be admitted

to museums with or without pay, as they themselves may indi-  
cate. If guides are needed to help or watch ~~them~~ <sup>young children,</sup> a program

could be instituted for high school girls to work in the  
~~place,~~ <sup>place, to have someone available at any time</sup>  
 museum one morning or afternoon a week, to conduct small

children, singly or in groups -- and giving <sup>e</sup> them ~~the~~ the  
 choice of what they would like to see: painting, sculpture,

photography, architecture, design. It will also be a  
 good art education for the guides, who, in intervals of  
 freedom, could visit the museum library or be shown  
 through the staff rooms to become cognisant with the  
 activities of which a museum consists.

Ruth Vollmer.

The Modern Museum is a business or monopoly. Unlike monopolies regulating public consumption of fare in other businesses, the government does not seek to destroy it but rather applauds it for being a good example of capitalistic efficiency. And well it should be applauded on this abstract basis; for what other business has been so devious as to be able to set the standards by which it is to be judged?

The lack of concern for this monopoly is two-fold. The government enjoys seeing leftist-leaning, communist-inspired artists under regulation. What could be better than regulating them and public taste for so long and having artists believe they are not really being regulated but are having a favor done for them? The other reason is a loop-hole made in their regulation of monopolies. A private institution can't be prosecuted under the same laws of collusion as a public institution, whether or not that private institution has triple the power and effect of any public institution. Thus the Museum of Modern Art gets underwritten by the CIA and NBC and CBS join in to give the public the news as they see it. This leaves MOMA in the hands of the trustees who are, incidentally, also the trustees of the Guggenheim, the Los Angeles County Museum and every other museum in this country. These people have different overt manifestations but they are the same people. Your one vote today is directly commensurate with the size of your financial last name.

The object of the wealthy is to control and exploit the poor (sensibility now being firmly established as a concomitant of bank

# JAY WHOLLY

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balance) and to tell them what is good and bad art. The irony here is that they believe they have a right to do this.

The Museum makes the mistaken assumption that because they acquire a painting it must be good, and if they acquire ten paintings they must be great. The gallery with its prestige is the microcosm that allows this to occur. They proceed from here to give the results of their findings, the "Kudo" to the artist and the assurance to their investments a show. They present the public with apples and pears; how are the people supposed to know cherries exist.

It doesn't take an assessment such as this to show the Museum has no qualitative basis for judgment - look at the collection. I would like to ask a question here. Why, with all the bad white art in the Museum isn't there an equal quantity of bad black art? Since the Museum doesn't make qualitative judgments about art, it is impossible for them to say that it is because the black artists are not of the same high (low?) standard. I must thus conclude that the Museum is racist.

In order to perpetuate the hoax that the Museum has so surreptitiously gone about creating, they have stooped to blackmail and giving the media false information. I wonder how far they will go before it is all over. For blackmail I refer you to the letters sent to artists that are to be represented in the Museum's permanent historical document of the forties. Artists were told that if they did not want to be represented by the small or insignificant works that the Museum acquired earlier, they must donate large canvases. The show was arranged by .....

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# JAY WHOLLY

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The Museum told the press that the artists' coalition told them that they intended to come to the Museum for their Sunday demonstration and "vandalize" the art. This was after executive members of the staff had been informed by individual participants in the coalition that we had no such intention, nor would anything of that nature occur.

The Museum should have only revolving group shows and should have no permanent collection. This would eliminate the need to make their investments pay. The exhibits should be governed by a revolving board of an equal number of artist, critics and administrators. It should revolve once a year with each board being responsible for two shows.

The money for this could be raised through tax-deductible donations by the few people who would still be interested in art. If too much money was raised, grants could be given out to artists. All artists could be taxed 2 or 3% of their yearly earnings for the same purpose.

The New York Times should not be allowed to print articles on art.

All artists should refuse to participate in any show that does not have the democratic bases described above. If a law couldn't be passed similar to the one in France, then all artists should make anyone who buys anything sign a contract guaranteeing that the artist receive a percentage of the increase in value whenever it is resold. As these things are enacted, a levelling-off of prices should occur and all art of living artists, good or bad, should cost the same amount. (141)

ANN WILSON

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There are a lot of things besides the Modern that a group of Artists as a power block could direct their energies toward.

THE ECONOMIC SITUATION\*IE\* JOB, RENT, FOOD, SUPPLY MONEY.  
Research should be done of the WPA support of artists during the depression. Also research into the Scandinavian support of their artists. Some sort of ground plan or link up should be made with the projected minimum annual wage. This seems projected pretty far into the future but we may get some ideas.

THE DISPLAY AND SELLING OF WORK.

I think ideas should be suggested for alternatives to the uptown situation. Research should be done on Legal copywrites. Lincoln center has State and Rockefeller money for theater and dance why not some for LIVE ART.

Groups could be formed to set up a few galleries up and down the Bowery, like the star turtle to form a downtown nucleus like tenth street used to be.

WE could form a mutual aid society.

EDUCATION

A lot of painters have been offered interesting structural things at colleges. Some research into black Mountain might be a good idea at this time. A lot of places like Ford like to back experimental Education ideas.

The community of Paul Williams at Stony point offers another idea for research into living working communities in proximity to New York.

PUBLICATION

MY final idea I think is most pertinent to this particular group and time.

How about getting out a publication that could be a forum for ideas and research at this time.

Research IT IS and SCRAP and lets try to come up with something.

We have writers with us lets take advantage of them.

The Columbia students have set up their own printing shop.

We could even dream of something like THE GREAT BEAR PRESS.

Ann Wilson

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**The Museum of Modern Art**

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900

**Annual Pass**

No.

Name

**A.W.C.**

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**DOCUMENTS I**

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OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS PUBLICATION FOR  
THE PURPOSE OF REALIZING OUR COMMON AIMS

Sindrofoi:

Let's hope that our unanimous decision January 1st 1969 to remove my work from the Machine exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art will be just the first in a series of acts against the stagnant policies of art museums all over the world. Let us unite, artists with scientists, students with workers, to change these anachronistic situations into information centers for all artistic activities, and in this way create a time when art can be enjoyed freely by each individual.

Takis

New York

January 3, 1969

# art

WHOSE ART?

by John Perreault

Last Friday I received a polite but impassioned telephone call: "This is Takis. . . . At four o'clock I am going to remove my sculpture from the Machine Show at the Museum of Modern Art. . . . They are exhibiting it against my wishes. I would appreciate it if you would please come." The Cool Revolution!

They moved like clockwork: Takis, unshaven, calm, looking like a saintly longshoreman or an anarchist ready to plant a bomb; Willoughby Sharp who took off all his clothes at Jill Johnston's panel discussion at NYU; black-bearded Farman, a poet; and Do, a beautiful woman with reddish hair who called the Director's office from a telephone booth to explain what was going to happen. There were others.

4.00, 4.01, 4.02, 4.03. . . . In a crowded gallery, in front of stunned guards, Takis moved in on his own work, cut the wires, unplugged it, and, protected by

THE NEW YORK

## of Modern Museum



sculpture after removing it from

Farman and Willoughby, gently carried it out into the museum garden, with a coolness that was unbelievable. It was very well rehearsed and on the surface looked more like a movie jewel-robbery than the anarchist's ballet that it really was. Takis and his bearded cadre left a small wake of handbills, strategically handed out to the guards as they approached, and to the few bystanders that seemed to get what was going on.

One handbill, signed by Takis, proclaimed: "Let's hope that our unanimous decision January 1st 1969 to remove my work from the Machine exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art will be just the first in a series of acts against the stagnant policies of art museums all over the world. Let us unite, artists with scientists, students with workers, to change these anachronistic situations into information centers for all artistic activities, and in this way create a time when art can be enjoyed freely by each individual."

The guards and security men were flipped out or completely confused. "Do you have permission to move this work?" "How do we know you're really the artist?" One security man, obviously trying his damndest to take care of the situation, but making one ludicrous move after another, tried to stop the photographers from taking his picture after having proclaimed that if this had been the Metropolitan Takis would have been shot on the spot. (The Metropolitan, as everyone knows, is not particularly well-known for exhibiting the works of living artists; they can't expect any trouble from Rembrandt or even Jackson Pollock.)

But gentle Takis refused to move in spite of the invitations to come in out of the cold and talk it over. "I am guarding my work. I want written assurance that this will be permanently removed from this show and that the museum will not ever again exhibit it without my permission."

Takis, as I have indicated here once before, is an important artist and an artist I respect. Aside from the high quality of his work, having met him in person a week or so ago, I know him to be a serious person as well as a serious artist, and probably not someone to do something merely for publicity. He was very upset. And, I might add, with some justification.

Continued on next page

the village VOICE, January 9, 1969

Page Seventeen

Continued from preceding page

Takis is represented in the Machine Show by "Tele-Sculpture (1960)." Cork and wood with magnets, hanging from steel wires, move around an electro-magnet. 1960! In the show it seems like an afterthought, sandwiched in amongst other works, in a room given over to larger, newer, and more spectacular inventions by artists, not necessarily better, but certainly more fashionable. In a letter to Dr. K. G. Pontus Hulten who organized the Machine Show, Takis stated that if he were to be represented by this work, he refused to be represented at all. Other more recent works were easily available to the museum. Therefore, although this particular work was in the museum's collection, it was exhibited against his wishes and despite his protestations. This was the straw that broke the camel's back. Artists everywhere complain about the museums and feel powerless when confronted with them. Takis did something about his complaint.

The garden got darker and colder and colder. Although various "officials" eventually ventured down into the garden,

written assurance was a long way off. It still is. But Takis, although he still wants all artists to have some say in the exhibition of their works, was in some way successful. After an hour-and-a-half "sit-in" and then finally a two hour talk with Bates Lowry, the new director of the museum, he at least got a verbal agreement. The piece is no longer in the show. Lowry, of course, inherited the situation and, recognizing the importance of Takis's gesture, agreed to more talks and public discussion in February.

Hopefully the discussion will be more than a discussion and some concrete actions will result. Another Takis handbill lists exactly what he and his friends are opposed to: "1. The exhibition of works by living artists against their express consent, 2. The exclusive ownership privileges exercised by museums over the work of living artists, 3. The lack of consultation between museum authorities and artists, particularly with regard to the installation and maintenance of their work, 4. The unauthorized use of photographs and other material pertaining to the artist's work for publicity purposes." Certainly an artist should have some say in the treatment of his works, no matter who has "purchased" them. But

this is only one of the potentially revolutionary issues that will come up in that promised public discussion at the museum in February.

Takis is an established artist. Currently he is a Fellow at MIT's Center for Advanced Visual Studies. The catalog for his exhibition at the Hayden Gallery, MIT contains commentaries by Marcel Duchamp, William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso. If a well-known artist like Takis is at the mercy of the Museum Establishment and apparently cannot exercise any control over the exhibition of his works, in what way do the museums—or the galleries, for that matter—treat younger artists?



TAKIS TAKES IT BACK

Voice: Fred W. McDorrah





A THE "MUSEUM" BELONGS TO ALL THE LIVING ARTISTS WHO WISH TO REGISTER WITH IT.

THE DIRECTORS OF THE "MUSEUM" WILL BE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ARTISTS - ELECTED BY ARTISTS IN LARGE PLENARY MEETINGS, THEY WILL NOT BE THE HAND- PICKED DARLINGS OF A COTERIE OF TRUSTEES AND STOCKHOLDERS.

IF THE MUSEUM IS TO BE A LIVE INSTITUTION, EVEN AS THE MONEY NECESSARY FOR ITS GROWTH COMES FROM SINCERE PATRONS AND SUPPORTERS, THE DIRECTORSHIP IS ONLY THE RESULT OF A PROCESS GENERATED BY THE ARTISTS- ALL OF THEM- WITHOUT ANY POSSIBLE DISCRIMINATION ALONG THE PETRIFIED CONCEPTS OF AGE, RACE, RELIGION, NATIONALITY AND IDEOLOGY. JUST REGISTER YOURSELF AS A ARTIST- OWNER OF THE MUSEUM, USE YOUR BALLOT OR YOUR FOOT, CHAOS IS AN INTRINSIC PART OF OUR ORDER- CREATION.

B THE PERMANENCE OF INNER RENEWALS, THE WILLINGNESS TO CHANGE TO THE RADICAL NEW, THE CAPABILITY TO ABSORB THE GROWING MULTIPLICITY OF INFORMATION AND TO AJUST TO THE BROADENING NETWORK OF NEEDS AND DEMANDS. THESE ARE SOME OF THE FACTS THAT DIFFERENCIATE A DYNAMIC LIVING ORGANISM FROM THE RIGIDITY OF A DECAYING AND DYING ONE. AT THIS HOUR, STARTS THE TESTING OF EVERY "MUSEUM". WILL THEY BE THE VAPID

DEATH- CHAMBERS OF A SECTARIAN, CRUSTACEAN, BOURGOIS ESTABLISHMENT ? OR WILL THEY BECOME THE ILLUMINATED HARBORS OF THE THROBBING, FLOWERING MASSES OF A JUST SOCIETY?

C EXAMPLE - OUR SUGGESTION

A SERIES OF FOUR SHOWS, OVER A PERIOD OF FOUR MONTHS IN WHICH EVERY SCULPTOR LIVING NOW IN NEW YORK CITY ( IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER) WILL BE REPRESENTED BY THREE WORKS AT THE " MUSEUM", REGARDLESS OF SIZE, OR STYLE, OR PREVIOUS HONORS. WITH FANFARE OPENINGS, GUESTS OF HONOR PICKED BY A COMPUTER, ONE PICTURE OF EACH ARTIST, AND WORK, PRINTED IN GLOSSY CATALOGUES, TO BE BRIEF, THE WHOLE WORKS. ALWAYS, EVERYTHING EQUAL.

NO INTERMEDIARIES: PATRONS, COLLECTORS, OR GALLERIES WILL BE RECOGNIZED AS PROXIES OF THE ARTISTS. EVERY SELF- APPOINTED ARTIST WILL INTRODUCE HIMSELF TO THE MUSEUM AND REGISTER HIS WORKS, WHICH WILL THEN BE EXHIBITED WITHOUT BEING JUDGED, BY ANY COMMITTEES OF CURATORS, ARTISTS, CRITICS OR OFFICIALS. TODAY ONE CITY AWAKENS TO THE SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF ITS ARTISTS, TOMORROW A HUNDRED CITIES WILL AWAKEN.  
WE HAVE HEREBY STARTET A DIALOGUE.

JAN 3, 1969



On January 3, 1969, Takis and a small group of his friends removed his "Tele-sculpture 1960" from the Machine exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. This action was taken because the work was exhibited against the artist's express consent.

We consider it to be a flagrant injustice that an artist should be unable to exercise any control over the exhibition of his work during his own lifetime, regardless of who owns the work legally.

In relation to the above injustice, we are opposed to a number of current museum practices :

- 1 The exhibition of works by living artists against their express consent.
- 2 The degree of control exercised by museums, galleries and private collectors over the work of living artists.
- 3 The lack of consultation between museum authorities and artists, particularly with regard to the maintenance and installation of their works.
- 4 The unauthorized use of photographs and other material for publicity purposes.

We believe that the reevaluation of the rights of artists over their work during lifetime is long overdue and wish to initiate an open dialogue concerning artists especially in the following areas: copyrights, reproduction rights, exhibition rights and maintenance responsibilities.

We chose to confront the Museum of Modern Art directly not only to draw attention to a specific injustice, but also as a symbolic act to stimulate a dialogue which might significantly increase artists' control over their works.

# WE DEMAND

1. The immediate cancellation of the forthcoming "Harlem On My Mind" exhibition opening January 18, 1969.
2. The appointment of Black people on a curatorial level and in all other policy-making areas of the museum.
3. That the Metropolitan Museum seek a more viable relationship with the TOTAL BLACK COMMUNITY!

# SOUL'S BEEN Heavy Guard at the Met Museum SOLD AGAIN !!!!

*The Metropolitan Museum's "HARLEM ON MY MIND" show, scheduled to pre-view THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, must be boycotted by the entire Black community!!!*

*The show is, supposedly, an historical sociological photographic survey that has been organized by whites who do not begin to know the Black Experience! Moreover, the incredible sum of one half million dollars (\$500,000) was spent to mount an exhibition whose "director" (Allon Schoener) either ignored or, even worse, un-substantially represented the advisory resources of the Black artistic and intellectual community.*

*Present-day Harlem is geographically (Harlem begins at 96th Street) on the doorstep of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It is therefore mandatory that the Museum become more aware of and sensitive to the needs of the Black community!*

## WE DEMAND:

- 1) The immediate cancellation of the "HARLEM ON MY MIND" show, scheduled to open officially Saturday, January 18.*
- 2) That the Metropolitan Museum appoint blacks to policy-making and curatorial positions.*
- 3) That the Metropolitan Museum seek a more viable relationship with the TOTAL BLACK COMMUNITY!!!*

*JOIN OUR PROTEST DEMONSTRATION AND BRING A FRIEND, THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, AT 6 P.M. - METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, 5TH AVE. & 82ND ST.*

*For further information, please contact:*

**THE BLACK EMERGENCY CULTURAL COALITION**

*Chairmen: Benny Andrews (BE 3-3248)*

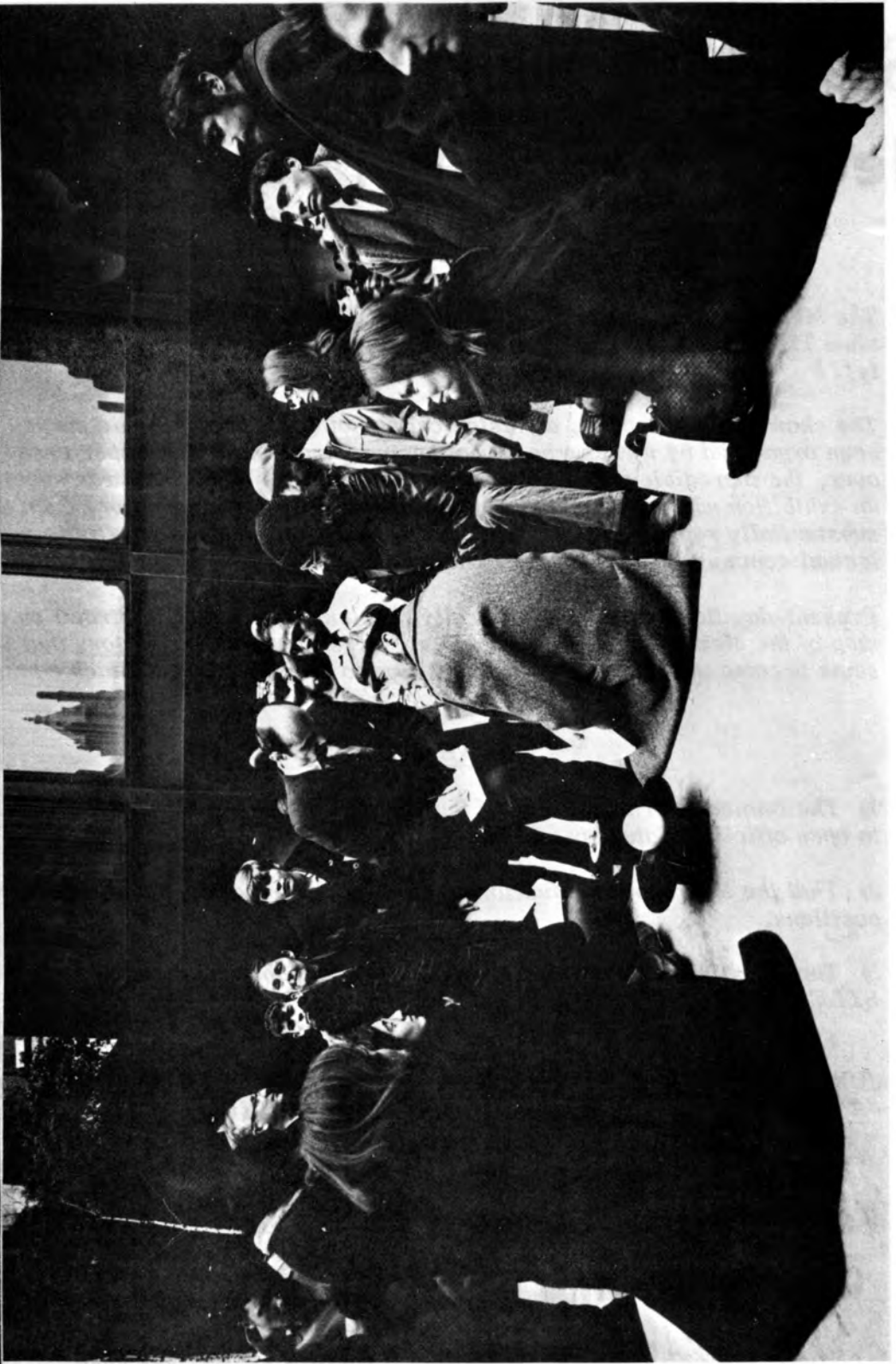
*Henri Ghent (988-4558)*

*Edward Taylor (831-5292)*

ALEX GROSS

# artists attack moma

Photo by : Mehdik HonSari



# artists attack moma

by

Alex Gross

THE EAST VILLAGE OTHER

JAN 24, 1969

Demonstrations at the Modern Museum have tended to affect the art world the way revolutions in Paris have affected the world beyond it. The first demonstration of artists in the Thirties was against the conservatism of the administration at that time and opened the way to a fuller acceptance of abstract art in America. The second demonstration, on April 24, 1960, was against the domination of galleries and museums by a single art style, that of abstract expressionism, and also against the supremacy of a single criticism favoring that style. Soon after this demonstration came a comparative revival of figurative work, followed by the developments of pop, op, and psychedelia which opened art out into many new styles and media. There is therefore good reason to watch and listen for all the signs and symptoms after the act of protest carried out by the Greek artist Takis and his friends on the third of January of this year, a year when anything can happen.

On this day Takis removed one of his kinetic sculptures from the Machine exhibition at the Modern and sat with it in the museum garden for two hours amidst menacing museum guards (one of whom suggested he would have been shot for doing the same thing at the Metropolitan) before he and his friends were permitted a dialogue with the curator. Not presented to the curator at this time were the suggestions of the more militant members of this group, among them Takis and the Persian poet Farman. These suggestions, while rejecting conventional definitions of revolution and fashionable sloganeering, embody concrete proposals for renewal not only of the Modern but of the whole museum scene. The group feels they may also justify expanded and extended demonstrations in the future.

The proposals thusfar put forward by Takis and Farman are meant to raise the level of the art world at every point and not merely to benefit a single school or group of artists. Ideas are still in the planning stage and highly flexible, but among those proposed so far:

- 1) The Museum of Modern Art should be open free of charge to the general public on at least one day of every week.
- 2) A Registry of Artists should be compiled at the



Modern for the benefit of all museums listing all artists living in the New York area. For the purpose of this registry de facto recognition as an artist should be given to any person able to present a body of work.

3) Using this Registry as a basis, a completely random show of all artists should be put together by lottery and shown at the Modern at least once a year. While it is possible that such a show will contain much mediocrity, it is felt that this method will not be any more dangerous to the public taste than the one now in use. There is a precedent for using a lottery in last year's Pavilions in the Parks program in London, where artists were awarded pavilions by chance in which they created happenings.

4) A similar random show of photographs should be instituted.

5) A much more direct relationship between the museum and artists should be cultivated. At present almost all contact must go through gallery owners and other middle-men. This relationship should express itself particularly where conditions of exhibition are concerned.

6) A plan should be evolved to provide the artist with some percentage of the resale price of his work, whether this goes up or down. At present artists, unlike writers or composers, receive money only from the first sale of their work, and the effect of any later sale is felt only by the subsequent owners. This is particularly important for the majority of artists who only sell a few works and who can never hope to sell a work to a major museum, with the attendant publicity and price increase this could bring to all their work.

7) Both known and unknown artists should be admitted as members to the Board of Directors of the Museum of Modern Art.

8) Artists should be encouraged to create Tech Art pieces which can be manufactured for the masses, and the Museum should undertake to lessen the mystique surrounding the original work of art.

9) Rooms should be continually available at the Modern for the mounting of environments, and there

should be at least one environment continually on view. At this writing the Modern has never sponsored an environment. Artists should be invited and given funds to mount such environments for periods of two weeks or longer.

10) The artist should retain undisputed copyright in his own work, regardless of who owns it, and he should have reasonable access to see it when he so requires.

Most important of all, it is felt that an attempt should be made to alter the atmosphere now given off by museums, to challenge the sense that the visitor must enter the museum in a state of awe, behold the works in a state bordering on religious ecstasy, and leave with a feeling of having been thereby enriched in one's culture and innermost soul. This effect may bear a remarkable resemblance to what church-going once gave, but there is no evidence that it is good or meaningful either for the visitor or the work of art. The artists in this group recognize that their task will not be easy and welcome suggestions from other artists or interested parties on how to make their suggestions more practical and realizable. They also believe that further demonstrations at the Modern and elsewhere may be necessary to drive home their points and would welcome the participation of artists, students, actors, writers, and any other interested persons. Suggestions may be forwarded to the group care of EVO. The members of the group so far are Takis, Farman, Hans Haacke, Nicholas Calas, Willoughby Sharp, Elizabeth Biar, and Dennis Oppenheim.

This means that last year's demonstrations in the universities may take place this year in the museums as well, though it has yet to be seen if artists living all over the city will prove as devoted demonstrators as students living or working on their campuses. No one should be surprised if the museums do become such targets, though it is to be hoped that the works of art will not be damaged. The present mood of our society is to ask deep-cutting questions about the very meaning and purpose of culture, questions which may have no definitive answers but which will nonetheless be asked. If the result may be partly to demystify the artist, it may also be to make his work more accessible and socially meaningful.

1) The Museum of Modern Art should be open free of charge to the general public on at least one day of every week.

2) A Registry of Artists should be compiled at the Modern for the benefit of all museums listing all artists living in the New York area. For the purpose of this registry de facto, recognition as an artist should be given to any person able to present a body of work.

3) Using this Registry as a basis, a completely random show of all artists should be put together by lottery and shown at the Modern at least once a year. While it is possible that such a show will contain much mediocrity, it is felt that this method will not be any more dangerous to public taste than the one now in use. There is a precedent for this procedure in last year's Pavilions in the Parks program in London, where artists were awarded pavilions by lottery in which to create happenings.

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10) The artist should retain undisputed copyright in his own work, regardless of who owns it, and he should have reasonable access to see it when he so requires.

### 13 DEMANDS

submitted to Mr. Bates Lowry, Director of the Museum of Modern Art,  
by a group of artists and critics  
on January 28, 1969.

1. The Museum should hold a public hearing during February on the topic "The Museum's Relationship to Artists and to Society", which should conform to the recognized rules of procedure for public hearings.
2. A section of the Museum, under the direction of black artists, should be devoted to showing the accomplishments of black artists.
3. The Museum's activities should be extended into the Black, Spanish and other communities. It should also encourage exhibits with which these groups can identify.
4. A committee of artists with curatorial responsibilities should be set up annually to arrange exhibits.
5. The Museum should be open on two evenings until midnight and admission should be free at all times.
6. Artists should be paid a rental fee for the exhibition of their works.
7. The Museum should recognize an artist's right to refuse showing a work owned by the Museum in any exhibition other than one of the Museum's permanent collection.
8. The Museum should declare its position on copyright legislation and the proposed arts proceeds act. It should also take active steps to inform artists of their legal rights.
9. A registry of artists should be instituted at the Museum. Artists who wish to be registered should supply the Museum with documentation of their work, in the form of photographs, news clippings, etc., and this material should be added to the existing artists' files.
10. The Museum should exhibit experimental works requiring unique environmental conditions at locations outside the Museum.
11. A section of the Museum should be permanently devoted to showing the works of artists without galleries.
12. The Museum should include among its staff persons qualified to handle the installation and maintenance of technological works.
13. The Museum should appoint a responsible person to handle any grievances arising from its dealings with artists.

# Sculptor Takes Work Out of Modern Museum Show

An artist removed his sculpture from the exhibition entitled "The Machine" at the Museum of Modern Art yesterday because, he said, it had been displayed against his wishes. Takis Vassilakis said he took "this action as a symbolic act to stimulate a more meaningful dialogue between museum directors, artists and the public."

The 44-year-old artist arrived at the museum on West 53d Street with several friends at 4 P.M. Before guards could intervene, the group lifted the fixed part of the work off its pedestal, pulled down the two over-

head revolving forms and carried the parts to the museum's outdoor garden. The sculpture, a three-part construction, consists of an electromagnet about 12 inches in diameter and a white sphere and a black spool-shaped form that are suspended from the ceiling. When the magnet is turned on, it attracts the spool and repels the sphere. The sculpture was purchased in 1962 by John de Menil, who donated it to the museum.

In the outdoor garden, Mr. Vassilakis and his friends put the sculpture on the ground and sat around it,

refusing to move until they were permitted to confer with Bates Lowry, the museum director. After an hour-long talk in the director's office on the fifth floor, the sculptor announced that the museum had agreed to place the work in storage.

Mr. Lowry said he had also agreed to meet with the artist and his friends again to set a date for a discussion on how best to initiate "an open dialogue." He said the incident had raised some interesting points on the problems "between any institution, the artist and the public."



Takis Vassilakis carrying the parts of his sculpture after removing it from exhibition

The New York Times

the village VOICE, February 6, 1969

New York Free Press, 6 February 1969

The art museum today has not received the provocations concerning dramatic change that the universities have felt. Several artists and critics have recently petitioned the Museum of Modern Art with a view toward change within the museum; change that could possibly give the institution, so outdated and irrelevant now, the opportunity for revitalization. Printed here are the list of proposals submitted by the group to the officials of the museum. The group claims to represent no one; yet knows it represents many. It includes the following: Hans Haacke, Tom Lloyd, Willoughby Sharp, Takis, Tsai, John Perrault and myself. Some of the proposals offered the museum are, of course, fantastic but they are not nearly fantastic enough. Most

Battcock



important is the first proposal which requests a public hearing, sponsored by the museum. Only a public hearing, held according to proper rules of procedure can democratically allow for the free presentation of a cross section of thought. A panel discussion would undoubtedly prove more acceptable to the museum: it would also afford the museum opportunity to distribute its own views and we are not, at this time, interested in hearing them. Before anything else can be done, all those who have a thought concerning the museum, its function and role, indeed its very license, must be heard, even if they're full of shit, it doesn't matter. Should the museum be reluctant to provide the public hearing requested one may conclude that it is democratic procedure that, really bugs them. The group has requested a decision within the next couple of days. If the museum refuses to cooperate and denies the public hearing, the group intends to hold the hearing anyway, under its own auspices and open to anybody. Naturally the negotiations that have so far occurred have been interesting. My thoughts concerning the problem have sent shocks through my electric typewriter (or is it the other way round?)

January 28, 1969

To the Museum of Modern Art:

Realizing that the thirteen proposals put forward to you today

require thought and consideration on the part of all concerned, in particular the first proposal, we consider that a period of ten days should be sufficient to have your written response directed to all the undersigned.

From our discussion today, it must be evident that our thirteen proposals are of great mutual interest. However, before we engage in further dialogue, we should like to know by letter your position on the first proposal.

1. The Museum should hold a public hearing during February on the topic 'The Museum's Relationship to Artists and to Society,' which should conform to the recognized rules of procedure for public hearings.
2. A section of the Museum, under the direction of black artists, should be devoted to showing the accomplishments of black artists.
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January 28, 1969.

Page Sixteen

# art

by John Perreault

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Awhile ago the well-known artist Takis removed his work of sculpture from The Machine Show at the Modern. This was a symbolic act. Later informal meetings were held in which supporters of Takis, before and/or after the incident ironed out a list of proposals for museum reform.

On January 28 a list of 13 proposals was presented to Bates

Lowry, director, and four curators of the Museum of Modern Art by: Gregory Battcock, Hans Haacke, Tom Lloyd, Willoughby Sharp, Takis, Tsai, and myself. Since we are now awaiting the museum's answer to our first proposal—a proposal we consider important since it will allow other people a chance to air their grievances and offer their suggestions—I will for the moment offer the 13 points as a news item and not make any other comment:



# fucking thru the ages

**BY ALEX GROSS**

Presidents may come and presidents may go, but genuine historical events cut more deeply and leave more lasting effects. One of these took place last summer in the Swedish town of Lund. Later in the year it spread to Denmark and Germany. Soon it will engulf all of us.

The event in question was the First International Exhibition of Erotic Art, in which everyone's fantasies, daydreams, and ordinary practices became a solid everyday environment on all sides of the viewer, an inescapable world consisting of paintings, drawings, sculptures, constructions and kinetic works depicting sex in most of its forms, on land, in the water, on boats, with various pulleys or other machines, including heterosexual, male and female homosexual, and mixed copulations in couples and small or large groups, sometimes with existent or no-existent animals as well, with an occasional onanist thrown in for good measure. The show was immense, the major part of it forming the private collection of the most persistent sexual pioneers of our time, the American psychologists who first introduced the world to Walter's *My Secret Life*, Doctors Eberhard and Phyllis Kronhausen.

It is to be hoped that readers who missed this show in Europe will have a chance to see it here at home in the near future, but for those who can't wait and have a lot of money Grove Press has just brought out a giant book called *Erotic Art* containing many of the exhibitions—the price is twenty-five dollars, not just because of the subject matter, as there are a number of art books around costing that much, most of them not the least bit erotic.

Where the text of most art books is usually little more than pretentious filler, the articles in *Erotic Art* are a piece of history in themselves. They record the impressions of visitors to the show, along with many pictures of these visitors contemplating scenes of cunnilingus and fellatio in states ranging from bemused to ecstatic, and they also provide a number of interviews with the artists themselves, including Larry Rivers, Andy Warhol, and Jean Jacques Lebel, in which they record how they feel about erotic art. Practically everyone who attended agreed that the show was and is an important turning point in how people today feel about sexual matters and a sign of further progress to come.

One Swedish businessman relates that he found himself coming more and more upset by the exhibit during the first half hour but then calmed down and began to study the pic-

tures as he realized he was only seeing "what happens every day between man and woman. And that is nothing to be ashamed of." Far from being boring or repetitious, the juxtaposition of erotic works from many schools and cultures appears to have made the subject even more alive and meaningful. Children as young as four attended the show with their parents—they too are interviewed and appear to have taken the exhibit completely in their stride.

In the past it has been customary to present erotic art in a pseudo-scholarly manner, relating it to historical or anthropological themes or the supposed drives of "primitive" man. The Kronhausens also present their material historically and divide it into Western, Primitive, and various eastern sections. But their method is nonetheless quite different, for in their introduction they reject in no uncertain terms the hypocrisy which has always made it necessary in the past to justify erotic art and literature by citing a "redeeming social purpose" to separate it from the allegedly obscene. Our obscenity laws still pay homage to this principle on the theory that sex in itself either in art or life somehow endangers society. But the Kronhausens insist on the view of "an ever growing liberal minority" who believe that "sexual stimulation—far from being disturbing to the individual and inimical to society—is in itself a positive social value." Even the poster for this show was precedent breaking—it showed a Japanese scene of a couple going at it with every public hair glisteningly clear. This poster appeared on walls all over Sweden while the show was on.

The big question of course is how long is it to be before this show, which returns to Sweden in the spring by popular demand, reaches America as well. The much beleaguered curators of our museums would do well to ponder this question. There is no point in claiming that only a depraved and degenerate people would enjoy such a show, especially when the Swedes, Danes, and Germans are probably even more sober-sided than we are and also demonstrably more industrious with a higher annual growth rate economically. There is no doubting the high artistic level of the exhibit nor the important artistic and humane perspectives to be gained from showing all these works together.

But the real problems in bringing this show to America have nothing to do with art. There is at this moment in the nation's history a wave of defeatism (more probably just a temporary failure of nerve) which can best be overcome precisely by such acts as bringing this exhibit to America as soon as possible. Because the last few years have been relatively free and permissive, a strange theory is going

the rounds that we must now suffer a wave of hysterical repression for the next ten years. This is nothing but puritanical nonsense and should be treated as such—it stems from the sick puritan idea that we must pay for every moment of pleasure with hours of pain and penitence. There is no longer any reason to believe this sort of dangerous dribble. Nor is there any reason to suppose that a Republican president in the White House should signify a turn to sexual hibernation. Sexual habits and behavior transcend political parties just as they do entire nations and cultures, as the Kronhausens's exhibit clearly shows.

The freedom which not only the young but all sections of the population have won in the last few years is not so easily pushed aside, and certainly not by a weak president chosen by a minority in a dubious election. The direction is not backwards. From the Swinging Sixties we must all go forward together in this supremely suitable year of sixty-nine into an era of even greater freedom and self-liberation, the Sensual, Sensuous Seventies. As the French artist Andre Masson told the Kronhausens on their arrival in Paris during the spring uprising, "The real revolution is not here on the streets. It has no direction and will lead nowhere. The real revolution today is taking place up there in that museum in Lund. The fire you have kindled with that exhibition will in time destroy the old order more effectively than anything else."





V V

SIR :

WHY NOT!

As a member of society's most  
imposed upon minority of professional  
people -- artists -- I applaud the 13  
DEMANDS of Takis & his supporters  
made on museums. (V.V. Feb 6 ~~6~~)

Artists by nature are loners and are  
loth to gang up -- except for fun & games.  
But changes are ringing and I'm all  
for ringing some -- like T's. 13 points  
it might take a couple of sit-ins --  
but why not!

LD

LEN LYR

Feb 9 '69, 41 Bellvue

17

# The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 245-3200 Cable: Modernart

Bates Lowry  
Director

February 14, 1969

Dear:

In response to the proposal by you and your colleagues that The Museum of Modern Art hold a "public hearing" on the relationship between the Museum and artists, it is our conviction that a more thorough and systematic approach is essential if we are to find answers to the questions, raised by you and others, many of which we have been studying for some time.

They are questions of far-reaching implications, a satisfactory resolution of which requires an opportunity for all points of view to be heard and for all possible answers to be explored. I am, therefore, recommending to the Board of Trustees that a Special Committee on Artist Relations be appointed, to be made up of objective and fair-minded individuals who are interested in the world of art and informed as to the needs and practices both of artists and of the institutions that bring their work to the public.

The Committee would hold as many meetings as necessary with as many artists and other interested people as may ask to be heard. A record of all discussions would be kept. A report would be made as to all points raised and all solutions suggested during these discussions. The Committee would also report its own conclusions for the consideration of the administrators, curators and Trustees of the Museum.

Because many of the problems already raised or likely to be raised would be applicable to other museums and to other institutions dealing with works of art, the report would be made public. A well-documented, thoroughly prepared and broadly based study of this kind would, in our judgment, constitute a great service to artists everywhere, to the public and to the institutions that exist to serve both.

We think that you and your colleagues have performed a useful and timely service in entering discussions with us and in bringing up this complex but vital matter of the relationship of museums to the artists whose works they exhibit.

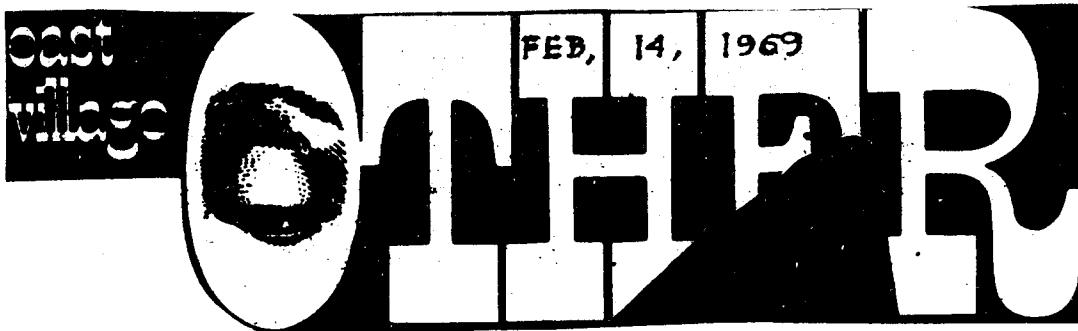
Perhaps we could meet on February 28 at 11 a.m. here at the Museum.

Sincerely,

Bates Lowry

EL:rb

Sent to: Gregory Battcock, Hans Haacke, Tom Lloyd, Willoughby Sharp, Takis Vassilakis,  
Wen-Ying Tsai, John Perreault



## THE SHAME OF THE ART WORLD

The art world is about to enter the stormiest period it has ever known. This would be the case even if the problems confronting it were limited to the already formidable ones of the emergence of Tech Art, the awakening of a new art audience, the demands placed on artists to construct a more humane environment, and the erosion of old values and formation of new ones this entire process entails. At a time when the art world should be broadly oriented, outgoing, and forward-looking, it is in fact petty, introverted, with its face pointed firmly towards the past. It would not be so bad if the issues mentioned were the only ones threatening -- they are at least internal issues which can still for a short while be debated among a small circle of friends. But the real problem about to make itself felt is deeper and dirtier -- it even has political overtones and will tend to focus on all the phoniest aspects of the art world at a time when these can least afford close scrutiny. It is this issue which is the subject of an ultimatum recently sent to the Modern Museum, an ultimatum which runs out on Friday, February 7.

The question is one of race -- as always it is a piercing and painful question, one which goes through all sections of society. It can perhaps best be phrased in a series of sub-questions: why is there no well-known major American artist who happens to be black? Why are there almost no black artists being shown by the galleries? Why have our major New York and American museums done next to nothing for black artists?

The answers to these questions are not easily forthcoming. There are no satisfactory answers. The pitiful attempts some may make to explain themselves out of the situation will only draw them back into it more deeply. I have been told by some that the reason is simply that there are no good black artists. Assuming this were true, we would still have to ask why it were true, and the answer would come boomeranging back that the blacks have never had the same chance to become artists as the whites. But an even more crucial question lies in wait -- what if there really are good black artists who have not been shown? And, even more deeply, can we really say that the standards by which we judge good and bad art are the ultimate ones?

Whatever questions we ask, the answers will very likely come back to shame us. There are few black artists in this country

(and almost no recognized ones) because art in this country up until this very moment has been the white boy's plaything. It has been a game for the milder sort of bourgeois rebel who having been brought up with a sufficiency of the world's goods, has merrily opted out into a romance of idealized values where the artist is prophet, martyr, and cultural hero. Occasionally it is a very well-paid job, and even if it isn't, it can still bring a bit of status and the illusion that one is doing something better and higher. How delightful it is to have one's works reproduced, to see one's words in print, occasionally to hear them on television as well. The artist is the new preacher, the prophet of the modernist religion. But as soon as a black man appears using the cult words of the religion, the devout begin to feel ill at ease. Why is this?

It is because the assumption that art is only white man's work is built into the very culture itself. Art, which pays homage to the idea of reaching all of society and changing it, becomes embarrassed when it is actually expected to do so. This is because today's art world, instead of being a busy crossroads, a central point where all the energy of society can pass through, has elevated itself into a limited elite interested primarily in its own promotion and preservation.

In England today a black man may work where bread is baked or milk is bottled, but he is not allowed to be seen delivering them. The sight of his black hand on the pure white essentials of society is too much for the majority to bear. In the same way white society has been quite unhappy when a black man has been allowed to express his opinions about our pure white secrets of art. The phrases and opinions which seemed like revealed truth when uttered by a white artist have tended to cause doubt and embarrassment when spoken by a black one. Clearly something is wrong, not just with attitudes to the blacks, but with our entire notion of culture. After a long time black playwrights, novelists, and poets were acknowledged to exist, as long as they expressed the right degree of bitterness at the right time, but they still may not enter the holy of holies. It is not so much a question of whether the art world should respect black artists but whether the blacks should regard the art world as worthy of their respect.

Part of the reason for this scandal is of course the fact that artists are rarely political animals -- they depend on the monied members of society for their survival and will not readily offend them. This is understandable. What is less understandable is that the art establishment itself, not the most reactionary segment of society, has been so slow in doing something to equalize the balance in the direction of the blacks. Perhaps the only consolation (and a dim one it is at this time of racial-religious mud-slinging) is that the art establishment is divided about equally between gentiles and jews, so that both are equally guilty of this neglect. It is to be hoped that black leaders

will see that they are being led off onto a false track on the jewish question, a course that will please only those who hate jew and black alike and would gladly see them destroy one another.

In any case it would appear that artists are now making some steps towards becoming more aware of these problems. The ultimatum to the Modern Museum demands that free open discussions be begun at the museum immediately on this and other subjects. If the museum refuses, these discussions will take place elsewhere in any case. The artists and critics acting to bring about these discussions include Hans Haacke, Tom Lloyd, Takis, Farman, John Perreault, Gregory Battcock, and the author of this article. In addition to the points listed in EVO two weeks ago, the following demands are also being made:

- 1) The Modern Museum should set up a permanent Black Wing for black and Puerto Rican artists, with the goal of inspiring a higher creative level in the long run among these communities. This wing should be administered entirely by members of these communities, who should also sit on the selection board for white artists.
- 2) A permanent wing should also be set up for unknown artists, and a zealous effort should be made to keep it filled not with works which satisfy a coterie but with odd, off-beat work and even with what is now considered to be junk.
- 3) The Modern Museum should be open free of charge all seven days of the week.
- 4) The Modern Museum should also remain open until midnight at least two days a week.

It is also felt that an attempt should be made to bring the International Erotic Exhibition from Sweden to a major New York museum at the earliest possible date. If the Museum should prove adamant and these points are not met, picketings, sit-ins, and demonstrations are anticipated. Anyone is welcome to take part in these, whether he is an artist or not, and should contact Debbie Freeman or Farman at the Chelsea Hotel for more details and for information on the full thirteen points now at issue.

February 22, 1969

Mr. Bates Lowry, Director  
Museum of Modern Art  
11 West 53rd St.  
N.Y.C. 10019, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Lowry:

We regret that you have not answered our first proposal to our satisfaction. Your suggestion concerning the creation of a Special Committee on Artists' Relations is not a substitute for the immediate need for a public hearing open to all. Therefore, as we have previously indicated we have no alternative but to proceed with other arrangements providing for an open hearing to allow anybody the opportunity to express views concerning the Museum's relationship to artists and society.

We will be pleased to accept your invitation to another meeting in the future -- provided that you are able to offer concrete answers concerning the following points, all of which have already been offered for your consideration:

2. A section of the Museum, under the auspices of black artists should be devoted to showing the accomplishments of black artists.
3. The Museum's activities should be extended into the Black, Spanish and other communities. It should encourage exhibits with which these groups can identify.
5. The Museum should be open on at least two evenings until midnight and admission should be free at all times.
7. The Museum should recognize an artist's right to refuse showing a work owned by the Museum in any exhibition other than one of the Museum's permanent collection.
8. The Museum should declare its position on copyright legislation and the proposed arts proceeds act. It should also take steps to inform artists of their legal rights.
9. A registry of artists should be instituted at the Museum.
11. A section of the Museum should be permanently devoted to showing the works of artists without galleries.
12. The Museum should include among its staff persons qualified to handle the installation and maintenance of technological works.
13. The Museum should appoint a responsible person to handle any grievances arising from its dealings with artists.

When we receive a clear indication of the Museum's attitude toward all the above points, we will be glad to continue meetings with the Museum to offer any aid we can in implementing action.

May we expect a written reply to the above no later than Friday, March 7? We will consider your refusal to reply sufficient evidence that we must search for other means to make our concern felt.

Gregory Battcock, 317 W 99, N.Y.C. 10025  
Farman, Hotel Chelsea, 222 West 23rd St.

John Perreault, 242 W 107th St.  
Takis, Hotel Chelsea  
Tsai, 96 5th Ave, 10011

Hans Haacke, 25 West 16th St., N.Y., 10011

Tom Lloyd, 154-02 107th Ave., Jamaica, N.Y., 11433

## Meaningful Art

VOICE, February 13, 1969

Dear Sir:

First let me state that I think that the Museum of Modern Art is the finest museum of its kind in the world. Secondly I think that most of the items (although not all of them) in the petition sent to the curator ("Art," Voice, February 6) are silly and beside the point. Especially the section which states "A section of the museum under the direction of black artists should be devoted to showing the accomplishments of black artists." Why not Chinese/Jews/Eskimos/church groups/Presidents/Laplanders or Winston Churchill? For the simple reason that such concepts have nothing to do with art. To put a special section aside devoted to any ethnic, social, or religious group as a permanent fixture in a museum is the antithesis of what great painting is all about . . . the work of individuals and their individual revelation to us. Great art is universal and is above racial or social sectioning. If any black artist, or any other artist for that matter, is worth showing then he should be shown

—but only in relationship to his work being significant firstly as art and not because he is a member of any racial group. If most of the paintings in the MOMA collection are by artists whose skin is white, they are there not because of that, but because they are significantly creative people who produce meaningful work. Being black, white, yellow, or purple has nothing to do with the creation of meaningful art.

—Bob Cowan  
Brooklyn



## OUTSIDE THE MUSEUM

the village VOICE, March 6, 1969

by John Perreault

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If the above kind of art is the wave of the future one wonders why Takis and his supporters (including myself) are spending so much time trying to get the Museum of Modern Art to shape up. Who needs the museums?

But the truth of the matter is that for a long (no pun intended) time yet there will continue to be many different kinds of art: technological, environmental, and even good, old-fashioned painting and sculpture. What has to change is the attitude most institutions have toward artists. Or else they've had it.

We finally received an answer from the Museum in regard to our demand for an open hearing on the Museum's relationship to artists and to society. On the surface it looks very good. But in reality the Museum has very cleverly denied a public hearing, substituting a Committee on Artists Relations (neatly dropping the "society" part of our proposed topic). This committee would hear complaints and suggestion, probably in some very comfortable little office, and then come up with a public, published report. The catch is that obviously the report would take years to accomplish and there is no guarantee that the trustees of the Museum would take any action on any recommendation coming out of such a committee. And just who would be on the committee anyway?

Artists are tired of being exploited. There are very few artists who make a living out of their art. I'd say not more than a dozen or so in all of New York. Some very "successful" artists make nothing at all, and yet they are "famous." Because of the Takis incident and the demands made by Takis and his group of supporters, artists are finally beginning to get together. The group, as of the last meeting, has grown to over 30 people. Len Lye and Carl Andre are two of the new supporters. The six or seven original supporters or even the enlarged group of 30, however, cannot possibly represent all the artists or even a cross-section. This has been our main objection to private consultations with the Museum. (Besides some of us are critics and are about to get together on our own. The poets also!) Even if the Museum doesn't want to cooperate, there will be a public

Page Thirteen

hearing! Date and time to be announced shortly.

At any rate, after expressing our regret that the Museum had denied a public hearing, we further replied:

"We will be pleased to accept your invitation to another meeting in the future—provided that you are able to offer concrete answers concerning the following points, all of which you have already been offered for your consideration:

"2. A section of the Museum, under the auspices of black artists should be devoted to showing the accomplishments of black artists.

"3. The Museum's activities should be extended into black, Spanish, and other communities. It should encourage exhibits with which these groups can identify."

(My comment on these two demands is that as long as the Museum considers itself in part an educational institution, it cannot continue to ignore the black and Spanish population. It is not a question of aesthetics but one of social and educational responsibility. Also, although it is a private institution, its non-profit tax exempt status means that indirectly it is supported by the general public. If we have exhibits of French artists and other nationalities, why not black artists? They have been allowed to be Americans in name only and constitute a distinct culture and nation.)

"5. The Museum should be open on at least two evenings until midnight and admission should be free at all times.

"7. The Museum should recognize an artist's right to refuse showing a work owned by the Museum in any exhibition other than one of the Museum's permanent collection."

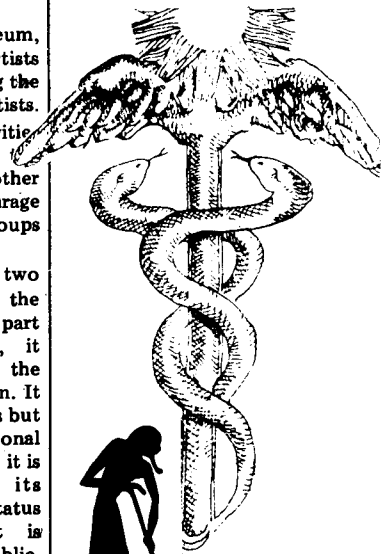
Demands 9, 11, 12 and 13 (to summarize) concern getting the Museum's position on copyright legislation, a registry of artists, a section of the Museum for artists without galleries, a qualified technical staff for technological works, and the appointment of a responsible person to handle artists' grievances . . .

"When we receive clear indication of the Museum's attitude towards the above points, we will be glad to continue meetings with the Museum to offer any aid we can in implementing action.

# art



down to



# art

"May we expect a written reply to the above no later than Friday, March 7? We will consider your refusal to reply sufficient evidence that we must search for other means to make our concerns felt."

If you have a complaint against the Museum—a concrete example of an injustice or even something more general—or if you have any ideas about needed reforms and changes of policy, please write me at The Voice. We need all the ideas and support we can get.

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# the wire



February 13, 1969

Mr. Roger L. Stevens  
Office of the Chairman  
National Council of the Arts  
1800 G Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20506

Dear Mr. Stevens:

Just received your letter of the 14th on the 5th of February. Appreciate your apologies; too bad the P.O. doesn't function a little better.

I'd like to start off by saying that my challenging the choices of Artists made by the panel have undergone a radical change in view of me in deciding just where the "wrong" in the whole concept of giving awards out is.

No, I don't know who the panel members are. I asked Grace Glueck to tell me and she said she was not at liberty to say.

Yes, I was casual about distinguishing between grants and awards - perhaps it's because I've never been acquainted with either. And lastly, I am not surprised that your Council has such great difficulty in making its choices, and when they are made, find themselves open to much criticism. This gets me back to the original "wrong".

Only Artists (if anyone) are qualified to say who has "achieved", who shows "promise", and who "needs". These criteria can be met in an indigenous way only.....to hit the mark.

A panel of Artists should be elected by their peers in open convention for this task.

The Henry Geld-Zahlers from the peripheral institutions, museums, universities and galleries, should tend to their picture keeping, scholarship gallery exhibitions and what have you...and leave the driving to us.

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We in the Art Community know who needs and deserves this money better than anyone: we live with each other on a day-to-day basis. A panel of peripheral people are too remote to "hit the mark". They might as well go to the artist's club on a crowded Friday night, open the door and throw the money in - some of it would probably stand a better chance of reaching the right people. (Regret having to use that image.) At this point I will list the Artists I know from the Awardees as an example of the complaint I originally registered with you. I want to say emphatically that I think at the least these are competent Artists, but all make their living from their work and teaching or have husbands who support them. I complain because I know Artists - like myself - who fill these three qualifications eminently and who do not earn their bread from their work or teaching from sheer lack of opportunity.

Here is the listing:

ARTIST	GALLERY	SCHOOL	QUALIFICATIONS
A. Held	Andre Emmerich	Yale	Promise
Fridl Zubas	Andre Emmerich	Brandeis	Promise
D. Von Schlegell	Royal Marks	A.S.L.	Promise & Achievement
Morris Kantor	At Present?	A.S.L.	Near 80 years
Paul Burlim	Poindexter	At Present?	Near 80 years
Gandie Brodie	Durlacher	?	Promise
Patricia Adams	Zabriskie	?	Promise
Mary Frank	Stephen Radich	?	Promise
Peter Agostini	Stephen Radich	Columbia	Promise

I think the word competent or professional should replace promise as a qualification. Anyway, only one qualifies with two of three criteria and I wonder if the other twenty-six are about as unsatisfactory. Should you care to have the names and addresses of the "deserving" Artists I know, I will be glad to forward them. The addresses of the above can be found in the New York phone book or through their galleries. I am out of the City for now as you will note.

Respectfully,

James Cuchlara  
59 Hill Street  
Christiansted, St. Croix  
U.S. Virgin Islands  
00820

National Council on the Arts



National Endowment for the Arts

1800 G STREET, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

Office of the Chairman

March 7, 1969

Dear Mr. Cuchiara:

In answer to your letter of February 13 I can only say that in our society fortunately everyone is entitled to their own opinion.

You apparently feel that only artists are qualified to judge other artists, which is open to debate for a number of reasons. Having spent many years in the theatre, I have found that artists generally tend to evaluate other artists strictly by their own standards. This, of course, makes it difficult for them to be completely objective when choosing awardees.

I feel there definitely should be some artists on the panels and there always have been. Also, the National Council on the Arts has four visual artists as members, as well as a number of artists in other fields. In fact, the Council has often been criticized for having too many practising artists and not enough people with experience in other fields.

I might close by noting that, regardless of your opinion, the choice of awards to visual artists has been widely praised in the press, and we have received very little of the type of criticism expressed in your letter.

Sincerely,

Roger L. Stevens  
Chairman

Mr. James Cuchiara  
59 Hill Street  
Christiansted, St. Croix  
U. S. Virgin Islands

# LONDON

ATURDAY MARCH 8 1969

## Artists may hold museum sit-in

From INNIS MACBEATH

New York, March 7

The Museum of Modern Art has responded cautiously to a group of exasperated artists by promising to appoint a special committee to investigate and report on its dealings with them. The artists, who want a public hearing on the museum's dealings, not only with them but with society as a whole, now propose to hold a public hearing of their own, perhaps in the form of a sit-in at the museum.

What began as an individual protest by one artist at the showing of his work against his wishes has developed into an earnest and significant challenge to the arbitrary power of museum administrators. Half an hour's conversation with Mr. Takis Vassilakis, the artist whose concern for his own autonomy and the fortunes of his unluckier colleagues, has precipitated the affair, is enough to convince anyone that there is a case to answer.

Takis, as he is known professionally—the latest of his six London exhibitions was at Indica Galleries—is a technological sculptor, aged 43, born in Greece, and now officially resident in France. He is in the United States as artist in residence at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In a pioneering collaboration between artist and scientist he has helped to develop a battery deriving power from the oscillation of the sea, which can provide an electrical reserve for a lifeboat (for the scientist) or floating illuminated discs (for the artist).

While he was at the M.I.T., the Museum of Modern Art prepared its exhibition entitled "The machine as seen at the end of the mechanical age." The museum owns one of Takis's pieces, *Tele Sculpture* (1960), in which cork and wood with magnets, hanging from steel wires, move round an electro-magnet. He wrote to the organizer, Dr. Pontus Hulten, asking that this piece should not be in the show. Nevertheless, it was included.

Takis went to the exhibition in January, removed *Tele-Sculpture*, and after two hours' conversation with Mr. Bates Lowry, director of the museum, reached agreement that it should indeed be shown but only as part of the permanent collection and not as part of the special show.

## Artists Threaten Sit-in at the



The Museum of Modern Art should open an exhibition gallery for the work of black artists. It should pay artists a rental fee for the exhibition of their work. Most important, it should hold a public hearing on the topic "The Museum's Relationship to Artists and to Society."

These proposals are among a list of 13 recently submitted to the museum by a small group of artists and critics, who are demanding sweeping changes in museum policy and practices. Unless the museum gives evidence by the middle of next week of its intention to hold a public hearing, the group plans to stage a sit-in.

The threatened action recalls similar measures taken against Establishment art institutions in Europe last year: the disruption of two big international art shows—the Venice Biennale and Documenta, at Kassel, West Germany—by student and ar-

GRACE GLUECK

tist groups, and student sit-ins and debates last summer protesting the "obsolescence" of art education at two English schools, the Hornsey and the Guildford Colleges of Art.

Takis Vassilakis, a Greek-born, technologically oriented sculptor who serves as the New York group's "symbolic spokesman," said yesterday that its list of proposals was "the beginning of an international movement against the stagnant policies of art museums all over the world."

THE TIMES LONDON

A dozen other artists and critics have since joined Takis in presenting a series of wider questions to the museum. Apart from the open hearing, they want a section of the museum to be devoted to black artists, a curatorial committee of artists to advise on exhibitions, a section to be devoted permanently to the works or artists without galleries, a grievance officer, rental fees, and some power of veto on exhibitions of works except in the permanent collections, and so on.

Mr. Lowry announced the formation of the special committee today, the deadline that the group had set for an answer. Takis claims support from all over the United States and Europe. The campaign is gathering momentum.

## Modern

Mr. Vassilakis, known professionally as Takis, is an artist-in-residence at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He initiated the protest against the Modern Museum on Jan. 3 by removing his "Tele-Sculpture" from the exhibition "The Machine at the End of the Mechanical Age." He was also one of four internationally known artists who removed their work from Documenta last summer on the grounds that the exhibition's administration had behaved "dictatorially."

Yesterday Prof. Gyorgy Kepes, director of the Center for Advanced Visual Studies, and a painter himself, said that he supported "most" of the group's proposals.

### A Spokesman for Blacks

Among the other members of the 13-man group are John Perreault and Gregory Battcock, writers on art, and the sculptors Wen-Ying Tsai and Hans Haacke (both of whom were represented in the museum's "Machine" show, Len Lye and Tom Lloyd, a spokesman for black artists. A separate spokesman, who was originally with the group, is Willoughby Sharp, a cinematographer and exhibition organizer.

The group says it has the backing of dissident artists

throughout the country and could muster "at least 300 supporters" for a sit-in.

In response to these proposals, Bates Lowry, director of the museum, said yesterday that a Special Committee on Artists' Relations was being formed "to explore problems concerning the relationships of artists and museums."

The committee to be made up of people experienced in the needs and practices of both artists and museums, would hold a series of public hearings and make the record of all proceedings available "to anyone interested in consulting or publishing it."

### 'Extremely Complicated'

Noting that some of the group's proposals were "identical" to those already under discussion at the museum, Mr. Lowry said that some of the problems raised were "extremely complicated." They would not be solved by a "single large public meeting," he said.

"We feel that a series of regularly scheduled committee hearings at which individuals and representatives of various organizations have an uninterrupted opportunity to state their positions in great detail and engage in a dialogue with a special committee charged with this responsibility is a more effective way to gather information on complicated questions."



Last night Takis, appraised of Mr. Lowry's statement, said that he would consult with the artists' group to determine the course of action. The group has favored a large open hearing, he noted, to give "dramatic emphasis" to the needs of artists internationally and "to gather every shade of opinion from the artistic community."

"As a group we are not so pretentious as to say that we represent all artists," he said. "We want to have an honest and democratic representation."

Among the group's other proposals are the extension of the museum's activities into black, Spanish and other communities; the formation of a committee of artists with curatorial responsibilities to arrange exhibitions at the museum; free admission at all times and the establishment of a museum section permanently devoted to showing works of artists without galleries.

A number of the museum's trustees are known to favor several of the group's ideas. "There is a need for a serious dialogue with the artists," said one board member, who indicated that he was in agreement with "some but by no means all" of the proposals.

The artists say they are "flexible" about their demands. "You always ask for more than you can get," noted Takis.

Return Address: See below

March 10, 1969\*

To The Museum of Modern Art  
Bates Lowry, Director  
21 West 53rd St.  
N.Y.C., New York

Dear Mr. Lowry:

We regret that for the second time you have not answered our original proposal of January 28, 1969. Your suggestion creating a Special Committee on Artists' Relations is not a substitute for the immediate need for a Public Hearing open to all on the topic, "The Museum's relationship to artists and to society". A series of small committee meetings, open to the press or not, does not constitute a public forum.

We insist that a proper public hearing cannot be held under conditions imposed by The Museum of Modern Art. Before the many relevant problems can be discussed in detail, there must be a free and open public hearing. At such a hearing, The Museum of Modern Art will be welcome to present its point of view under the same conditions as other participants.

The fact that you have made no concrete reply to any of our 13 demands forces us to believe that you are unwilling to deal with us. Since the structure and policy of The Museum of Modern Art are the matters immediately at issue, a committee appointed by the Museum would be useless.

Carl Andre  
Ilene Astrahan  
Gregory Battcock  
Frederich Castle  
Farman  
Alex Gross  
Hans Haacke  
Joseph Kosuth  
David Lee  
Lucy Lippard  
Tom Lloyd  
Len Lye  
John Perreault  
Malile Ryder  
Gary Smith  
Takis  
Tsai  
Ruth Vollmer

(\* March 15: Delivery to Museum  
March 17: Release to Press)

(Return Address:  
Gregory Battcock, 317 W 99, NYC  
10025  
Farman, Hotel Chelsea, 222 W 23 St.  
Hans Haacke, 25 W 16th St. 10011  
Tom Lloyd, 154-02 107th Ave.  
Jamaica, NY  
John Perreault, 242 W 10th St.  
Takis, Hotel Chelsea  
Tsai, 96th 5th Ave., NYC 10011)

Copies: The above.

ORIGINAL COPY: PERSONAL DELIVERY AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ON  
SATURDAY, MARCH 15.

C  
O  
P  
Y

David Rockefeller *Chairman*

Henry Allen Moe  
William S. Paley  
John Hay Whitney *Vice-Chairmen*

Mrs. Bliss Parkinson *President*

James Thrall Soby  
Ralph F. Colin  
Gardner Cowles *Vice-Presidents*

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Mrs. Bertram Smith  
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Miriam G. Cedarbaum *Assistant Secretary*

**The Museum of Modern Art**

## ART: MY RETIREMENT MESSAGE

by Gregory Battcock

\* \* \* \* \*  
Yesterday was DeKooning opening at the Modern, and since I've already written about DeKooning's paintings (*Arts Magazine*, November 1967) and since I didn't get to see the paintings at the opening (I almost didn't get to the opening even: they didn't send me an invitation). At the bar I was introduced to a lady who said "Oh you're an art critic, I don't think I've ever read you, I can't read, ha ha." I said "O." "Tell me, who do you write for?" she says. "People who can read," I said.

I mostly remember how festive the opening was, which is the sort of thing somebody else would say. It was a nice opening but somehow reminded one of the grand ball before the massacre. I think it's becoming clear that there is no hope that the Museum will reform itself and become the educational institution it claims to be. The best thing that could happen would be for the Museum to at least admit that it is not interested in modern art and that it has no concern with its social responsibilities, which isn't the same as social affairs, which it is quite good at. But

it won't admit these obvious things and I guess that's what's most appalling. If it did, it could honestly pursue its ambitions toward being an art store-house, which is really O.K. after all, but they have these incredibly grand claims, really the mind boggles. They think they are socially committed, responsible to modern art and the modern artist, acting as a positive educational force, etc., etc.! One problem about the current protest activity is the very list of 13 demands presented to the Museum's curators. They are such ordinary demands; probably most of them would be affected by the Museum on its own sooner or later. The most interesting demands and really the only ones that are worth bothering about, are those requesting a black wing for showing work of black artists, and demanding the involvement of the Museum with black and Puerto Rican communities. And you should hear everyone scream when these "black" demands are discussed. All the other proposals are acceptable to just about everybody, with one or two little modifications but nobody seems able to understand the real urgency of the "black" demands—perhaps the most essential, and responsible of the entire list. People say things like "well if they have a black wing they should have a Japanese wing," and stuff like that, stupid, illogical, utterly within the modern rationalist heritage. Jesus, if that's reason then give me the irrational. And they say, "well isn't that just more segregation? All of a sudden (you might have noticed) segregation is wrong, even when it isn't a question of segregation but simply of trying to give someone an even

break, which isn't easy when they've never had even the hope of that even chance (at least in the art world) and still don't. Someone actually said that what's more important than black artists are women artists in general who have never been encouraged to be in art, and are never given an even break, trodden upon. God, if I hear that line again. If anything, women have too much power, in the art world and every other world in modern America. And, there are so many Rich American Women Artists that one should make a list starting off with Helen Frankenthaler now showing top quality stuff at the Whitney, and then add women artists like Lee Krasner, Lee Bontacou, Louise Nevelson, Elaine DeKooning, Marisol, Mitchell, Pat Johansen, Silvia Stone, Nell Blaine, Kusama, Strider, Riley, Hartigan, so now how many rich, suggestful, professional, high quality black artists can you name?

What the other demands on the list boil down to is, primarily, more money for the artist. Strange, but that isn't really where I'm at. Most of the art that's done for free is the writing art engenders.

New York Free Press 13 March 1969,

FROM THE PRECEDING PAGE

\* \* \* \* \*  
So Battcock is retiring from Art Criticism. That little bit of news isn't likely to make very many people happy or sad since firstly everybody knew it wasn't art criticism anyway and secondly I wasn't really doing much damage and thirdly, since nobody read it, artists are still hounding me at all hours to come down and take a look at their work and maybe they'll make spaghetti. I suggested to John Perreault that maybe I should write an art column for *The Voice* and he said over my dead body. *The Other* already has Lil Picard who is generally incomprehensible and Alex Gross who is perfectly serious, so they don't need me. Maybe *Rat* will invite me to write an art column. Actually, I don't do so well in publications with big graphic imaginations because the more surprise, shock and delight they stimulate by playing around with the type and pictures, the more difficult it becomes for the writer, who has to shout out all that, for example. Actually in those situations you have to be a pretty good writer and can't get away with the usual boring slop that passes for criticism in the pages of the *Times* (except for Clairborne, Curtis, Shenker, Huxtable and poor Renata Adler who probably got fired because Hollywood couldn't stand her not being able to stand Hollywood).

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW VOLCANO FOUND  
UNDER MODERN MUSEUM

by ALEX GROSS

The relations between the Modern Museum and the protesting artists are entering a more crucial stage. Although the artists are doing their best to show patience and understanding for the museum's position, there is every indication that its curators are doing their best to ignore the artists and the problems they have raised. Recently the artists sent the museum a letter listing only those points which could be answered with a simple yes or no by the museum. Not only did the museum withhold this simple yes or no, they also chose to interpret the letter as meaning that any points not listed were no longer at issue. Actually, very much the reverse is true — many new points have now been added to the original ones, involving not only nepotism in the museum-gallery network but misuse of museum space and funds. As the protest against the museum is a deep and growing one, it is not surprising that new ideas should be gathered as the movement expands — all these points and others will soon be raised at the public hearings.

As of now the Modern has never looked more ebullient and alive — the current Machine Show is highly successful, but even this exhibition, which was the work of an outsider, was nowhere near as well-planned and hung as other shows of this genre. This is one reason why many of the artists who helped start the protest were in fact tech artists whose work is hanging in that very show. Anyone interested in seeing a model of how a tech art show can or should be hung and what magic it can create should visit the Otto Piene exhibit which just opened at the Howard Wise Gallery. Here, on a small scale, can be seen some of the mind-opening contrasts of light and dark, movement and stillness, excitement and calm which can be attained in this new genre of exhibition.

At the moment the differences dividing artists and museum, although there are many of them, could be settled by the museum giving in on a single point. The artists feel that a public hearing must be held, sponsored by the museum, to be followed by detailed work in smaller groups, while the museum insists that committee work must come first followed by publication of its conclusions, with no public hearing and no assurance that the conclusions will be acted on. The artists feel that a public hearing is absolutely necessary, both to allow all points of view to be heard and to publicize the need for change. If the museum gave in on this point, it would represent a great step forward towards understanding. The hearings will be held in any case, but it would be a sign of good faith if

it is to be hoped that there are people on the museum staff who will realize this in time. But apparently there are others who believe that the art world will simply go on in its old superficial manner at the very moment when it is ready to erupt in change.

What is the general public likely to make of this contest of wills, which will surely escalate in the months to come? What are art-lovers, art-buyers, and (if one dare mention them) art-dealers likely to conclude when they learn that the great majority of working artists no longer has any trust or respect for the Modern Museum? The Modern has striven for almost forty years to build up the position of immense power and prestige it now enjoys, yet all of this may be irrevocably altered in a few week's time by the intransigence and unwisdom of the museum's directorate. Left with its permanent collection (which might be well consigned to a special wing of the Metropolitan to make way for livelier exhibits) and whatever guest shows they could dredge up, the Modern might eke out the rest of the century as a hobbling old crone, its image of yore never to be recaptured.

the museum were to sponsor them.

It may be asked what will replace the Modern Museum, if go it must, as not only its detractors but its curators seem hell-bent on making happen. Some people at the Modern seem to feel that since they already have Bracque, Picasso, and De Kooning, they needn't be bothered hanging any of the newer upstarts — only direct and immediate intercession by the trustees can check this suicidal attitude. But in terms of a replacement for the Modern, it is perhaps significant that a new organization is now being formed which calls itself MUSEUM.

MUSEUM already has 150 members and describes its main aim as giving "the artists greater autonomy in our society" — it proposes to sell artists' work without taking any percentage of the price. It also proposes to offer a meeting place for artists as well as information on jobs, housing, and grants — no style or mode of art will be excluded, and all members will have a chance to see their work exhibited. The financing of this venture is based on membership fees, publication, services and rental payments. Anyone interested in further information should write to MUSEUM, BOX 382, COOPER STATION, NYC 10003.

The mere existence of such an entity as MUSEUM shows how many lively ideas are in the air, ideas which not even the Museum of Modern Art, as powerful as it may be at present, can afford to ignore if it wishes to still be powerful in the future.



## ARTISTS PROTEST AGAINST MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

PRESS RELEASE

Friday, March 14, 1969

On January 3, 1969, an artist removed his work from the Machine Show at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. The artist, Takis Vassilakis, a fellow of the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, resorted to this action because the Museum, which owns the work, had ignored his request that it not be displayed. Other artists represented in the Machine Show had encountered personal disrespect, negligence, and even deliberate disregard of instructions as to the proper care and display of their work. By his action, Takis demonstrated that these and other artists need not submit passively to the arbitrary decisions of the Museum.

As a result of a spontaneous sit-in by supporters of Takis following the removal of his work, Bates Lowry, the Director of the Museum, agreed to a dialogue with the artists to be held on January 24, 1969. In the days following Takis' action, artists began to realize that their initial complaints were merely symptoms of a conflict between the Museum on one hand and artists and the community on the other. When ten artists and critics arrived at the Museum on the appointed day, Mr. Lowry refused to see them on the grounds that they were too many and that art journalists were among them. As a result of another spontaneous sit-in, Mr. Lowry agreed to meet with a smaller group on January 28.

On that day, a group of seven artists and critics presented a 13 point program for change to Mr. Lowry and members of the Museum Staff. After a brief discussion, Mr. Lowry rejected the artists' first point which called for a public hearing on "The Museum's Relationship to Artists and to Society", to be held under the auspices of the Museum. In reply, the artists suggested a period of ten days during which Mr. Lowry and his associates could study the 13 points and reconsider his refusal to hold a public hearing.

At the end of ten days, Mr. Lowry sent a letter to each member of the group requesting a delay of another week before formally answering the points at issue. In his final response on February 14, 1969, Mr. Lowry informed the artists by letter that he was recommending to the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art that a "Special Committee on Artists' Relations" be appointed within the structure of the Museum.

The artists objected to this proposal for the following reasons:

- 1) Before discussions in detail could be constructive and meaningful, all interested persons must have had an equal opportunity to express their opinions in a public forum.
- 2) By their limiting and exclusive nature, formal committee sessions make equal participation by all interested persons impossible.
- 3) While a committee appointed by the Museum as an interested party could serve to represent the interests of the Museum, such a committee could not serve as a properly constituted public forum.

In their reply of February 22, the artists stated that "concrete answers" to nine points of the original program for change were a condition for further discussions. These demands were singled out for the following reasons:

- 1) Seven of the points (#5,7,8,9,11,12,13) could be carried out by the Museum independently, since they dealt with matters of internal policy-making in which discussions with other parties would be of no help.
- 2) The points concerning black artists and community relations required direct answers because it was necessary to know the Museum's principal attitudes toward these questions.

A reply to this letter was requested from Mr. Lowry by March 7. In a letter received by the artists on March 7, Mr. Lowry reiterated his plan for the formation of a committee appointed by the Museum ("our committee") which was to hold a "well-organized series of meetings." He did not respond to any of the 13 points.

Conclusions:

- 1) The Museum of Modern Art refuses to deal sincerely with artists.
- 2) The Museum of Modern Art refuses to respond to the needs of the Black, Spanish and other communities.
- 3) The Museum of Modern Art refuses to subject itself to a searching examination.
- 4) Artists, prepared to rectify and update Museum policies and practices, find that neither meetings nor correspondence with officials of the Museum of Modern Art help to bring about overdue changes.

The number of artists aware of their rights, duties, and responsibilities is growing. They will resort to whatever action they deem necessary.

In behalf of the concerned artists:

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Carl Andre  
Hans Haacke  
Tom Lloyd

# The Museum of Modern Art

**To** The Staff

**From** Bates Lowry

**Date** March 18, 1969

**Re** Formation of a special committee to study the museum's relationship to artists and society.

As many of you probably saw in the New York Times of Friday, March 7, the series of discussions we have been having with a group of artists led by Takis had come to a standstill. So that the staff will be fully informed about these discussions, I want to review the circumstances that have led up to a threatened sit-in at the Museum:

1. On January 3, Takis, an artist who has a number of works in the collection, came to the Museum with a group of friends and removed from the Machine exhibition his Tele-Sculpture (1960), a work that had been acquired with funds given by Mr. and Mrs. John de Menil. The group took it into the Sculpture Garden where they posed for photographs--they had alerted the Times-- and sent word that they wanted written assurance from the Museum that we would never again put the work on view without the artist's permission. Takis was finally persuaded that such written assurance would not be forthcoming but that the Director of the Museum would be glad to talk with him and a few of his friends in his office.

Since the ensuing conversation indicated that there had been some confusion over the matter between Takis and the director of the exhibition, I agreed to put the piece in storage. At the end of this first informal meeting it was agreed that some members of the staff would meet on January 24 with representatives of the artists to discuss the relationship of the Museum and artists.

2. On January 15 I received a letter that listed 12 artists and writers who expected to participate in the January 24 meeting. We told the signer of the letter that we felt that 12 people were too many for a discussion since members of the Museum's staff would also want to take part. It was agreed that the artists would have six representatives and the Museum would have six.

3. On January 24 so many more than six artist-representatives arrived that I felt that a discussion was not possible. We then agreed again to meet with six people representing the artists and six representing the Museum. The meeting was scheduled for January 28.

4. On January 28 the group arrived with a list of 13 points (see attached). The group representing the artists consisted of: Gregory Battcock, Hans Haacke, Tom Lloyd, John Perreault, Willoughby Sharp, Takis, and Wen-Ying Tsai. Although Mr. Lloyd, who had not been mentioned before, brought the group to seven instead of the agreed-upon six, we went ahead with the meeting. In addition to myself, the members of the staff present were: Arthur Drexler, Wilder Green, William S. Lieberman, Elizabeth Shaw, and John Szarkowski. After the meeting the artist-representatives left a statement addressed to the Museum in which they acknowledged that their 13 proposals required thought and consideration, and that they considered a period of 10 days should be sufficient for a written response directed to the undersigned (the 7 who had attended the meeting). "However," they concluded, "before we engage in further dialogue, we should like to know by letter your position on the first proposal."

5. On February 6 I sent a letter to the 7 people who had been at the January 28 meeting explaining that although the general feeling at the Museum was that a conference sponsored by the Museum to continue the discussion of the relations between the Museum and artists would be mutually beneficial, there were certain members of the staff who had been away and I was therefore delaying formal response to their request until February 14.

In his column in the February 6 issue of the Village Voice John Perreault mentioned that informal meetings had taken place, and that he and the others were awaiting the Museum's answer to their first proposal; at the same time he published the 13 points.

In the February 6 edition of the New York Free Press the 13 points and the two-paragraph post-meeting statement were published.

6. On February 14, after talking with various members of our staff and with members of the Board of Trustees, in particular William Paley, President of the Board, and Walter Bareiss, Chairman of the Painting and Sculpture Committee, among others, I wrote a letter to the 7 artist-representatives stating that the Museum intended to establish a Special Committee on Artist Relations (see attached).

7. On February 28 I received a reply signed by Gregory Battcock, Farman, Hans Haacke, Tom Lloyd, John Perreault, Takis, and Tsai. The signers regretted that we had not answered their first proposal to their satisfaction and therefore had no alternative but to proceed with other arrangements providing for an open hearing. They added that they would be pleased to accept the invitation to another meeting in the future, provided we were able to offer concrete answers to points 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13. "When we receive a clear indication of the Museum's attitude toward all the above points, we will be glad to continue meetings with the Museum to offer any aid we can in implementing action. May we expect a written reply to the above no later than Friday, March 7? We will consider your refusal to reply sufficient evidence that we must search for other means to make our concerns felt."

On March 1 the East Village Other printed an item that stated that if the Museum did not send "a satisfactory reply by March 7, the artists intend to move from the public discussion stage to direct public demonstrations and sit-ins at the museum."

In his column in the March 6 issue of the Village Voice John Perreault reported the essence of the February 22 letter, and remarked that as of the last meeting the group of Takis and his supporters had grown to over 30 people, and that a public hearing would take place, date and time to be announced shortly.

8. On March 6 we prepared a statement for the press for release March 7 (see attached) that publicly announced the formation of the Special Committee on Artist Relations. At the same time we wrote letters to the 7 artist-representatives telling them that we were going ahead with the formation of the Committee and hoped that they would attend the meetings.

9. On March 15 a letter dated March 10 (with Release to Press date of March 17) was delivered to the Museum (see attached). The letter, which carried the names of 11 people in addition to the 7 to whom we had written on March 6, repeated the dissatisfaction with our plan to form a Special Committee.

10. At this writing we are actively forming the Special Committee, which will be made up of a broad range of people who are interested in the relationship of museums and artists and the responsibilities of museums to the community and society. The Committee will include artists (painters, sculptors, and those who work in mixed media and less traditional categories), people involved with film-making, photography and the other creative arts, urban design, as well as museum directors, collectors, dealers, art and cultural critics and historians, and people actively involved with the city's problems. The place and times of the meetings will be announced as soon as the physical arrangements are complete. The sessions will be open to the Press and the public, and it is expected that the Committee will make its report by June 1.



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Sabotage  
Betriebsstörung  
KLEY

**architects, choreographers, composers, critics & writers,  
designers, film-makers, museum workers, painters,  
photographers, printers, sculptors, taxidermists, etc.**

ARE ASKED TO COME TO THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART GARDEN  
21 WEST 53RD STREET AT 3:00  
ON SUNDAY, MARCH 30TH.

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AMONG THE REASONS THIS ACTION IS BEING CALLED ARE THESE:

- 1) TO DEMONSTRATE THE RIGHT OF ART WORKERS TO USE ALL MUSEUM FACILITIES;
- 2) TO SUPPORT THE DEMANDS OF BLACK ARTISTS;
- 3) TO DEMAND THAT ALL MUSEUMS EXPAND THEIR ACTIVITIES INTO ALL AREAS AND COMMUNITIES OF THE CITY;
- 4) TO DEMAND FREE ADMISSION ON BEHALF OF ANYONE WISHING IT;
- 5) TO DEMAND ACCESS TO MUSEUM POLICY-MAKING ON BEHALF OF ART WORKERS.

***DEMONSTRATE  
OUR STRENGTH  
AT MOMA!***

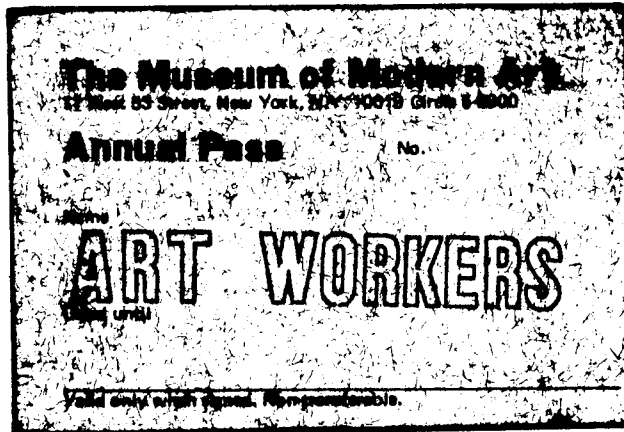


# The Museum of Modern Art

**To** THE STAFF  
**From** BATES LOWRY  
**Date** March 24, 1969

Attached is a statement we handed out on Saturday, March 22, when about 25 representatives of the protesting artist group appeared at the Museum demanding free admission. While many of the artists hold artist passes, it was their intention to dramatize their point that everyone be admitted free to the Museum. Free admission on this basis was denied them.

They then distributed to the public in the lobby the attached handbill. As you see, the handbill announces that the group is planning a demonstration to take place in the Museum's Sculpture Garden on Sunday, March 30, at 3:00 p.m. Admission to the Museum will proceed as usual on that day.





MUSEUM DEMONSTRATION SUNDAY

Last Saturday's preliminary demonstration at the Modern Museum was a remarkable success, if only because of the air of amiable belligerency in which it was carried it out. Thirty artists sought to gain free entry to the Museum. They were refused in the presence of the curator and began to distribute specially printed replicas of the <sup>Museum's</sup> Artists' Membership cards (some of which were successfully used by students <sup>to enter</sup>) as well as leaflets calling for a further demonstration this Sunday at 3 o'clock. From a counter-leaflet distributed by the museum the demonstrators finally learned after months of fruitless meetings and letters the incredible reason why the Museum felt they could not allow free admission, not even on one day out of the week: they simply cannot afford it. And this from a museum backed by multiple Rockefellers and their friends, whose paintings lie piled up in the Museum's cellars, accumulating millions of dollars in tax benefits for these pitiful specimens of the new poor.

It is to be hoped that the expanded demonstration in the Museum garden at 3:00 P.M. this Sunday will prove equally successful and revealing—anyone interested in the arts <sup>is invited</sup> should ~~be~~ to attend, but no one should come who does not plan to prove by his conduct that he is genuinely interested in the arts.

~~The~~ <sup>The</sup> grievances of the artists have already been made more than clear in previous articles, and this is the time to draw attention to the larger issues at stake. It is by now futile to deny that a major new change in taste has taken place among artists and within the art world, a new wave, a revolution if you will. It is also futile to deny that the Modern Museum, which in the past was always in the vanguard of every passing whim of taste, has been caught with its pants down this time—unless its directors do something soon to change their position, they will find themselves more and more often fighting a rearguard action, with all that this implies in loss of prestige, loss of contact with artists, loss of endowment.

Perhaps the best way of experiencing the nature of this change in taste is to take a walk through the Modern's permanent collection. The very arrangement of sleek white partitions and walls, which not long ago seemed ~~the~~ the ultimate definition of tasteful austerity and quiet with-it-ness, now looks monotonous and institutional, unimaginative and pedantic. But what of the paintings themselves, those supposedly awesome, soul-summoning masterpieces attaining such creative supremacy that the works of contemporary Americans may not be shown nearby for fear of polluting them. While these paintings were chosen by many different people at different times, ~~there~~ <sup>there</sup> is nonetheless an overwhelming <sup>underlying</sup> ~~uniformity~~ uniformity in the taste ~~underlying~~ their selection.

With few exceptions this taste seems to gravitate towards everything that is fragmentary or bare or incomplete. Time and again outlines seem to have triumphed over detail, caricatures over outlines, and blur over caricatures. In terms of color there is a marked tendency towards greys and dirty browns and washed-out blues, which make the colors of a Chagall or a Tchelitchev seem almost an intrusion. In terms of mood it is grimness which predominates, or rather an unsuccessful attempt at grimness, an affected high seriousness which ends up as monotony. Generations of docents, critics, and curators have defended this grimness by saying it is a reflection of the age we live in, but this does not make sense, has never made sense, and it is time that people stopped pretending it makes sense. It is the artist's role and privilege to be able to influence society rather than act as a passive vehicle merely reflecting it. And it is this <sup>new active</sup> ~~attractive~~ role for the artist that is now lurching into existence.

It is to the great credit of much of the younger generation that they refuse to accept this greyness and grimness imposed from above. They know instinctively that a museum can be something more than an austere and awesome hybrid of church and lecture hall, that it can expand itself outwards in as many directions as are contained in the human imagination. Possibly the most imaginative museum New York ever had was the old Museum of Science and Industry in Rockefeller Center, an institution before its time, presumably destroyed because it was unprofitable. Perhaps the most

successful surviving one is the Museum of Natural History, an admittedly uneven institution but one which has shaped the knowledge and fantasies of generations of New Yorkers. Both of these museums owe their success to the fact that they dared to be environmental, that they used light, color, and movement to simulate and stimulate the movement of the mind itself. The museum of tomorrow (if there is still any reason for calling it a museum) will take up where these left off--it will be a combination of real and artificial environments, indoor and outdoor pleasure and meditation centers, mixed-media representations of various ages and cultures. Conventional museums and collections may be sandwiched in between-- painting and sculpture, despite rumors to the contrary, are by no means dead--but the overall mood will be something between a revival meeting, an amusement park, a free-form theatre, and a therapy center.

In the meantime we are stuck with the Museum of Modern Art and must try and make the best of it--it is a pity that the Museum does not seem to want to make the best of us. Thusfar both its directors and its public information officers seem to have gone out of their way, on the one hand, to imagine that the grievances of the artists are petty in scope and can be resolved by the old superficial ways of the art world--complaints like black art, free museum entry, curatorial roles for artists belong to the real world and cannot be settled by a petty backstage deal involving individual artists and their work. On the other hand (and at the other extreme) these

same officers, possibly upset by their lack of success with the first method, have also started a campaign of vicious vilification against the artists, alleging that they seek disorder in the museum, though it is obvious that an artist's first allegiance is to creation and not its opposite.

One artist in particular was so completely slandered concerning his opinions that it may yet provide material for legal proceedings. How are artists or informed people at large to go on respecting the Modern Museum if its officers continue to resort to such tactics as slander and malicious invention?

The failures of the Museum are not on the level of personal dealings alone--there are many signs that they are beginning to falter on the overall tactics as well. Preparations had been made to arrest several artists on the grounds of counterfeiting museum tickets--the guards were waiting with baited breath, ticket colors were being changed every half hour, and cryptic notations were penciled on the back of individual tickets. The guards were completely thrown off balance when cards instead of tickets were produced (differing from the real cards in one noticeable detail), and many art stu-

dents using them were admitted without paying. The critic Gregory Battcock had worse luck--entering the museum with a valid press pass, he began to take photographs of the demonstration from inside when he was accosted by a guard, manhandled, and thrown out into the lobby. Although both the museum's chief curator and its press officer identified him as a bona fide critic, neither of these personages was able to overrule the guard and allow Battcock to return.

It is obviously time for the museum's officers to make a fresh start, and all lines of communication must be kept open to allow them to do so. They have already sent their auditors to meetings of the dissenting artists, and it would be a gesture in the right direction if they allowed an auditor from the artists' group to attend the Museum's meeting on strategy for the demonstration. The artists' group has already requested the Museum to make such a gesture. Otherwise they will be equally (and perhaps more than equally) responsible for whatever happens at the demonstration. One should do everything possible to cooperate with history.

# MINORITY REPORT # 1

\_\_\_\_\_ We as artists support only in part the action and demands being made today against the Museum of Modern Art. Futhermore, we recognize that the Museum of Modern Art and the galleries are inseparable. Today museums serve as galleries and galleries serve as museums. They both represent the same interests.

\_\_\_\_\_ We question artists from galleries protesting a museum that in matters of contemporary art is guided by these same galleries.

\_\_\_\_\_ Artists from galleries who take action against a museum should be willing to join unaffiliated artists and in turn take action against the galleries.

\_\_\_\_\_ Because three of the leaders of todays protest at the Museum of Modern Art are associated with the Howard Wise Gallery we think the Howard Wise Gallery is the appropriate place for a protest simultaneous to the demonstration going on at the Museum of Modern Art.

\_\_\_\_\_ A protest such as this, against a small (but representative) part of a society corrupted by the war in Vietnam, may seem irrelevant, but the devil dwells in small details.



March 24, 1969

Mrs. Elizabeth Shaw  
Director of Public Information  
Museum of Modern Art  
11 West 53 Street  
New York, N. Y.

Dear Liz:

Re: Artists' Protest

Following our conversation after the luncheon the other day and our subsequent phone conversation, in the course of which you suggested -- in no uncertain terms, -- that one or more of the five artists of my Gallery who are involved with the artists' protest, had threatened to harm or destroy works of art at the Museum, I spoke with each of these artists, that is: Takis, Len Lye, Tsai, Haacke and Tom Lloyd. Each denied having made any such threat, implicit or overt, and in addition every one expressed strong feelings against destruction of any work of art in or out of the Museum, and abhorrence that any physical harm be done to the Museum in any way. "An artist would be crazy to harm the work of another artist" was typical of their comments.

And these artists are not crazy. They are only frustrated by what they feel is a lack of concern on the part of the Museum for their work and their welfare. They feel, I sense, that there is a sort of symbiosis between the artist and the Museum. That the artists need the museum for their existence, and the Museum needs the artist in order to remain alive. They feel that while the Museum can act unilaterally with respect to the artist, the artist is powerless vis-a-vis the museum, and it should be readily understandable that he doesn't like it.

It is mainly through the Museum that the artist can reach the public, and he feels he should at least be assured that he is appropriately represented in Museum theme and group shows, and that his works are properly displayed in such exhibitions. This is what started the present "dialogue". Takis removed his work from the Machine show after he had requested that it be withdrawn and that he be represented in the exhibition by the work which had been selected by the exhibition director in the first place, and to which he had agreed. His request was ignored, and that is why he took the action he did. The message got across.

Tsai objected to the manner in which his work was displayed on two counts. First, that the work was so placed and lighted that the artistic effect which is the essence of the work, was completely lost. Secondly, that the tight space allocated to the work might result in damage to the work itself. The first objection was completely ignored. And the second,

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(cont'd)

March 24, 1969

after repeated protestations on Tsai's part, was finally attended to by placing a barrier between the public and the work, but only after one of the seven columns had been toppled over by the crush of people, with severe damage resulting to this sculpture.

One thing I believe the very secure staff and Trustees of the Museum fail to appreciate is that, with a few exceptions, most artists are in effect poverty stricken, and even those with good gallery affiliations net only a few thousand a year from the sale of their works. The artist who doesn't have a teaching job or a rich wife, and wants to devote the major part of his time to his work (serious artists do) is really struggling against horrendous odds. You may believe it or not, but to pay that \$1.50 admission fee to the Museum is really a hardship, and yet museum-going is part of his stimulation to create. If these artists are to retain their dignity and continue to devote themselves to their work, they must have help, and because the Museum should, by its nature, be their friend and ally, the least they expect from it is a helpful understanding.

No such attitude is evidenced in Mr. Lowry's memo of March 18 to the Museum staff, nor in his "Open Letter" distributed Saturday to visitors to the Museum, in anticipation of an attempt by some artists to seek free entry to the Museum. (Wouldn't it have been an effective gesture if they had been welcomed into the Museum, and perhaps invited up to the Board Room for coffee and a friendly chat?)

From my contacts and relations with the five artists and others, I believe that I have a good idea of what the artists really want and need in order to co-exist with the Museum on an amicable basis. It is not so much the 13 demands, though they are very much in earnest about these, or even the demand for a public hearing. It is for a means of communicating their views to the government of the Museum in a direct and effective manner. It is for a voice in the setting of museum policy vis-a-vis the artists and the public. It is tangible assurance that their views and proposals will receive thoughtful and sympathetic consideration by the government of the Museum, with a view to their implementation, or, if not accepted, then a reasoned and convincing rationale explaining the Museum's refusal to act.

I understand that a large demonstration is planned for next Sunday in support of the artists' demands. I am sure you are aware of this.

A more friendly and flexible attitude on the part of the Museum accompanied by specific constructive proposals will, I am sure, evoke a similar response from the artists, who are important to the Museum and to the community. Your implication that I have somehow been egging the artists on to action against the Museum ("After all, they are your artists") is really just not so.

(cont'd)

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Mrs. Elizabeth Shaw

- 3 -

March 24, 1969

Up until our talk, I was not in any way involved, nor even apprized of any of the artists' demands or actions. I am not now involved, except to write this letter, which I hope will contribute some small bit towards the improvement of "the Museum's Relationship to the Artists and to Society", with beneficial results to all concerned.

Cordially,

Howard Wise

HW:lk

cc: Estes Lowry  
Tsai  
Takis  
Hans Haacke  
Tom Lloyd  
Len Lye

P.S. Thought you might get a smile out of the enclosed "protest" against the Howard Wise Gallery

March 30, 1969 - Noon

STATEMENT BY BATES LOWRY, DIRECTOR, THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

For many weeks we have been corresponding and holding informal talks with a loosely organized group of artists and their colleagues who have raised questions about the relations between artists, museums and society. Because we think these issues are of real concern, to us and to other institutions, we are establishing a Special Committee on Artist Relations composed of about 35 artists, dealers, critics, museum directors and civic leaders. This Committee will hold a series of sessions, open to the press and observers, to hear any individual who cares to speak on these or related issues such as extension of Museum hours, copyright legislation and opportunities for artists without gallery affiliation to have their work seen. The Committee will report to the Museum by June 1.

The group with whom we have been communicating prefers a single open hearing to air the issues. Last week they called for a demonstration in the Museum Sculpture Garden to bring public attention to their questions and to their plans for an open hearing. As an indication of our continued willingness to talk, we have taken the unusual step of opening the Garden to permit any artists who wish to take part in this peaceful demonstration to enter through the West 54 Street gate. I have also asked about 40 Museum staff members to distribute literature about the Museum's program and policies and engage in individual talks with the artists. All staff members are wearing identification badges giving their names and departments.

So that the public will not have their visit to the galleries interrupted we have asked the artists to confine their demonstration to the Garden. As we expect unusually large crowds on Palm Sunday, we have increased our security forces to make certain no work of art is accidentally damaged.

# WRITE-IN JOINT CHIEFS OF WAR

## NEW YORK ARTISTS AND WRITERS

Send a gift, a keepsake, a trophy, a poem, an amulet, or whatever you like (the bulkier the better) to the WAR CHIEFS OF THE PENTAGON.

This action is a lead-off to the Easter Weekend peace marches and rallies in seven major cities on April 5 and 6.

Bring your gift (packaged for mailing, but preferably open so that its contents can be viewed and photographed) to 530 LaGuardia Place (West B'way), Wednesday, April 2nd, between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m.

We will then walk together to make public our MASS ANTIWAR MAIL-IN to the Canal Street Post Office, (Canal and Greene Sts.).

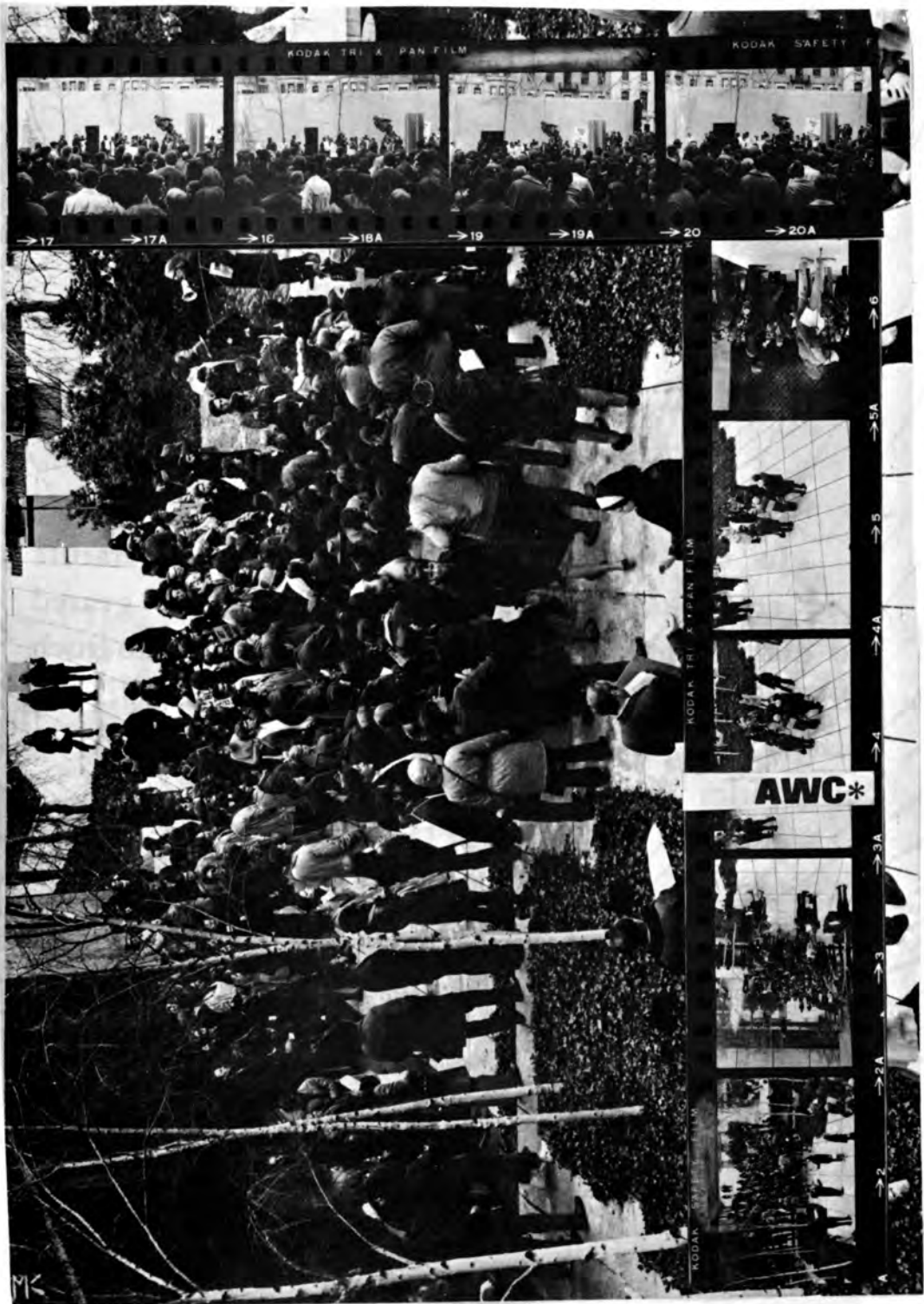
AD HOC ARTISTS COMMITTEE AGAINST THE WAR  
ARTISTS AND WRITERS PROTEST

In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes, art that is detached from or independent of politics.

DEAD G.I. IN VIET-NAM JUNGLE

By Thanh Hai (South Vietnamese poet)  
Translated from Vietnamese.

Green are Viet-Nam's forests,  
And red is Viet-Nam's soil.  
Who lies there, dead,  
in deep jungle forlorn?  
An American G.I., dead,  
His home State, who knows?  
Fair hair tinged with red,  
Eyes closed forever,  
Lonely in jungle remote,  
Back home across the ocean,  
His wife goes out for a stroll,  
And his little boy writes to Dad.  
As in days gone by, his mother so old  
Sits lost in prayers, sad:  
—Oh, Virgin Mary, have pity on us!  
Home may he soon return!  
In the Viet-Nam jungle, this summer,  
Dead leaves come fluttering down,  
Oh, G.I. hugging the earth,  
Do you hear your mother's prayer?  
Green are Viet-Nam's forests,  
And red is Viet-Nam's soil.  
C.I. who lies there, dead,  
Did you know at home the streets are in turmoil,  
in days and days of protest  
Marches your silver-haired mother,  
Your wife and little toddler,  
In front of troop trains they lie fearless!  
How magnificent that gold-starred banner,  
In American hands clasped tight!  
In the jungle, eternal night  
Has descended upon your eyes.  
May I ask: how many of America's youth,  
Can look straight at the clear sky,  
And see the truth?  
—No, your foe is not in Viet-Nam,  
But right there,  
In America.



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## MINORITY REPORT #2

WE ARE HERE IN SUPPORT OF TODAY'S PROTEST. HOWEVER, WE ONCE AGAIN OBJECT TO THE SINGLING OUT OF THE M.O.M.A. AS THE ONLY TARGET FOR TODAY'S PROTEST. WE REASSERT THAT THE GALLERIES ARE ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR A NUMBER OF PROBLEMS THAT THE ARTISTS HAVE WITH TODAY'S SOCIETY.

ON FRIDAY EVENING OF MARCH 21<sup>ST</sup>, A GROUP OF ARTISTS MET TO DISCUSS THE INITIAL SMALL ACTION PLANNED FOR THE NEXT DAY AT THE M.O.M.A. AT THAT TIME DOUBTS AND MISGIVINGS WERE EXPRESSED ABOUT THE SPECIFIC DIFFERENCES OF OPINION WE HAD WITH THE THIRTEEN POINTS & THE UNDEMOCRATIC PROCEDURES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS. WE FELT ARTISTS WERE BEING ASKED IN TO AMASS STRENGTH FOR THE SUPPORT OF POLICIES THAT WERE DECIDED UPON BY ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF ARTISTS. WE THEREFORE FELT IT NECESSARY TO DRAW UP OUR 1<sup>ST</sup> MINORITY REPORT AND TAKE ACTION.

WE READ THE MINORITY POSITION REPORT TO THE GROUP ASSEMBLING ON SATURDAY MARCH 22<sup>ND</sup> FOR THE SMALL DEMONSTRATION MADE THAT DAY AT THE M.O.M.A. IN ORDER TO EMPHASIZE OUR VIEW THAT THE MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES ARE MUTUALLY DEPENDENT, WE DECIDED ON A SIMULTANEOUS PARALLEL PROTEST AT THE HOWARD WISE GALLERY. WE READ OUR FIVE POINTS TO MR. WISE IN HIS OFFICE, DISCUSSED THE ISSUES, LEAFLETED THE PREMISES AND LEFT.

ALTHOUGH WE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE ARTISTS' PROTEST AGAINST THE M.O.M.A., WE WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO OBJECT TO BOTH THE EXISTANCE OF COMMERCIAL GALLERIES & THEIR CONNELTION WITH MUSEUMS.

BENKERT, HERDMAN, HEWITT, MIECZKOWSKI



## The Museum of Modern Art

**To** The Staff  
**From** Bates Lowry  
**Date** March 31, 1969  
**Re** Artists' Demonstration, March 30, 1969

For those of you who were not specifically asked to be present at the Museum yesterday during the artists' demonstration, I am attaching copies of material we gave to visitors to the Museum and the press. I am also attaching a copy of the article that appeared in today's New York Times.

The demonstrators entered the Garden through the open gate on 54th Street and gathered at the bridge and pool at the east end of the Garden where they took turns addressing the group through a hand-held loud speaker. At the end, they were allowed to exit through the lobby of the Museum. There were some pickets in front of the Museum on 53rd Street during the course of the demonstration.

Various handbills were distributed by the demonstrators; I have not reproduced them here, but should you wish to see them, Marjorie Cohen's office in the Department of Public Information has them.

I should mention that among some of the other inaccuracies in the New York Times article, I was misquoted and made no categorical statement of the kind quoted there.

*no mention of  
reason for  
e.g. demonstration  
Hearing*

## MODERN MUSEUM PROTEST TARGET

300 Demonstrators Orderly  
—More Black Art Sought

By ROBERT WINDELER

About 300 demonstrators gathered in the courtyard of the Museum of Modern Art yesterday afternoon, protesting what they called the museum's inadequate showing of black art and demanding that admission be free.

Museum officials, who had advance word of the demonstration, had ordered that the gates on West 54th Street into the garden be kept open to allow the protesters free access to the museum's outdoor area.

After about an hour of speeches, beginning at 3 P.M., perhaps a dozen demonstrators attempted to enter the museum through a back door, walk through the main hall and leave through the front door. Museum guards and officials resisted them for five minutes, until Bates Lowry, the museum's director, said they should be allowed to walk through an especially white-ribboned corridor so as not to disturb about 6,500 paying visitors.

Perhaps 100 of the group did walk through, and the demonstration dispersed at 4:30 P.M. No one was hurt.

The protesters were organized by a group called the Art Workers Coalition Committee for Black Bloo. Yesterday's crowd was overwhelmingly white.

The speeches, by anyone who requested the group's portable speaker, sometimes advocated splinter, even extremist positions. One man wanted the museum's research department dedicated to the work of South Vietnam's National Liberation Front. Another wanted the museum renamed "The Malcolm X Institute of Black Nationalism." Most adhered to the coalition's "13 Points," first presented to Mr. Lowry on Jan. 28.

These include demands for a black artists wing, extension into the black, Spanish and other minority communities and a public hearing to examine "the Museum's Relationship to Artists and to Society."

Mr. Lowry, who was present throughout the demonstration, said in an interview that the

public hearing and free admission were "absolutely impossible, and can't be considered." In a long letter distributed to paying visitors yesterday he said he hoped they would not be inconvenienced.

An independent committee, of about 35 artists, filmmakers, critics, historians, collectors, dealers and civic leaders, Mr. Lowry said, would study the relation between museums and artists. Its members will be announced this week, he said.

Yesterday's demonstrators carried signs ("Bury the Mausoleum of Modern Art," "Retrospective for Romane Bearden Now," "Dump Dada and Moma"), but they mostly milled about and there was no chanting.



ART WORKERS COALITION

By HARRY GILROY

"Corporations must act if the arts are to be saved," Bates Lowry, director of the Museum of Modern Art, told a gathering of executives yesterday at a Columbia School of Business luncheon at the Pierre Hotel.

He said that cultural institutions generally are in financial trouble and gave examples from New York, Los Angeles and Atlanta. He mentioned a deficit of \$600,000 in his own institution, but added, "Our situation is not yet critical compared to the general one across the country."

New York City, he said, has warned the 15 cultural institutions it partly supports to expect cuts of between 24 and 32 per cent. "Lincoln Center," he continued, "is in dire financial straits."

Los Angeles, which has built a \$35-million cultural center, foresees a \$350,000 loss on its operation this year, so the Los Angeles Philharmonic cannot afford a home of its own.

Atlanta has closed its Municipal Theater two months after its opening, and the \$13-million Atlanta Memorial

## FUCK THE MOMA

Dear Rat:

The Museum of Modern Art presents art as art history. It presents art as a totalitarian pig-orderly labyrinth of charming and meaningless styles. Museums are granted non-profit tax-deductible status on the premise that they are educational institutions. The Museum of Modern Art's educational policy is the handmaiden of its art historical view—namely it teaches reverence of and envy for property. 'You too can be an object.' Look at an Eames chair, but don't sit in it. When the Museum asked Gertrude Stein for her art collection, she replied no, a thing can't be modern and a museum at the same time.

On Sunday March 30th at 3:00, a large number of art workers are going to assemble in the Museum of Modern Art garden to demonstrate their right to use all museum facilities. Other purposes of this demonstration are to support the demands of black and other minority art workers to demand free admission to all museums on behalf of anyone wishing it and to demand access to museum policy-making on behalf of all art workers.

Gustave Courbet



Rat Vol. 2



The New York

Bates Lowry

## Bates Lowry Calls Business to Rescue

Arts Center is now half empty.

Mr. Lowry told the business executives of the conclusions reached by a conference held by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Boston last fall. Considering the future of cultural institutions in the year 2000, the conferees said museums would have to play an ever increasing role in "continuing education."

He noted that the conference assumed society would become increasingly technological and the individual increasingly alienated from society. The conferees, he said, "made the museums responsible for dealing with the alienated."

"How ironic and sad, then," he commented, "is the conclusion of the conference on the future of our cultural institutions. The very ones chosen and looked to to effect the cure of our society, to reduce the confrontation between human beings and the technological world, may well not be around to do so."

Problems allowed to go untreated get harder to treat, he suggested. He cited past pollution of the Potomac River and said, "It has become clear that the plan for cleaning up the Potomac cannot make up for the years of neglect. The completion of the 10-year plan has not produced the desired results."

"The lesson is also true for the arts," he added. "The need is now—not a dramatic rescue operation 10 years from now. Like the streams allowed to be polluted, the arts if allowed to founder will not respond to a quick cure."

Emphasizing the next 10 years as the critical ones, beginning now, he said: "It is unrealistic to expect government aid during that time."

He concluded: "There is only one place to turn—to the business community."

Urging corporations to act, Mr. Lowry pointed out that they now are donating to tax-exempt institutions only 1 per cent of their income, although they are allowed to give 5 per cent before taxes.

# BLACK ART-TECH ART-PRICK ART

Alex Gross

APRIL 2, 1969

EVO

An inability to respond to change can wreck an institution more surely than the spilled boots of a hundred storm troopers. That is one of the lessons to be drawn from Sunday's demonstration at the Museum of Modern Art. A second lesson is that it is now abundantly clear that there are hawks and doves among demonstrators and museum staff alike, and that the doves on each side will have to learn to listen to each other or be drowned out by the battle cries of the hawks. The third lesson is that the demonstrators must come up with some new ideas of strategy soon or suffer the fate of all movements ~~of strategy soon or suffer the fate of all movements~~ and disband. Any further confrontation at the complete lack of communication. The demonstrators must decide once and for all whether their aim is to negotiate with the museum over reforms, either directly or indirectly, or to try setting up a completely alternate system to museums and galleries. A decision on this must be made soon, just as the museum must soon decide whether it is really interested in changing itself or only in going through the verbal motions.

The demonstration began peacefully enough, even in an atmosphere of modified joy, as the Museum had at the last minute agreed to let the protesting artists into the garden. It was felt that this meant that the Museum was thereby legitimizing the protest and admitting that the artists concerned had a right to express their grievances. It was a sunny day, and the feeling of joy lasted for some time. Speaker succeeded speaker, talking through a barely audible loudspeaker which served as a background to most of the proceedings, the proof that a demonstration was actually taking place. Against this background a group of three or four hundred people happily exchanged views, identity-badged museum officials sometimes coming to heated words with demonstrators and on-lookers. Black artists were much in evidence with posters asserting the racism of the museum's curators. Journalists and photographers mingled with the crowd, and the overall feel was one of a joint spring outing of two rival churches, where no one agreed but every one felt it was necessary to listen. The need to bring the First International Ex-

hibition, of Erotic Art to New York was also discussed.

A small incident occurred when a group of artists decided they wanted to leave by the museum's front door instead of the back gate on Fifty-fourth Street through which they had entered. It must be admitted that a feeling did grow through the pleasant exchanges that the demonstrators were really regarded as some kind of poor relations to be segregated from the higher congregation of museum visitors. These were not allowed to join the demonstrators in the garden except on pain of losing their right to re-enter the museum. And the guards at the doors became more and more impatient with those trying to get through as the afternoon wore on. When the attempt was made to force the doors, there was a brief scuffle ending in stalemate, with some of the demonstrators yelling to cool it, others for more action. A compromise was finally reached suitable to the museum, and the demonstrators were allowed to walk a gauntlet of museum visitors, roped off from them on either side by a cordon sanitaire, and finally found themselves out on Fifty-Third Street. They began to picket there, and after a while the demonstrators broke up, without having achieved even for themselves the free admission they had sought for all.

Television of course seized upon the one incident and blew it up out of proportion. They also managed to report that the museum in its goodness was about to hold a public hearing on the very questions the artists were protesting — it was in fact the artists who were distributing leaflets calling for the public hearing (to be held on April 10th), an idea which the Museum has consistently shelved in favor of private committees. But none of this should be allowed to detract from the fact that an informative afternoon was had by everyone, not least of all the museum staff, and if a small task force of thirty policemen, complete with a wide panoply of weapons, was hidden in the storage area beneath the cafeteria from early that morning, it would perhaps be fair not to call too much attention to their presence, since the museum had the wisdom never to call them into action.

The one dissatisfying aspect of the demonstration is that it is difficult to say what was accomplished of

a tangible nature, since none of the thirteen points received a concrete answer and no one from the museum staff either asked for or was given a chance to speak. These thirteen points have long been regarded by impartial observers as rather obvious in their nature — with the exception of the demand for a black artists' wing none of them is really controversial, and it is difficult to explain why they have not been granted by the museum long ago — except in terms of institutional paralysis.

It is this last factor which may prove ultimately most operative — after a long and worthy history in which they exhibited and defended the leading modern artists of the preceding generation, the staff of the Modern Museum may simply have become too large, successful, and unwieldy to be able to function clearly either as a single entity or an institution. This, together with a dependence on clearing everything with the trustees, may explain why new ideas are not applied even when their application is obvious and why promises have not been kept which were probably made in good faith. This is meant not as an excuse but an explanation, so that no one should expect from the Modern Museum an instant granting of the thirteen points, as simple and self-evident as they are.

But it is ultimately also the thirteen points and their corollaries which will make or break the Museum and the entire art world — they will not simply go away tomorrow, even if all of Sunday's demonstrators were to disappear, as they are living evidence of an art world undergoing changes far deeper than even those it has thus far been able to make articulate, evidence of the changes all of society is now undergoing and of the changing role of art within it. Black Art, Tech Art, Prick Art — all of these are essential to the future of the art world, as is the struggle for artists' rights and the need for art to be accessible to all segments of society. These demands will not disappear overnight, whatever the fate of the present demonstrations may be. Anyone interested in attending a public hearing on these questions (and any of his own choosing) should come to the Auditorium of the School of Visual Arts, 209 East 23rd Street, on Thursday April 10th from six to ten in the evening.

# technology in art

EAST VILLAGE OTHER, DEC. 13, 1968

BY ALEX GROSS

A slow-motion underground explosion of nuclear proportions is taking place in the art world. The first tremors are now being felt, but almost no one is aware how deep or lasting the overall effects may be. Not even the people who are causing the explosion understand the full power of what they are doing, but this is probably true of most people who cause explosions. The phenomenon in question is called Technology in Art, or Tech Art for short—its outlying spasms have recently been felt at the Documenta exhibition in Germany, at the Denise Rene Gallery in Paris, at the Redfern Gallery and the I.C.A. show in London, but the epicenter of the blast is right here in New York City, where two shows have just come seething to the surface, one robustly, even violently, at the Brooklyn Museum, the other more fuzzily and sedately at the Museum of Modern Art.

The impact these shows will have is difficult to foresee, but a few guesses are still possible. Within the next eighteen months at least some and probably most of the following will have happened:

*A leading art critic will accuse all artists who cooperate with technicians of treason to the cause of art.*

*Another leading art critic will accuse all artists who oppose Tech Art of being old fuddy-duddies.*

*The name of Leonardo da Vinci will be invoked by artists to prove that only a great artist can be a great technician.*

*The name of Leonardo da Vinci will be invoked by technicians to prove that only a great technician can be a great artist.*

*Painters and sculptors will picket the offices of E.A.T., the organization connected with both Tech Art shows. They will carry signs warning the populace against the menace of Tech Art.*

*Tech Art proponents will disturb the opening of a major exhibition of paintings by setting off a sound-and-light bomb.*

*One or two Tech Art ideas will reach the mass level, being made in every form from vast display devices in Times Square to miniature and toy versions costing a few dollars.*

*Light shows will rival television as the home entertainment medium of America. An artist, subsidized by a major electrical corporation and using giant lenses ground by the Corning Glass Works, will give a light show on the clouds.*

*Three painters will attempt suicide, one of them succeeding—they will claim in their suicide notes that the competition of Tech Art was too much for them.*

*An artist being supported by a leading corporation will quit his post, giving as his reason a lack of clarity in the relationship between artists and company.*

*A major corporation will discharge its artists in residence, giving as its reason a lack of clarity in the relationship between artists and company.*

*President Nixon will applaud the role of Tech Art in stimulating the nation's economy. By this time the main Tech Art pioneers will have disassociated themselves from the movement.*

The biggest controversy in art history is brewing. It took a lot of fighting to establish the modern movement in painting and sculpture, but the battle over Tech Art will make the modernist controversy look like a pillow fight. The reason is simple: for half a century artists have tended to look at art as the one possible alternative to the industrial society, the one place where the mass production world could never enter, unless it was willing to dress up in its Sunday best and pay a high admission charge.

More specifically, many artists and art critics have defined art as being irrevocably opposed to science and technology in its basic assumptions and daily practice. Science might transform the entire world around us and the lives of millions of people, but the sanctuary of art must remain pure and inviolable. But now scientists and technologists have dared to turn artists, bringing their knowledge and methods into the holy places. It is not surprising if some people feel themselves menaced.

There is also the original—versus—reproduction problem—until recently the original was everything in art, and reproductions were tolerated only as long as it was understood that they were merely reproductions. There was no shortage of people to claim they could instantly feel out an original from a reproduction, though a few court cases involving forgeries ought to have weakened this conviction. With Tech Art it is hard to see how this distinction can be totally maintained—the copy that is mass-produced in a factory may actually be superior to the Tech Artist's clumsily assembled prototype. Furthermore, if the artist's first model does find its way to a museum, will it be an art museum or a museum of science and industry or does it matter? It is obvious that a number of things are in for a change, not least of all the categories of thinking inside our heads.

One thing to get straight from the beginning is that there is good and bad Tech Art just as there is good and bad painting—in fact the standards may be clearer in the long run for tech art than for painting. But in a show like that at the Brooklyn or the Modern (or the latest display at the Howard Wise Gallery) there is a further element at work which is certain to influence judgement, quite apart from the intrinsic worth of any given piece.

What the organizers of these shows have done, whether they realize it or not, is to create an atmosphere where the whole is far greater than the sum of the parts, a mixed-media environment which has as much to do with theatre or architecture or fun houses of the future as it does with what has traditionally been understood as art. This is one reason why conventional critics have missed the point of these two shows.

What is needed to judge and understand these new environments is not a painting or sculpture critic at all but a mixed-media correspondent, correspondent rather than critic because it is often necessary to "travel" into the world set up by these environments and observe how they fit (or do not fit) together on their own terms. An outside view of the individual elements can sometimes be completely irrelevant, even if it is correct as far as it goes. Seen from this viewpoint the show at the Brooklyn is an enormous success, constantly provoking the brain in any number of directions, creating meaningful motion inside the mind itself. The show at the Howard Wise gallery is similarly successful, though on a smaller scale, because the organizers realized it was there at least partially to amuse and to create internal motion. The show at the Modern is less successful because the organizers were not sure whether they wanted to present a complete historical retrospective or merely try to show how with it they are. In many ways the Modern remains wedded to the grim, grey, "serious-art" concepts of the thirties.

Mixed-media environments can come in all shapes, sizes, and moods from the glare of an amusement park to the contemplative air of a neo-Japanese garden. In fact the museums of the future (if there is still any reason to call them museums) may be buildings and domed-in pleasure gardens entirely composed of different mixed-media environments, corresponding to all the levels inside the human brain. Here will be constructed in at least four dimensions all the psychic states which have blessed or bedevilled man from the beginnings of time—they will be externalized, and he will be able to walk through them and live them out harmlessly on all sides of him instead of having them take control of him unpredictably from within. What we call museums today will be conserved in a single historical wing of these gigantic Mind Palaces.

The show in Brooklyn is a step on the way towards this, which means that it is likely to be controversial among museum administrators themselves.

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Another reason for having this sort of show is likely to take art out of the hands of a small circle of esthetes. Whole gangs from the Bronx may descend on this show and take home something they have never received from an "art" exhibition before. There is also the possibility that a gang might go through and wreck it, in which case why not make an environment specifically designed to be wrecked and put together again—invite various gangs and have a contest as to which one can wreck it most quickly and completely. A society which

can channel the forces that might destroy it has the chance of developing into one worth living in.

Basically the goal of a mixed-media environment is to make the spectator (who is preferably also a participant) go more deeply into himself or further out towards other people. This is a genuinely revolutionary function, aimed at recreating the bases on which people react to things, each other, and their own minds, unlike much of the reactionary posturing which now passes for revolutionary. Human nature may be immutable (or may not be), but the elements that compose it can be mixed in any number of different proportions and combinations which distinguish different cultures from each other—mixed-media is a means of transport into the next culture.

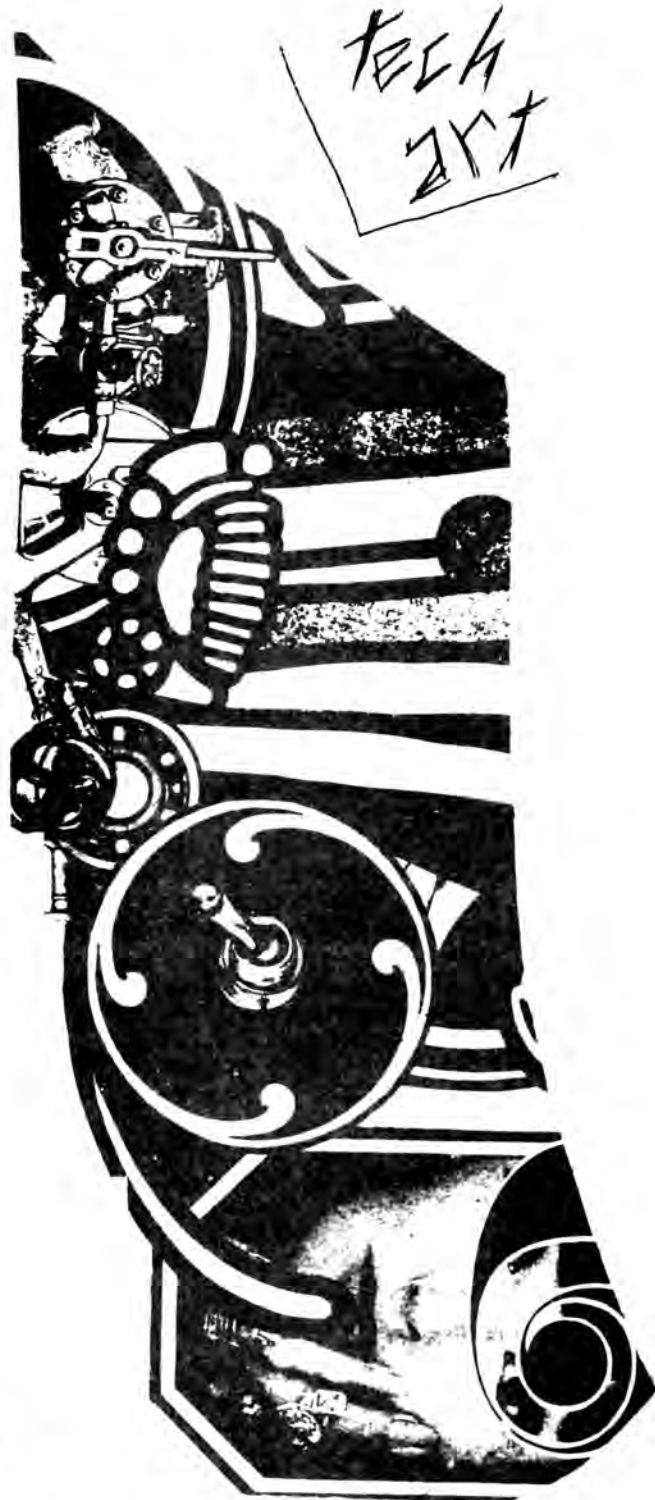
Obviously there are certain individual items in the two shows which fall short of the desired effect, though they make interesting padding within the overall environment. It is an open question whether everything should be on the same level of brilliance in a mixed-media showing—possibly a few things should be left less than perfect in order to provide a background for what is better. In any case light boxes with vague, evanescent streamings almost coming to a climax are probably already a cliché and will only work if skillfully juxtaposed with other devices. This is also true of some other light gimmicks based on nothing more than the use of a Carousel or other automatic projector (though these are used with true art in the Cassens-Stern environment, perhaps the best piece in the Brooklyn show). Flashing lights have also been used a bit too often, though once again they are blindingly effective in the piece one staggers by as one enters, Jean Tsché's work I AM A HUMAN BEING, DO NOT DESTROY. Simple kinetic effects powered by magnets and solenoids are also something of a bore now as are inflatables (depending on how all these are used) and plexiglass abstracts rotated in front of a projector, though these will probably prove effective for someone seeing them the first time. It might also be a good idea for all devices to be built as sturdily as possible—with or without gang attendance. It is always a disappointment to come upon an Out Of Order sign.

Leaving to one side the mixed-media aspect, there is finally the question of whether a given object should be judged as a work of art or a piece of technology. In the long run this question may be

irrelevant, but for the present it is still a meaningful one. The people at E.A.T. (Experiments in Art and Technology) have not thought this aspect completely through—it is perhaps too much at this phase to ask that they should have—but they seem to be favoring the technician at the expense of the artists. At any rate they have bestowed their prizes on the technicians rather than the artists (almost all the works are the product of artist-technician co-shaping), and it is a jury of technicians which has awarded these prizes purely on the basis of technical considerations.

Now it has always been obvious that a work which is technically stunning can add up to less than nothing on the artistic scale, just as an artistic idea can be vague and vapid without the technique to make it happen in reality. This is as true of Tech Art as it ever was. In some cases a perfect marriage of first-class art and technology may be achieved, in others the contribution of both may be unimpressive. It should also be remembered that the most ingenious work is often not the most intricate but the simplest one—that which does most with least. Tech Art should never become an absolute end in itself—it would be ironic if in ten years art should have gone from abstract expressionism, which sacrificed technique to feeling and form, to another extreme demanding technique at the expense of content and feeling.

In any case the question of standards for Tech Art, either as individual works or as mixed-media environments, is something which requires a great deal more thought if art and man are to be brought a step further through them. The possibilities are there beyond doubt, shining and immense, full of all kinds of promise, and the only person likely to be unsettled by them is the artist uncommitted to either Tech or conventional art, wondering whether to join E.A.T. or be eaten.



April 4, 1969

AN OPEN LETTER TO TODAY'S VISITORS TO THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

A PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BLACK WING AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART IN MEMORY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

WHY A BLACK WING? MARTIN LUTHER KING MEMORIAL AT MOMA SEGREGATED BLACK ART

On October 30th, 1968 at the Museum of Modern Art, prominent black artists were segregated in a back room at a memorial show in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.--or rather, in contempt of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Among those black artists subjected to this humiliating, racist cultural segregation were Jacob Lawrence, Charles White, Romare Bearden, and the late Bob Thompson. No one save the three black advisors on the Committee protested this racist insult to the black cultural community, which was really the most blatant contempt for the creative struggle which permeated the life and perpetuated the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

THE WHITE CULTURAL COMMUNITY SUPPORTED WHITE RACISM IN THE NAME OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Originally the Memorial Exhibition for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had included the works of no black artists! Black artists were included for the first time as the direct result of pressure from the black cultural community. None of the white members of the Committee even recognized the racism, nor were they repelled to the point of raising their voices against this insult to the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. How, we ask, can the white cultural community survive when its leadership, in the persons of such distinguished figures as Mayor John Lindsay, Mrs. Aristotle Onassis, Carroll Janis of the Sydney Janis Gallery, Edward Fry of the Guggenheim Museum, Henry Geldzahler of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, John Gordon of the Whitney Museum, Donelson Hoopes of the Brooklyn Museum, Karl Katz of the Jewish Museum, and William S. Rubin of the Museum of Modern Art, fail to react to the Museum of Modern Art's racist treatment of black artists and blatant insult to the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.? Obviously, they either expected black artists to be segregated, or they felt such a liberal streak that they were included at all that mere relegation to a back room represented in their minds a giant stride toward tokenism at the Museum of Modern Art. More likely, they never thought anything at all, which is the best way to support the racism that buried Martin Luther King. Whatever the explanation, black artists can no longer wait for MOMA's brand of integration, which is already 100 years late in coming.



A SEPARATE BLACK WING IN HONOR OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WILL BRING THE BLACK ART MOVEMENT TO THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART AND THE PEOPLE

The Museum of Modern Art has already had 34 years in which to give recognition to the accomplishments of black artists. At this point, 25 million blacks and Puerto Ricans have received absolutely no cultural identification from the Museum of Modern Art. Black artists require the same exposure given to artists of other movements even in their infancy. The wings and galleries of the Museum are most often composed of group art, identifiable according to ethnic, philosophical or national strains. The several wings devoted to the works of American artists have signally failed to include the works of black and Puerto Rican artists--Americans, too.

INTEGRATION MEANS WAIT ANOTHER 100 YEARS; A SEPARATE WING MEANS NOW

A separate Black Wing at the Museum of Modern Art will mean that black artists can assemble an exhibition in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King that will honor the true spirit of justice and equality and freedom for which he lived, worked, and died.

It will mean that the 175,000 public school children who visit the Museum annually will know the contributions of their own black and Puerto Rican culture, with which they can identify, and that the black and Puerto Rican students in our private and parochial schools, colleges and universities can gain from exposure for the first time to the works of black and Puerto Rican artists at the Museum of Modern Art.

It will mean that our young black and Puerto Rican artists will be able to exhibit in the Museum just as young white artists are able to, and enjoy the development and international exposure and support that only the Museum of Modern Art can give them.

WHO WILL PAY FOR THE MARTIN LUTHER KING WING FOR BLACK ART?

Public money supports this Museum. No amount of shrieks about private endowments can overcome that fact. These private endowments are underwritten by our Federal Government in the form of tax abatements which amount to as much as ninety per cent of the actual value of the endowment. Donations have come from more than 900 private donors, including more than 200 corporations. How much of this corporate contribution represents earnings on sales to black and Puerto Rican consumers? Tax abatement is a recognition that donations to the Museum are a contribution to the public good. Is the public good served by excluding black art and Puerto Rican art from the Museum, or segregating it in some back room of the Museum? Should your tax burden, which must compensate for the abatement granted to these private and corporate donors, be increased in order to support the racist policies of this Museum? Are these corporate donors, whose income derives in substantial amount from purchases directly and indirectly by the black and Puerto Rican communities, willing to stand up and acknowledge that they are using money taken out of the black and Puerto Rican communities, and tax relief which is redistributed as a burden on the taxpayers of the black and Puerto Rican communities, in order to support the strangulation of black and Puerto Rican art?



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

You can put an end to this disgrace, this deprivation worked upon white, black, and Puerto Rican alike. You can put an end to the disgrace of the Museum of Modern Art's sponsorship of art shows at American Embassies in Africa which exclude the works of black and Puerto Rican artists.

HOW?

The relevancy of the Museum of Modern Art's program to the black and Puerto Rican communities will be researched and evaluated in the form of a questionnaire to be distributed to the staff of the Museum and to all art-loving, community-conscious people.

On April 13th, 1969, 200 black and Puerto Rican students will begin the evaluation with a walking tour of the Museum of Modern Art. We shall meet at 12.00 Noon that day in the Museum's auditorium. Come to that meeting. Bring your interested friends. Join us. Ask questions of the speakers. Write to the Museum--

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART  
21 West 53rd Street  
New York, New York 10019  
or call the Public Information Department  
245-3200

Help us evaluate!

On April 10th, 1969, an open hearing will be held at the School of Visual Arts from 6.00 P.M. to 10.00 P.M. The school is located at 209 East 23rd Street, New York City (Manhattan). Public transportation is provided by the IRT East Side (Lexington Avenue) Line to the 23rd Street Station (Local); BMT 14th St. Canarsie Line to Third Avenue. Connections from the Independent Line can be made to the 14th St. Line at Eighth Avenue and 14th Street; from the 6th Avenue Subway at 34th Street, Downtown Express to Union Square, then either Lexington Ave. Local uptown to 23rd St. or 14th St. Canarsie Line to Third Avenue. A full slate of demands will be discussed at this time.

Join us in our fight. It is your fight, too. It is America's fight, and the fight which we must all make if what America professes to stand for is to survive.

BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN STUDENTS  
AND ARTISTS FOR A BLACK WING IN  
MEMORY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

TOM LLOYD 154-02 107th Avenue Jamaica, NY 11433 657-6433

FAITH RINGGOLD 345 W. 145th Street NYC 862-5876

THE NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 1969

# Harlem Photographer Sees Lifework Hauled Away

By ROBERT M. SMITH

James Van Der Zee, ruffled but dignified in his brown felt hat and baggy gray suit, stood at the door of his photo studio last night and watched more than 50 years of his photographs of Harlem being carted out.

Called Michelangelo by some policemen and G.G. by hundreds of the Harlem residents he has photographed, the 83-year-old Negro photographer was being evicted from the four-story brownstone he had lived in for the last 29 years.

The eviction came only weeks after he was prominently featured in the "Harlem on My Mind" exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

"It is the highest time and the lowest time," said Mr. Van Der Zee as he looked absently around the silver-painted studio on the first floor of the brownstone at 272 Lenox Avenue, near 124th Street.

He poked amid the debris of

old photos for chauffeur's licenses and lockets and wallets, mounds of paper, phone books, tin cans, and the props he used for his photos—mainly trellises with artificial flowers. A golden valance still hung amid the emptiness at the rear of the studio, directly above a layer of litter.

### Photos of Spellman

The stocky old man raised his cane. Caught on the rubber tip was a roll of negatives on wide, old fashioned film. He held it to the light. "Cardinal Spellman at his silver jubilee," he said, and rolled the film into his coat pocket.

The city marshal had come at 10 o'clock to begin the removal. Mr. Van Der Zee was being evicted for nonpayment of rent following a dispute concerning the mortgage to the house. All day long the moving men had been transferring Mr. and Mrs. Van Der Zee's goods into a van in front of the house.

Included, by Marshal Edwin B. Adams's count, were 20 card-

board boxes and one wooden packing crate filled with negatives and photographs, some of them dating back to 1915 when Mr. Van Der Zee began his Harlem picture-taking.

"Just about every event in Harlem" during those years was in the collection, Mr. Van Der Zee, as well as most of the important persons who lived in the area or passed through, from Marcus Garvey and Father Divine to Adam Clayton Powell.

The photos featured in "Harlem on My Mind" are in the care of the curator of the exhibit, Reginald McGee, Mr. Van Der Zee said. He added that Mr. McGee had also come early yesterday, before the marshal, and loaded as many photographs and negatives as he could into his car.

The rest of the photographer's lifework was to spend the night in boxes and crates in a moving van parked in a lot in St. Albans, Queens. From there the collection is to go to a warehouse to be designated by the

city's Bureau of Encumbrances. Mr. Van Der Zee has 30 days to claim them, if he can find a house or apartment to live in in the interim.

Mr. Van Der Zee said he had no idea where he would spend last night. His wife, 76-year-old Gaynell, was taken to Harlem Hospital, the photographer said, when she became overwrought during the eviction.

Drinking from a container of skimmed milk, Mr. Van Der Zee continued poking through the rubble in the small studio. Someone accidentally set off a fire extinguisher, and the spray shot across the room. The photographer, perspiring heavily but with his hat and tie still in place, brushed the wet debris aside. Under it was a tightly rolled American flag.

Mr. Van Der Zee picked up the flag.

"Do what you want to this old gray head," he quoted, "but spare your country's flag." He chuckled.

# Stevens and Heckscher Discuss Fund Crisis in Arts

By RICHARD F. SHEPARD

The money crisis in the arts was underlined yesterday by two speakers who have been prominent in governmental cultural affairs programs.

Roger L. Stevens, a Democrat who left his post last month as chairman of the National Council of the Arts, refused to be pessimistic about the future Republican guardianship of the arts. But August Heckscher, who directs recreation and cultural affairs for the city's Republican administration, expressed fears that a "broad retrenchment" is at hand on all levels of government.

The views were the latest to be expressed in a crisis that has been building up for some time. The head of the Museum of Modern Art, and the head of the Ford Foundation's arts program have recently warned of a deterioration of support, public and private, for the arts and its institutions.

This has been accompanied by the announcement of a curtailment of activities by Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts by a plan to cut city funds to parks, museums and libraries by 24 per cent in the budget now being considered, by the threat of a severe cutback in services and by a trimming of the budget for the New York State Council of the Arts.

Unlike other crises, which often produce great art as the upshot of tortured human events, the arts crisis has aroused fears that cultural activities will decline. The government, because of com-



SAD DAY'S END: James Van Der Zee last night in his Harlem studio, which he is being evicted from. He spent the day watching movers take out cartons of negatives he has taken in more than 50 years photographing Harlem.



August Heckscher, left, and Roger L. Stevens at the Sardi's meeting, where they discussed government aid for the arts.

peting demands for money in the military and social areas, has been shaving allocations for the arts. Public giving has also dropped off.

Mr. Stevens and Mr. Heckscher made their comments at the monthly meeting of the Drama Desk, the organi-

zation of theater editors and reporters, at Sardi's. They were joined by Harold Clurman, critic and author, who emphasized that the arts were not an "ornament" to society, but an essential ingredient that should not be forced to beg for support.

Mr. Stevens, who is still chairman of Washington's John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, said, "I'm not as pessimistic as most people think they should be. Some 95 per cent of those on the boards of trustees of arts organizations are Republicans. They're going to see to it that money is available to make up the huge gap."

He noted, however, that although \$15-million is authorized by law for the Federal arts program, only \$7.5-million is allotted in the budget planned for the coming fiscal year. Even some of this, he added, will probably be cut away. No successor to Mr. Stevens as head of the National Council of the Arts has yet been named by the Nixon Administration.

Mr. Heckscher stressed the need for a more aggressive attitude by arts institutions when they are threatened by a diminution of city funds. He called the proposed 24 per cent reduction a "crippling, horrible blow."

"You are going to see the parks dirty, the parkway roads unclean, and the ice skating in Central Park on a shorter schedule," Mr. Heckscher said, adding that all summer programs, which have helped contribute to "the civil peace of the city," would have to be curtailed.

"We've reached a critical moment in what had been six or seven years of advancement in the arts," he continued. "That moment of brightness seems to be fading. The crisis is overlaid by a falling off in the amount of private giving." 63

STUDENTS AND ARTISTS UNITED FOR A MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. WING FOR BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ART AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART IN NEW YORK CITY

FAITH RINGGOLD 345 W 145th St. NYC 862-5876  
TOM LLOYD 154 -022107th Avenue Jamaica NY 657-6433

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART EXCLUDES BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ART  
The Museum is the international pace-setter of the modern art movement. Its exclusion of the work of black and Puerto Rican artists has denied them recognition, support, and the impetus for development which every art school and movement requires. It stands as the redoubt of the only great cultural empire in America which, however unwittingly, perpetuates total and unrelenting racism in America. Music, dance, theatre, literature, and audio-video communications have made themselves great by enriching themselves with the cultural wealth of black and Puerto Rican heritage; they have shared the prestige of artistic regeneration through a new and dynamic cultural infusion. In order to develop as a movement, black and Puerto Rican art requires national and international exposure. Either it will receive it, or the decaying effects of a society already weighted with war and racism will crush what little hope remains that art is not indeed dead in America. But Black and Puerto Rican art are alive! In search of museum retrospectives! Of major exhibitions, International representation, and all the exposure which museum publications, commissions, grants, and sponsorship can give!

THE MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. WING WILL BE SEPARATE--BUT ONLY AS THE YOLK IS SEPARATE FROM THE SHELL. Black determination has never failed to provide creative leadership to surmount every hurdle to freedom. We cannot be free until our art is free! We would gladly be free in any way. But we have been 34 years at the Museum waiting to be free without being separate, and there have been no retrospectives for Jacob Lawrence or Romare Bearden, no publications devoted to their work, no group shows for our younger artists. If our art is not to be mixed with the art of whites, well, so be it! Give us our own wing, where we can show our black and Puerto Rican artists, where we can proclaim to the world our statement of what constitutes value and truth and the spirit of our people! Give it to us, or tell us that we have no place at all in your museums, just as we have no place in your churches and clubs and cooperatives! Can the Museum of Modern Art at least be that honest about it? We ask Governor Rockefeller and Mr. Philip Johnson of Johnson's Wax--trustees of the Museum--to make reason prevail. We will have our art, and we will have our wing. We have our own thing to do, something that grows out of our different experience as a people, coupled with the unceasing need of black and Puerto Rican people to give reason and vitality to existence. Modern Art needs a new direction and impetus--away from the "Cool School" emphasis of use of materials in the hope of avoiding the revolution. Black and Puerto Rican Art proclaims to the world: "We are the revolution! We are 25 million strong, very much alive and very seldom cool! Our art is not dead, and we will not let it die, because to kill our art is to kill the spirit of our people! That is why we must have the Martin Luther King Wing----NOW!!!!!"

AT 12 NOON AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 21 W 53 St., in the AUDITORIUM, SUNDAY, April 13, we will conduct an evaluation of the Museum in its default of cultural responsibility to the public and cultural integrity to itself and the artistic community. TAKE PART. CARE. SAVE BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ART FROM CULTURAL GENOCIDE. SAVE AMERICAN ART FROM THE FOLLY OF RACIST SUICIDE!

## A MESSAGE TO THE BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN COMMUNITY ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF PORTRAYING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE

### WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Although we are all members of the same human family, our experience as a people has helped to make us different from other groups, just as our individual experiences make us as individuals different from one another. That differentness is a right; it makes us who and what we are, and that differentness has a right to be respected and preserved. The differentness of other Americans is recorded and preserved in the art of their group; their children and our children see it, and this fosters identification and a sense of worthwhileness. Our children and we ourselves are entitled to this same identification, respect, and sense of worthwhileness enjoyed by others. The public vehicle for helping to sustain and encourage all of this is the museum. For people alive, developing and contributing today, the foremost vehicle in the world for telling the story of cultural contribution is the Museum of Modern Art.

### IS IT BEING DONE ?

We want you to find this out for yourselves. On Sunday, April 13th, at 12 Noon, 200 black and Puerto Rican students will assemble in the Auditorium of the Museum of Modern Art for a brief orientation on methods of evaluating whether or not the Museum of Modern Art is usefully fulfilling its obligation to portray the cultural contributions of black and Puerto Rican artists and to determine whether that portrayal could be better served by the establishment of a black and Puerto Rican wing at the Museum. Cultural leaders of the community will speak to the group. We urge you to support this work either by personally attending, or by encouraging others to attend, or both.

### WHY A SEPARATE WING?

The Museum maintains wings for the exhibition of Dutch, Russian, Italian, Austro-Germanic, and other ethnic and national cultural contributions. Blacks and Puerto Ricans amount to more than 25 million Americans--one out of every eight! Our distinctiveness as a people is clearly recognized in the many laws, practices and customs within the American society which declared and even today declare such a difference. In short, we are different for purposes of unequal treatment, but not different for purposes of equal recognition of our cultural individuality. If we are different--and we are among the first to insist that we are--then we ought to be able to present that difference through our art and other cultural contributions in a Martin Luther King, Jr. Wing of the Museum of Modern Art.

SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S RIGHT TO KNOW, ENJOY AND UNDERSTAND HIS RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE. HELP TO FREE BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ART FROM THE CULTURAL GENOCIDE PRACTICED BY THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART TODAY. WITHOUT A MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WING, BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ARTISTS WILL HAVE TO WAIT ANOTHER 100 YEARS FOR FREEDOM, IF CULTURAL GENOCIDE DOES NOT IN FACT, AS IT SEEMS TO DO, WIPEOUT OUR CULTURE ENTIRELY. BRING THIS PAPER WITH YOU TO THE MUSEUM THIS SUNDAY, OR MAIL IT TO A MEMBER OF OUR COMMITTEE:

Faith Ringgold 345 W. 145th St., New York, N.Y.  
Tom Lloyd 154-02 107th Ave., Jamaica, N.Y.

STUDENTS & ARTISTS FOR A  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.  
WING FOR BLACK ART AT THE  
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

# The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 245-3200 Cable: Modernart

Bates Lowry  
Director

April 10, 1969

Mr. Tom Lloyd  
Miss Faith Ringgold  
154-02 107th Avenue  
Jamaica, New York 11433

Dear Mr. Lloyd and Miss Ringgold:

The Museum welcomes group visits of students although it is impossible for us to make our auditorium or any other space available for briefing sessions.

There is no admission fee for New York City public junior and high school groups. As we must schedule the visits in order to avoid overcrowding the galleries, appointments should be made two weeks in advance. At least one adult, preferably a teacher, must accompany each group of 12 junior or senior high school students.

Your letter of April 3, which we received April 7, also refers to works of art on view at the Museum. As in all art museums, the works in our galleries are selected for their quality as works of art; they are grouped according to stylistic affinities without regard to the artist's religion, race, political affiliation or the country in which he was born. For the convenience of our visitors, the galleries are arranged in rough chronological sequence according to historic styles or movements in 20th-century art.

Thus, for example, the School of Paris galleries contain works by artists of varying political views and whose native countries range from Spain to Russia. The German Expressionists galleries contain works by artists of different religious beliefs. The so-called New York School includes work by artists born in many different sections of this country. We have on occasion, for example, grouped the kinetic works in the collection and thus brought into a single gallery artists from many parts of the world who do not know each other's work and have never formally banded together to create a particular aesthetic, as did say, the Italian Futurists.

The Museum was founded on the premise that the artists of our time were creating works of exceptional interest and importance. I have every faith that artists will continue to do so; and as long as that is true, the Museum will exhibit and acquire these works.

As to our plans for the future about which you inquire, we will continue to try to help the entire community understand, enjoy and use the visual arts of our time. New methods will continually be sought; the purpose remains the same.

Sincerely yours,

  
Bates Lowry

BL:rb

SOME QUOTES

Liberation News Service

If you are not careful, the newspaper will have you hating the people who are being oppressed and loving the people who are doing the oppressing.

I'm for anybody who's for freedom. I'm for anybody who's for justice. I'm for anybody who's for equality. I'm not for anybody who tells me to turn the other cheek when a cracker is busting my jaw. I'm not for anybody who tells black people to be non-violent while nobody is telling white people to be non-violent.

We are anti-exploitation, anti-degradation, anti-oppression if the white man doesn't want us to be anti-him then let him stop oppressing, degrading and exploiting us.

--Malcolm X

"NOBODY WHO'S LOOKING FOR  
A GOOD IMAGE WILL EVER BE FREE. NO,  
THAT KIND OF IMAGE DOESN'T GET YOU FREEDOM."

Malcolm X



# art

## MOMA & THE WORKERS

by John Perreault

The Museum of Modern Art seems to have been playing a delaying game with those artists and writers who, sparked by the Takis incident, have become concerned enough and socially conscious enough to demand museum reforms. These reforms, I believe, would not only aid artists, but aid in increasing the museum's relevance and perhaps insure its very survival. But the longer MOMA delays, contrary to expectations, the stronger and the larger the group of concerned artists grows.

Undoubtedly, many within the museum's structure would themselves like to see these reforms, but one doubts that they

are in the majority. The initial negotiations and confrontations were handled very badly, so much so that I felt it necessary to withdraw my deKooning lecture as a protest. As the group—now called Art Workers Coalition, "workers" being the only word anyone could think of that would make room for writers, choreographers, historians, film-makers, etc.—has grown in numbers, the museum has grown in sophistication. Rumors circulated that the first demonstration might be met with an invitation to a party.

Why do art officials still think that artists can be placated by a little wine and a little bread? The view that artists are children is not only romantic, it is also childish itself. It is also convenient. To grant artists any autonomy, wisdom, or intelligence might mean that their demands would have to be taken seriously. Perish the thought.

Occasioned by the museum's refusal to give yes or no answers to any of the 13 proposals for reform, there have so far been two demonstrations. At the first, on Saturday, April 22, a token group of 25 carried signs, handed out leaflets, and gave out facsimiles of MOMA's artists' admission pass, clearly stamped Art Worker in large type. They petitioned for free admission and were, of course, denied.

The second demonstration occurred the Sunday before last in MOMA's garden, stripped of most of its sculpture and temporarily sealed off from the rest of the museum. The museum is terrified of vandalism, but the protestors have a strong anti-vandalism policy. They are idealistically and perhaps misguidedly for art, otherwise most would not have spent so much time trying to get the museum to reform.

MOMA in a clever move (some might call it "repressive tolerance") threw open its garden gates to more than 300 demonstrators, a good number of whom, contrary to the New York Times, were indeed black. Speakers took turns at a bullhorn

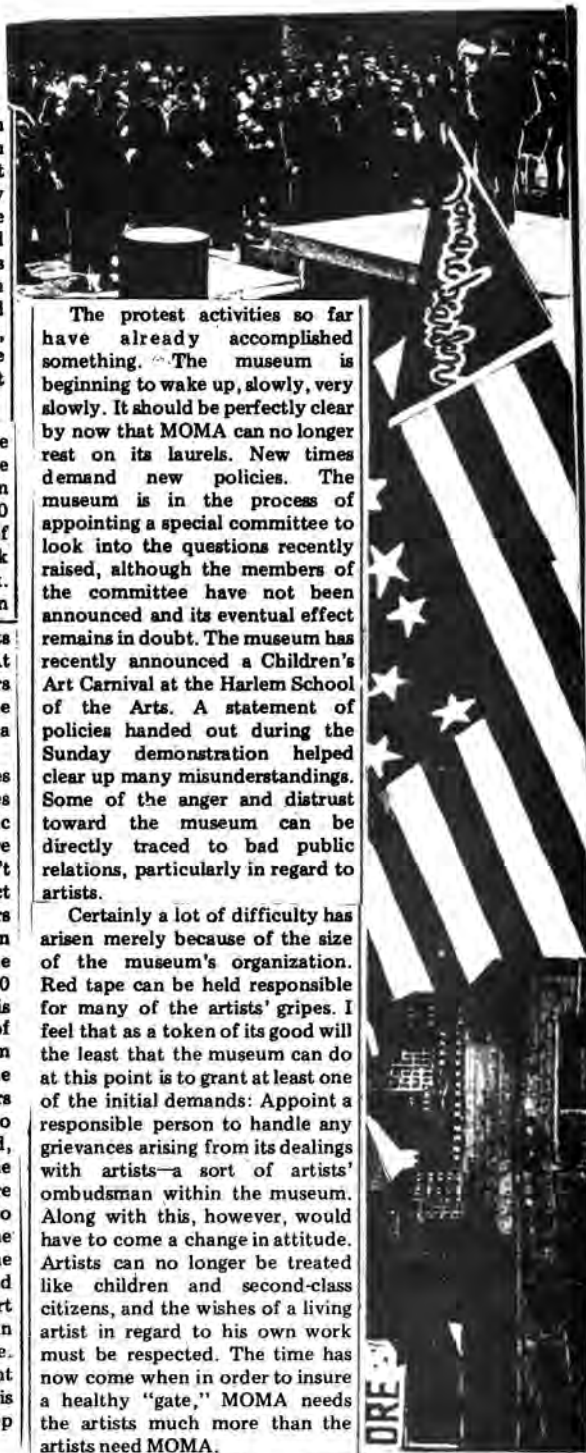
and the museum passed out its own mimeographed literature. At one point a group of protestors demanded exit through the museum. The museum provided a ribboned-off corridor.

The following day the Times quoted Museum Director Bates Lowry as saying that the public hearing and free admission were "absolutely impossible, and can't be considered." At last a direct answer! The Art Workers Coalition, however, is having an open hearing on its own at the School of Visual Arts on April 10 from 6 to 10 p. m. The subject is "What should be the program of the art workers regarding museum reform and to establish the program of an open art workers coalition?" Each person who wishes to speak will be assigned, upon arrival, an approximate time for speaking. All witnesses are encouraged by the Coalition to present their views in writing. The complete record of the proceedings will be published and brought to the attention of all art workers and art institutions in New York City and elsewhere. More than any of the recent demonstrations, I think that this is an important, positive step forward.

having a political meeting (Kosuth and I are both involved in the recent efforts to get through some sorely needed reforms at the Museum of Modern Art). Virginia

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be limited to working through schools or organizations. The poor artists and non-artists need art as much as the affluent, particularly the kinds of art the Museum of Modern Art is in a position to offer.



The protest activities so far have already accomplished something. The museum is beginning to wake up, slowly, very slowly. It should be perfectly clear by now that MOMA can no longer rest on its laurels. New times demand new policies. The museum is in the process of appointing a special committee to look into the questions recently raised, although the members of the committee have not been announced and its eventual effect remains in doubt. The museum has recently announced a Children's Art Carnival at the Harlem School of the Arts. A statement of policies handed out during the Sunday demonstration helped clear up many misunderstandings. Some of the anger and distrust toward the museum can be directly traced to bad public relations, particularly in regard to artists.

Certainly a lot of difficulty has arisen merely because of the size of the museum's organization. Red tape can be held responsible for many of the artists' gripes. I feel that as a token of its good will the least that the museum can do at this point is to grant at least one of the initial demands: Appoint a responsible person to handle any grievances arising from its dealings with artists—a sort of artists' ombudsman within the museum. Along with this, however, would have to come a change in attitude. Artists can no longer be treated like children and second-class citizens, and the wishes of a living artist in regard to his own work must be respected. The time has now come when in order to insure a healthy "gate," MOMA needs the artists much more than the artists need MOMA.

ORE

Also, I think that the museum should consider at least one day of free admission. Although MOMA claims that one-quarter of its budget comes from admission fees, almost half of this is from membership fees. I am not convinced that one free day, perhaps a Tuesday, or some other low-traffic day would wreck the museum financially. Most or all of the financial loss could be made up by keeping the museum open evenings for the rest of the week. The loss of \$13,000 (one-sixth of the admissions fees) would probably not even be this much since obviously most admission money is earned during the weekends. Although on paper MOMA's policy for free passes seems liberal, red tape again keeps it from being effective. Moreover, those who are poor should not have to beg for free admission or be limited to working through schools or organizations. The poor artists and non-artists need art as much as the affluent, particularly the kinds of art the Museum of Modern Art is in a position to offer.

for everyone in the arts photographers, printers, sculptors,

# OPEN HEARING

## SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS

### Auditorium

### 209 E 23 NYC



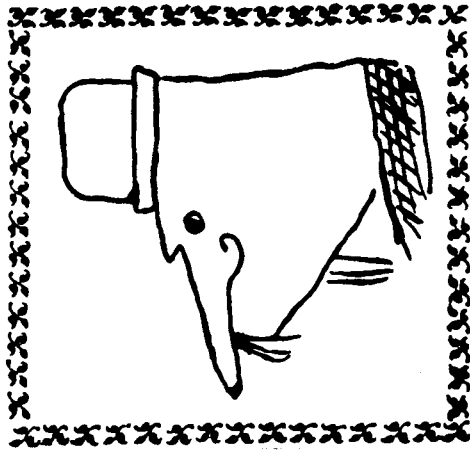
GIVE AND HEAR EVIDENCE ON ARTIST MUSEUM GALLERY COMMUNITY PROBLEMS . . . SOLUTIONS

69



designers, film-makers, museum workers, painters,

choreographers, composers, critics & writers,



# 10

### 6 to 10 p m



# Museums Warn City Budget Cuts May Close Them

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 1968

By EMANUEL PERLMUTTER

The city's museums, botanic and zoological gardens and other cultural facilities have warned Mayor Lindsay that they may have to operate part-time, move to other cities or close down if they are forced to comply with budget cutbacks that City Hall is demanding.

The warning was contained in a letter to the Mayor from the Cultural Institutions Group, Inc., made public yesterday. The organization represents 18 museums, libraries, gardens, the Aquarium and other quasi-public institutions that are privately endowed but receive city financial assistance.

The cultural groups said galleries would have to be closed, the operation of many facilities limited, and special programs for schoolchildren abandoned if they complied with a request by Budget Director Frederick O'R. Hayes to reduce their budgets by 24 per cent.

As examples of what the curtailments demanded by the city would mean, they cited the following:

¶The proposed reduction of \$482,000 in the budget of the Metropolitan Museum of Art would mean it would have to close either on Mondays or Tuesdays, or close half of the galleries Monday through Saturday.

¶For the New York Botanical Garden the \$276,000 cut would

mean the reduction of 35 jobs, the closing of the conservatory, museum exhibits and other public facilities either completely or for several days each week, and the closing of the more isolated sections of the gardens, since no guards would be available.

¶The American Museum of Natural History, asked to cut \$503,000, would drop 70 employees, close on Sundays, holidays and five weeks in the summer, restrict visiting to 11 A.M. to 3 P.M. on other days, and admit school groups only by appointment.

¶For the New York Zoological Society, the \$425,000 budget cut would cost 55 jobs, force the Bronx Zoo to be

closed part-time and cause the New York Aquarium to curtail various programs in wildlife conservation and environmental research.

**Cuts Called 'Catastrophic'**

Comparable curtailments of service would be imposed, the letter said, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, the Brooklyn Children's Museum, the New York City Hall of Science, the Museum of the City of New York, the Queens Botanical Garden, the Staten Island Historical Society, the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, the Staten Island

Zoological Society and the Wave Center for Environmental Studies.

Ralph R. Miller, chairman, chairman of the Cultural Institution Group, said:

"The cutback asked of these institutions is minor in terms of savings, but catastrophic in terms of permanently damaging the reputation and programs of these institutions so that their ability to maintain their position of eminence and attract private support is put in an untenable position, leading to the possible moving of certain museums to other cities and the permanent closing of others."

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 1968

## Dissidents Stir Art World

By GRACE GLUECK

Should the Museum of Modern Art be shut down? Or should artists simply ignore it? Are black artists entitled to special exhibition facilities? And what are some constructive alternatives to the present art world structure?

Questions such as these will be discussed Monday night at a meeting of the Art Workers' Coalition, a group of dissident artists, writers, filmmakers, critics and museum people. The meeting, to be held at Museum, an artists' cooperative exhibition hall at 729 Broadway, is a continuation of a public discussion staged by the group Thursday evening at the School of Visual Arts.

The heated but relatively decorous meeting (two firecrackers went off) lasted four hours and drew a come-and-go audience of 250 people. They heard nearly 50 dissidents speak on topics ranging from the Museum of Modern Art and its contemporary relevance to the life style of wealthy artists.

A number of Negro artists had the floor, and read similar statements denouncing the Museum of Modern Art for its alleged exclusion of black and Puerto Rican artists. They also demanded the establishment of a Martin Luther King Jr. wing for the exhibition of work by such artists.

As spokesmen for the group, Students and Artists United for a Martin Luther King Jr. Wing for Black and Puerto Rican Art at the Museum Art, they also announced that 200 artists, art and university students and secondary school children would meet at the museum tomorrow at noon. There they will conduct a "walking tour" for the purpose of "evaluating the museum in its default of cultural responsibility to the public and the artistic community."

The group had requested use of the museum's auditorium for "briefing purposes." But permission was denied, a museum spokesman said, on the grounds that the museum does not lend its auditorium to any group for such use. Members of the group, unless holding special admission cards, will also be asked to pay the regular admission fee.

"We don't intend to," Tom Lloyd, a Negro artist and one of the group's organizers, said. "Our whole point is that black people cannot afford to pay the museum's admission fee of \$1.50. Nor can blacks afford to become members."

Filmmakers were another vocal group at the Thursday evening meeting. Also using the museum as their target, they called for a number of improvements in the Film Department.

Other proposals regarding the museum included one by Lucy Lippard, a critic, that it shift its exhibition function "to a series of smaller museums resembling branch libraries, in loft buildings, or any large simple space—as vital community centers that would provide space for experimental projects in all media."

Sol Lewitt, a sculptor, whose statement was read for him, advocated that the museum limit itself to collecting works no more than 25 years old.

"Older work would be sold off and the proceeds used to maintain a truly modern collection," he suggested.

A number of ideas were also put forth on the artist's role. Bill Gordy, a film editor, rejected the idea of a "darkies' wing" at the museum ("How about a wing for women? WASPS over 30? Jewish Heterosexual Magic Realists?").





# COMMUNITIES

RAT, MAY 1, 1969

By Jon Greff

The term 'community control' was lost to the pages of the New York Times when the teachers strike ended in November. Uptight, straight, ruling class America feels that it has returned to its subtle takeover of the areas of the city thought to be 'ghettos'. The white, liberally mesmerized community feels secure in its knowledge that the tenement strewn streets of the city can be controlled. Communities of people speaking the same language, with the same needs, the same wants, similar emotional feelings towards each other create binds of trust that cannot be put into words. Together vibrations; the casual nod on the sidewalk, the raps in the grocery store. 'What's happenin', man'. The words may be in a different language or the jargon may be different, but the feeling is the same. And these people, not a nameless mass, but together people living in the same house, on the same block, all know that they don't want anyone outside their lives, different from their backgrounds, their existence, telling them what to do, telling them how to live. People driving into a neighborhood from outside, charging ridiculously high prices for food, and then splitting when it gets dark; These people have to go.

Flashback 1: The Lower East Side last July-hot town, summer in the city, back of my neck... yeah. The Ninth precinct kept pouring cops and more TFF cops onto the streets east of Ave. B to stop any outbreaks of violence before they could occur. By the mid of July, the people, the people living, shopping, talking on those streets were so tired and mad at seeing a veritable army of white, racist cops on their streets that they fought back. And the cops freaked out. They couldn't handle people

throwing bricks and molotov cocktails from the roofs of their houses that all they could do was send more cops on the streets. It got heavier. For three straight nights there was a ten block area in which there were no cops. It was a liberated zone. The people fought and the cops split.

Flashback 2: A few months later. The South Bronx, Lincoln Hospital. Community people tired of having the wealthy, white hospital administrators running the hospital for them. Tired of a structure that was unfit for patients to be cared for even twenty years ago. Tired of the administrators turning away patients who needed good mental care. So they took over the hospital, kicked out the administrators, and ran the hospital themselves. Getting together became a reality for these people when everyday community meetings were held to decide what to do with the hospital. The hospital belonged to the people.

Similar scenes happening all over the city. Harlem, Bedford Stuyvesant, the schools, the colleges. People fighting over things that are real to them. Not having to philosophize about the imperialist power structure, but taking actions against their direct oppressors. Kicking out the jams—the real jams. One of the intrinsic laws of the jungle turned into a basic law of the ghetto: 'mess with me and I mess with you'.

A new evolutionary process taking place. People breaking down into smaller and smaller units to eradicate the evils from their lives. No longer can eight million people living in one city be considered as one unit; as one entity. It must be the individual apartment houses, each street, each block, each neighborhood, acting as a separate self to decide how to live and how to continue living.

For the privilege of having power over one's life one must fight.

THE  
PEOPLE'S

A controversial public hearing on the relation between museum, artist, and society will be held on Thursday, April 10th from 6 to 10 in the evening at the School of Visual Arts, 209 East 23rd Street. These hearings, where anyone and everyone may speak or file a written record on his opinion, have already provoked considerable embarrassment at the Museum of Modern Art, which has consistently refused to sponsor them. In a recent article in the Times the Museum's Director was quoted as saying that both the public hearing and free admission to the Museum are "absolutely impossible and can't be considered." This has in fact been the Museum's constant stand throughout its dealings with the protesting artists, dealings which recently culminated in demonstrations at the Museum. The Museum has consistently, both in letters and press releases, denied that either a public hearing or free admission is possible. Now the Museum's Director has felt himself required to make a special statement claiming he has been misquoted by the Times in stating what has been his position all along. The Museum is also having difficulty finding members to serve on the closed committee they had proposed as an alternative to the open hearing—at least one person who was approached has refused to serve, and the committee so far exists only on paper. The Museum is coming under additional fire for having smuggled thirty policemen into its basement for last Sunday's demonstration—it appears there was no clear line of command to send them into action, so that any one at the museum (or anyone outside with a telephone) could have ordered them to act at any time and set them to work battering demonstrators and works of art alike. Whether fairly or unfairly much of this criticism is being aimed at Director Bates Lowry—it is certain that without his obstructionism the artists' protest could never have come as far as it has, and many people both inside and outside the Museum are beginning to wonder if he is the right man for the job. Lowry's principle posts before coming to the Modern were Director of the Pomona College Art Gallery and chairman of the art department at Brown University. It remains to be seen how he will act on Sunday, April 13th, when 200 young black students will visit the Museum to look through the permanent collection for examples of works painted by black men. They will ask for free admission, basing their request on a little-known museum rule allowing free entry to groups of students applying in advance.

# Is the Museum a Museum Piece?

By Alex Gross

MAGAZINE,  
MUSEUM  
729 Broadway  
New York, N.Y. 10003

Reprinted from The East Village Other.

It is not particularly important to point out that things are changing, as they have always been doing so, even though the pace may be faster today. Nor is it terribly important to insist that these changes must be made as quickly as possible—they will be anyway, and there is no way of stopping them. Nor is it particularly meaningful to refer to a certain building on 53rd Street as the **Mausoleum** of Modern Art, though more and more people are referring to it in this manner. What is important, to the point of being absolutely central, is that we understand the nature of the changes which are taking place so that we know why they are necessary and can help to bring them into being as efficiently as possible.

The real question is whether museums are still as necessary at least in their present form. Those who imagine that museums are eternal and unchanging both as concept and institution would do well to note that the museum as we know it is rather recent in its origins. Like the concert hall, the opera house, and (to an extent) the proscenium theatre with unmoveable seats, the museum is largely a product of the nineteenth century and the upper middle class audience which patronized all these institutions. Basically the art museum was (and remains) a place one visits to commune with what are supposed to be truly meaningful values of life and society, as distinguished from the imperfect poverty-stricken, money-grubbing world outside its walls. The museum was (and is) a place to avoid life rather than to encounter it, a place to congratulate oneself on one's values rather than to doubt them and move on to something better.

The Museum of Modern Art, and with it all forward-looking museums in the first half of this century, worked mightily and accomplished much to change the overall taste of museum-goers during that period of time. But they did almost nothing to alter the nineteenth century reasons for which people go to museums — they changed the style of display, broadened art out into crafts and design, and replaced old fashionable names with new ones, but the museum remained the museum, a church-like place where one went to commune with all that was highest and best, a substitute temple whose holiness was guaranteed by priests turned curators.

But what happens to the museum when people get tired of visiting it for those reasons? For that matter, what happens to society when people get tired of attending proscenium theatres, concert halls, and opera houses?

All of this is now beginning to happen, and it is part of a single cultural phenomenon. The opera house was always to some extent a matter of social snobbery, while music in general, as more and more people are discovering, is more fun to listen to (or to make) at home. As for the fixed seat theatre, it has been evident for some time, particularly in its Broadway incarnation, that it is a top-heavy, bloated bore, a walking dead-man.

At the same time that these institutions are beginning to wither away, a taste for something altogether new, merging all possible genres of art, religion, therapy and enjoyment in a single, all-embracing whole, is beginning to make itself felt. It is something that will bring pleasure without guilt, social criticism without dogma, and self-development

without pretension. Some of the preparatory work in this direction is already being done by environmental, mixed-media, and tech artists and by psychologists carrying out experiments in therapy along these lines. One of the results of this work will be the setting up of artificial environments fully as rich and compelling as nature at her best, though no substitute for it. These experiments are sure to be greeted with doubt and scepticism by the fearful few, and one will hear the objection that nature is being tampered with, even though the whole business of man has always been to tamper with nature — the only way to truly returning to nature is to return to the caves.

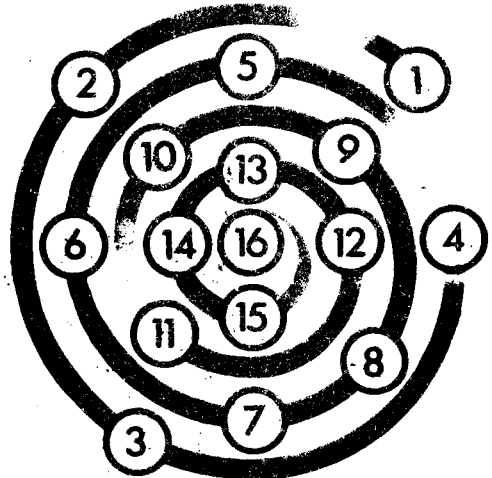
The imminence of these changes is understood in an instinctive way by many of the young and anyone else in tune with culture today. The real question is how the museums are to go about fitting in these tendencies into their programs and concepts from another century, assuming they can fit them in—the only possible alternative is by passing the museums altogether and breaking through into something more in touch with what is needed. It is to be hoped that the museums will understand what is happening in time and show the necessary flexibility in the face of change—it is in this light that the current protests against the Modern Museum should be understood. The direction in the arts today is towards a greater involvement of an ever increasing number of people in far more ways than curators still thinking in dated terms are capable of imagining. It is ironic that the Modern Museum, which spent so many years of its early growth fighting against outmoded ideas of museum organization, should now find itself the object of a similar attack, but this is only one other sign among many of how fast our culture has begun to move. It is significant that the points at issue should contain not only the usual artists' complaint of too little exposure but also go on into the domain of black-white politics, environmental experiments, and general museum policy. A new point which the artists also intend to press has to do with removing those members of the museum's directorate who happen to be close relatives of important art gallery owners—it is believed that the museum is particularly vulnerable on the issue of nepotism.

However these and other matters may develop, it is not to be expected that all artists will be in agreement on all phases at all times. Disagreement among artists and critics is a normal and healthy phenomenon and one which helps at its best, to bring about reasonable and necessary changes. What is most to be feared is not disagreement at all but the possibility that those who are in responsible positions in museums throughout this country and the world will imagine themselves to be high priests of eternal deities and so not realize the full scope and importance of what an increasingly large group of artists is now trying to tell them.

## OSMOSIS

Osmosis  
The pillow on my bed  
on which I sink my head  
And drink up dreams.

Veronica Galati



## PAINTING AND SCULPTURE COLLECTIONS July 1, 1951 to May 31, 1953

### An Important Change of Policy

On February 15, 1953 Mr. John Hay Whitney, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art, made the following announcement of the Board's decision to make the most important works of art in the Museum's possession the nucleus for a permanent collection of masterworks of modern art:

*"The Museum has come to believe that its former policy, by which all the works of art in its possession would eventually be transferred to other institutions, did not work out to the benefit of its public. It now believes it essential for the understanding and enjoyment of its entire collection to have permanently on public view masterpieces of the modern movement, beginning with the latter half of the nineteenth century. The Museum plans to set aside special galleries for this purpose and to transfer to them, from its collections, outstanding paintings and sculptures which it considers have passed the test of time, and to acquire additional works of art of equal excellence for permanent retention.*

*"The Museum of Modern Art believes now, as always, that the major portion of its collection cannot remain static. In acquiring recently produced work it must attempt to include all significant and promising aspects of today's artistic production. Such policy would lead inevitably to an accumulation of works of art which, while essential for the representation of today's work, is bound to be excessively large and unciely once it becomes a review of yesterday. Periodic reconsideration of this major part of the Collection will, therefore, always be an integral part of the Museum's procedure. The creation of a permanent core within the Collection constitutes a radically important departure from the Museum's past policy. It must be stressed that this permanent nucleus will be composed only of great masterworks.*

*"Combining thus under one roof the most representative collection of the significant movements and trends of today and a permanent core of the finest examples of the entire modern movement, the Museum believes that its contribution to the knowledge and enjoyment of modern art will be of ever-increasing importance."*

In the course of putting this new policy into effect the Museum of Modern Art terminated its agreement of 1917 with the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Though this termination will not interfere with the cooperation desirable between two institutions working in the same city it does permit them to resume complete independence in the formation of their collections.

The collection of American folk painting and sculpture and the twenty-seven modern works of art which were acquired by the Metropolitan Museum from the Museum of Modern Art under the terms of the 1917 agreement have now been transferred, physically or in title, to the older institution, with the exception of two paintings by Matisse, *Courds* and *Interior with Violin Case*, which have been repurchased by the Museum of Modern Art.

To guide and help implement the new policy, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, with their approval, has appointed a new committee to be known as the Policy Committee for the Museum's Collection of Masterworks. The members, appointed in March 1953, are listed opposite. The committee, concerned with long range planning, will in no way supersede the existing Committee on the Museum Collections which is involved primarily with current activities and acquisitions.

#### THE MRS. SIMON GUGGENHEIM FUND EXHIBITION

The Museum's change of policy was anticipated by the most important event of the year 1952, the exhibition of works bought over the previous fifteen years with funds provided by Mrs. Simon Guggenheim.

Mrs. Guggenheim had expressed the wish that the Museum would use her purchase funds to acquire works of the highest excellence. Only such works, she felt, would have permanent value and were, therefore, indispensable to the Museum. The exhibition was a report to the public of how the Museum had responded both to Mrs. Guggenheim's

## FOREWORD : THE COLLECTIONS OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

This book has been prepared by the Museum of Modern Art on the occasion of its Twenty-fifth Anniversary. Intended as a tribute to the art of our time, it deals with many branches of contemporary visual art produced in forty countries over the past seventy-five years. Obviously such a vast subject cannot be treated exhaustively in any one volume, but we believe that this book will serve its purpose if it conveys an idea of the variety, excellence of achievement, and vigor of modern art.

That it was possible to select the illustrations for this book entirely from the Museum's own collection is a matter of considerable pride to us. A quarter century is a short period in the history of most of the world's major art museums. Yet within that time the Museum of Modern Art has assembled great collections, some of them unsurpassed, in a variety of modern fields including painting, sculpture, prints, motion pictures, well-designed furniture and utensils, posters and photography.

Originally it was the Museum's stated policy to keep the collection fluid by passing on to other institutions even its best works as they matured and became 'classic.' Recently the Museum has adopted a radically new policy which will be implemented by the creation of a highly selective *permanent* collection of masterworks by both twentieth-century artists and their great nineteenth-century forerunners, particularly in painting. The selection and acquisition of these masterworks will be one of the major goals of the Museum, but the experimental collecting of new forms of art will continue in spite of the limited confines of our presently inadequate gallery and storage space.

The Museum's collection is a living testimony to the courage, the generosity, and the enthusiasm of the entire Museum community—its Trustees, its patrons, its staff. We are proud of past achievement but realize fully how much there is still to be done.

To help people enjoy, understand, and use the visual arts of our time is the stated purpose of the Museum of Modern Art. Particularly during a time when conformity enforced through authoritarian pressure is a constant threat to the development of a free society, it is most heartening to turn to the arts and to find in them the vitality and diversity that reflect freedom of thought and of faith. We believe that the collection of the Museum of Modern Art and this publication represent our respect for the individual and for his ability to contribute to society as a whole through free use of his individual gifts in his individual manner. This freedom we believe fundamental to democratic society.

JOHN HAY WHITNEY  
*Chairman of the Board of Trustees, 1954*

NELSON A. ROCKEFELLER  
*Chairman of the Board of Trustees, 1958*

## FOREWORD

Twenty-seven years ago in the autumn of 1929, even before it opened its doors to the public, the Museum of Modern Art began to form its collection. Today, in its several departments, the collection includes many thousands of works of art.

Painting and sculpture, with concomitant drawings and prints, were the only media exhibited and collected by the Museum during its first three years. By 1932 the Museum had acquired six paintings and eight sculptures, all gifts—the depression was at its deepest and there were as yet no purchase funds.

The Lillie P. Bliss Collection, conditionally bequeathed in 1931, was formally accessioned in 1934 and immediately gave importance to the Museum Collection. In 1935 the Advisory Committee purchased the first of its gifts and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., gave her collection of 181 watercolors and oils, mostly by Americans. Among early donors of important works of art were Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., Stephen C. Clark, A. Conger Goodyear, Aristide Maillol, Edward M. M. Warburg and the Museum's Advisory Committee.

In 1937 Mrs. Rockefeller, with the help of her son Nelson A. Rockefeller, established the Museum's first purchase fund. In 1938 Mrs. Simon Guggenheim made her first gift to the collection, purchased with funds which have since been frequently and magnificently replenished. Mrs. Guggenheim has stipulated that her Fund should be used for the acquisition only of works of exceptional importance and quality. In 1939 Mrs. Rockefeller presented two more collections: thirty-six sculptures and a group of American folk painting and sculpture; and in 1941 an anonymous donor added to his already generous gifts of works of art.

In September 1947, under the terms of a formal agreement between the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Modern Art sold to the Metropolitan twenty-six works already deemed "classical" (page 7), the proceeds to be used for the purchase of more "modern" works.

However, in February 1953 the Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art announced an important change of policy which resulted in the abrogation of the agreement with the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the creation of a permanent core of masterworks within the Museum Collection. The Policy Committee for the Museum's Permanent Collection of Masterworks was appointed (page 4) and drew up a resolution which was approved by the Board of Trustees at its meeting of May 2, 1956. The Resolution, with part of its preamble, follows:

"In its early years the Museum of Modern Art, primarily devoted to loan exhibitions, planned its Collections with the stated policy of eventually passing



on the works of art to other institutions or otherwise disposing of them as they matured or no longer seemed useful.

"However, the Trustees have recently determined, as a radically new departure, to establish a collection of works of art, limited in number and of the highest quality, which shall remain permanently in the Museum's possession. . . .

"After discussion, it was, on motion made and seconded, unanimously resolved that:

- 1 The Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art herewith confirm the establishment of a Permanent Collection of Masterworks of Modern Art.
- 2 The Permanent Collection of Masterworks shall comprise works of art selected from the Museum's general Collection together with such additions as may be approved from time to time by the Trustees.
- 3 In general, the Permanent Collection of Masterworks shall not include works of art executed prior to the mid-nineteenth century.
- 4 The Collection of Masterworks shall have the same degree of permanence as the collections of the other great museums of this country. No work of art accepted as a gift for the Permanent Collection of Masterworks shall be eliminated from it except in accordance with the conditions, if any, originally stipulated by the donor.
- 5 No works of art shall be eliminated from the Permanent Collection of Masterworks, and no material change shall be made in the policies governing the Permanent Collection of Masterworks, unless approved by three quarters of the Trustees of the Museum then in office."

In June 1954 the Trustees of the Museum established the honorary group, Patrons of the Museum Collections, in recognition of those who have been particularly generous in their donations or bequests of works of art and purchase funds. Patrons are elected by the Board of Trustees and their names listed in publications and on the wooden plaque at the entrance to the galleries of the painting collection. The list of Patrons appears on page 4, of the many other generous donors to the painting and sculpture collection, on page 68.

The Museum Collections as one of the five administrative divisions of the Museum was established in 1947 and embraces all the works of art in the Museum's possession. The Director of the Museum Collections is responsible to the Committee on the Museum Collections, the Chairman of which, in turn, reports to the Board of Trustees. Curatorially, the staff of the Museum Collections is at present directly concerned only with painting, sculpture, constructions, collages, drawings and prints; curatorial responsibility for the other collections is divided among the Departments of Photography, Architecture and Design, and the Film Library.

A selection of about 165 paintings, roughly one seventh of the collection, is on view in the second floor galleries of the Museum; sculpture is shown on the third floor and in the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden. Unless on loan elsewhere, works not on view may be seen by appointment.

The first catalog, *Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art*, published in 1942, listed 693 works. The collection of painting and sculpture, as of

December 31, 1956, numbers about 1,360 items by artists of nearly 40 different nationalities.

A comprehensive list of the Museum of Modern Art publications referring to painting and sculpture in the collection is given on page 64. Of particular relevance are the catalog, *Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art*, 1948, with 380 reproductions (now out of print but available in libraries); its six illustrated supplements, issued as *Museum Bulletins*, and covering accessions from 1948 through 1956; *The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Painting and Sculpture Collection*, Les Éditions Braun & Cie, Paris, 1950; and *Masters of Modern Art*, 1954, the Museum's 25th Anniversary volume, with 356 illustrations, 77 of them in color, available in German, French, Spanish and Swedish as well as American editions.

ALFRED H. BARR, JR.  
*Director of the Museum Collections*



Copy for P.C.

1112

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## Agreement

between

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

and

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

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Dated as of September 15, 1947

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**AGREEMENT** made as of September 15, 1947, between **THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART**, a New York corporation, (hereinafter referred to as "Metropolitan Museum"), **THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**, a New York corporation, (hereinafter referred to as "Modern Museum"), and **WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART**, a New York corporation, (hereinafter referred to as "Whitney Museum");

**WHEREAS**, Metropolitan Museum is concerned primarily with the visual arts of the past, both American and foreign, and Modern Museum is concerned primarily with the encouragement and study of the visual arts of the present and recent past, both American and foreign; and

**WHEREAS**, an arrangement in principle has been entered into for the coalition of Metropolitan Museum with Whitney Museum, and Whitney Museum is concerned primarily with the encouragement and study of American painting, drawing, prints and sculpture; and

**WHEREAS**, it is desirable in the interests of rendering better service to the public and effecting economies to define the activities of the parties in regard to the collection and exhibition of paintings, drawings, prints and sculpture; and

**WHEREAS**, it is the expectation of the parties that this agreement will be renewed from time to time on similar terms and that the ultimate result of the continued renewal hereof will be that Metropolitan Museum will eventually have the opportunity to acquire any paintings, drawings, prints and sculpture now owned or hereafter acquired by Modern Museum on terms permitting such transfer:

Now, **THEREFORE**, the parties, in consideration of the mutual covenants herein contained, agree as follows:

**FIRST**: For the purposes of this agreement, the term "modern art" shall be deemed to include any painting, drawing, print or sculpture by a living artist and any such work of art by a deceased artist which is still significant in the contemporary movement in art, and the term "classic art" shall be deemed to include all other paintings, drawings, prints or sculpture which have become part of the cultural history of mankind.

**SECOND: Metropolitan Museum agrees:**

(1) To deposit with Modern Museum such paintings, drawings, prints and sculpture now owned or hereafter acquired by Metropolitan Museum as it believes can be more appropriately exhibited by Modern Museum. The objects of art to be deposited initially are listed in Schedule A hereto attached.

(2) To lend freely to Modern Museum objects of classic art which Modern Museum may deem useful in showing the development of current trends or the relationship of modern to classic art and which Metropolitan Museum does not consider inappropriate for lending.

(3) To purchase from Modern Museum the paintings, drawings and sculpture listed in Schedule B hereto attached and in consideration thereof to pay Modern Museum the sum of \$191,000, payable in four annual installments of \$39,000 each, the first installment to be paid on October 1, 1947, and a final installment of \$35,000 to be paid on October 1, 1951. Delivery of such objects of art to Metropolitan Museum shall be made not later than October 1, 1957. Title to each such object of art shall pass to Metropolitan Museum upon the payment of the final installment of purchase price or upon delivery thereof to Metropolitan Museum, whichever event first occurs.

(4) To consult with Modern Museum and Whitney Museum in connection with developing representative collections in the fields in which the parties are specially interested.

(5) Not to exhibit foreign modern art without prior consultation with Modern Museum and to exhibit American modern art only through the facilities of Whitney Museum until the coalition between Metropolitan Museum and Whitney Museum becomes effective.

(6) To advise Modern Museum and Whitney Museum of its program of exhibitions and to cooperate with said museums in coordinating their respective programs of exhibitions.

**THIRD: Modern Museum agrees:**

(1) To deliver to Metropolitan Museum the Daumier painting described in subdivision (s) (17) of Article Fifth of the will of Lizzie P. Bliss promptly upon the execution of this agreement.

(2) To sell to Metropolitan Museum the paintings, drawings and sculpture listed in Schedule B in consideration of the payments to be made to Modern Museum as provided in Article Second, Paragraph (3) hereof. Delivery of said objects of art to Metropolitan Museum shall be made, and title thereto shall pass to Metropolitan Museum, as provided in Article Second, Paragraph (3) hereof. Modern Museum declares that any new work of art acquired out of the proceeds of sale of any of the above objects of art, shall bear the name of the donor or fund through which the relevant object of art sold was originally acquired.

(3) To deposit with Metropolitan Museum such paintings, drawings, prints and sculpture now owned or hereafter acquired by Modern Museum as it believes can be more appropriately exhibited by Metropolitan Museum.

(4) To lend freely to Whitney Museum and Metropolitan Museum objects of modern art which they may deem useful in showing the development of current trends and which Modern Museum does not consider inappropriate for lending.

(5) To consult with Metropolitan Museum and Whitney Museum in connection with developing representative collections in the fields in which the parties are specially interested.

(6) Not to hold annual exhibitions of American modern art comparable to the annual exhibitions heretofore held by Whitney Museum until the coalition between Metropolitan Museum and Whitney Museum becomes effective.

(7) To advise Metropolitan Museum and Whitney Museum of its program of exhibitions and to cooperate with said museums in coordinating their respective programs of exhibitions.

**FOURTH:** Whitney Museum agrees:

(1) To lend freely to Modern Museum objects of American art which Modern Museum may deem useful in showing the development of current trends or the relationship of American modern to American classic art and which Whitney Museum does not consider inappropriate for lending.

(2) To consult with Metropolitan Museum and Modern Museum in connection with developing representative collections in the fields in which the parties are specially interested. The

existing practice in regard to the purchase of works of living American artists based on the proposed agreement of coalition between Metropolitan Museum and Whitney Museum is hereby confirmed.

(3) To confine its activities to the field of American art and not to exhibit foreign modern art.

(4) To advise Metropolitan Museum and Modern Museum of its program of exhibitions and to cooperate with said museums in coordinating their respective programs of exhibitions.

FIFTH: While the parties expect that this agreement will provide a permanent pattern for their mutual activities, they recognize that it is unwise to bind institutions indefinitely to a particular course of conduct or to the expenditure of funds for specific purposes. For these reasons, this agreement shall terminate on October 1, 1957. The parties expect, as this agreement or any renewal thereof terminates, to enter into a new agreement similar to the predecessor agreement.

Upon the termination of this agreement, the obligations of Modern Museum under Article Third, Paragraph (2) hereof to deliver to Metropolitan Museum the paintings, drawings, prints and sculpture listed in Schedule B shall survive such termination and remain in effect and all paintings, drawings, prints or sculpture deposited by Metropolitan Museum with Modern Museum or by Modern Museum with Metropolitan Museum shall be returned to the depositing museum.

SIXTH: Pending delivery of each object of art to be acquired by Metropolitan Museum hereunder, Modern Museum shall retain the same for the benefit of Metropolitan Museum and shall insure it to the extent of its market value for the benefit of Metropolitan Museum by an all-risk fine arts policy or policies in the form currently in use. In case Modern Museum shall fail to deliver any such object of art to Metropolitan Museum by the date herein specified, Modern Museum shall forthwith pay to Metropolitan Museum a sum equal to the then market value of such object of art less any insurance recovered by Metropolitan Museum. For the purposes of this article, the market value of any such object of art shall be the amount heretofore determined by mutual agreement unless Metropolitan Museum

at intervals of not less than one year shall have requested that such market value be redetermined, in which case the market value shall be the amount so redetermined by mutual agreement or in accordance with the provisions of Article NINTH hereof.

SEVENTH: Nothing herein contained shall be deemed (a) to limit the right of each party to control its own policy of purchases or (b) to require any party to accept deposits of objects of art which it may determine to be inappropriate for inclusion in its collections or (c) to prevent Metropolitan Museum from retaining, collecting or lending modern art prints and making them available to the public except through its own exhibitions or (d) to require the labelling of any objects of art acquired by Metropolitan Museum hereunder as the property of Metropolitan Museum until such time as said objects of art shall have been delivered to Metropolitan Museum or (e) to prevent Modern Museum from acquiring or exhibiting objects of American modern art appropriate to its function of presenting a rounded and balanced demonstration of modern art in all its phases and without limitation as to nationality.

Each party agrees that whenever it exhibits, reproduces or catalogues any painting, drawing, print or sculpture deposited with it or lent to it by any other party hereto, appropriate reference shall be made to the museum of origin and the donor or fund through which the work was originally acquired by the depositing or lending museum. Each party further agrees that whenever it catalogues any painting, drawing, print or sculpture sold to it by any other party hereto, appropriate reference shall be made to the selling museum and to the donor or fund through which the work was originally acquired by the selling museum.

EIGHTH: Except as specifically provided herein, each museum shall be free to follow such policies as it may deem advisable in all other activities and particularly in educational and other programs designed to encourage commercial and industrial art.

NINTH: In the event that any difference of opinion shall arise between the Metropolitan Museum and the Modern Museum over the

interpretation of any provision hereof or its performance, the matter shall be referred to a committee composed of three Trustees from each of the two museums and the decision of a majority of such committee shall be final and binding upon the parties. If the committee shall be equally divided, the matter shall then be referred to an individual selected by a majority of such committee and the decision of such individual shall be final and binding upon the parties. A similar procedure shall be used in the event that any difference of opinion shall arise between the Modern Museum and the Whitney Museum and any decision so arrived at shall be final and binding upon the parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have caused these presents to be signed by their duly authorized officers and their corporate seals to be hereunto affixed as of the day and year first above written.

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

By \_\_\_\_\_  
*President*

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Secretary*

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

By \_\_\_\_\_  
*Chairman of the Board*

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Secretary*

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

By \_\_\_\_\_  
*President*

Attest:

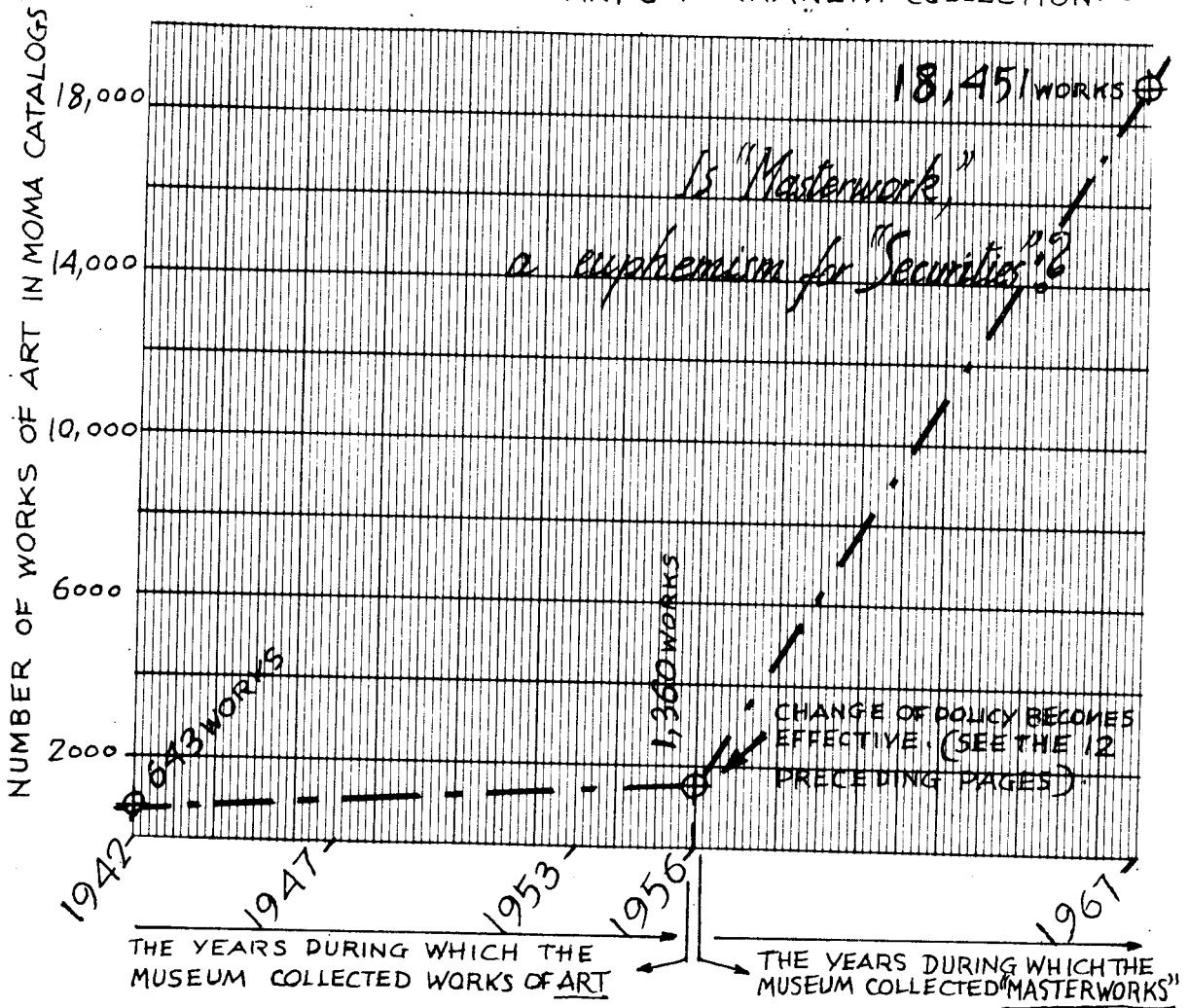
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Secretary*

Schedule A

Objects of art to be deposited with the Modern Museum by the Metropolitan Museum pursuant to Article SECOND, Paragraph (1), of the foregoing agreement.

<u>Artist</u>	<u>Media</u>	<u>Title</u>
Maillol	bronze	Chained Action
Picasso	oil	Portrait of Gertrude Stein

AWC CHART INDICATING THE GROWTH PROFILE OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART'S PERMANENT COLLECTION





## Schedule B

Objects of art to be sold by Modern Museum to the Metropolitan pursuant to Article THIRD, Paragraph (2), of the foregoing agreement.

<u>Artist</u>	<u>Media</u>	<u>Title</u>
Cezanne	oil	Man in a Blue Cap
"	wc	Bathers Under a Bridge
Despiau	plaster	Little Peasant Girl
"	plaster	Madame Othon Friesz
"	bronze	Maria Lani
"	bronze	Seated Youth
Kolbe	bronze	Seated Figure
"	terra cotta	Crouching Figure
"	bronze	Portrait of Dr. Valentiner
Maillol	bronze	Portrait of Renoir
"	bronze	Ile de France
"	plaster	Spring
"	bronze	Standing Figure
"	bronze	Standing Woman
re-purchased by us — Matisse	oil	The Gourds
" " " " " "	oil	Interior with Violin Case
" " " " " "	oil	Bouquet on the Bamboo Table
Picasso	oil	La Coiffure
"	oil	Woman in White
Redon	tempera	Etruscan Vase
Rouault	oil	Portrait of Lebasque
"	gouache, etc.	Funeral
Seurat	dr	The Artist's Mother
"	dr	Lady Fishing
"	dr	Seurat—House at Dusk
Signac	wc	Village Festival

purchase completed  
but not yet delivered  
to Met.

## AMERICAN FOLK ART

Hicks	oil	The Residence of David Twining
"	oil	The Peaceable Kingdom
Unknown	oil	Baby in Red Chair
"	wc	Glass Bowl with Fruit
"	oil	The Quilting Party
"	wood	Eagle
"	wood	Henry Ward Beecher
"	copper	Weathervane-Fish
"	iron	Weathervane-Horse
"	oil	Child with Dog
"	"fractur"	Crucifixion
"	dr	Deer
"	dr	Horse
"	wood	Seated Woman

delivered to  
Met 11-16-1950

86

(14)

(40)

April 11, 1969

President Richard M. Nixon  
White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Nixon:

With all due respect to your right to make your appointments as you see fit, I as a *artist* feel obliged to request that you appoint an individual as your Cultural Advisor who has the high esteem of the creative world.

The reported candidates for this position, David Black, John Rockefeller III, Jr. and August Hecksher are disappointing because they are too far removed from the creative scene to be leaders in the cultural movement of today.

We need a person as your Advisor who would bring the interest and influence of the Presidency to the various art fields. With this kind of encouraging person in the White House, we can have a flourishing of the arts (which we are more than ready for) as has not existed in the history of America.

The Art Workers' Coalition will be happy to submit names for consideration on request.

Sincerely,

*James Cuchiana*  
*342 Bowery*  
*NYC NY. 10012*  
87

For Press Release.

Gentlemen:

Included two open letters (from myself and another Belgian artist, Marcel Broodthaers) to the Secretary of Arts in Belgium, protesting the participation of Belgian artists in an art exhibition in fascist Spain.

I would appreciate your support for this protest.

March 27, 1969

Jeen Toche

72 Carmine St.

New York, NY 10014

Tel: 242-7287

Jean TOCHE  
72 Carmine Street  
New York, NY 10014

27 mars 1969.

Lettre ouverte  
au Ministre de l'Education Nationale  
et de la Culture.  
158 Avenue de Cortenberg  
Bruxelles, Belgium.

Monsieur le Ministre:

Je vous félicite vivement pour votre appui, et celui de certains artistes Belges, par votre intervention, à une exposition internationale des Beaux-Arts et du Sport en mai prochain à Madrid.

Ceci ne peut que démontrer une fois de plus, et avec quelle insolence..., que l'Art et la Culture sont bien au service des forces repressives de la Société.

Il n'a pas suffi que la Belgique devienne aux yeux des noirs, et du monde entier, le meurtrier de Lumumba, il fallait encore insulter les travailleurs Espagnols et la mémoire de 1936.

Bien que non invité, je ne peux que concevoir mon refus à une telle manipulation hypocrite.

Je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur le Ministre, mes salutations ironiques

*Jean Toche*  
—  
JOAN TOCHE.

VIVE LA REPUBLIQUE

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Translation:

Open letter to the Belgian Secretary of Arts.

I can only congratulate you for support, and those of some Belgian artists, through your intervention, to an international exhibition of Arts and Sports in coming mai in Madrid.

This can only demonstrate one more time, and with such insolence..., that Art and Culture are really at the service of the repressive forces of Society.

It was not enough that Belgium becomes for the Black people, and for the whole world, the murderer of Lumumba, we had to also insult the Spanish workers and the memory of 1936.

Although not invited, I can only refuse my being part to such an hypocritical manipulation.

**DECLARATION of INDEPENDENCE**

Republic of the  
Federal Socialist States of BELGIUM  
(R.F.S.S.B.)

**GOVERNMENT IN EXILE**

- Action Committee for the Liberation of the Flemish and Walloon Workers
  - Collective Committee for Direct Democracy
  - Vigilance Committee against Centralized Authoritarian Hierarchy
  - Action Committee for Sexual Liberation
- Movement of May 4, 1969**



Lettre ouverte  
au Ministre de l'Education Nationale  
et de la Culture.

Bruxelles, le 3 mars 69.

Monsieur le Ministre,

J'ai le regret de ne pouvoir accepter l'invitation concernant une exposition internationale des Beaux-Arts et de Sport organisée en mai à Madrid, et à laquelle vous donnez officiellement votre appui.

Mes idées m'ont toujours éloigné des préoccupations liées au thème de cette exposition nommée exactement dans la lettre qui m'est parvenue par les soins de vos services : le Sport et l'Education Physique.

Et bien que ce thème serait "pris dans le sens le plus large" il n'en existe pas moins. J'y vois une sorte d'engagement culturel, souligné par l'état d'exception régnant en Espagne; engagement auquel je ne puis souscrire.

C'est au nom de ma conception des choses de l'art et de la poésie et de leur diffusion que j'ai cru pouvoir vous adresser ma réponse sous forme de lettre ouverte.

Mais c'est avec plaisir que j'accepterai une participation à quelque prochaine manifestation internationale.

Je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur le Ministre, mes salutations distinguées.

M. Broodthaers.  
30, rue de la Pépinière,  
Bruxelles 1.

New York, April 15, 1969

ART WORKERS COALITION

c/o MUSEUM P.L.A.

729 Broadway , New York City

Ministre de l'Education Nationale  
et de la Culture  
158 Avenue de Cortenberg  
Bruxelles, Belgium

Les artistes appartenant à " Art Workers Coalition " apportent leur support aux artistes Belges ayant refusés de participer à une exposition Internationale à Madrid au mois de Mai 1969.

The artists and workers of the " Art Workers Coalition " give their full support to the Belgian artists who have refused to participate in an International exhibition to be held in un-democratic city of Madrid during the month of May 1969.

ART WORKERS COALITION

Farman  
Paul Liebegott  
Frank Lincoln Viner  
Richard Serra  
Carl Andre  
D. Holmes  
Hans Haacke  
John Perrault  
David Lee  
Ceasar Velez  
Marjorie Hupert  
Ricardo Vitiello  
Bob Huot  
Lucy Lippard  
Stephen Phillips  
Lil Piccard  
Paula Davies  
P.J. Francisco  
Robert Barry  
Martin Bressler  
Steve Rosenthal  
Naomi Levine  
Peter Pinchbeck  
Tom Lloyd  
Joanna Pousette-Dart  
Gavin Mc Fayden  
Iain Whitecross

Thomas Sullivan  
Rosemarie Castoro  
Vernita Nemeč  
Frederica Lawrence  
L. Brewers  
Alex Gross  
J. Russo  
Alan Bermowitz  
Martin Leeds  
Eva Russo  
Marsha Emanuel  
Raymond Sherman  
Bruce Brown  
Jon Bauch  
Gary Smith  
Robert Rosineck  
Jack O Connell  
Mark Berger  
Olga Eph ron  
Stanley Gould

# THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM

EASTERN PARKWAY, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11238

## BOARD OF ESTIMATE HEARING - APRIL 15, 1969

April 8, 1969

To All Friends of the Brooklyn Museum:

It is with great anxiety and regret that I write to you at this time. The Brooklyn Museum is threatened with a city budget cut of at least 24% (\$253,000) for the coming fiscal year. In order to comply with this cut we shall be forced to reduce our staff by about 46 positions which will include almost the entire staff of the Education Division. This will obviously mean that all school programs and other public service functions will be eliminated. In addition to school class programs, children's concerts and lending services, leisure time programs will also be discontinued. These are the activities which many of your children and you have enjoyed for a long period. Sunday concerts, Festival Time, Saturday films, children's art classes, Junior Membership activities and adult gallery talks and lectures will be among the many things affected. The Museum will be open only for limited hours and an entrance fee of .50¢ per adult and .25¢ per child will be charged for all visitors including school classes.

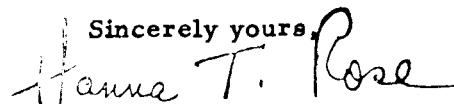
If you believe that our services are a vital part of the education program of children and of the cultural life of this city, will you join with our friends and trustees in protesting this action on the part of the City officials. We cannot do this alone - only you, the citizens of Brooklyn, can help. May I ask that you communicate your support for our budget request directly to the following:

Mayor John V. Lindsay  
City Hall  
New York, New York 10007

Borough President Abe Stark  
21 Borough Hall  
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Thomas J. Cuite, Chairman of Finance Committee  
New York City Council  
City Hall  
New York, New York 10007

Sincerely yours,



Hanna T. Rose  
Curator of Education

HTR:ad



TO HON. JOHN V. LINDSAY  
MAYOR OF NEW YORK CITY  
CITY HALL, NEW YORK 10007

ART WORKERS COALITION  
NEW YORK CITY  
APRIL 18, 1969

TO MR. THOMAS J. CUIE  
CHAIRMAN OF FINANCE COMMITTEE  
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
CITY HALL, NEW YORK 10007

AS MEMBERS OF THE 'ARTWORKERS COALITION', WE THE UNDERSIGNED WISH TO EXPRESS IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS OUR OPPOSITION TO THE BUDGET CUTBACKS (EITHER 24% OR 18%) DICTATED BY THE STATE LEGISLATURE, TO THE MUSEUMS OF THIS CITY.

WE HAVE NOT HESITATED TO TAKE DIRECT ACTION IN SUPPORT OF OUR PRINCIPLES IN THE PAST, AND WE WILL NOT HESITATE IN THIS CASE.

ARTWORKERS COALITION  
NEW YORK CITY  
C/O MUSEUM FOR LIVING  
ARTISTS  
729 BROADWAY

Tom Lloyd  
James Cuchiara  
Naomi Levine  
Victoria Peterson  
Ben Katz

Stuart Russel  
Hans Haacke  
Ann Wilson  
Gene Swenson  
Anita Steckel

Elizabeth Clarck  
Peter Pinchbeck  
Robert Barry  
Joseph Di Donato  
Gordon Hait

Joseph D. Russo  
Robert Huot  
Frederick Castle  
William Johnson  
Jean Toche

Pamela Ricart  
Frank Hewitt  
Theresa Mannino  
Stanley Gould  
Anna Carney

John Evans  
Stephen Phillips  
Arthur Hughes  
Irving Petlin  
Faith Riggold

David Jacov  
M. Sullivan Smith  
Stella Waitzkin  
Bob Bernstein  
Charles Fodor

Doris O'Kane  
Stan Kaplan  
Hollis Frampton  
Farman  
Iain Whitecross

Joseph Kosuth  
H. D. Pindell  
J. Di Giorgio  
Alex Gross  
Edwin Micczkowski

Nelson Rockefeller once jokingly told Franz Kline that the only reason he and other collectors bought artists work was to keep artists from becoming revolutionaries. Artists are now starting to use their art for political ends that will free Museums, galleries, and collectors, as artists are already free.

An open hearing set up by the Artworkers Coalition, held Thursday night, April 10th, at the School of Visual Arts auditorium, covered an entire spectrum of radical political positions. A total of 48 artists spoke on the arena of political possibility. Many speakers felt the Museum of Modern Art, its board of trustees, gallery owners, and collectors, represent and are indeed part of the entire rotten structure of this country. That is, the trustee members of other large powerful businesses as; Columbia University, the Whitney Museum, CBS, NBC, Time-Life, Harvard University, galleries, Newsweek, and the New York Times. Further, this same power block extends into, and controls politics, the mass media, schools, and ARTISTS toward its own ends. In relationship to the artist, this means control over his very being and reason for existence. Control that is maintained through gallery system, extended and joined to the Museums. Control of the viewers of art in that the museums are not free because of their own constriction toward viewers in a do not stop, look, or touch, attitude in art. The Museum of Modern Art is in essence showing dead gold bricks.

In reaction against this Monolith Mausoleum, a number of proposals were put forth. The blacks demand from the Museum a separatist wing for "Black Art". A wing in fact (and ironically) dedicated to the late Martin Luther King Jr. Their reasoning is the Museum already has other wings blocked off for types or styles of art which the blacks are not part of. Other speakers demanded that ALL ARTISTS boycott or strike against the gallery-museum system by refusing to show their work, or reproductions of it, in all galleries, museums, and publications, until the system is changed and the artist has control beyond the confines of his own studio. Others wishing to keep the Museum space but not the administrative structure

4

**'Positive Use of Violence'**  
Distressed by the sharp cuts in the New York State welfare budget for the coming year, a group of New York City clergymen—members of the Interfaith Citywide Coordinating Committee Against Poverty—had a sharp warning for Governor Rockefeller last week. Ghetto tensions "will not be able to restrain the violence that will produce a long, hot summer unless the Governor takes positive action," the clergymen said. "With the immoral decision of the Legislature in regard to the health, education and welfare of the people, we believe it may be, that to bring about the changes needed, we will have to support the positive use of violence."

as it now stands, seek museum reform with artist participation and control. Another possibility of artist control, outside the museum framework, would be to set up a "protective" organization. An organization that every artist would join. It would be protective, in that it would collect rents or royalties each time a work is published, or shown. The money would go to the artist. Another suggestion was that the artists draw up contracts when they make sales saying that they own the "artistic merit" in the work and retain all rights as to its disposition.

The complete record of the proceedings of this hearing will be published and brought to the attention of all art workers and art institutions in New York City and elsewhere. An unlimited amount of copies will be made available at cost to anyone requesting them. The committee which has organized this hearing will prepare a report drawing conclusions from all of the testimony.

\*rhymes with caulk

Stephen Phillips

**FREE ADMISSION  
AT MODERN MUSEUM**

**NEW YORK (EVO)** — There is now free admission at the Modern Museum. This is the only conclusion to be drawn from last Sunday's demonstration. Fifty black and white demonstrators were let in without paying in the presence of the entire Museum staff and three television networks. Anyone wishing to enter on similar terms should go either alone or in a group to the museum and ask for free admission where the guards are standing. If denied entry he should go to the box office and press his point home. He should simply identify himself as one of the many citizens concerned for reform in America's museums. If he has any difficulty he should notify EVO. The Museum is expected to declare itself on an official free day some time in the near future, but until they do there is no reason to suppose that the above procedure is not the correct one.

should simply identify himself as one of the many citizens concerned for reform in Amer-

home. He should simply identify himself as one of the many citizens concerned for reform in Amer-

April 16, 1969

**FREE ADMISSION  
AT MODERN MUSEUM  
NEW YORK (EVO)**  
There is now free admission at the Modern Museum. This

# 'I accuse, Baby!' She Cried

By GRACE GLUECK

**I**T was a lively *kunstklatsch*, all right. Jean Toche, a "destruction artist," got up and denounced museums as "fascistic." Tom Lloyd, a black "light artist," read a four-page, single spaced letter to MOMA, urging more "cultural relevance" for blacks and Puerto Ricans. Naomi Levine, a filmmaker, reported that "rotteness was beginning to show in the creative arts." And, "I accuse, baby!" cried erotic artist Anita Steckel, lashing out at critics for failing to cover her recent exhibition.

The occasion (at the School of Visual Arts auditorium), was the first "public hearing" held by the Art Workers' Coalition, a loose-knit group whose camp-Marxist name reflects a thumpingly anarchist non-structure. Composed of artists, writers, filmmakers, critics, museum people and ephemeralists, its only point of unity is, if anything, its anti-Establishmentarianism.

The range in age and life style is from Farman, a young Persian-born artist who asked temporary liberation from the movement to tend, among other things, to his "sexual life," to Barnett Newman, Dad of Cool, who sent in a statement to be read, but appeared in person (to greet well-wishers on the sidewalk) only after the meeting had adjourned.

The object of the recent "hearing," says the critic Lucy Lippard, who serves the group as one of its many outspoken spokesmen, was "to get people thinking about change instead of continuing the personal griping and backbiting that always goes on; to crystallize and analyze the broad dissatisfaction and see where constructive energy can be directed."

We'll get on with that in a minute, but first a bit of background. A. W. C. got started last January when Takis, the technologically-oriented artist removed his work from MOMA's "Machine" show on the grounds that it had been used despite his written objection. The action touched off a surprising response. Dissident attention, hitherto unfocused, zeroed in on MOMA

as the Establishment beast. A small group of artists, writers, critics, got up a 13-point proposal demanding, among other things, the extension of MOMA activities into ghetto communities, the formation of an artists' committee to arrange shows at the museum, free admission at all times, and the opening of a gallery for black artists' work. But the prime push was for an open hearing on "The Museum's Relationship to Artists and to Society."

Bates Lowry, MOMA's director, responded by noting that some of the proposals had already been met or were under discussion by the museum. Insisting that the issues would not be solved by "a single large public meeting," he plumped instead for "a series of regularly scheduled committee hearings." At it, individuals and representatives of various organizations could have a chance to "engage in a dialogue" with a special committee.

The Coalition's answer was the open "public hearing" last week, to which MOMA sent no official representative (though it claims that some staff members attended unofficially). Witnessed attentively by an audience of some 250 people, the hearing provided a platform for nearly 50 speakers (plus some who did not speak but submitted statements for the record). The Coalition, which held a meeting last Monday evening to "evaluate" the public hearing, taped all the speakers' remarks, and plans to publish a transcript of them.

No mistake about it, MOMA was the topic of the evening. Black speakers, reading similar statements, denounced the museum for its alleged exclusion of black and Puerto Rican artists. Film-makers, another vocal group, called for greater budget emphasis on (and sweeping changes in) MOMA's Film Department. Other artists demanded participation in MOMA's control, called for a system of branch museums, and suggested that its permanent collection be limited to works no more than 25 years old. (Charging that MOMA had become "an art-historical

mausoleum," the artechnologist Hans Haacke reminded the group that in 1947, MOMA had agreed to sell all "classical" works to the Met, and concentrate on those that were "still significant in the modern movement." Though 26 works were sold at the time, he noted, MOMA's board reversed this "enlightened" policy in 1953, and decided to establish a permanent collection of "masterworks . . . a species that is impossible to define.")

During the marathon 4-hour session, the target broadened into the Art Establishment. A ringing (but anonymous) denunciation of the uptown scene read by the sculptor Carl Andre suggested that artists could solve their problems by getting rid of the art world itself. (No commercial connections, no "shows" and "exhibitions," no cooperation with museums, no more "scene," no more "big money artists.") Another proposal, by artist David Lee, charged

that art had been made into "currency" by a handful of art collectors, whom museums existed to serve. A partial solution: "Art workers will have to make an art appropriate to the living conditions of a vastly greater number of people than those who currently buy it."

Along with others who spoke, film editor Bill Gordy had a more immediate suggestion. Like other creators, he urged, artists should sell their work on a royalty basis, insisting on contracts that would guarantee a percentage of the profits from later resales.

All in all, an Artists' Club romp the evening wasn't. And before it was over, anyone could see that MOMA was simply a metaphor for all that participants felt was wrong with the art world structure. There seemed also this possibility: that some of the changes advocated might come about not through artists' direct action, but by shifts in the nature of art itself—increasingly less devoted to objects than to "process," more concerned with effects (however ephemeral) than with collectibility.

"There seems little hope for broad reform of the Museum of Modern Art," Miss Lippard said. "It has done a great deal in the past and now seems to have become so large and unwieldy that it has outgrown its usefulness. What is really needed is not just an updated Monolith of Modern Art, but a new and more flexible system."

What surprised observers was not so much that apolitical artists are, like other minorities, feeling the winds of change. But for the first time in a long time, they seem to be working together toward solutions for their dissatisfactions. No one knows if, as Miss Lippard puts it, "the very loosely-knit and constantly-changing group known as the Art Workers' Coalition is the right instrument for advancing those changes" (or even if it will last the season). But it's obviously started something.



The Modern Museum stands discredited. This is the only conclusion to be drawn from last Thursday's highly successful public hearing. It has been discredited not only among artists, for whom it long ago ceased to be a spokesman, but also increasingly among the general public and even among its own staff. The Museum has fallen down on its public relations and its artists relations—one could also say that it has fallen down on general policy, but there is no general policy substantial enough at the Museum for it to fall down on. The prestige which this museum enjoyed at the beginning of the year is on an accelerating downgrade—rarely has an institution fallen so far in so short a time. Only a new director and a complete overhaul of policy can possibly regain for the Museum some fraction of its former status, and it is to be feared that these will not come in time. In the meantime it may be useful to draw attention to a specific example of the glaring misuse of Museum time and space and the general notions of art which have allowed it to occur.

Perhaps the best way of doing this is in the form of a contrast between an exhibit now at the Modern Museum and an art event which opened in Hartford, Connecticut last week. The exhibit in question is the De Kooning show which anyone with a buck fifty and the will to be indoctrinated can go and see this month. The art event is a kinetic light environment by Cossen, Stern, and Isobe at the Austin Arts Center in Hartford's enterprising Trinity College.

The De Kooning show is an exhibit of paintings (as well as other two-dimensional artefacts). The Modern often has shows of paintings. Many people know what paintings are and have them on their walls. Paintings are a visual art form.

Comparatively few people know what a kinetic environment is or have ever been to one. A kinetic environment is multi-dimensional, embracing time as well as space and (some would say) other dimension as well. It is not merely a visual art form—it is a visual, auditory, spatial, tactile, and often sensual art form. Olfactory and heat-cold elements can be added (and sometimes are unintentionally). Theatrical elements can also be mixed in ad libitum.

The Museum of Modern Art has sponsored many painting exhibits. It has never sponsored a single environment. Once fourteen curators from the Modern Museum visited a distinguished environmental artist, admired the environment he had set up in his home, and argued for several hours about which department of the Museum had jurisdiction over environments. They were never able to decide, and so no environment has ever been shown at the Modern Museum. The tendency in the arts today (and in all of science) is towards the breaking down and merging of fields and categories—that the Museum should be an exception to this is nothing less than scandalous.

The economic side of the question is even more scandalous. It is this aspect that is most often cited by Museums to reject environments and other new ideas. But the facts are otherwise. The De Kooning show now on display cost the Museum approximately forty thousand dollars (\$40,000) to put together. This figure is exclusive of salaries paid to Museum staff connected with the exhibit. It is an average figure for a show at the Modern—some shows have cost several times this amount. The cost of the environment at Hartford was approximately \$4,000, or one tenth of what the Museum spent on De Kooning. They were able to spend this little even though the techniques for creating environments are in their infancy and many time- and money-saving methods are likely to be found in the near future. This figure also excludes salaries; for the simple reason that few of these were paid.

The artists themselves made nothing from the environment. Lee Nickerson, Billy Kossma, Tom Kelly and others who helped to form and build this environment were working for little more than a few weeks free room and board at the college. Many Trinity students also volunteered their time and work to help complete the environment in time for the opening—like the citizens of a medieval town who helped build their cathedrals without pay, these students were helping to construct an art form which they find real and meaningful. No volunteers helped put up the De Kooning show, though of course none were needed.

The real question is whether the shows the Modern is putting on can be called in any sense real or meaningful. The Museum has simply come to that point of its institutional life where it is completely out of contact

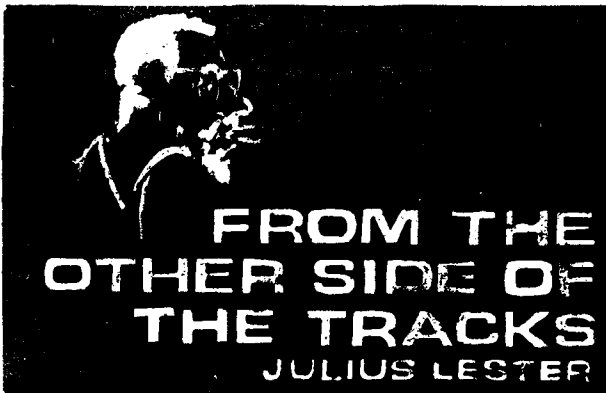
with the ideas of the young, the passionate, and the creative. It must now either undergo drastic change from within or without or cease to exist as an active influence in the art world. Much of what the Museum originally stood for is now either old hat or not terribly relevant. Challenging it is a group of vital new artists who also challenge everything ever understood as art or museum or esthetics. Techniques now exist for the projection of constantly moving and shifting color patterns by night or by day. It is these that will determine what cover our walls as much as the history of painting. Other techniques exist or will soon exist which can totally alter the space around us and our ideas of men, our own minds, and the universe.

None of this is to say that all the problems of constructing environments have been solved (any more than all the problems of painting were ever solved) or that conventional art is necessarily a complete cadavre. What is certain is that at a time when new approaches to the traditional arts seem ever fewer and far between, an entire new domain has been opened up in the field of environmental, light, and kinetic creation. Tech Art is not this year's or last year's fashion in the art world—it is a realm as broad and limitless as science itself. What are being produced today in this field are merely the earliest models and prototypes—what can be produced in the future is scarcely to be imagined. When these new artists do occasionally fail, it is as often as not due to faulty esthetics inherited from the past or the poverty-stricken conditions in which they are forced to work.

Perhaps Gertrude Stein was right when she said that either a museum on the one hand or modern art on the other might exist, but never a "museum of modern art." Certainly the contradictions, both in this concept and in its embodiment on Third Street, are now visible for all to see.

**ART**  
**A NEW BEGINNING — Lil Picard**

... are Walter de Maria ... shown now at the ... Artist, also belongs to the Dwan Gallery, & he works for the Protest ... Art Workers, he is a very interesting figure of the aggressive new world of future Art,



Relationships between black and white radicals have always broken down when whites have felt that they knew better than blacks what was best for blacks.

William Lloyd Garrison refused to speak to Frederick Douglass when the latter insisted upon his right to speak as a black abolitionist, not as a Garrisonian. The Communist party was never able to resolve its differences with blacks, who wanted to combine Marxism-Leninism with black nationalism; the usual result was the expulsion or resignation of these blacks from the party. William Monroe Trotter refused to join the NAACP when it was formed because he feared that it would be dominated by whites. W.E.B. DuBois was in constant conflict with the whites in the NAACP, and DuBois only survived because he made the NAACP journal, the Crisis, into his own magazine, a force independent of the NAACP.

### Blacks define for themselves

With the articulation of Black power, and its tenets of the unassailable right of blacks to define for themselves, we hoped that a new day had arrived. Whites would attempt to organize whites, remaining aware of what was happening within the black movement, supporting that movement and joining in actions whenever the black movement desired such.

If white radicals were able to abide by this, it would serve to build trust between black and white radicals and bury that history of white supremacist attitudes eventually overriding white radical pretensions, with the subsequent betrayal of blacks.

The recent SDS statement on the Black Panther party shows that history has repeated itself. The intent of the SDS statement was to show support for the Black Panther party, an aim with which no one has any disagreement. SDS's intent, however, is subverted when the contents of the statement (see page 8) are examined.

What should have been a statement of support is, in effect, a statement in which SDS thrusts itself into the internal affairs of the black movement. It should have been a statement telling the government that SDS stands united with the Panthers against the government's current attempts to destroy them. Instead, it states categorically who the black vanguard is, what the correct ideology is, what the correct military strategy is, and what the correct program is. *98*

To say the least, the SDS resolution is unfortunate. That the Black Panther party should have the support and aid of SDS is indisputable. And it is indisputable that SDS has an obligation and responsibility to have relations and even make formal alliances with any black organization willing to enter into such arrangements. But it is not within the province of SDS's responsibilities or rights to assert that any black organization represents "the vanguard force" in "the black liberation movement." That right belongs to the black community and the black community alone. To have so asserted puts SDS in the position of trying directly to guide the black movement and tell that movement what is in its own best interests. This is an insult.

SDS goes further and calls the Black Panther party 10-point program "an essentially correct program for the black community." Whether or not that program is "essentially correct" is not at issue here. What is at issue is SDS's ability to know what is correct or incorrect for the black community. And being an organization of whites, SDS is not in any position to define or analyze for blacks. If SDS is going to attempt to do so, then it must discuss why the Panther program is correct and why the programs of the Republic of New Africa, the Black Muslims, SNCC, the National Welfare Rights Organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and other groups are incorrect. SDS does not do so.

More than halfway through its statement, SDS begins to use the phrase, "and other black revolutionary groups," which does not rectify the statement's initial mistakes. The inclusion of "and other black revolutionary groups" sounds more like an afterthought than anything SDS takes seriously.

SDS goes even further, saying that revolutionary nationalism is correct and cultural nationalism is incorrect. On what basis does SDS presume to know anything about nationalism? The correct and incorrect aspects and uses of nationalism is the most difficult of problems for nationalists; and no one in SDS can ever be a nationalist. If SDS were going to enter into this ideological debate, as it did, then it has a responsibility to define and discuss cultural nationalism and revolutionary nationalism before reaching its conclusions. SDS simply states its conclusions, which are nothing more than a parroting of the Panther position.

Viet Nam, O Viet Nam!  
Her rice-fields shine in the sun  
For ever hold dear your beautiful land!  
Defend it and keep it your own!

In the fields the young girls work.  
Beautiful, strong and true.  
They plant the rice with rifles near-by  
Ready to die for you.

Though now you are divided  
Your heart still beats as one.  
And one day soon the sun will rise  
On a unified Viet Nam.

Categorically to state that cultural nationalism is "reactionary" is to falsify irresponsibly the history of the black movement. It is cultural nationalism that has laid the foundation for revolutionary nationalism. It is cultural nationalism that has, more than any other ideology, brought a common consciousness to blacks.

To oppose cultural nationalism and revolutionary nationalism to each other is to ignore totally the transition from cultural nationalism to revolutionary nationalism which some blacks have made and many are in the process of making. It is unjust to condemn the black youth who yesterday was "Negro" and has just awakened to himself (his blackness). To condemn him for his cultural nationalism will only make him defensive and retard his growth to revolutionary nationalism.

### Unnecessary factionalism

The job is to criticize cultural nationalism in such a way as to aid the growth to revolutionary nationalism. To condemn cultural nationalism outright is to divide the movement and create conditions for warring factions. Perhaps this factionalism is inevitable, as at least appears in California between Ron Karenga's US organization and the Panthers. That factionalism, however, is not so in evidence in other parts of the country and it can be avoided. Also, it is necessary to distinguish between cultural nationalism and the establishment's attempts to exploit cultural nationalism.

One of the most difficult of ideological battles is going to be moving cultural nationalists to a position of revolutionary nationalism. That battle cannot be won by the outright condemnation of cultural nationalism at this stage. For SDS to inject itself into this ideological struggle is arrogant beyond all imagining, for it is not a struggle in which SDS has to involve itself. No white organization has the right to condemn cultural nationalism, because no white person can be a cultural nationalist. No white organization has the right to support revolutionary nationalism, because no white can be a revolutionary nationalist. SDS, however, has arrogated unto itself these rights.

When SDS characterizes cultural nationalism as "porkchop nationalism," it is guilty of a racism which blacks have had to endure for much too long. SDS should have

(continued on page 22)

# ... From the other side of the tracks

(continued from page 13)

enough respect for blacks to use its own language, and not to appropriate the language of another people. One of the hardest and most bitter struggles blacks have waged has been against cultural imperialism. Now it seems that a fight must also be waged against SDS, a group from which one would have expected a little more understanding and sensitivity.

Whatever the intent of the SDS statement, its effect can only be damaging. Those blacks who are not Panthers, which is most, will of course be offended and insulted. Those blacks who have disagreements with the Panthers will view the statement as interference by SDS in a matter which is none of its concern.

Surely, SDS has not answered all the questions necessary for a revolutionary ideology, program and strategy in the white community that it can presume to answer those questions for blacks.

## White chauvinism

Because SDS involves itself so directly in the black movement, it exemplifies the very white chauvinism which it, in its statement, claims to be fighting. How can SDS presume to know anything about nationalism? How can SDS presume to know what is the "essentially correct program for the black community"? How can SDS presume to know who is "the vanguard" in the black community? How can SDS presume to know what is the correct military strategy for the black community? SDS presumes to know all of these things, as whites have always presumed to know all of these things for black people.

Last December SDS said that "nationalism is 'the main ideological weapon of the ruling class' within the black liberation movement..." Now SDS repudiates its "inability to distinguish between revolutionary nationalism and

reactionary nationalism" and calls its previous position "at best nonrevolutionary." At best, it was racist, as the present statement is racist.

It would have been helpful to us all if SDS had shown us how it reached the first conclusion, reversed it, and reached the second conclusion. An organization which calls itself revolutionary has the responsibility to make us aware of its thought processes and not just present conclusions. SDS, however, presents us with two contradictory conclusions within four months, both wrong, both racist and both put forward with the confidence of Chairman Mao.

Given the content of the statement, it is not surprising that it is a compendium of hackneyed language. It sounded as if it had come straight from the pages of the Black Panther party newspaper, rather than from the organization which gave us one of the great documents of contemporary history, the Port Huron Statement. The language of this statement is one continual left cliché, incomprehensible to anyone who is not part of the left. All the stock phrases of left rhetoric are there, sounding as if they mean something. In actuality, they mean little, because too many of us hide behind rhetoric—as opposed to learning—to be able to express concepts in a language that helps to clarify and enlighten.

Given the present state of the movement, clarity and enlightenment are of the highest priority. SDS, in this instance, has provided neither.

## A little respect

SDS should have accorded the black movement and the black community a modicum of respect by not making this statement public, whatever its private opinions may be. By the open attacks which the Black Panther party has been making on cultural nationalism, it should be apparent

that there is an intense ideological struggle taking place within the black movement. That struggle can only be resolved by blacks. SDS's intrusion into it is not only unwelcome, it is disruptive and damaging—both to SDS and to the black movement. Blacks know, however, that whites only act in terms of what is good for them and it seems that SDS, despite appearances, is more white than revolutionary.

What is at issue here is the correct relationship a white radical organization should have to the black radical movement. By presuming to know what program, ideology, military strategy, and what particular organization best serve the interests of the black community, SDS has served to set us back. Those blacks who are suspicious of working with whites will have their suspicions confirmed by this statement. Those blacks who maintain that whites cannot be revolutionary will have this statement to offer as proof.

The ultimate irony comes in the fact that SDS could have exemplified its solidarity with the Panthers without involving itself in the particulars of the black movement. This statement is as arrogant and presumptuous as the Progressive Labor party statement of last year criticizing the government of North Vietnam for entering into peace negotiations.

The North Vietnamese can afford to laugh at such presumption. The black radical movement is not in an equivalent position.

The SDS statement damages any claims SDS may have had of being radical or becoming revolutionary. White radical organizations of the past failed in their attempts to work with blacks because they thought they had the right to involve themselves in questions of ideology and tactics which were the concern of blacks alone. Some of us thought SDS might be different. It is only regrettable that we didn't find out sooner that it wasn't. 99

## Viet Nam, O Viet Nam!

Chorus

Dưới ánh dương rực rỡ huy hoàng Lúa  
vui reo trên đồng bát ngát Hây  
ca lên bao lời trù mến đất nước này Gìn  
gữ lấy đất nước này bạn ơi

Words and music by Julius Lester



BLACK ARTIST DEMAND SEPERATE WING

The Black Artists Who Are Demonstrating At The Museum Of Modern Art This Sunday Are Demonstrating **FOR A** Black Wing In The Museum. What Does This Demonstration Mean.

It means that Black Art is an expression of our beliefs and values.

It means because Black Artists see the world differently and because our values and realities are altogether different we demand the right to exist as a distinct category, and since one of the reasons Black Artists create is to give black people a sense of human dignity, pride and identity

this is why we do indeed constitute a seperate group. It means that Black Artists will be brought together, allowed a great deal of personal freedom and expression. They will inter-relate and cause constructive changes to take place.

It means that Black Artists will develop a pure creative black energy that will blossom and grow . . . We will not adopt or use the frame of reference white society has devised. It means we will be instilled with a sense of ethnic pride and positive identification our ancient creative past and our future.

It means that white people will be able to go into the black wing to see, learn, respect and encourage the accomplishments of Black Artists. It means that a black family of seven will go to the Museum of Modern Art (without paying the \$10.50 to get in) on a Sunday afternoon, stroll past the emptiness of the consumer-spectator art into the magic of black creation.

It also means that the black that we elect in the MOMA on the Junior Council, The International Council, The International Study Center Advisory Board, The Curatorial Committees and the Board of Trustees, will not be negro persons with functionally white minds, but black representatives who

are aware and proud of their blackness.

It means no longer can the racist Museum of Modern Art sponsor a benefit show in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King and then segregate the Black Artists in one room.

Segregation - enforced  
no choice

Seperation - voluntary

It means that no longer will the racist MOMA sponsor art shows for American Embassies in Africa and exclude Black Artists.

It means we no longer can try to change white attitudes, we have to do our own thing.

It means the Museum can no longer keep black people away from knowledge.

Art Workers Coalition Committee For  
Black Bloc

Tom Lloyd	657-6433
Faith Ringgold	862-5876
Iris Crump	AL4-6996

THE DEMONSTRATION WILL BE HELD AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

21 West 53rd Street at 3:00  
on Sunday, March 30th.



SYNTHETIC REPORT OF THE PUBLIC HEARING HELD APRIL 10, 1969.

A

In the course of the following work, the name of the group heretofore named the Art Workers' Coalition has been changed to Artists' Coalition.

This is done because the old name has an archaic tone not appropriate to a modern organization; because artists are not workers; because all persons who regard themselves as artists are artists, no matter what their activities; because the organization does not reflect the interests of all persons who have some connection with art but rather identifies with those who call themselves artists; because the connotations of nineteenth century classical socialism which attach to the former name do not describe the interests of those who are participating in the group.

B

The committee has organized the remarks in an index by means of seven titles or categories as follows:

1. The structure of the Artists' Coalition.
2. Possible alternatives to present art institutions.
3. Possible reforms of present art institutions.
4. Legal and economic relationships of artists to others.
5. Specific proposals for organized action.
6. General and philosophical observations and remarks.

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7. Rights of black & Puerto Rican artists.

It is interesting to note that a tabulation of all the written statements submitted at the hearing yields a different order to the categories in terms of the number of times a given category is appropriate as a description of the testimony:

1. General & philosophical.
2. Possible reforms.
3. Legal and economic.
4. Possible alternatives.
5. Special interests.
6. Specific action.
7. Coalition structure.

C | The testimony offered publicly at the hearing gives an overwhelming impression of being concerned with beliefs and values. Thus the report of the public hearing must concern itself with the beliefs and values upon which the society in which we live is constituted.

Religion is the series which describes the beliefs and values of the people in a given time and place. In effect the controversies implied in the testimony are religious arguments. Politics is the series which describes the relations between people in a given time and place. Since much of the testimony concerns such relations, it is correct to say that the entire report is a religious document with political overtones.

D | The testimony defines a religion based on money and on the powers conferred by the possession and transfer of money. The witnesses all agree on the nature of the society, and they all agree that it must be changed in various ways.

Money is an objective construction of time. Time is an abstract conception of life.

E | The testimony is not concerned with the question of what art is, nor is it concerned with what art may be considered to be good or bad, except as such definitions operate politically to the detriment of various artists or types or sources of art.

In some cultures people say, We have no art. We do everything as well as possible. This implies that the best example of any type of activity may well be considered as art. Thus, all art is good. Artists are persons who do everything as well as possible. Everything that artists do is art. In a religious situation which demands that every good be directly related to money, the art and the artist will inevitably concern themselves with money.

F | The testimony divides unevenly along lines which can be approximately described in words. On the one hand, many artists believe that the society in general must guarantee that artists get their fair share of the money. All such viewpoints insist that artists are not primarily interested in making money, but that they have a right to just enough money to enable them to do their work and to live as they please.

G | On the other hand, many artists are interested in drawing attention to the monetary construction of society for the purpose of showing that this construction is bad and ought therefore to be undermined and ultimately abolished. All such viewpoints insist that money is worthless as a scale of values, and that artists should dissociate themselves from all commercial politics.

Among the statements, there are many which to various degrees unite these two tendencies. The first tendency can be properly described as a complaint and a demand. The second, as a belief and a revolution. It is my opinion that the second tendency dominates the sense of the whole of the testimony. But it is also my opinion that these divisions represent personal opinions in different stages of experience and development; that they may be correctly described as initial and final conclusions based on various degrees of personal experience.

H | Not all of the testimony is directly related to money in any way. A considerable, but not predominant amount of the testimony, concentrates on the transcendental aspects of art which unite all people of all times in activities which arise out of desires and dreams rather than out of necessities and imperatives.

It is mistaken to assume that because artists are necessarily involved in economic questions, they have economic success as an important goal. The whole proceeding declares unequivocally that money is necessary but not important to artists.

I

The hearing bears evidence that artists consider themselves to be a group of persons, and not a series of isolated individualists. It is thought generally among the artists who spoke that the idea of the individuality of artists as a sacrament in the commercial religion of our time is an oppressive measure designed to placate many of the most potentially disruptive forces which could lead society into other paths than are now being used habitually by those who benefit from the maintenance of old customs.

The combined mythologies of newness and originality in art have channelled the thoughts of artists toward the thoughts of owners of property and away from the pursuit of happiness.

J

The hearing bears evidence that artists today wish to address their works to the people in general. Many conceptions of art which does not operate as a commodity are generically preferred to those which can be bought and sold. But furthermore, regardless of its objective state or mode, all arts which are available and attractive to people generally are preferred to those states and modes that are available and attractive only to educated and relatively wealthy individuals.

This fact indicates that artists today wish to assume leadership in areas which artists in the past have abdicated from. All beauty is propaganda in favour of what the creator believes to be good, and, incidentally, against what the creator believes to be bad. Much of modern art is a contrivance designed to render such ethical distinctions meaningless with a purpose to integrate art into commercial society. We believe in the affirmation of our collective and individual goodness with a purpose to give all people an image or model of free life and good work. This purpose is undoubtedly detrimental to commerce.

Commerce is made possible and viable through mythologies which emphasize and insist on a view of the world which is composed of comparisons. Nothing can be considered as good. Things can only be considered in terms of other things. Thus all things lose integrity and value. All things assume the transient character of money. The testimony tends to oppose this view of the world.

K Among the ancillary considerations to commerce (those considerations which back up and enforce commercial syntax) the predominant complaint against the institutions of our time is that they are oriented to racism.

Racism can be defined thus: many people of divergent and disparate origins and values and beliefs are associated together in terms of the beliefs and values of one section of these people whether or not there are more people who share the predominant values and beliefs than there are people who share other values and beliefs. Racism is a state of mind and not a series of supposedly objective facts about majorities and minorities.

L Black and Puerto Rican artists in New York have associated together for the purpose of asserting that their values and beliefs are different from those of Wasp, Jewish and Foreign artists. Black and Puerto Rican artists demand that direct and indirect public monetary support of art be used to propagate Black and Puerto Rican art as well as the kinds of art which the predominant races produce. The addition of a room or "wing" to the Modern Museum for Black and Puerto Rican art was advocated repeatedly.

Black and Puerto Rican artists insist that they are not interested in parroting the manners of persons of other races just as American artists of a generation or two ago insisted that they were not interested in parroting the manners of the people of European countries. In the same way, we call attention to the fact that Blacks and Puerto Ricans generally are not interested in all kinds of art which is thought to be interesting by white people generally. These differences must be recognized for what they are and treated accordingly. It is not denied that these distinctions are in themselves aspects of racism. We do not think that all Blacks and Puerto Ricans prefer the same things. But we think that the similarly degraded situation of Blacks and Puerto Ricans in white society warrants this alliance at this time.

M Another important complaint against established institutions comes from unsuccessful artists. Those whose art has been repeatedly rejected by persons who are in nominal control of the institutions of commerce, and who in consequence cannot make a living by their own activities, must be

opposed to the nature of established institutions and oppressed by the commercial success of artists whose work is arbitrarily judged by the institutions to be better than their own. The whole of the testimony repeatedly denies the value of the ancient cliché of the "suffering artist".

It is asserted

that everyone should be able to live by his own activities.

It is quite likely that base motives such as jealousy may play a part in the complaints and demands of unsuccessful artists. But it would be entirely mistaken to dismiss their points on such grounds. The point that they mainly make is one that affects all of us profoundly: We believe that all activities are worthwhile and that the necessities of life should be given to all active persons.

N Many reforms of current institutions are advanced by those who believe that the institutions can be reformed to conform with the lives of artists today.

O 1. Most of the testimony opposed the institution of artists' agents or galleries, asserting that artists should deal with the public directly and not through middlemen.

P 2. Most of the testimony asserted that it must be recognized that there is an essential contradiction between the function of a museum which collects art and the function of a museum which shows current art.

Q 3. Much of the testimony concerned itself with details of the structure and organization of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The predominant opinion is that the museum staff identify with the interests of wealthy collectors of art and not with the interests of artists and this is considered to be bad.

It should be borne in mind that the Artists' Coalition arose out of one artist's argument with the Modern Museum over a question whether an artist still owns a work after he sells or gives it away.

R 4. Several witnesses made the suggestion that the exhibitions of current art should be held by non-commercial organizations, such as the Artists' Coalition, in locations scattered all over the city, the nation and the world rather than in locations concentrated in a few capital areas of capital cities.

S 5. Several artists made a point of the fact that once a work leaves an artist's hands, it is no longer in his control. Several people suggested that the law of France respecting the re-sale of art be enacted in the United States. This would result in no work being resold in the artist's lifetime without his permission, and a proportion of accrued profit on all subsequent sales would go to the artist. It was also urged that no work by an artist could be shown or photographed without his permission and that certain fees should be paid for all instances of the exhibition of a work of art. Various practical schedules of rates and uniform contracts were outlined in the testimony.

T 6. Much point was made of the fact that several museums charge admission fees to the public. It was thought variously that such fees should be abolished, or that they should be abolished for certain groups or at certain moments, or that the fees collected should be put to the uses of certain groups, interests or modes of art. Several proposals pertained only to museums charging admission fees, presumably on the assumption that these institutions would have more income than others.

It is expected that this report will be accompanied by a list of all the specific proposals of every tendency which appear in the testimony as a whole.

It should be noted that most of the testimony was given in the terminology of the arts usually referred to as painting and sculpture. This terminology did not seem to be intended to exclude other artists or modes of arts but seemed to be the habit of the speakers.

U

7. Many speakers mentioned the fact that there are many tax deductions and tax exemptions granted by the United States government in connection with art activities and institutions. It is assumed that much less money would be available for art if this was not the case. Some speakers nevertheless recommended the revocation of all such privileges in connection with art. Several said that this fact should be used to put pressure on the institutions thereby supported, since in effect their money comes from the public, however indirectly.

It should be noted that some of the testimony indicated the possibility that the Artists' Coalition should become or should instigate one or more organizations designed to operate as lobbies or pressure groups affecting the press and the public politics of the nation, as well as of the city. However, I don't think that this was a predominant conception of the organization. If there was any impression to be gained from the testimony with regard to the Artists' Coalition function, it was that it should be a loosely organized body of artists that would be responsive to various public emergencies.

V

In very many connections, the artists expressed their opposition to the American government's war in Viet-Nam.

W

There were many references to a general belief that the conditions of American society at the present time constitute a revolution in beliefs and values, as well as a revolution in the relations between and among people. The tendency of the testimony was to advance the religious revolution more than the political revolution. Revolution on all levels of meaning was however felt to be the predominant reality of life now.



X Special attention was drawn to the situation of artists working with motion picture film. In addition to various testimony indicating that the Modern Museum uses films as its principal attraction for the public and does not pay artists adequately for their films, it was remarked that the Modern Museum collection and that of the Cinematheque Française in Paris are the only film museums in the world.

Undoubtedly there are many artists working in various mediums whose views were not represented in the hearing, as it happened. For example, nobody mentioned the extraordinary difficulty that is encountered if one wishes to have a good book published by the commercial press.

Y The hearing gave the impression that visual artists are slow to respond to changes in society general<sup>ly</sup>/because they are supported through the excesses of commercial society, principally tax benefits granted to wealthy individuals and institutions. Be that as it may, the tone of most of the statements was a pleasure to perceive and the meaning of the remarks generally was that artists are determined to accord their religious and political views with their own personal lives, regardless of the hazards entailed.

Z There remains to the twenty-sixth point in this series, a general observation on the public hearing and on the Artists' Coalition. This event and this organization are the first evidence that many artists wish to involve themselves in collective activities of any magnitude. There is a very general recognition that art can no longer be conducted exclusively on the private and personal scale. This report, which is actually conceived and written by one person, is however submitted as an example of a collective work of art.

April 23, 1969. New York.

## I. STRUCTURE OF COALITION

### Alternative A - A Commune

1. No central leadership.
2. Decisions made by vote after discussion in public meetings.
3. Public meetings held regularly and can be attended by anyone.
4. Action carried out by committees set up by public meetings.
5. Committee would cover different areas, for example
  - a) Information and research
  - b) National and international collaboration
  - c) Administration
  - d) Specific actions
6. Officials required such as Treasurer, Secretary, to be appointed by public meetings.
7. Library and communications system set up.
8. Structure flexible and able to be adjusted by vote in public meeting.

### Alternative B - A Union

1. Board elected in open hearing of art workers with one year term.
2. Organization changes membership dues.
3. Organization pays board to enable it to spend maximum time on coalition activities.
4. Members approach board for assistance in carrying out projects, etc.

## II. ALTERNATIVES TO MUSEUMS, GALLERIES, ETC.

### 1. New Outlets

Artists should deal person to person with their customers. They should sell either directly from their studios or from decentralized Living Art Centers run by artists, perhaps similar in structure to MUSEUM. Large open shows and flexible exhibiting situations should be organized by the A/C. Streets, parks and other public areas should be used whenever possible and cooperation with other radical creative groups in theatre, etc. should be considered. Prices should be kept at reasonable levels to encourage all kinds of people to buy art and to maintain a sense of reality as to the nature of their product.

### 2. New Work

Artists should give thought to producing work that is appropriate to the life style of the public and not just to that of the very rich.

### 3. A New Society

Artists should work to change our society, to bring about greater equality, and an end to poverty. Above all they should work to turn the present massive spending on defense and war to humanitarian and creative projects.

### III. REFORMS TO MUSEUMS, GALLERIES, ETC.

#### Alternative A - Reform

1. Direction of Museum - It is a public, not a private institution;

- As a recipient of public money, through tax concessions, the Museum should be answerable to the public. Artists and community leaders should be represented on the boards of direction and the composition of the later should change regularly, and public meetings should be held. We should press for federal and state subsidies of the museums.

2. Policy of Museum - We want a Museum, not a Mausoleum;

- After 20 years, work should be sold or rented to the Metropolitan Museum and the proceeds used to finance the purchase and exhibition of new work and provision of new facilities for frequent, rotating exhibitions. Alternatively, a New Museum should be set up by the present museum, purely for exhibitions, and extremely flexible in concept. The museum film department should be autonomous and should receive a fair share of funds for its development.

3. Relationships with Artists - A Museum should make things possible for artists, Not impossible;

- The Museum should respect the artists' wishes regarding the exhibition of his work. It should sponsor and commission new work. It should seek out and exhibit the work of artists without galleries. It should include artists as spokesmen in its daily lectures series. It should appoint an ombudsman to deal with artists' relations.

4. Relationship with the Public - Art for all the people;

A separate wing in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. should be set up to show the work of black and Puerto Rican artists, or a satisfactory alternative should be arrived at by negotiations between black and Puerto Rican artists on the one hand and the museum on the other. Decentralization is essential to bring art to the community and should be achieved by setting up branch museums to function as art activity centers for all kinds of media, including film. Free museum entry should be available at least one day per week and evening opening and film screening should be increased.

#### Alternative B - Boycott

Ignore the museums. They record the past; leave them to do that job. They will never be able to do any other. Save our energies for other work. The museums can never give enough help to enough artists to make our efforts worthwhile.

1/2 Likewise ignore the galleries and if necessary picket them till enough other

ARTISTS DO SO TO CLOSE THEM DOWN

IV. LEGAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS

Alternative A. - To be free, the artist must have control over and receive reasonable value for his work.

1. Rentals. All exhibitions charging entry fees should pay the exhibiting artists rental fees for their work. This would apply to all work whether or not owned by the artist. A model contract should be drafted. Filmmakers should likewise be properly compensated not only for individual screenings but also for prints acquired for museum archives.

2. Resales.

A percentage of the profit realised on resale of an artist's work should revert to the artist. A model sale contract should be drafted.

3. Ownership.

The artist never gives up ownership in his work. Reproduction and royalty rights and the right to retrieve his work for the original price and change or destroy it would also be provided for.

4. Social benefits.

Research should be undertaken regarding the Scandinavian methods of giving support to artists, the possibility of creating a trust fund from contributions by successful artists, or from taxes levied on sales of "dead" art; such a fund would provide stipends, sickness benefits, help for dependents, etc. the possibility of obtaining a guaranteed annual minimum wage or negative income tax for artists.

5. Foundation grants.

Work for more and larger grants. Grants for individuals in total at least equal to those presently given to the cultural institutions.

Alternative B. - To be free, the artist must not count the value of his work.

THE Coalition should not be concerned with attempting to enforce proprietary rights or with helping artists to become rich.

VI. THE ARTISTS RELATION TO SOCIETY

1st Conflict: - The Artist and His Customer

Most artists are individualist, anti-establishment and poor. They are against war, class exploitation and racial discrimination.

Most art customers are conformist, establishment and rich. They have a vested interest in defense expenditure, class distinction and racial inequality. To resolve the conflict they must reform the customer or ignore him and find new customers more in harmony with the artists' own beliefs.

2nd Conflict - The Artist and His Fellow Artist

The successful artist is lionized by society, pressured to produce and paid extravagantly yet uncertainly.

The unsuccessful artist is despised by society for not working, embittered by his inability to show his product and forced to earn a living in any way he can.

In order to succeed under these conditions, artists are obliged to fight fiercely with each other and cooperate with those who most exploit them. To resolve the conflict, artists must learn to cooperate closely with each other, and fight their exploiters for the rights that will enable each of them to function as individuals.

3rd Conflict - The Product and the People

In general, the art object is inadequate to the artist as a means of barter for for the necessities of life, irrelevant to the people in a world of hunger, war and racial injustice and precious only to the rich who use it to increase their wealth and maintain their position.

To resolve the conflict, artists must develop art that is real for our time, that is meaningful to those not in on the making of it, that reaches the people and that does not reinforce the horrible sanctity of private property.

# Artists And The Problem Of 'Relevance'

By HILTON KRAMER

**I**N the social turmoil that has overtaken American life in recent years, artists and art institutions have tended to play a negligible role — if, indeed, any role at all. As individuals, of course, a great many artists have taken part in civil rights demonstrations, anti-war activities, and other forms of protest politics, but such political activity has rarely been allowed to penetrate the sanctum of the studio. In this realm, at least, there has been no attempt to revive the attitudes of the nineteen-thirties. There has been nothing like the current movement of playwrights, poets, and prose writers to place political issues at the center of their creative work. The general assumption among painters, sculptors, and artists working in related visual media has been that, so far as explicit political involvement goes, the work of art must remain inviolate.

Museums, too, have tended — correctly, I think — to be wary of political involvement. Though many museums now conduct a variety of community programs — designed, for the most part, to bring art more directly into the lives of those who have heretofore had little acquaintance with it — they regard these programs as ancillary to their principal function, which is to act as a disinterested custodian of the artistic achievements of both the near and the distant past.

When, on rare occasions, artists and museums have deviated from their customary practice and plunged into one or another political task, they have usually turned themselves into amateur journalists. This has been as true of those artists who, upon urgent request, have gotten up some quick visual statement on the war in Vietnam as it was of the Metropolitan Museum's "Harlem on My Mind" exhibition. In both cases, traditional artistic values were judged to be irrelevant, and those of photo-journalism or political caricature were advanced in their stead.

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that the problem of "relevance," so far as our artists and museums are concerned, had been exhausted by these failures. The real issues in this sphere are being raised in other terms — terms that go beyond parochial questions of subject-matter in order to redefine the artist's fundamental relation to society. And they are being raised in quite different quarters — both within the establishment and outside it — and in the name of quite different values.

At a considerable distance from the establishment, for example, is the group of artists, critics, filmmakers, and other interested parties that calls itself the Art Workers Coalition. A few weeks ago I sat through the four-hour open meeting which this group conducted at the School of Visual Arts — a meeting called for the

purpose of organizing some kind of protest against the policies of the Museum of Modern Art. In the course of that meeting, a great many patent absurdities were voiced — one had reason to doubt whether certain speakers had ever been inside the museum — yet at least one issue of real importance was put forward repeatedly, and it is an issue that bears serious attention.

This was the issue of the artist's moral and economic status vis-a-vis the institutions that now determine his place on the cultural scene, and indeed, his ability to function as a cultural force. Though the Museum of Modern Art was the immediate target of complaint, the issue obviously went beyond the museum and its policies. What was denounced was the entire social system — not only museums, but galleries, critics, art journals, collectors, the mass media, etc. — that now decisively intervenes between the production of a work of art and its meaningful consumption. What was proposed — albeit incoherently, and with that mixture of naivete, violent rhetoric, and irrationality we have more or less come to expect from such protests — was a way of thinking about the production and consumption of works of art that would radically modify, if not actually displace, currently established practices, with their heavy reliance on big money and false prestige.

In part, then, this was a plea to liberate art from the entanglements of bureaucracy, commerce, and vested critical interests — a plea to rescue the artistic vocation from the squalid politics of careerism, commercialism, and cultural mandarinism. Though I cannot recall that a single workable idea was advanced in that long and repetitious meeting, I nonetheless took away from it the vivid impression of a moral issue which wiser and more experienced minds had long been content to leave totally unexamined.

Radical proposals are not, however, the sole property of anti-establishment rebels — a fact which the rebels themselves tend to be curiously ignorant of. At the moment, I should say that the most radical program for the future of art was being carried out within the establishment itself: I refer to the ambitious project initiated by Maurice Tuchman, the senior curator of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, which calls for the collaboration of well-known artists and big-time industry. This "Art and Technology" project, which is already under way on the West Coast promises, if successful, to alter the terms of the artistic vocation to a much greater extent than anything put forward by the Art Workers Coalition — but in precisely the opposite direction.

The artists working under Mr. Tuchman's plan — and they include many illustrious names — are able to avail themselves of a vast amount of technical information, expert advice, physical assistance, and actual materials. No doubt this will lead to certain artistic conceptions that could otherwise never be realized. But it is always an illusion to assume that such advantages are to be gained without cost, and what remains to be calculated is precisely the moral price of this enterprise, which, in effect, marks the first major collaboration of advanced art and the West Coast military-industrial establishment. It is odd to think of certain artists who have entered into this collaboration after having contributed to various anti-war exhibitions.

But what I think the most interesting, if not the most radical, aspect of this project is the new role which the museum has assumed in conceiving it. For Mr. Tuchman has, on this occasion, acted as a kind of broker between the artist and the industrial establishment, promoting a conception of the work of art that would, if carried to its logical conclusion, take the whole concept of art outside the museum. Mr. Tuchman has — in principle, if not in fact — moved to place the artist in a position of utter dependency upon the industrial process, and thus upon the network of social values which supports that process.

Compared to such a dependency, the artist's relation to the museum is relatively innocent and autonomous, despite the fears and accusations voiced by the Art Workers Coalition. Mr. Tuchman, too, is concerned about "relevance" — the relevance of art to a culture increasingly dominated, by complex technology — and instead of conceiving of the museum as a countervailing force in such a culture, he clearly believes the museum should lend its prestige to adjusting art to the inevitable.

Compared to the future which this promises, the present system, with all its moral failings, seems almost pastoral in its old-fashioned freedoms. The prospect before us may, in fact, be far more grim than the Art Workers Coalition has yet imagined.

FREE!

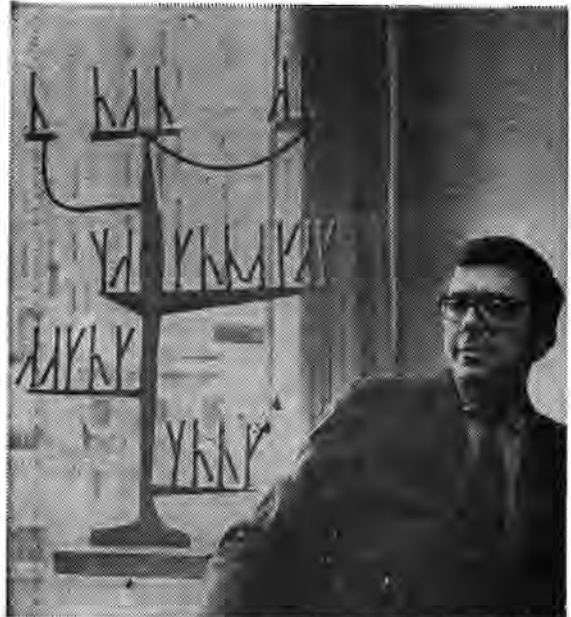
FREE!

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, MAY 4, 1969

FREE DAY AT THE MODERN!

By GRACE GLUECK

## Lowry Out as Director Of the Modern Museum



Dan Budnik

Bates Lowry in office at Museum of Modern Art, where his resignation as director was announced yesterday. Behind him is a candelabrum by David Smith, sculptor.

Bates Lowry, director of the Museum of Modern Art for less than a year, has resigned "for personal considerations," David Rockefeller, the museum's board chairman, and William S. Paley, president, announced yesterday.

Although the announcement expressed "deep regret" over the resignation, and "appreciation for the initiative" with which Mr. Lowry had guided the museum, it is understood that his resignation

The Rockefeller and Paley statement was issued in "behalf of the Board of Trustees," but many of the board members were in London to attend the museum's yearly International Council meeting. It was not known whether those trustees had taken part in deliberations over Mr. Lowry's resignation. They were notified of the resignation by cablegram.

Mr. Rockefeller and Mr. Paley emphasized in this statement that the present direction of the program and policies of the museum would continue.

Staff members, many of whom expressed surprise at the announcement, said they were mystified by the timing. The museum, they noted, will soon open two major shows: 20th century art from the collection of Governor Rockefeller, a trustee and former president of the museum, on May 28, and "Pioneers of American Painting," an exhibition of work by abstract expressionist painters in June.

Also, the museum is about to undertake a major fund drive and is completing plans for the expansion of its physical facilities.

Recently, the museum has been the target of demonstrations and protests by artists who have demanded more of a voice in museum policies. Mr. Lowry has been actively involved in dealing with the demonstrators. However, although the trustees were reported to be satisfied with his handling of the demonstrations as they occurred, a small group is said to be unhappy over his proposal to establish a series of committee hearings at which the museum and the artists would engage in a "dialogue."

Incorporated in the statement issued by Mr. Paley and Mr. Rockefeller was one by Mr. Lowry. It read:

"The curatorial and program staff of the Museum of Modern Art is the most dedicated group I have been privileged to work with. Their devotion to an ideal and their determination to achieve this has impressed me on many occasions. I only want to say at this time that it is with deep regret that I have come to believe that

I must give up my working relationship with them."

Yesterday, Mr. Lowry could not be reached for further comment.

In their statement, distributed to the staff, Mr. Paley and Mr. Rockefeller stressed that the present direction of the program and policies of the museum would continue.

His role in the committee's quick and effective organization of fund raising and in mustering groups of experts to aid Florence brought him to national attention—and, observers say, was instrumental in his appointment to the Modern Museum post.

During his short tenure, Mr. Lowry presided over the consolidation of three departments that were formerly administered separately—the international program, painting and sculpture and museum collections. He assumed the role of director of the department of painting and sculpture in addition to his post as director of the museum.

The effect of the consolidation is to provide a central channel for all of the museum's painting and sculpture acquisitions and exhibitions, which are staged by the museum in its West 53d Street building and elsewhere.

Mr. Lowry also set in motion a plan whereby each curatorial department developed a staff-trustee committee, and he established a regular weekly meeting of curatorial staff heads, the first in the museum's history.

In addition, Mr. Lowry originated a plan, not yet implemented, to display the museum's permanent collection more flexibly.

Mr. Lowry also played an active role in the museum's acquisition last fall of the \$6.5-million Gertrude Stein collection, which had been pursued by museums and dealers all over the world.

There was considerable speculation yesterday on the reasons for Mr. Lowry's departure.

One staff member noted that Mr. Lowry had held two posts, formerly held by two men, which made things "doubly difficult." The job of director, before Mr. Lowry's tenure, was held by Mr. d'Harnoncourt, a man noted for the smoothness of his relations with trustees and staff members, while the administration and acquisition of the museum collections had been carried out by Alfred Barr Jr.

One New York museum official, asked to speculate on the reason for Mr. Lowry's resignation, shrugged and said: "It's an impossible job. It's such a big organization, with so much internal politics that it defies administration."

Bates Lowry, resigned before forming the "Committee on Artists' Relations", that he had suggested - in opposition to the "Open Public Hearing," proposed by the artists. The Hearing was held on April 10, 1969. a w c

# The Museum of Modern Art

Attach. 3

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 245-3200 Cable: Modernart

No. 32  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
Friday, March 7, 1969

A Special Committee on Artists' Relations is being formed by The Museum of Modern Art, Bates Lowry, Director, announced today. The purpose of the Committee is to explore problems concerning the relationships of artists and museums.

The Special Committee will be made up of people whose experience has informed them as to the needs and practices of both the artists and the institutions that bring their work to the public. The Committee will meet regularly to hear all those who want to present their views. A record will be kept, and a report with recommendations will be made public.

"The decision to establish the Committee," Mr. Lowry said, "is the result of the belief we have had for some time, that the whole field of the relations between museums and artists needs to be re-examined. Our interest in this problem was heightened by our recent discussions with a small group of artists who were interested in discovering the Museum's attitude toward a series of questions, some of which were identical with those already under discussion at the Museum."

Among the problems involved are the conditions under which works of art are exhibited; copyright matters; wider opportunities for artists without gallery association to have their works seen by Museum curators; the extension of the Museum's activities outside its own walls; and the economic rights of the artist in his work.

"Some of the problems raised are extremely complicated," Mr. Lowry continued. "Sound and workable solutions to new problems can be found only after the most painstaking inquiry into all views, after all the relevant facts have been presented, and after the most earnest consideration by all those concerned."

Mr. Lowry said that it was the hope and expectation of the Museum that the Committee's inquiry and report will prove helpful to other institutions and artists

117  
(more)



with similar problems. "The world of museums and artists, as all other areas of life, has changed enormously in the last decade," he added. "The changes have, in many instances come so fast that it has sometimes been difficult to act responsibly as soon as they occurred. Certainly there has been a spectacular growth both in museum attendance and in the number of artists who are struggling for a hearing. In establishing the proposed Special Committee on Artists' Relations the Museum is aiming to remain true to its original purpose: to help people enjoy, use, and understand the arts of our time.

Several people are being considered for membership on the Special Committee. "When they have been invited," Mr. Lowry said, "and when they have accepted, their names will be publicly announced, as will the Committee's schedule of sessions and working procedures."

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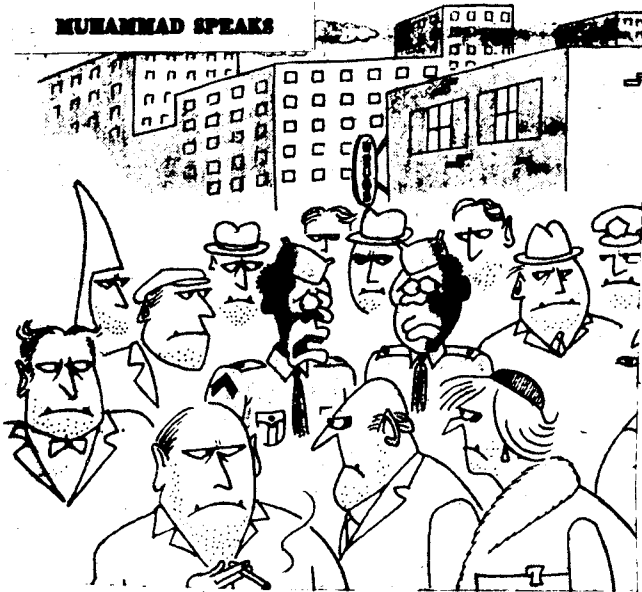


M.O.M.A.  
SECURITY OFFICERS

proposal for constitutional articles for the Artists' Coalition

1. The membership of the Artists' Coalition is all the people who have attended one or more general meetings.
2. Funds may be raised from time to time for certain purposes, but no regular contributions or dues should ever be solicited or collected. Each special fund will be held by a special treasurer.
3. General meetings ought to take place at least once a month, be held in a public, accessible location, be open to everyone, be advertised publicly in advance. All persons who wish to make brief statements on matters of interest to artists should be permitted to speak, and these statements should be published periodically. Every few months, a statement summarizing all the activities of the Coalition for that period should be published and brought to the attention of everyone who is interested in them.
4. At the beginning of each general meeting, a new chairman should be chosen to run that meeting. During each meeting, small committees of two or three interested persons may be appointed to carry out specific projects. At the end of each meeting, about 15 people should volunteer for the main committee which will carry out the activities of the Coalition between meetings and undertake special projects and so forth. At each general meeting, the date, place and hour of the next general meeting should be announced.
5. The main committee should meet between general meetings of the Coalition in order to do the work of the Coalition at the time of each meeting. Additional interested persons should not be excluded from meetings of the main committee. The meetings should be conducted informally without an official chairman and without any voting. Part of each meeting of the main committee should be devoted to a discussion of general problems and questions raised by the current activities of the Coalition.
6. No permanent staff, chairman or secretariat should ever be hired or constituted by the Coalition itself. Aid of various kinds may be solicited or hired for various specific projects, but the work of the Coalition should be carried on voluntarily. The Coalition should not undertake to own or lease facilities on a long term basis, nor should it be incorporated under law, nor should it be able in any other way to oblige people to do things against their will. The coalition might set up corporations or authorize persons to act for it in certain cases, but these arrangements should not affect the organization of the Coalition itself, nor can the Coalition be held responsible for their existence or maintenance.
7. <sup>vs/</sup> The expense of the Coalition and its activities at any time should be regarded as a collective work of art whose character will only reflect the interests of those who are doing the work at any given time.

**MUHAMMAD SPEAKS**



"I KNOW WE'RE HOME FROM VIETNAM, BUT I'M NOW GETTING THE FEELING WE'RE SURROUNDED BY THE REAL ENEMY."

**THE WORLD OF DAVID ROCKEFELLER**

President Chase Manhattan Bank

**CIVIC**

Director  
Morningside Heights, Inc.

Chairman  
Downtown-Lower  
Manhattan Association

Director-Vice President  
Council on Foreign Relations

Chairman  
International Executive  
Service Corps

**PHILANTHROPIC**

Vice President  
Rockefeller Brothers Fund

President  
Sealantic Fund

**BUSINESS**

Director  
Rockefeller Center, Inc.

Partner  
L'Enfant Plaza \$65 million  
office-hotel complex  
in Washington, D.C.

Partner  
Embarcadero Center  
\$125 million office-hotel  
complex in San Francisco

Partner  
With brother Laurance  
4,000-acre resort  
development on St. Croix

Partner  
15,500-acre sheep ranch  
in Australia

**CULTURAL**

Chairman  
Museum of Modern Art

Trustee  
John F. Kennedy Library

**EDUCATIONAL**

Chairman  
Rockefeller University

President  
Board of Overseers  
Harvard College

Source:  
**Newsweek,**  
April 3, 1967

NACLA Vol. III  
No. 2



**9,000 GI's  
KILLED**

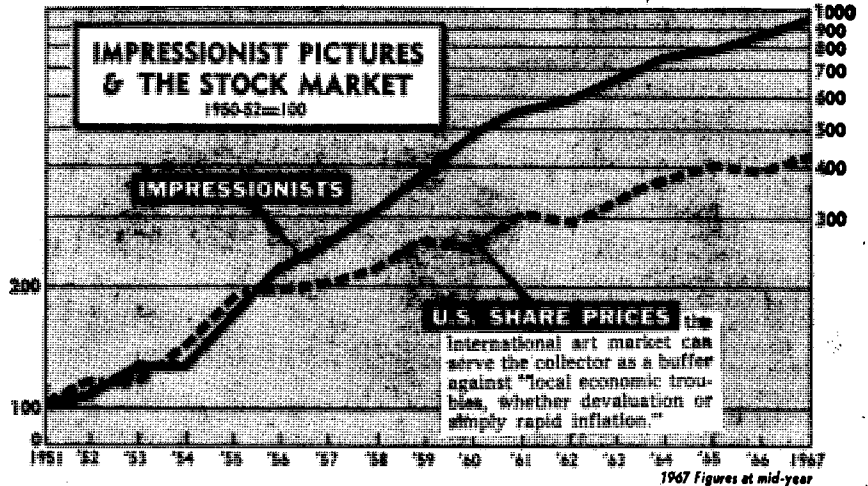
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NEGOTIATIONS  
BEGAN

DEMONSTRATE  
TO END  
THE WAR  
**SATURDAY  
APRIL 5**

PARADE  
ASSEMBLE: 1:30 PM  
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RALLY: 4 PM  
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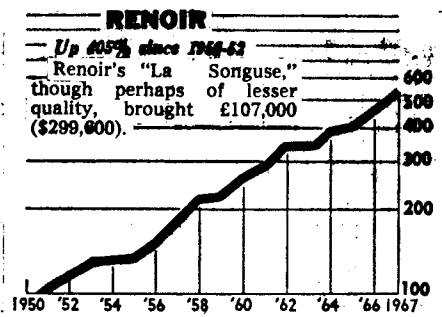
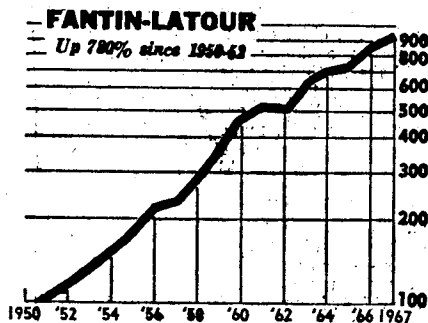
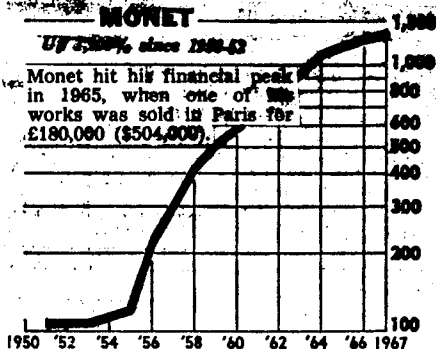
Fifth Ave. Vietnam  
Peace Parade Committee  
17 E. 17th St. NYC  
255-1075

**The Arts Belong To The People**



The New York Times  
Nov. 30, 1967  
Chart shows collective rise in value on the art market from 1951 to 1967 of works of six impressionist painters. Price increases are shown against index based on 1952 prices.

**Investors Enjoy a Bull Market**



ARTISTS AND INDUSTRY: THE LATEST GRAND ALLIANCE  
by Bob Heilbroner, Liberation News Service

NEW YORK (LNS) — Egyptian sculptors sculpted Pharaohs, Roman sculptors Emperors, and medieval sculptors Popes and Kings. If you're a Marxist you think this might have something to do with who fed whom.

But in modern capitalism, the rulers have gone underground. This is supposed to be a democracy, you know, and covert, institutionalized power meets less resistance anyway. Let the hired hands do the dirty work.

The Rockefellers and the Kaisers don't want their portraits plastered all over the place, and religious art is out. So what's an artist to do?

The rulers still get to decide who eats, and, through their museums, galleries and charities, they decide who becomes well known. But traditionally artists are small eaters, and many choose honor over fame. They've tended to get a bit out of line lately — sometimes downright subversive. As Herbert Marcuse has said, art tends to look for alternatives to the status quo.

When Michelangelo, his health failing, wanted to quit work on the Sistine Chapel, the Pope made it clear to him that it would be even less healthy to stop work. Nowadays, more subtle methods have to be found.

Creative ideas, however, are not the domain of artists alone. Maurice Tuchman, senior curator of the Los Angeles Museum, has started a program to increase "collaboration" between artists and industry. It's a sort of artist-in-resident arrangement, whereby famous American artists are employed to work at the plants of huge corporations.

Says THE NEW YORK TIMES: "The industry deals directly with the artist, supplying money and facilities in return for his ideas and products."

The program presently involves some of America's most powerful corporations, including Garret Aerospace, Lockheed (key suppliers of military aircraft for Vietnam). The Rand Corporation (think-tank for American Vietnam policy and a prime developer of American Cold War strategy), IBM, and the American Cement Company.

The artists include Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, and some foreign artists, including Jean Dubuffet and Victor Vasarely, whom the New York Times refers to as "the Hungarian-born 'father' of op art."

The idea is to demonstrate that artists and huge industrial enterprises can, after all, work together — or, more precisely, that artists can work for big business. The strategy is two-pronged: first of all, it's been obvious for a long time that something had to be done about the artists' attitude toward big-time capitalism; and second, it seems that industry has been having difficulty attracting "creative individuals" to work for them. This new program, the Times tells us, "could give collaborating industries valuable insights into artists' creative ways."

The first part of the strategy, at least, seems to be working. Artist Larry Bell, working for the Rand Corporation, assures us that "It's quite different than I expected. I'm not saying that I still don't think of the Rand Corporation in those terms (Vietnam and imperialism), but I've discovered that the scope of their involvements is much broader." (Now there's some really alarming news!)

Of particular interest for the rest of us is artists James Turrell's and Robert Irwin's project with the Garrett Corporation (designers, among other things, of "environmental control" for space craft). With the help of Garrett's physiologists and psychologists, the artists are designing experiments in "perception and sensory interaction." Seems they're measuring the brainwaves generated during Zen meditation, and exploring ways of enhancing the taste of beer with music tones.

The United States Information Agency is planning to display a selection of work from the artists for industry to project at the 1970 World's Fair in Japan.

Says Curator Tuchman, "I think we've proved, in the three months of collaboration, that artists and corporations and technologies can co-exist and make each other's lives productive."



**Cultural Economies:**

**Histories from the Alternative Arts Movement, NYC**

GROWTH

DECAY

**Cultural Economies: Histories from the Alternative Arts Movement, NYC**

Organized by Julie Ault

February 24–April 6, 1996

**The Drawing Center  
35 Wooster Street  
New York, NY 10013**

This exhibition and publication have been made possible by grants from the New York State Council on the Arts and the Lannan Foundation.

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"Why is today the same as every other day?" ©1996 Julie Ault

"Attempting Community" ©1996 Thomas Lawson

Cover: John Fekner, *Growth Decay*, 1978.

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| 54 | Surprising Costs of the Co-op Boom, and Who Might Pay<br><i>The New York Times</i> , June 3, 1984           | Ann Meyerson<br>George Sternlieb |
| 56 | Commentary: The Problem with Puerilism<br><i>Art in America</i> , Summer 1984                               | Craig Owens                      |
| 58 | When Artists Seek Royalties on Their Resales<br><i>The New York Times</i> , May 31, 1987                    | Roberta Smith                    |
| 60 | The End of an Alternative<br><i>Arts Magazine</i> , September 1988  | Allan Schwartzman                |
| 62 | 'A Day Without Art'<br><i>The Village Voice</i> , December 5, 1989  | David Deitcher                   |
| 64 | Darkness Visible<br><i>New York Magazine</i> , March 16, 1992   | Kay Larson                       |
| 66 | Alternative Art Spaces: Survival of the Nimblest<br><i>The New York Times</i> , February 20, 1994           | Allan Schwartzman                |
| 68 | Remodeling New York for the Bourgeoisie<br><i>The New York Times</i> , September 24, 1995                   | Herbert Muschamp                 |
| 71 | Accord in House Would Kill Funds for Arts by 1997<br><i>The New York Times</i> , July 14, 1995              | Jerry Gray                       |
| 72 | Arts Phase-out Stays on Course in House<br><i>The New York Times</i> , July 18, 1995                        | Jerry Gray                       |

## Director's Foreword

This publication accompanies the exhibition *Cultural Economies: Histories from the Alternative Arts Movement, NYC*, a project documenting the work of artists active in the last twenty years in alternative venues—public sites and community centers, artist-run and artist-initiated spaces, collectives and collaboratives. Although alternative art practices can be defined by their difference from those of the dominant art-world economy, the term “alternative” often fails to represent the centrality and significance of the movement. This exhibition, catalogue, and a forthcoming publication of commissioned essays are offered as a celebration and tribute to the artists and institutions who have shaped the movement's many manifestations.

Any project of this scope requires substantial financial support, and The Drawing Center is profoundly grateful for funds received from the New York State Council on the Arts and the Lannan Foundation. We are indebted to the Visual Arts Program at NYSCA, and especially its director Elizabeth Merena, for initiating this exhibition through a call for proposals in the summer of 1994. The intent of this grant opportunity was to encourage New York City's alternative spaces to evaluate and assess the alternative arts movement, their own histories, and the contributions made by other institutions and individuals to the field of contemporary art. To respond to this call for proposals, The Drawing Center turned to guest curator Julie Ault, who conceived of an exhibition which offered an economically and socially contextualized view of significant alternative practices and structures. In addition to celebrating the artists and institutions who comprise the alternative arts movement, it is our hope that this project reflects the long and impressive history of support for the emerging arts and culture of this city. A similar NYSCA grant was awarded to Exit Art/The First World for the exhibition *Counterculture: Alternative Information from the Underground Press to the Internet, 1965–1995*, organized by Brian Wallis. These exhibitions are intended to complement each other.

Very special thanks are extended to Julie Ault, who guided the development of this exhibition with tremendous insight and dedication. It has been a great honor to work with Julie who, as a founding member of the artist-collaborative Group Material, forms part of the history she has uncovered and traced. We are indebted as well to intern Dorothy Désir-Davis for her research assistance and contribution to the exhibition's public programs. At The Drawing Center, we owe our gratitude to Elizabeth Finch, assistant curator, for overseeing the many details surrounding the organization of the exhibition and this publication; and to Sarah Falkner, registrar, for ably orchestrating the transport of diverse materials and artworks.

This publication was conceived as a special issue of *REAL LIFE Magazine*, an artists' magazine founded by Thomas Lawson and Susan Morgan, published intermittently since 1978. We are grateful to Tom and Susan for collaborating with us on this component of the project, and thankful to Tom for contributing a thoughtful and compelling essay. For the design of this pub-

lication, we extend our appreciation to Laura Fields. In addition, we owe our gratitude to Bethany Johns for creating the exhibition's invitation and poster.

Finally, during the organization of this project we appealed to the memories and expertise of many individuals active in the alternative arts movement. Their accounts of the people, institutions, and economic and social forces at play in the shaping of the movement have formed the core of this exhibition. Some of the spaces and groups we include in this project no longer exist, and we have attempted to piece together their histories through the generosity and foresight of those who have cared for the archives of these endeavors. Other institutions and groups have continued on, and this exhibition seeks to present the ways in which their work has changed over the years. Because of the size and extent of this project, any list of individuals and institutions who have contributed to its realization would be incomplete. Nonetheless, we offer our thanks to the following individuals, groups, and institutions who have generously lent representative materials and artworks:

ABC No Rio, Charlie Ahearn, John Ahearn, A.I.R. Gallery, Alexander & Bonin, Brooke Alexander, American Fine Arts, Tomie Arai, Art in General, Artists Space, Rudolf Baranik, Barry Blinderman, Linda Goode Bryant, Susan Cahan, Collaborative Projects, Creative Time, David Deitcher, Jane Dickson, Stefan Eins, Exit Art/The First World, John Fekner, Four Walls, Franklin Furnace, Andrea Fraser, Barbara Gladstone Gallery, Day Gleeson, Mike Glier, Robert Goldman, Jay Gorney Modern Art, Gran Fury, Group Material, Guerrilla Girls, Jon Hendricks, Henry Street Settlement, Janet Henry, Jenny Holzer, Rebecca Howland, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, INTAR Gallery, Bethany Johns, Just Above Midtown, Lisa Kahane, The Kitchen, Louise Lawler, Longwood Art Gallery, Metro Pictures, Marc Miller, Barbara Moore, Alan Moore, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York State Council on the Arts, PAD/D Archives at The Museum of Modern Art Library, National Association of Artists Organizations (N.A.A.O.), P.P.O.W. Gallery, Paper Tiger TV, Printed Matter, Public Art Fund, Lee Quinones, Repro History, Walter Robinson, Tim Rollins and K.O.S., Martha Rosler, Erika Rothenberg, Christy Rupp, Richard Serra, Tony Shafrazi, Allison and James Shapiro, Cindy Sherman, Greg Sholette, Adam Simon, Nancy Spero, Jack Tilton Gallery, Dennis Thomas, Rigoberto Torres, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Anton van Dalen, Video Data Bank, Visual AIDS, Carrie Mae Weems, White Columns, Fred Wilson, and Martin Wong.

**Ann Philbin**

*Questions*

My first visit to New York City in 1976 was pretty exciting. Coming from a small town in Maine where art meant posters of Andrew Wyeth's "Christina's World," New York challenged me to think more expansively about possible functions for art and artists. The catalytic event was coming across wheatpasted broadsides made by Artists Meeting for Cultural Change (AMCC) that posed questions such as "Why is today the same as every other day?...Who profits from art?...Who wins when artists compete?" Although the flyers did propose some answers—"Today, as every other day, art remains the mute witness of the supremacy of a system of those who have over those who have not"—I didn't read them. The questions were enough.

Like many of the initiatives and organizations represented in *Cultural Economies*, the who, what, when, how, and why of AMCC are scantily documented. American market culture pathologically seeks to obscure its politics by characterizing commercial processes as apolitical and overt political expression as unprofitable (uncollectible) and fringe. With no associated objects circulating in the art economy, efforts disappear—some more easily and swiftly than others.

The point of origin for developing *Cultural Economies* was as much personal anxiety as social desire. I wondered why current times seem so permeated with cynicism and pessimism, why there isn't the tremendously empowering sense of potentiality, experienced by many in the seventies and through the eighties, to work within and affect culture.

*Not a polemic, not a history*

Recently, an artist friend cautioned me about the subjectivity we bring to any notion of the past. What was a series of provocative and productive moments for some, was for others the bad years, down moments of inhospitality and alienation. It's treacherous territory—the past—and difficult to find some way to take pleasure in it, gather experiences and inspiration, without falling into full-scale nostalgia or romantic revisionism. Difficult to find the appropriate distance (or closeness) to assess gains and losses, to celebrate and critique.

I'm reluctant to use the word history. It sounds so academic, and implies closure, but *Cultural Economies* is nevertheless a histories project, a pieced-together, alternative reading of significant art production in still-recent contexts. Histories are always elusive. Hard data can only take us so far. Without voices (distinct from narration) there is an absence of shape and tone. My investigation in and around the subject has resulted in countless enlightening conversations in which personal convictions, desires, and judgements surfaced, often with mixed and forceful emotions propelling the discussion. What is recalled and emphasized, of course, reflects and reveals individual and collective agendas, past-tense and still playing out.

The very word alternative produces endless arguments. It's provocative and meaningless,

and suggests simultaneously an opening up and a closing down. Naming oneself alternative sets up both distance from and bondage to dominant institutions and ideas. It implies both a subordinate and a rebellious, perhaps productive, relationship to power. For critically constructive activities and structures it becomes essential to reject the term as a label. The more radical a group or effort, the more likely it is to resist the tag. "We are not alternative to anything" is a much-echoed sentiment that defies simple binary readings of power and its dynamics. Resisting the label positions margin as center: maybe not center center, but central in a given context. These are not just word games. Identifications and refusals have real consequences in the art-world system, the real world.

The more voices speaking about a time, an event, a feeling, the richer and fuller history becomes, perhaps only to break totally, as a contained image or narrative, from the density and scope of contradictory descriptions. There can be no complete story, no real story, no decisive reading of events or their meanings. The more points of view there are, the more discussion there is, the more unmanageable the story becomes. And the more inspiring.

#### *Anarchy, hierarchy*

The phantom subject of *Cultural Economies* is the art-world system: the social, economic, political systems and forces that determine and influence what happens in the cultural field. They form an arena which has no central governing body, a space in which variously antagonistic, competitive, and harmonious institutional and individuated relationships occur. But of course, structures encourage certain behaviors and penalize those who do not respond. In the exhibition, artworks, documentary materials, and artifacts reflect and cross reference elements of the shifting social arrangements.

Superficially, the art-world configuration of entities and institutions locked in relativity defines itself along frictions and clearly delineated functions; between alternative and mainstream, non-profit and for-profit, subordinate and dominant. Specialization and interdependence go hand in hand. Whatever the details, the system still operates and reproduces itself. A fundamental question arises from a purely positional picture of the art world as a system. What are the relations within the system? Relations refer to interactions between elements, and the positions they occupy vis-a-vis each other. The arrangement of units is a property of the system, not of the elements themselves.

A significant dilemma facing alternative spaces and structures is the onset of bureaucracy and hierarchy. Openness and commitment to flexibility in programming as well as in daily internal operations are frequently sacrificed to the demands of funding constancy which mandate conventional, static administrative processes. Financial stability takes center stage when salaries and rent are past due. Under these conditions it's difficult to be spontaneous or debate essential questions about purpose and philosophy.

Alternative spaces, mid-level organizations, and larger cultural institutions too often accept their roles as participants in the art-world system with little tangible resistance. Consequently, a balance of power is achieved, expectations and functions are overdetermined, and creative approaches no longer flourish and are perhaps no longer welcome.

The unwelcome associations of the label alternative—marginalization and diminishment—are further complicated by the perils of a market culture which smoothly incorporates alternatives as style—pressworthy and, until recently, fundable. Social critique and political meaning are often diffused by mainstream commercial processes.

Alternative is always contextual. Despite the predicaments, the idea of alternative, in some genuine sense, still carries exciting possibilities of being responsive—even reactive—but also constructive, creative, and generative. Ideally, alternative might refer to origins, beginnings, processes, and journeys. When an alternative becomes a container or destination, it takes on a structural function and becomes a form of official or accepted dissent within an established system.

Many of the activities represented in *Cultural Economies* have positively affected constellations of cultural power which continue to shift. Yet economic, cultural, and social power (abstract and concrete) perseveres structurally, regardless of reformatory changes and redress. Despite possibilities for change, one truth seems evidenced by the cyclical nature of conflicts between artists and cultural institutions and audiences: the only remedies for structural problems are structural changes. This is why artist-run alternative spaces, and eventually alternative networks, evolved in the first place.

Invention and reinvention are always possible, despite the Right, despite the culture wars, despite temporarily curtailed government funding, despite the stealthy and speedy privatization of the public realm. Looking back, and ahead, at the tremendously rich environment of structures, venues, support, and community produced by initiatives answering (or not) to the name alternative, one finds infinite exemplary acts and art. The result is countless models for practices that try to, and in some instances do, effectively transcend and challenge the established system. The individuals who come together around ideas of cultural democracy, working experimentally and taking risks, offer examples for others to emulate and improve on.

### *Incidentally*

This publication contains a selection of press articles that report on some relevant activities and conditions, providing generalized context by way of temporal fragments. The topics and issues covered parallel many concerns expressed in the exhibition.

Drawing on my experience as a member of Group Material, I resist single-author declaratives and prefer multiple voices and points of view, combining them within a forum where diverse elements augment each another to create a complex picture of experiences and events. I've chosen from daily and weekly press in order to stress real time, accessibility, and the news-

worthy quality of the events described.

It will be apparent that this exhibition, and the public events and publication that accompany it, does not posit a chronology, comprehensive survey, or “greatest hits.” My criteria for inclusion grew from a combination of subjective tendencies (hopefully not narrow), pragmatic concerns that are difficult to convey but were not taken lightly, and an overarching interest and enthusiasm for short-lived critical endeavors, overt social and political content, collectivity, and, most of all, undiluted idealism.

### *Acknowledgements*

Formative and significant conversations with the following people provided me with insights, directions, challenges, and support: Doug Ashford, Judith Barry, Barry Blinderman, Bobby Bordo, David Deitcher, Stefan Eins, Thomas Eggerer, Nina Felshin, Mike Glier, Jon Hendricks, Janet Henry, Roni Horn, Rebecca Howland, Isaac Julien, Lisa Kahane, Jochen Klein, Steve Kurtz, Miwon Kwon, Louise Lawler, Tom Lawson, Susana Leval, Joe Lewis, Lucy Lippard, Inverna Lockpez, Ute Meta Bauer, Alan Moore, Susan Morgan, Mark Nash, Mathias Poledna, Walter Robinson, Tim Rollins, Peter Taub, and Mierle Laderman Ukeles.

Ongoing discussions with Dorothy Désir-Davis, Beth Finch, Russell Ferguson, Susan Cahan, John Ahearn, Elizabeth Merena, and especially Martin Beck have been invaluable.

Special thanks to Bruce Ferguson for the happenstance; Annie Philbin for her immediate enthusiasm and sustained support; Helmut Draxler and Brian Wallis for our dialogues; and Andres Serrano, Gloria Watkins, and Felix Gonzalez-Torres for providing the necessary and desired living and working context.

J.A.

The news stories collected here are by turn inspiring, infuriating, fun, and very sad. My spirits rise as a detail reminds me of the funny peculiarity of a moment shared. Long dormant anger stirs at the memory of some self-righteous posturing that worked against the interests of all but the grand-standing individual. Reading through this documentary history, a bemused resignation washes over me as the large patterns that shape our daily lives—the economic forces of inflation and real estate speculation, the continuing fallout from the political assault on New Deal liberalism—come into plain sight. And then I am moved again to irritation at so many writers for *The New York Times* and *The Village Voice* who write of art and artists with a tone of such deep condescension. (John Russell always sounds so delighted by the antics of these adorably unpredictable children, while Richard Goldstein wants his readers to know that it is he who has all the inside information, the inside talk, and the larger meaning.) But soon enough this annoyance passes, and I am again energized recalling heroic and often quixotic attempts to rethink the purposes and methods of art-making in this culture. This near-joy is then leavened with sadness at the remembrance of all those friends and adversaries lost prematurely in these terrible years of AIDS.

Sitting down to write this essay has proved quite difficult, in large part because of a reluctance to poke around in that emotional quagmire, a remembered past. After trying on different voices and styles, I have decided to write this directly as one who was there: a former participant trying to square memory and emotion. This whole project, it seems to me, is an attempt to recognize the successes and failures of the struggle of marginalized artists (artists who happened to be women, artists who did not happen to be European-American, artists who did not want to make mainstream, modernist art and artists who did, but for some reason were not acceptable) to gain access to support, attention, an audience. The successes are to be seen in the diverse kinds of art that are now visible in art places, the diverse kinds of places that are now acceptable as art places, the diverse kinds of people who are now granted access to art. The failures have to do with factionalism; the inability of the marginalized and formerly marginalized to come together to fight the common enemy: the indifference and hostility of the majority of people to the very idea of art. And the result of these failings is that our work as artists enjoys ever less support. To get at this history is a huge project, and would require the full apparatus of a scholarly enterprise to accomplish it properly. Instead, I offer the quirky and partial recollections of a survivor.

I moved to New York in 1975, looking for a community of artists. I came with a deeply imbued egalitarian socialism typical of people of my background and education in Scotland; once here, I was a bit surprised to learn that what I took to be a kind of common sense was considered dangerous communism. I came with an idea of community and in search of fellow



artists. Fueled by movies like "An American in Paris," I imagined a free-floating, sexy world where ideas and passions were exchanged, and the problems of daily life were somehow taken care of. What I imagined was a fantasy.

The thing is, Lower Manhattan in the late seventies came close to fulfilling that fantasy. The city was near-bankrupt, the collapsed Westside Highway only the most visible sign of widespread corruption and decay. After dark, the vast warehouse districts below Houston Street were all but deserted, and a newcomer soon came to recognize that the few people on the streets were artists and musicians and dancers who lived and worked there. It was easy to find the bars and restaurants that stayed open late, and, in these places, easy to strike up conversations and eventually friendships with others seeking the classic bohemian life.

Long before local politicians made rebuilding New York a slogan to disguise years of deferred maintenance, creatives with generous parents or luck with grants were turning abandoned factories into glamorous loft studios, setting the stage for the gentrification of large parts of the city. To do this they needed skilled and semi-skilled labor willing to take cash and no benefits; and thus was solved the immigrant's problem of how to pay the rent.

With a drop of money in the bank, these were heady times. You could see Simone Forti or Joan Jonas perform at 112 Greene Street, or a film by Yvonne Rainer at the Collective. You could crack up at Bill Wegman's videos at The Kitchen. You could watch and listen to the Ramones or Richard Hell at CBGB's. You could catch the rigorous dreamscapes of Richard Foreman at his Ontological-Hysteric Theatre. If you were really lucky, you might be able to afford tickets to "Einstein on the Beach," the Robert Wilson/Philip Glass opera at the Met. On Saturdays, you could see installations by Robert Morris, new work by Gilbert & George, great, raw, wooden things by Grosvenor Nonas Windsor at Castelli, Sonnabend, and Paula Cooper. Later, you could get some wine and cheese, catch up on news, and see something decent, if not overwhelmingly ambitious, at the cooperative spaces like A.I.R. and 55 Mercer. Later still, you could go to Fanelli's and find out if there were any parties. At other times, you might encounter Bob Moskowitz's paintings at The Clocktower, or a cast-metal chair by Scott Burton sitting on the sidewalk, as if discarded in some loft renovation. Acconci was everywhere, in Sonnabend and on derelict piers, at The Kitchen, and at P.S. 1. At Printed Matter, you could browse Lawrence Weiner's books, or read interviews with Liza Bear and Willoughby Sharpe in *Avalanche*, or Edit DeAk's fantasies about Brice Marden and Neil Jenney in *ArtRite*, and wonder if these people were for real. At Jaap Rietman's, you could follow high-minded arguments about quality in *Artforum*, or, with more polemical thrust, in *The Fox*. Later at night, much later, you could have drunken arguments about beauty with Richard Serra in tiny, claustrophobic bars. On the way home, you could encounter more polemics, broadsides demanding to know who profits from art. The amazing thing is, it all seemed a continuum. This was a community of ideas where none seemed excessively privileged, and all could be engaged.

But of course, this was all mostly a work of willed imagination. In reality there was a sense

that the SoHo aristocracy, the generation who had begun their careers in the late sixties, had a pretty firm grip on things, and was not likely to give generous access to younger artists with different ideas. After a while, the so-called alternative spaces began to seem stale, and everything else out of reach. In this context, Artists Space emerged as one of the few places that consistently tried to show something else, in part at least because its originating charter insisted on younger artists and allowed only one major showing. Helene Winer's office became the place to be on a Friday afternoon, to talk about new work, see what other people were doing. The exciting thing was, people were attempting, again, to think about art differently.

The prevailing view, anchored in a distrust of what painting signifies in a market economy, disregarded objects for processes. It asked that artists consider the relationship between producer and consumer, and the role of the presenting institution—be it raw warehouse space, art gallery, or museum—in constructing that relationship. *October*, started by Rosalind Krauss and Annette Michelson in 1976 in an attempt to reclaim the seriousness of purpose they felt *Artforum* had betrayed, published some of the most thoughtful and nuanced considerations of these ideas. Krauss and others proposed that the most significant work of the decade was driven by a concern for the indexical sign and its implication of a presence in absence. This, Krauss argued, was the essence of photography—an extended understanding of the photographic was now at the center of the most convincing art making.

As members of the first generation to grow up with television, the younger artists who checked in at Artists Space had a lived-in understanding of the uncanny pervasiveness of the photographic that went deeper than theory. A detached analysis of structures and systems was no longer entirely credible. The new imperative was to rethink the politics of representation in such a way as to acknowledge a widespread complex of refusal and complicity. What developed were various end game strategies that proposed an allegorical response to media imagery, evident in the work of Cindy Sherman, Paul McMahan, Sherrie Levine, David Salle, among others. These strategies were immediately criticized in *The Village Voice* and other old-time alternative publications as “retro-chic” and “punk.” Now, “retro chic” was a low blow, but the high energy, media-smart play with image that characterized the most interesting aspects of British punk and the relentless dumb irony of the New York bands both fed into this new kind of thinking. In fact, a large number of artists at that particular moment saw the barely competent garage band as a compelling vehicle for performance.

A new community was forming around a different set of ideas and priorities. Using organizational structures that had come into being in response to the activist agenda of the late sixties, this community sought access to a share of the increased public funding that activism had produced. Thus, the original forces behind 112 Greene Street moved on but allowed the shell of what they had built to be re-animated as White Columns, in a new space with a new mandate. Filmmakers Beth and Scott B and Eric Mitchell, along with other artists, formed Colab to get production money out of NEA grant categories devised to support organizations. But if this was

a community, it was a very loose one; with the steady influx of new artists guaranteed by the boom in art education, shared interests broadened, became less specific. The glue that offered some sense of cohesion was provided by a sudden publishing mania. Little magazines flourished and faded; ideas, names, faces, and images began to circulate. A number of financed attempts were launched to capture various niche markets, but most failed. More interesting were the ones published with no real money, except for small grants from the NEA or NYSCA. For example, *X Magazine*, a large-format tabloid that mostly covered the music and performance aspects of the downtown club scene for a couple of issues before going bust, or *Cover*, which saw itself as a revival of *Avalanche*, with interviews and features in glossy black and white, or *Spanner*, an erratic compilation of “artists’ pages.”

It was at this time that Susan Morgan and I began publishing *REAL LIFE Magazine*, with funds channeled through Artists Space and technical help from HallWalls in Buffalo. Our idea was to provide a simply designed, cheaply produced forum in which artists and writers could explore their ideas without too many big-time pressures, and for quite a few years we succeeded. Sometime in late 1979, we threw a party in an old Irish bar around the corner from the Mudd Club to celebrate our second issue. All kinds of people came, from all parts of the art world; many participants in the downtown alternative scene of course, but also people connected to the glossy art magazines and to the as yet unimaginably glamorous arena of commercial galleries, even a couple of museum curators. It seemed an auspicious moment, the beginning of a new era. Within little more than a year we discovered that this new era was to be presided over by Ronald Reagan, and that one of his interests was to de-fund and de-legitimize all art that shunned market support.

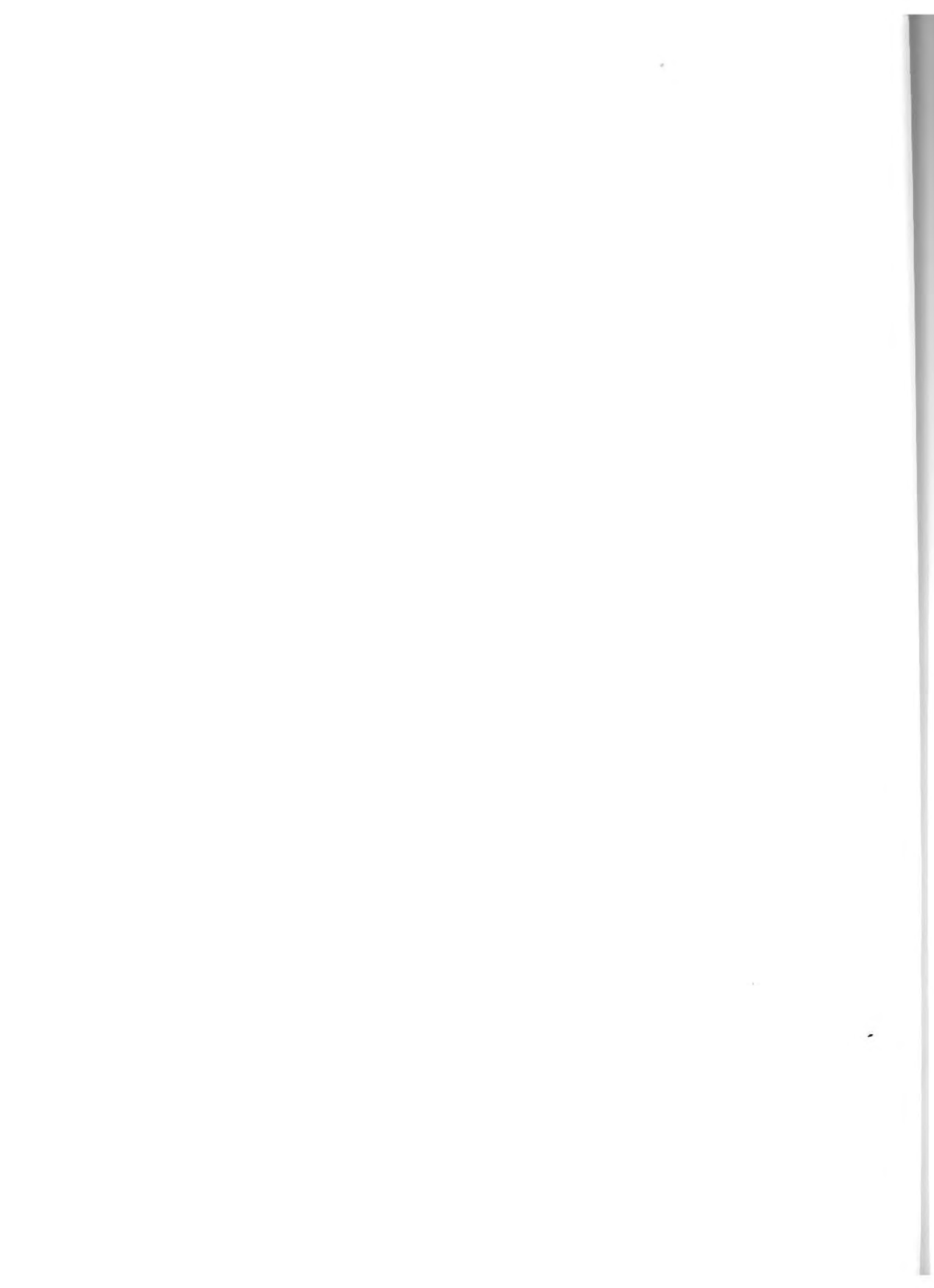
In fact, the first piece of shit to hit the fan had landed earlier that year when a freshly minted artist Donald Newman put up a show at Artists Space. Now, the thing about Artists Space at that time was that shows rarely got reviewed, or even mentioned. This meant it was the perfect place to try out ideas for a small audience made up of mostly sympathetic colleagues who were usually willing to be supportive but tough—a place where you could risk failure. I can’t remember much about Newman’s work—large scale drawings with sketchy, gestural marks, shadowy figures, perhaps veiled references to photography. What was memorable was the title he chose for his show, “The Nigger Drawings,” a dopey attempt to appropriate the existential angst of an earlier group of alienated youth, the Beats. What he wanted to do with this incendiary device was to link personal experience of poverty and emotional pain with public, historically resonant representations. He also wanted to get some attention. What he accomplished was a firestorm.

A scandal brewed in the downtown newspapers, there were demonstrations on the street in front of the gallery, angry letters were written to the funding agencies demanding that grants be rescinded. It is difficult to be clear what became of all this. A publicity stunt got turned around, and used as a convenient soap-box. The issue of an unconscious racism in the art world was raised. Money did flow more determinedly into projects and spaces that would benefit minority

artists. But a divisive demagoguery was unleashed that would return to haunt us all by the end of the next decade. In the name of a moral imperative, a rhetorical violence was directed at the right to free expression and was met by a very flabby and inconsistent defense. (I cannot help thinking of the parallel between the attacks on Newman and the later attacks on Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ*.) People who had reached a level of professional acknowledgment and comfort, as college professors, arts administrators, and journalists, stomped all over the fledging work of a very young artist, work that was irritating and silly, but hardly dangerous or evil. At the same time, a useful institution carrying out its mission as best it could was suddenly threatened with extinction.

Within a couple of years of this incident, Helene Winer had moved on to open her own gallery, Metro Pictures. Many of the artists who had spent Friday afternoons in her office began showing their work in the broader, international context opened up by a rejuvenated commercial system. Artists Space, like most of the alternatives of the seventies, gradually lost its bearings. Partly this had to do with the real estate mania that gripped New York in the eighties. Fiscally responsible boards decided they had to buy property in SoHo or Tribeca to remain viable; more adventurously alternative directors might have argued for moving to other parts of town where artists had moved in search of low rents. After all, with Fashion Moda, Stefan Eins and Joe Lewis established that they could operate an interesting situation in the Bronx. And Colab artists associated with "The Real Estate Show" and ABC No Rio proved that activist artists with no money could have fun and feel relevant throwing parties and creating cable TV shows on the Lower East Side. Group Material discovered that it was possible to function as an alternative without a space; its members simply commandeered existing sites to stage their highly discursive and inclusive interventions.

I am making two points, one concerning a particular historical moment, the other more general. In the late seventies, the alternatives of the counterculture of the Woodstock Nation began to seem old and rather innocent to a younger generation viscerally aware of the slippery resonance of mediated images. A community of meaning was split apart by this, one side continuing to seek wholeness, the other questioning the foundation of that very idea. The more general issue concerns the cyclical nature of change. Artists' initiatives are invariably high energy, they are intense and require full commitment. Inevitably there is burn-out, ideas become stale, actions rote. It is sad to read in the news reports included in this publication of the slow fade-out of many of the original artist-run organizations. But it is inspiring to realize that new initiatives are always taking shape, redefining the problem, rethinking possible solutions. At this moment the question remains; the struggle continues. What do artists want—a Lotto-like chance at making a fortune in a restricted market, with unbridled opportunities for a few winners, or a broad network of support for a large number of artists working with limited to modest means?



## Stompin' at the Met

In mid-1967, Thomas P.F. Hoving, director of New York's Metropolitan Museum gave Allon Schoener, of the New York State Council on the Arts, permission to mount a documentary show on New York's black community. "Harlem on My Mind," as the show is called, spelled trouble from the word go. Many white patrons of the arts protested that the august Met was a repository for high art only and no place for McLuhanesque sociology. Hoving retorted that "the Met was founded as a community museum and owned by the community for the community." Meanwhile, certain black members of the art world blasted the show when they learned that it would not include any paintings or sculptures by contemporary black artists, and some Harlem community leaders who were asked to work on the show felt they were being shunted aside by the non-Harlemite professionals.

The inevitable storm broke last week at the show's opening. For three nights, blacks and whites picketed before the Met's neo-classic façade, carrying signs like "That's White of Hoving," and "Soul Has Been Sold Again." Mayor John Lindsay, whom Hoving had loyally served as Parks Commissioner from 1965 to 1966 before moving to the Met, charged that the introduction to the show's catalogue, written two years ago by Candice van Ellison of Harlem, then 16 years old, was "racist." In her essay on Harlem life, she wrote that the "already badly exploited black" was allowed "to be further exploited by Jews" and that "behind every hurdle that the Afro-American has yet to jump stands the Jew who has already cleared it."

**Lashed:** Hoving at first bucked his close friend, the mayor, and defended Miss van Ellison's attitude as a "personal experience." But then former New York State Justice Bernard Botein, now of the city's Special Committee on Racial and Religious Prejudice, and filmmaker Dore Schary, national chairman of B'nai B'rith's Anti-Defamation League, lashed out at the essay. Miss van Ellison thereupon wrote a brief "disclaimer" re-asserting that "the facts were organized according to the socio-economic realities in Harlem at that time," but also stating that "any racist overtones which were inferred from the passages quoted out of context are regrettable." The museum staff stayed up all night mimeographing the statement and inserted it in all catalogues on sale as the week ended.

Explaining the correction, Hoving admitted "we had to clamp the lid on this thing." But underneath the lid there was still a can of worms. Botein, who helped hammer out the disclaimer with Miss van Ellison, told Hoving he still felt "the introduction contained racial overtones, although unintentional."

While the fracas over anti-Semitism was building up, a vandal stole into the Met at high noon and, apparently as a protest gesture, carved the letter "H" (meaning perhaps Harlem or Hoving) very carefully with a knife into ten major

canvases by Rembrandt, Guardi, Longhi, Boucher and others. "The act is morally disgusting," said Theodore Rousseau, vice director of the Met. "But I must insist that the damage was not very great and the paintings are now being restored. As a result of the desecration, Hoving immediately increased security forces and might even cover all the pictures in the collection with glass."

**Jammed:** Somehow "Harlem on My Mind" (the title comes from an Irving Berlin song) opened, offering an overview of the last 68 years of the New York black community in a thirteen-room multimedia environment of sight and sound jammed with photomurals, film projections, videotapes and recordings of Harlem's sounds and voices. Harlemites form a breadline during the Depression, Duke Ellington's band beats out jazz from the Cotton Club and Malcolm X



Newsweek—Bernard Gotfryd

Pickets outside Metropolitan: Facts of life

lies in state at a Harlem funeral. "Everybody else usually depicts only the grim side of Harlem but we've shown both sides," says Donald Harper, a black engineer who helped create the show. "We've shown there's a Harlem culture to be proud of."

Unfortunately, much of the show's information barrage is incomprehensible. There are too few captions to describe the sights and sounds. The voices of 115-year-old Mother Brown reminiscing about Harlem and Langston Hughes reading his poetry are badly muffled. And the slick installation, overwhelming and flashy, degrades Harlem into a black bazaar. By the end of the week, Harlem was on everyone's mind, even if no one felt very much like breaking into song. Whatever the museum's success in bringing Harlem inside its walls, it had inadvertently plunged itself into the facts of urban New York life.

—D. L. S.

## Tempest at the Met

Few New Yorkers managed to get the sociological documentary "Harlem on My Mind" off their minds as rabid controversy over the Metropolitan Museum's multimedia show, which is breaking attendance records, raged even more fiercely into the second week. It all started when Mayor John V. Lindsay denounced the introduction to the exhibition catalogue, written by Candice van Ellison, an 18-year-old Harlem girl, as "racist" for having stated that Jewish shopkeepers exploited Negroes in Harlem. Met director Thomas P.F. Hoving at first defended the introduction as "a personal opinion" but, following protests from many quarters, Hoving had Miss van Ellison insert into the catalogue a statement disclaiming any racist intent. Last week Hoving followed this with a strong statement apologizing to "all persons who have been offended . . . I now fully recognize that her essay was not appropriate . . . and should never have been used."

Press reaction to the show was frequently violent. The New York Times asked: "What is this show doing at the Met?" and worried that the "politicalization of art and all other forms of culture is a favorite device of dictatorship." The New York Post's Murray Kempton blasted the van Ellison essay as "anti-Semitic," adding that "some day the people uptown [in Harlem] may discover that Con Edison and the banks have more to do with their troubles than the manager of some credit jewelry store on 125th Street." Meanwhile, a coalition of historians, critics and artists, both black and white, urged that the exhibit be closed down, stating that "Harlem on My Mind" shows "no great love or understanding of Harlem, black people or history."

Newsweek, February 3, 1969

Newsweek, January 27, 1969

# The artists view

# FROM GUERNICA TO SONG MY



World Magazine Photos

By MARGRIT PITTMAN

"The poster is a purely humanitarian thing to jolt people into realization of the brutality of this war," young slightly-built Jon Hendricks said. "It is not political and there is no reason why the Museum should have gone back on its agreement to co-sponsor it."

Hendricks is an artist and a spokesman for the Art Workers Coalition in its challenge to the art establishment. This challenge has been centered in recent months on New York's Museum of Modern Art because, Hendricks says, "it is internationally known and acknowledged as one of the world's most important museums of its type."

The challenge has included demands for free admission, reorganization of the Board of Trustees to include patrons, artists and museum staff on an equal footing, organization of a Martin Luther King wing for the work of black artists, decentralization of museum facilities and involvement in programs to improve living conditions of artists.

The first widely publicized confrontation developed around a poster protesting the Song My atrocities, reproduced on the next page. This confrontation developed when museum trustee William S. Paley, on behalf of the Board, rejected co-sponsorship of the poster, disregarding the fact that Museum staff had supported this action.

The poster, 25" x 38" in color, was published despite the trustees' action. Hendricks said that the poster was done with union help. The paper, he said, was

contributed by Peter Brandt, a businessman.

Since the poster has been off the press, the Art Workers Coalition has held two

protest demonstrations at the Museum in front of Picasso's great mural of the bombing of Guernica by fascist planes in 1938 during the Spanish civil war. Hen-

dricks says there is a direct relation between the two incidents depicted on the mural and the poster.

A coalition leaflet states:

"Picasso's *Guernica* was a relevant statement about saturation bombing and the terroristic annihilation of defenseless civilians. Today, again, we need to cry out against the horrors of destroying unarmed civilians, old people and children."

The Coalition wants Song My posters to replace the Picasso mural until the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam, but will accept hanging of the posters opposite the mural.

The Museum disclaims having reneged in the matter. A press handout dated January 8, states that "at no point during any of the subsequent meetings with this committee was it said that a decision as to the use of the Museum's name could be made unilaterally by the Museum's staff Executive Committee."

To this, Hendricks says, "the museum lies. They have led us to believe all through negotiations... that is, since November 25... that the staff could act, and the majority of the staff members were for the poster."

The poster is now being distributed nationally and free by Art Workers Coalition, Box 553, Old Chelsea Station, New York 10011, N.Y.

The words inscribed across it in red are taken from an interview by CBS reporter Mike Wallace with Paul Meadlo, a soldier involved in the Song My massacre. When asked if the killing included babies, Meadlo replied, "And babies."



This young woman was among demonstrators in the lobby of the Museum of Modern Art in N.Y. on January 8. Soon after this picture was taken the demonstration moved to the room where Picasso's "Guernica" mural is on exhibit. Jon Hendricks, holding the bullhorn in the top picture, was one of the demonstration leaders.

## *Modern Museum to Drop Fee on Mondays*

By GRACE GLUECK

In an effort to make its facilities "available to more members of the community," the Museum of Modern Art will suspend its \$1.50 admission fee, the highest of any museum in the country, one day a week. Starting Feb. 9, the museum will be open free every Monday from 2 P.M. until 9 P.M.

"The museum has long been concerned that its admission fees may have precluded access to its resources by many people in the city," said Walter Bareiss, chairman of the museum's operating committee. He pointed out that at the same time, the income derived from admission fees and membership was "absolutely essential" to the museum's continued operation.

"We receive no subsidy from the city, state or Federal government, have a very

limited endowment, and are dependent on the public for our financial support," he noted. In 1968-69, the museum's admission fees accounted for \$804,000 of its total income for \$5,896,600.

All of the galleries will be open on Mondays, and three film showings—at 2:30, 5:30 and 8 P.M.—will be offered.

Although the new free day runs from 2 to 9 P.M., it is seven hours long just as the present Monday hours, which runs from 11 A.M. to 6 P.M. are. This avoids what a spokesman calls "the expensive problem" of overtime for the museum's guards, and provides additional evening hours for visitors.

The trustees' action in suspending the fee on Mondays, the museum's lightest day, was taken in response to urging by several groups. The most insistent has been the

Art Workers' Coalition, a loose-knit organization of artists, writers and filmmakers who have staged a number of protests at the museum. For the last few months a free-admission committee, composed of museum staffers and members of the Coalition, has been studying the question.

The museum has also been pressed by college student leaders and editors of college newspapers to institute a free day. Last year, as an experiment, it instituted a program of reduced rates for college students four evenings a week, with special entertainment thrown in.

The free Monday program is also experimental for a six-month period. It will give the museum a chance to determine the effect upon its general economics and whether the program can be continued without a special

subsidy.

Besides the Modern, three of the city's six major art museums, the Whitney, the Guggenheim and the Jewish also charge admission.

The Art Workers' Coalition is negotiating with the Whitney, where the admission fee is \$1, for a free day.

The Metropolitan and the Brooklyn Museum, both of which received city support, have no entrance fee at the present time (although the Metropolitan charges \$1 for special exhibitions, except on Mondays).

On three successive Monday evenings beginning this week, the Modern Museum garden will be open free, weather permitting, from 6 P.M. until 9 P.M. to allow visitors to take part in an outdoor section of the current exhibition, "Spaces." Admission will be through the gate on West 54th Street.





AWC protest at MOMA in front of 'Guernica': Mini-cause célèbre

## Ars Gratia Artis?

One afternoon last fall, two men and two women walked into the lobby of New York's Museum of Modern Art, dropped some leaflets and began to claw at one another's clothing. As they screamed incoherently, guards and museum visitors gathered in a circle to watch. Then the four burst sacks of beef blood which they had concealed under their garments and sank to the floor, writhing and moaning in bloody pools. After lying motionless for some moments, they stood up, put on their coats and left.

This "event" was staged under the auspices of the Art Workers Coalition, a loosely knit group of some 100 artists, writers and filmmakers who for the past year have channeled their disaffection with the art Establishment into open forums and demonstrations calling for sweeping change. Specifically, the "blood bath" served to dramatize the group's demand for the resignation of the Rockefeller family from the museum's board because of its alleged interest in companies that produce materials for war.

**Massacre:** "The time for art as diversion is over," says AWC artist Jean Toche. "How can we enjoy it, or hold it sacred when people in Vietnam are dying?" The AWC has used Vietnam to underscore its charge that art no longer serves humanity. And last month, in a mini-cause célèbre over a poster depicting the reported massacre at Song My, it put the staff of MOMA—AWC's primary target—temporarily at odds with its trustees.

The staff had enthusiastically agreed to sponsor with the AWC the printing of a poster taken from Ron Haerberle's Life magazine color photo of Vietnamese corpses, including many children, lying in a ditch. Union lithographers donated their services and paper was obtained

without cost. The museum's imprimatur was to have appeared in a corner of the poster, but just before its completion the staff met with William S. Paley, president of the museum's board of trustees and board chairman of CBS, who said he could not commit MOMA to "any position on any matter not directly related to a specific function of the museum." Whereupon the Art Workers staged a lie-in at the museum, carrying copies of the poster in front of Picasso's antiwar "Guernica."

The AWC sees the museum's non-involvement as just another aspect of a "corrupt and repressive" Establishment in which art has become an object and commodity alienated from both artist and community. Toche and Jon Hendricks, members of the AWC-affiliated Guerrilla Art Action Group, also visited the gala opening of the Metropolitan



Toche at Met: Gift-wrapped

Museum's "New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940-1970" show last fall. Hendricks, representing "the curator" in black tie, "honored" Toche, the "artist," who emerged from a gift box by dousing him with champagne and smearing his face with caviar.

**Ghetto:** The AWC has submitted eleven demands to MOMA, including branch museums in ghetto areas, equal representation for women and separate exhibition spaces for black and Puerto Rican artists. None of the demands has been met as proposed. Bates Lowry, who has since resigned as director, wrote to the AWC that art was selected for its quality "without regard to the artist's religion, race, political affiliation or the country in which he was born." Says AWC's Alex Gross: "They want our artists to make art, our niggers to eat watermelon and our women to stay in the kitchen."

The AWC is not the first group to march against the established order in art. Earlier in the century the Dadaists and Futurists campaigned with a slashing mixture of esthetic wit and polemic fury against museums, critics, the idolization of art and most of AWC's targets, and many a fist and bowl of rancid spaghetti was thrown in the heat of battle. What is new is not the fact of organized protest; it is the consonance of the AWC's program, amorphous as it is, with the sense of social concern and antimaterialism demonstrated by other echelons of "the movement."

Hendricks admits that the Art Workers are not all idealists bent on social reform. "There are so many different interests," he says. "Many want their fair share of the Establishment pie; and others, like the blacks, are more interested in gaining a symbolic foothold."

**Ethical:** Can the AWC be as successful as the student radicals in changing at least some of the more obviously ossified aspects of "the system"? MOMA recently announced that it would charge no admission on Mondays, a partial fulfillment of the AWC demand for free admission on all days. And MOMA's incoming director, 36-year-old John B. Hightower, is not going to brush off the issues. "I certainly plan to talk to groups of young people, like the AWC," he says. "I think their central argument is an ethical one—that the whole idea of art as investment, as object, needs to be analyzed."

Up to now both sides have behaved decorously. "No artist," says Gross, "would dream of destroying the work of another artist." And on its side the museum has shown restraint, refusing to call in police during demonstrations. But, says Hendricks, "a lot of people in the AWC are quite militant—and are growing more so. And not just about museums but also art schools, critics and galleries—the whole system is corrupt, and many of the Art Workers are getting tired of waiting for things to right themselves. This thing doesn't end with a free day or any other such gesture. I expect we'll have plenty to keep us busy."

Newsweek, February 9, 1970

## Museums and the Ghetto

Decentralization, a burning issue in politics and education, has become equally pressing among U.S. art museums, institutions whose origins in most cases hardly relate to the cultural needs of modern, especially urban, society. "We want the museums' help, not their art," says Tom Lloyd, a black artist turned cultural bureaucrat in behalf of decentralization. Backed by Thomas Hoving, director of the Metropolitan Museum, Lloyd has obtained \$29,000 in foundation and New York State funds to survey ghetto residents in the city—to find out what they want from the museums in the way of extensions, cultural centers, schools, visiting speakers, anything.

"It's pretty clear already," says Lloyd, "that we don't want extensions of the white, elite museum. What we want are independent cultural centers of our own, right away." Lloyd has been on the job since May, working out of a peeling storefront in the Jamaica district of Queens, one of the eight neighborhoods being canvassed by his group, the Community Artists Cultural Survey Committee. "When I explain what they offer in the Manhattan museums as art," Lloyd told NEWSWEEK's Douglas Davis, "the people here just flip out."

Mrs. Lee Kimche, a polite and proper white lady in the sleek Washington, D.C., offices of the American Association of Museums, is conducting another survey, vastly different in tone, but it hopes on a national level to answer the same question attacked by Lloyd. "Our Association," she says, "got 50 requests this year from museums for advice on how to launch new programs to reach minority groups—neighborhood museums, community art centers, things like that. We had to gather information to meet their demands." With a \$50,000 grant from HUD—the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development—Mrs. Kimche is doing precisely that, assisted by eleven museum officials already involved in ghetto and extension projects. They will report their recommendations to the AAM next year. "It's the nature of museums to look back," she concedes. "But now they realize they can't continue that way. They must diversify, meet the needs of all segments of the population, become a resource for education as well as culture and esthetics."

**Pioneer:** In plain language, this means the heat is on. The efforts launched by Tom Lloyd and Lee Kimche are both symptomatic responses to widespread social pressure being applied to museums by artists, black militants and just plain citizens alike. "Museums realize they can't be the aristocratic repositories they once were," admits Mrs. Kimche.

It is not a brand-new realization. As long ago as 1967, the Smithsonian opened the pioneer Anacostia Neighborhood



Newsweek—Tony Rolio

Lloyd (right): 'We want cultural centers of our own'

Museum, a now thriving "storefront" center in Washington, D.C.'s, troubled Southeast. John Kinard, its director, speaks of the museum as a "free atmosphere where children can concentrate and learn"; among his exhibition subjects have been movies, jazz and rats. The Brooklyn Museum has been operating MUSE, a cultural center for the children of Bedford-Stuyvesant, a black neighborhood in Brooklyn, since 1968. The same year, "Project Outreach," funded by the Detroit Institute of Arts, began sending exhibits and lecturers into small towns and ghetto areas throughout Michigan; last year it reached 90,000 people. Washington's Corcoran Gallery of Art has been running experimental workshops for young artists in settlement houses, boys' clubs and schools throughout the city since 1969—and permanently at its Dupont Circle branch. Similar projects are on the griddle across the nation.

**'Palaces':** But the pressure to expand these services—particularly in New York City—is hotter than ever. At the center of the fire is the august Metropolitan, which has been besieged by the advocates of decentralization ever since it announced its controversial expansion plan in April—to spend \$50 million on two wings for its priceless new acquisitions, among them the Robert Lehman collection of European art, slated to appropriate 38,000 square feet of virgin space in Central Park. "This will be a Lincoln Center," charges Robert Makla, leader of the New York Museum Action, a group opposed to the expansion, "a product of the vanity of Tom Hoving, who likes to build palaces." Says Dick Frank of the radical Art Workers' Coalition: "The Met should put the Lehman collection on tour, or house it in Brooklyn, or Queens, or some other culturally deprived city."

The Met is countering by arguing that it can do both—build the new wings and decentralize, in its own way, to serve the

neighborhoods it has rarely touched before. "Decentralization means different things to different people," says Hoving. "I don't want to lop off sections of the Metropolitan and put them down in the Bronx or Queens. I'd rather extend all the help we can give—loans, curators, advice—to cultural centers run by the people themselves, not by us." Earlier this year, the museum established a decentralization committee—and began raising \$250,000 to provide such help.

**Icons:** The Met's activity and rhetoric is closely matched by the Museum of Modern Art, another temple of culture under hot attack from decentralizers. MOMA is sponsoring an art center in Harlem, the Children's Art Carnival, serving 9,000 kids and run entirely by the community. More projects like this will come from MOMA's own third-world committee, now advised by black art historian Carroll Green Jr. "I'm less interested in hanging Cézanne's art in the ghettos as icons of elitist art," says MOMA director John Hightower, "than encouraging valid new art, like street theater and wall painting."

Critics charge that the similar nature of the projects undertaken by Hoving, Hightower and Lloyd is based on collusion—and the forthcoming AAM report could very well recommend a different structure of decentralization. There are those who believe, too, that the central museums must devote more space to black and Puerto Rican culture, not just keep it at arm's length, off in the ghettos. But there is no doubt that the museum seems to export itself best—as in Anacostia and Harlem—by leaving its satellites alone, esthetically speaking. "We are more interested in music, dance and participation here than preserving objects," says Lloyd, speaking for the early results of his survey, "and that means a new kind of cultural center, not just a little Metropolitan in Queens."

# 50% — NO JOKE

NEW YORK ELEMENT *Nov. - Dec. 1970*

AT THE SEPTEMBER 28th meeting of Art Workers Coalition—Art Strike meeting at Museum, Brenda Miller and Poppy Johnson, artist members, announced that they were going to take action to make the 1970 Whitney Annual 50% women. There was silence after the announcement, then low murmurers, "... but how do you know how many women artists there are...", and, "... you shouldn't be interested in numbers, start with 10%, next year 20%...". Then, from another man, "... why don't we press for an open Whitney show...". (Meaning, if you're going to let women in you might as well let everyone in). Altogether there was a great lack of enthusiasm, few comments, no offers of support, until Jon Hendricks, of Guerrilla Art Action Group, made a motion to support the women. The motion carried. That was the beginning.

On October 9th, six women met at Poppy Johnson's loft, and heard that an initial telephone call to Marcia Tucker, a curator at the Whitney, had met with a discouraging response, and so the six decided to draft a letter to all four Whitney curators, asking for a meeting within a week. They also planned preliminary action to support their demand—telephone calls to the curators by all interested people, and they began gathering names of all women sculptors so that they could give this list to the Museum in counter-action to a possible objection that there were not enough women. It was also decided to ask men artists to telegraph their support of this plan, (15 men did send wires) and as a last resort to ask these men to take their work out of the Annual.

The meeting ended in optimism, and the protesters, with linked arms and light hearts, walked out into the dark of the surrounding empty produce markets.

An emergency meeting of 16 women was called on October 14th, because word was received that the Administrator of the Whitney, Stephen E. Weil, had called one of the signers of the letter, and said the Whitney would not meet the women to discuss quotas for the Annual. What to do? It was decided to write no more letters for the time, but to perform small guerilla actions—all calculated to annoy the museum, but not to damage art or premises. Suggested actions included putting small demanding notes all around the museum, announcing the 50% demand on a large banner placed on the first-floor bulletin board; flooding the switchboard with calls; ordering a chinese dinner for 32 people and having it delivered to the Museum c.o.d.; distributing dozens of eggs, uncooked, in corners and staircases on every floor. Only some of these actions were done, but it was soon apparent that Whitney people were much vexed. It was also decided to invite two women curators, Marcia Tucker and Elke Solomon to a larger meeting and to talk with them as "women to women."

The curators did come to a meeting on October 22nd, as did Jennifer Licht, associate curator at the Museum of Modern Art. There were about 40 women artists there—a historic event, the first such meeting in New York art history, the first time that a group of women artists had met for an action. The tone of the evening was serious, direct questions were asked of the curators. What was the Whitney doing about the inequities toward women, and specifically what would they do about this Annual? At first there was cold distance between the antagonists, later there was sharp, spirited give-and-take between the curators and the artists.

The curators were told, first hand, how women artists feel about the constant discrimination against them in museums, in galleries, and on the faculties of art schools. Miss Tucker said she was not insensible to the discrimination, that it existed on the staffs of museums too, but she asked that the women let her help them without active interference, that she could do a better job for them that way. Several artists took exception to that: Camille Billops, a black artist, challenged the fact that curators have any power, especially women curators, and said that it was the trustees, *men*, who had all the power. Other women believed that agitation by the artists against the museum would strengthen the position of any friendly "insider", that suggestions for a better break for women would be backed up by legitimate demands from "outside". Two or three women felt that the curators should not be harassed, that quotas should not be pushed, only a general betterment of conditions. But the majority were firm for the specific demand, 50% of the Annual, and said that anything else would be tokenism.

Since that evening, the women have been meeting once a week, and the peaceful guerilla actions against the museum have continued—black-painted, hard-boiled eggs were distributed by black artists, interviews with museum visitors have been conducted by groups of women during which the 50% demand is discussed, unfriendly notices have been pinned to the bulletin board (The Whitney Stinks), and Tampax, labelled "50%" has been scattered around the floors.

Actions will go on, the women say, until the Museum agrees to meet, and the 50% demand, they insist, is non-negotiable.

T.S.

# Women Artists Demonstrate at Whitney

By GRACE GLUECK

Equipped with red armbands and a giant placard that read "Women Now," a small bevy of women artists invaded the invitational opening of the Whitney Museum's 1970 Sculpture Annual exhibition last evening. Waving the placard, they circulated among the guests and staged a five-minute sit-in before a massive piece of sculpture.

But their presence in protest against the low percentage of women exhibitors in the Whitney Annual shows attracted little attention in the crush of more than 1,000 invited guests.

"I'm only worried when there's trouble," said John I. H. Baur, the Whitney director, smiling in relief as the evening wore on. "And so far I haven't seen any."

Nevertheless, the Whitney Museum, prompted by rumors of stink bombs and other nuisances, had girded itself for the gate crashers' arrival. Ten policemen were stationed in the lobby and plainclothesmen moved among the guests on the upper floors.

## Ultraviolet Light Used

A guard screened tickets at the door under ultraviolet light and refused to honor more than 100 fake ones printed and given out by the protesters to friends and supporters. But most of those rejected gained entrance anyway, with the aid of tickets slipped to them by invited guests.

The women, and several male supporters, represent unaffiliated women artists as well as members of three groups: the Ad Hoc Women's Committee of the Art Workers Coalition, Women Artists in Revolution, and Women Students and Artists for Black Artists' Liberation.

Stressing that women represent a majority of the United

States population, the three groups have been after the Whitney for some time to give a 50-50 representation to men and women this year in the male-dominated annual.

In a letter to Mr. Baur last October, the Ad Hoc Committee charged that though the museum was founded by a woman, the late Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, its record had been "lousy" with regard to "the exhibition and encouragement of the work of women artists," and that further, the Whitney could not claim as an excuse that its annuals had been selected on the basis of quality.

"The annuals have never been based on taste," noted Lucy Lippard, an art critic and member of the Ad Hoc Committee. "We submitted a list of more than 100 women artists to the museum from which they could have picked work by 50 per cent women. The annual would have looked no better or worse."

The women's groups deny responsibility for several incidents that have occurred at the museum since their campaign began. One was the placing of uncooked eggs, bearing the 50 per cent message, around the Whitney staircases and gallery; another was the similar placement of sanitary tampons with the same inscription, and a third was sending out of a fake release on Whitney stationery to the press announcing that the annual would be comprised of 53 women.

## Museum Makes Denial

For its part the museum denies that it has practiced discrimination.

"Our primary objective is to do a good show using whatever means (of selection) seem productive under the circumstances," Mr. Baur wrote in reply to a recent letter from the Ad Hoc Committee.

Stephen E. Weil, the museum's administrator, had maintained in an earlier letter that to impose "a quota system" on the Whitney annual "would violate the museum's principles with resultant unfairness to other artists who didn't fall under it."

He also pointed out that in recent years the Whitney had given one-woman shows to Louise Nevelson, Helen Frankenthaler, Nancy Graves, Georgia O'Keeffe and currently, Lee Lozano.

It was noted last evening, however, that the current annual contains a far larger proportion of work by women—22 per cent—than any of the previous annuals. Of the 103 exhibitors from all parts of the country 22 are women. In previous years the representation of women ran between 5½ to 10 per cent.

## Pressure Was Effective

Last year it was 8 women to 143 men. Museum officials concede somewhat reluctantly that pressure from the women's groups was effective. "We have been bending over backwards not to ignore requests from women," said Mr. Weil. Mr. Baur noted, "I think we always try to respond to things that seem to be a genuine appeal."

Last evening's guests seemed largely against the idea of representation by sex. "Art should be judged on merit not sex," said Grace Borgenicht, the dealer. And Harold Rosenberg, the critic, quipped, "Are they taking an arithmetical position on art? That follows directly on minimalism."

But one woman exhibitor, Louise Bourgeois, the sculptor, who was sporting a red armband, had a different view. "Since we've been discriminated against for so long, we need special privileges," she said. "The question of quality should be suspended for the time being."

# POLITICS

Political communications from various segments of the art community will be published in this section from time to time. Material is selected on the basis of its potential interest to the general art community and does not necessarily reflect the views of the *Artforum* staff.

cedent setting.

Such an exhibition should then be a model of its kind, and try to deal with all the complex issues (social and esthetic) justly. Such an exhibition should also discover that the roots of America's collective cultural experience are wider than they are deep, and that museum culture cannot simply continue to nurture a few varieties of European transplants. Furthermore, exhibitions that serve minority interests cannot be merely indignant reactions, but must be positive acts, which in good faith foster greater understanding and awareness in changing times.

As African Americans and artists involved personally and publicly as citizens and creative people, we feel that the quality of such a survey to a large extent depends on the intentions and integrity of the institution and its delegated curators.

We say that the Whitney Museum has anti-curated its survey which results in misrepresenting and discrediting the complex and varied culture and visual history of the African American. The museum thus acts as a falsifier of history and minimizes the value of our works and therefore ourselves. This exhibition has been organized and developed in the worst form of tokenism without any regard for our real qualities. The museum has initiated no in depth historical research of the collective quality of African American art. It has not done in depth personal biographies of African American artists. The level of administration and curatology of the museum is apparently of low caliber if we are to judge by the procedures used by the museum and its staff. It is a waste of time, energy and life to organize a large scale exhibition which negates a coherent viewing and analysis of the creative content, context, influence, and general value of the works of African American artists. We cannot endorse non-creative intentions and procedures; therefore, we refuse, withdraw and withhold our work from the Whitney Museum of American Art's Survey of Black Art.

John Dowell  
Sam Gilliam  
Daniel Johnson  
Joe Overstreet  
Melvin Edwards  
Richard Hunt  
William T. Williams

Recent social pressure has focused on the ethnic exclusion practiced by American cultural institutions. As a result some of these institutions have attempted hasty redress in the form of ill-conceived exhibitions. For a major museum, in 1971, to attempt a definitive survey of the works of the African American artist in the United States is important and pre-

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## BYPASSING THE GALLERY SYSTEM

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MARCIA TUCKER

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On opening day, the ground floor of 97 Wooster Street in lower Manhattan's SoHo section was packed. People spilled out onto the sidewalk, talking, laughing, discussing plans, arguing. Inside, a photographer was trying to get 22 women together for a single photograph—lots of friendly jostling, joking, linked arms, warmth, confusion, excitement. It would have been like any other Saturday art opening in SoHo, except for a sense of amazed disbelief on the part of some, and a vicarious sense of achievement for others.

Three months before, the clean, bright, beautifully organized gallery space had been a dark, dirty storefront—plaster peeling, floors warped, wiring exposed, the ceiling torn and the fixtures dangling. A year before that, it had been "an idea buzzing around in my head," said Barbara Zucker, one of the 22 founders of Artists-in-Residence (AIR).

The opening of AIR, the first independent women's gallery, was a milestone. A cooperative consisting of 20 artists, a gallery coordinator, and a video program director, it is funded partly by its members, partly by a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts, and partly by donations from people who believe in its potential. Perhaps most unusual, it is nonprofit. Whereas New York art galleries take a commission of anywhere from 30 to 60 percent, all the money for a work sold by AIR goes to the artist.

One of AIR's most unusual features is its Monday Program. On a day when commercial galleries are closed, AIR is open, and its members offer their skills and knowledge to others. They also plan to visit schools and colleges, conducting symposiums, and teaching women the basic techniques for making stretchers for their paintings, making frames, and designing posters and mailers. They will also attempt to show women how to organize their time, find day care, obtain legal and business guidance, and develop their own galleries and exhibitions.

AIR's exhibition program provides a show for each of the 20 artists in the



gallery, two women a month. Kasha Linville serves as the "gallery coordinator," not the director. As she says, "I don't have power over other people."

Through the Video Program, approximately 30 videotapes are made of members and nonmembers at work and discussing their art in their studios. Hermine Fried, who is in charge of this program, feels that it is "a way of making the artist more real to the public," of extending communication by recording more intimate, natural situations and making them available to a wider range of people, including high school and college women.

How did the women of AIR organize such a complex project? Barbara Zucker, a sculptor who has been living and working in New York since 1962, told me: "My fantasy has always been to have a one-woman show, a show on my own terms." But for years she did what most artists in the city are forced to do to get their work shown—make endless calls to dealers, try to set up studio visits, take slides around to galleries—only to experience the humiliation of haranguing, the disappointment of commitments made and withdrawn, the frustration of spending precious time doing business instead of making art.

Last January, Barbara Zucker and Susan Williams, another sculptor and a close friend, began to explore ways of creating a situation for themselves and others that could provide an alternative to the difficulties they faced, both as artists and as women. They visited studios, and asked those whose work they respected to join them. These earliest members formed a kind of search com-

mittee, visiting as many studios as possible. They looked through the Women's Slide Registry, presently housed at 55 Mercer Street in New York City. The registry contains slides of the paintings and sculptures of hundreds of artists in the metropolitan area. They located 14 others, many of whose work had been previously unknown to them. Finally, all the prospective members met to see slides of one another's work and to make final decisions about joining the gallery. Two decided against it, and two more were chosen by the entire group. Each woman initially contributed a small amount of money, and agreed to a minimal monthly payment for maintenance.

They then divided into four groups: a legal committee that found two women lawyers willing to exchange their services for art; a grants committee that researched and obtained financial support and further developed the specific functions of the gallery; a publicity committee that developed a mailing list, a flyer, and sent out press releases; and a building committee that had perhaps the most difficult job of all—organizing the renovation of the space.

Everyone worked on it; even friends and members' children pitched in to help. A carpenter showed them how to build walls; an electrician worked for a few days and, while working, taught them what she knew. "None of us had a real idea about how the gallery should be structured," one of the AIR group said. "So, the formation was arrived at from our needs. We were all conscious that it was an experiment."

Most of the women agree that the

greatest difficulties they experienced were related to building problems. The work was strenuous, and, for many, completely new. There were personal tensions because most of the artists did not know each other initially. Those who had jobs and children to care for found it hard to put in the time required for renovation. One woman spoke about the difficulty of hearing remarks like, "We have to have even more time from each woman to lay the gallery floor, and if you can't come Friday, bring eight dollars to pay for someone else to do it." "Of course," she commented, "this means that if one is employed elsewhere Friday to support one's art, essentially one's art pays the eight dollars—a basically unromantic, awkward situation. The only solution to this problem must come from outside contributions, and our task is to encourage patronage of the gallery."

What helped these artists to overcome the obstacles? Opinions vary. "It's the core of sensitive, strong but gentle people here that makes it work, and a firm sense of fairness," someone said.

"We're working for a goal that's above the individual," said Howardena Pindell. "There are good women outside the gallery whom we want to reach."

"It's perhaps because the work is good, and there are no other ways it can be seen," someone else commented. "We became independent through a lot of work in the rest of our lives, but were expected to be dependent on the system with our art. We wanted to change that—we didn't need or want to ride on anyone else's back."

Harmony Hammond, an AIR sculptor, emphasized that "For me, this is not a stepping-stone, but an end in itself."

Finally, the success of their venture had to do with the fact that the artists were not chosen on the basis of friendship, art-world politics, or the need for exposure, but on the basis of their work, thus providing what one woman called a kind of "internal quality control." It is an alternative structure in terms of art rather than politics, although it's political in its formation. "It's about what women can do, about higher goals. We want it to be a prototype."

The attitudes of artists not involved in the gallery vary, but almost all agree that it is indeed a prototype. One male painter at the opening acknowledged that AIR was "the wave of the future. There's



AIR members Barbara Zucker (left) and Susan Williams joined the spillover crowd on opening day.

no middleman here, so it gets the art off the merchandising level. It's really healthy. The capitalist-gallery structure is breaking down because of its past record of manipulation, and this is a way of solving the problem."

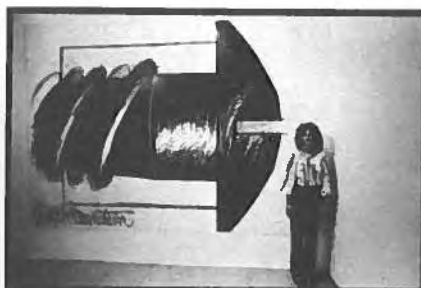
Another male painter agreed. "We've been thinking of doing something like this, too. I see that it really can work." That was greeted skeptically by the husband of an AIR artist. "Men still can't get it together the way women can."

An older, well-known, male sculptor doubted the enterprise itself. "I'm suspicious of the separation of men and women, because I'm interested in art. I'm all for women in that sense, but it remains to be proved."

There were also a few adverse reactions from women. An all-female gallery, AIR members were cautioned, would be seen as "an art front for a Lib Movement." There was speculation that the group couldn't stand together as artists, so were banding together as women.

Whether AIR will include men at some future date is still an open question, but, at present, all agree it's necessary to exclude them. It is an established fact that women artists have had, and continue to have, a more difficult time getting their work shown and sold. A survey of the 10 leading New York art galleries indicates that 96.4 percent of their artists are male. The percentage of one-woman exhibitions in museums is also notoriously low. The Guggenheim Museum has not yet had a major one-woman show, nor has the Metropolitan Museum. The Museum of Modern Art had only four such shows between 1942 and 1969. Demonstrations by artists' groups such as the Ad Hoc Women's Committee, WAR (Women Artists in Revolution), and Women in the Arts have been somewhat effective in changing the situation, but reforms are slow in coming. AIR is all-female because, says Nancy Spero, "We need it more than men do. For centuries they've done just fine, now it's our turn."

Within AIR, there is dissension about whether the gallery should be publicized as being open only to women artists. One member said that she prefers "a subtle approach. I want to have twenty strong artists and have the public discover that we are all women. I prefer to get into the art first, and then into the question of exposure for women." Another feels differently: "I want everyone



Some of the AIR exhibitors and their work. Left, top to bottom: Maud Boltz; Patsy Norvell; Rachel bas-Cohain. Right, top to bottom: Judith Bernstein; Rosemary Mayer; Daria Dorosh.

to know that it's a women's group. I want people to deal with that fact, not just have it be incidental."

Everyone believes, however, that both options are possible. The gallery name itself is neutral ("that was the hardest part, getting a name; it took us three months!"). The gallery flyer includes a brief résumé of what AIR is and how it operates, making it clear that only women are presently involved.

Like other collectives, AIR has found communal decision-making sometimes difficult and frustrating. "It's so hard to get in touch with twenty-two different people to get twenty-two different opinions," said one artist. "We get everyone's opinion on every issue. There's lots of irritation with one another, but everyone gets a fair hearing. It's more non-elitist than most situations, though, because we try to take the most complete poll possible, and the meetings are generally held in consciousness-raising style. The decisions as to who would show when, were done by drawing lots." But the difficulties are gradually resolving as personal tensions disappear. "It's such a hopeful situation. It's important to work at it, and we have more interest in being

supportive than not," one woman pointed out.

Regardless of the internal challenges and the external judgments, the 22 women of AIR believe in their gallery as a genuine option. For those of us in the art world who are not affiliated with AIR, it also provides options. Rather than griping about weaknesses and exclusivity of the existing system, we can look to AIR as an alternate model that can function successfully. Rachel bas-Cohain, one of the gallery artists, perhaps summed up this spirit best in a recent letter. "The pressures of building up a gallery from bare brick, fallen plaster, and rotten floors," she wrote, "of obtaining funds, of dealing with lawyers, landlords, printers, and lumber merchants, and of always acting together has been no easy task. And we have gone through the strain of it with singing as well; and we've come out of the hardest part loving each other."

Marcia Tucker is a curator of painting and sculpture at New York's Whitney Museum of American Art. She teaches at the School of Visual Arts and has published books and articles on art.



88 Seventh Avenue South  
New York, N.Y. 10014

# The Villager



(Jeanie Black Photo)

# ARTS:

## Pure Art or 'Brutality Chic:'

### Artists Space Accused of Racism Over Exhibit Title

BY EILEEN BLAIR

"It was generally agreed to be a dumb title, but it was the artist's title and we understood it in the context of the artist's work. We are very sorry that it was found offensive."

The "dumb" and "offensive" title referred to by Rags Watkins, a staff member of Artists Space is "The Nigger Drawings," artist Donald Newman's label for his abstract charcoal drawings that were shown for three weeks at the downtown gallery. The 23-year old white artist's show closed March 10, but the reaction still goes on.

More than 100 people — a third of them black — gathered at Artists Space, an alternative, non-commercial exhibition space at 105 Hudson Street in lower Manhattan Saturday, April 21. They were there to grapple with the general issue of racism in the arts and the specific concern of apparently inadvertent racism in a publically-funded arts organization. Participants in the heated, emotional confrontation included members of the recently formed Coalition Against Racism in the Arts, interested artists on both sides of the issue, the staff of Artists Space and curious onlookers, some of whom were attracted to the event by leaflets being handed out in front of the gallery by supporters of the Coalition. The artist, Donald Newman, was not present.

After a month of increasing negative reaction to the show's title, Artists Space Director Helene Winer still seemed rather surprised and dismayed over the intense hue and cry the incident has raised. Winer explained that she and her staff of three had discussed the title when it became known to them and, after conversations with the artist, thought it appropriate in the art context in which it was placed. The title was used on the announcements sent to those on the gallery's mailing list.

#### NO PERJORATIVE INTENT

According to Winer and Watkins, Newman's use of the word "nigger" had nothing to do with its historic perjorative racial connotation. The artist, Watkins explained, used the word as an adjective to describe the state of economic oppression that accompanied the creation of the work. "He didn't have enough money to present the work in the polished, professional way he would have liked," Watkins said.

But Winer and Watkin's understanding the title as an expression of poverty and economic oppression and their permitting the use of it without regard to its social and political implications has generated an angry reaction. Those who object to the title feel the gallery acted, at best, naively and stupidly and, at worst, irresponsibly and with unconscious racism. That Artists Space receives \$100,000 annually in public funds further riled those offended by Newman's title.

#### "PRETTY APOITICAL"

Funded primarily by the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and New York City's Department of Cultural Affairs, Artists Space has existed since 1973 as an exhibition space for artists' work that is considered inappropriate or unacceptable by mainstream show-casiers — the commercial galleries and museums. Shows are selected by the staff, headed by Winer or by

who were long if not aggressively opposed to nuclear energy, the Artists Space issue has prompted artists and others in the art world to renew their efforts against what black artist Howardena Pindell views as "an enduring, underlying, pervasive racism in the arts."

Saturday's informal debate ranged freely between the specific situation at Artists Space and the general issue of covert and overt racism in the arts. Participants, seated on the floor of Artists Space's main gallery, shouted comments from the floor, often simultaneously. Others stood to make more prolonged statements. The combative mood was perhaps best embodied in black artist Cliff Joseph's assertion that "This Coalition stands between this gallery and a whole lot of angry people uptown... if you know what I mean."

"I felt like a Southern Sherrif," said Helene Winer in an interview after Saturday's three-hour

stipulation Winer and her staff agreed with. "However," said Watkins, "we're not going to show black artists just because they're black." This comment sparked a storm of reaction from Coalition members and their supporters who insisted that the tokenism of the Sixties and early Seventies was not what they were seeking either.

"What's on trial here," said black artist John Chandler, "is a system that denies black people access to the cultural network." Chandler called on Artists Space "to become the alternative space it is truly meant to be," a space that does not mirror the "subtle racism" that Howardena Pindell feels exists throughout the art world, demonstrable in funding patterns, staffing practices and exhibition policies.

"My argument is not with the artist, nor even with the use of the term in a pure art context," continued Chandler. "But the title is a loaded one given the reality of

**'I've always thought we were a funky downtown gallery. Now we hear we're considered a prestigious art institution.'**

**—Rags Watkins of Artists Space**

guest curators. Aesthetics, not politics, is Artists Space orientation. "We're pretty apolitical," observed Watkins.

It is that very notion that an apolitical posture can defuse or neutralize a word or experience that has very real political and social implications that the Coalition Against Racism in the Arts objects to. Carol Duncan, an art historian who is white, charged Artists Space staffers: "By your logic, if I killed someone in a gallery it wouldn't be murder, it would be art!"

Winer has apologized for the show's title, calling it a "mistake," but the visceral reaction the incident has generated will not be sated with a verbal apology. Much as the Harrisburg nuclear reactor incident activated many people said

exchange during which she and her staff fielded charges that Artists Space had been thoughtless, insensitive, irresponsible, and unconsciously racist for permitting the title to be used. And yet, as angry and upset as the protestors were by the incident, some took pains not to personally attack Winer or her staff or the artist.

#### SOMETHING MUST BE DONE

"This is not an attack on Helene," insisted black artist Bob Blackburn. "I'm sure she wished it had never happened but something must be done for the people who were offended by it." The something-that-must-be-done that the Coalition is calling for seems to be a more aggressive effort by Artists Space to bring in and show black and other minority artists, a

the social-political structure. This show does exist in a larger context and social responsibility and a sense of obligation go with that."

Accountability to the public-at-large by a publically funded organization that, by definition, serves a small, special interest audience is a central issue in the debate between Artists Space and the Coalition and its supporters. Art historian Carol Duncan feels there can be no such thing as artistic neutrality. Another participant in the discussion argued that "a pure art context," if it exists, may be too small a context to warrant public funding.



Abandoned city-owned building on Delancey Street, the site of the Real Estate Show. (Photo by Alan Moore.)

# THE REAL ESTATE SHOW

by Lehmann Weichselbaum, *East Village Eye*, 1980

Most of us missed the New Year's Eve party at 123 Delancey Street hard by the Williamsburg Bridge, where 35 artists as the Committee for the Real Estate Show (CRES) were sneaking a preview for the New Year's opening of what was to be a two-week exhibit. The Real Estate show was all about the way money controls where and how people live in New York City in general, and the Lower East Side in particular. Artworks in every conceivable medium dealt with facts such as arson in the neighborhood, local alternate energy proposals, and the media blackout on what exactly the city is doing to low-income neighborhoods.

The show, several weeks in the planning, was consciously geared to the space that was to contain it. The city-owned storefront at 123 Delancey—built as a factory showroom in 1916, last used as a federal Model Cities office but having lain vacant for over a year—had been invaded and commandeered by CRES on December 30 after what they claim to be a year of long and frustrating campaigning to rent the property for an exhibition space from officials of the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD).

The squatter artists spent the next couple of days cleaning the windows, clearing the trash, fixing the plumbing, turning the heat on and putting up the show in preparation for the New

Year's Eve preview. On New Year's Day the show was officially opened to the public, even as artists continued bringing in their work.

On the morning of January 2, artists discovered the storefront padlocked from the inside, their work locked within. Phone calls revealed it to be the doing of HPD. The Real Estate Show had been open exactly one day. Its basic ideological premise—that artists, working people, the poor are systematically screwed out of decent places to exist in—could not have been brought home with more brutal irony.

The artists were experiencing firsthand an involuntary past-time neighborhood folk have been long familiar with: being cast out onto the street by indifferent interests, whether from private or public sectors. "We're nomads," says video artist, Mitch Corber. "We've got nowhere to go. We deserve a place. We spotted it. No one was there."

For their part, HPD officials—fronted by Assistant to the Commissioner, Edgar Kulkin and Executive Administrator for the Deputy Commissioner to the Office of Property Management, Denny Kelly—insisted they had other, bigger plans for the site. First, they said, three merchants had a prior claim on it (even though it had been allowed to stand empty for so long). Then, they said, it was part of a wide swath of neighborhood

slated for demolition in nine months to make way for an ambitious combination of low-income housing project, shopping mall and senior-citizen center.

But what seemed to irk the bureaucrats most was that the artists finally broke the rules they'd been playing by, patiently and unsuccessfully, for months. "You blew it," charged Kelly at one of many meetings between both sides. "You illegally entered a city building."

Yet even here, the artists tilted closer to conciliation than confrontation. They offered to rent the place for just two weeks, promising to close the show and be out by January 22. "We had hoped they would go on with reopening the space, helping us, joining us to present an informational display about their plans in the area," says Alan Moore. "They saw it as a challenge not an invitation."

HPD did give artist representatives a list of other city-managed property in the area, all of which proved to be too small, too decrepit or both. The artists still had hopes that HPD would let them back into 123 Delancey in time for a press conference CRES had called for noon, January 8.

At the appointed hour, the artists, accompanied by German artist Joseph Beuys, found reporters from the *Times*, *Soho News*, and the *Eye*, HPD officials—scurrying from street to their heated city car and back again—and a handful of cops guarding the doors. Nobody was getting in (except for two artists who somehow managed to sneak in before being gently escorted out by police). The press conference was called off in favor of standing around in the cold, pondering the next step. The notion of storming the building to invite arrest was ultimately shrugged off. The confrontation fizzled, at least for that day.

But HPD was losing face while it was scoring points. Less than flattering reports began to appear in the local papers. Lower East Side residents plainly liked what the artists were up to. "The merchants got everything else down here," said one young woman. "Instead of it just standing here, it would be a tribute to the block." Even the cops charged with defending the storefront from possible artistic wrath were outspoken—in favor of the artists.

"In my opinion, I would say they should have this building to rent from the city," said one officer from the local beat. "The city seems to have forgotten this area. This area hasn't been built up in the past ten years. Anywhere the artists have come they've upgraded the community. They seem to bring a resurgence."

But HPD had yet to play its last hand. Sculptor Peter Moennig believes the agency to be afflicted with a collective "forked tongue." "They promised everything, but never tried to be honest and helpful in a real sense," he charges. But the artists' feelings of betrayal were not quite complete until January 11.

On that day, city workers swept into 123 Delancey, cleared out the exhibited work and trucked it to an uptown warehouse. It was not until a few days later that artists were granted entry into the warehouse to take their stuff home.

Rebecca Howland, a sculptor, admits with some relief that half the work was original, half reproduceable. Plainly, one half was luckier than the other. "Pieces were hastily ripped off the wall and shoved into a box," she reports. "There are things missing. It was a real fast hatchet job."

The battle for 123 Delancey Street can be seen from two different, though related perspectives. First, the besieged empty storefront is typical of countless such properties throughout the city standing abandoned eminently habitable, as officials wave never-to-be-realized "renewal" plans in one hand and the wrecking ball in the other. It is precisely this problem that CRES addressed. Explains Alan Moore: "A lot of people are tired of getting the short end of the stick in the real estate world because of forces they don't understand but that always amount to money."

Second, the dispute reflects the city's deep-rooted ambivalence towards its artists. On the one hand, an artist can now take over a commercial loft and not feel like an outlaw. After all,



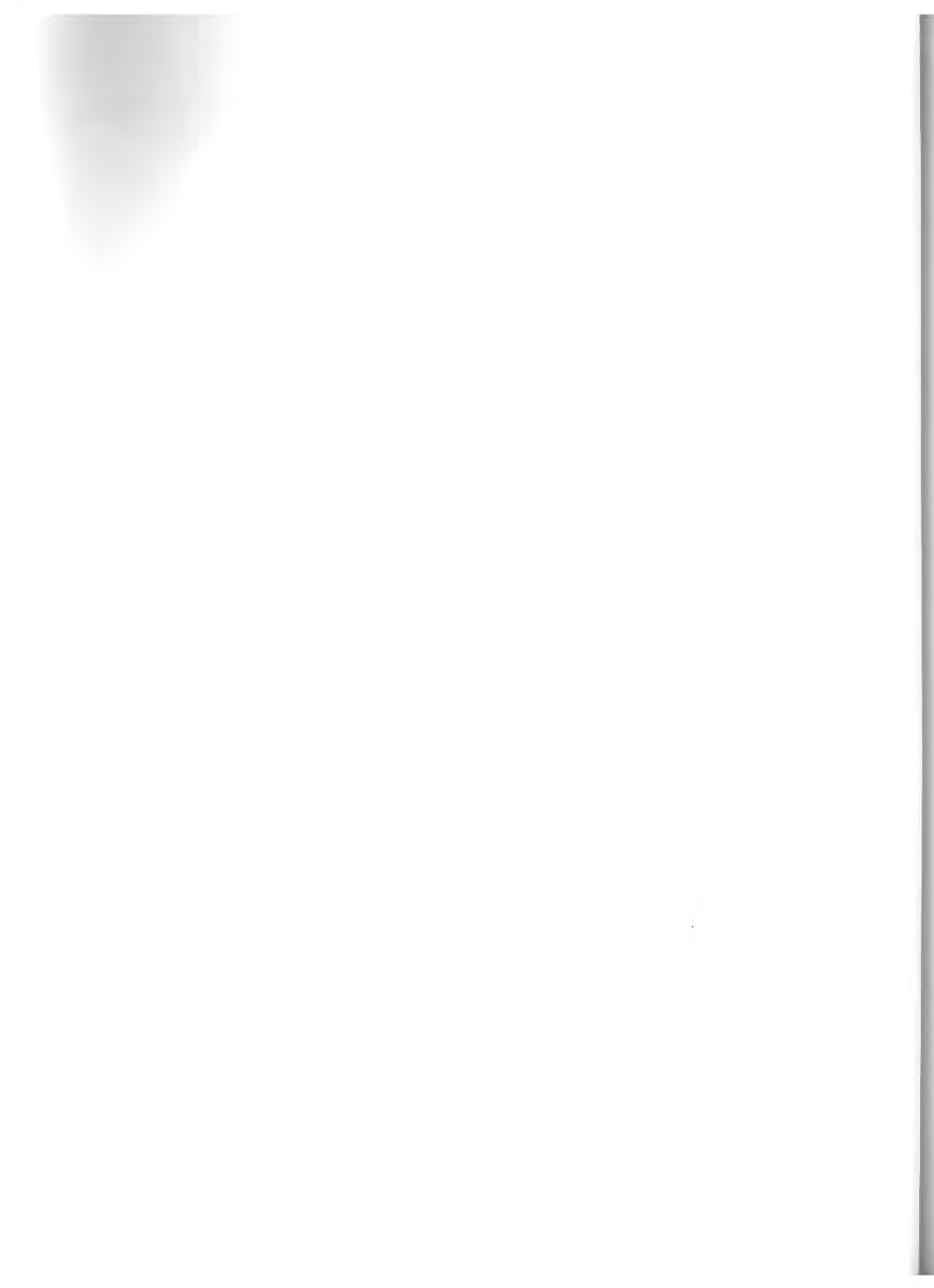
Ann Messner with bolt cutters used to enter 125 Delancey Street. (Photo by Peter Moennig.)

it was those illegal loft people who made Soho such a fun upper-middle-class place to live, wasn't it? And on the other hand, artists who, like those of CRES, refuse to act as shock troops for gentrification and play the art-commodity game, find their needs, at best, simply not taken seriously.

Rebecca Howland considers herself and her friends part of a "post-gallery movement." What they're after ultimately is not just another art space, but a "citizen's center," where the line between the esthetic and the social blurs into meaninglessness. Issues to be taken up, according to a recent manifesto, include "landlord speculation, tenant's rights, property misuse, projected housing developments and arbitrary urban planning."

On January 16, a compromise finally reached with the city brought the Real Estate Show artists a little closer to that goal. HPD's Denny Kelly—herself a painter and resident of nearby Tribeca—worked out an arrangement to take over 172 Delancey Street down the road, formerly Vivian's House of Beauty, until the end of February.

The solution is far from ideal. 172 Delancey—one of the alternative sites rejected earlier by the artists—is far more cramped than 123. It is completely unsuited to the exhibitions, musical performances and community meetings they envision. For now, it remains a base of operations from which to find what they're after. Says Peter Moennig: "Now the work begins."





### CRITIC'S VIEW

JOHN RUSSELL

# Art in Unexpected Places

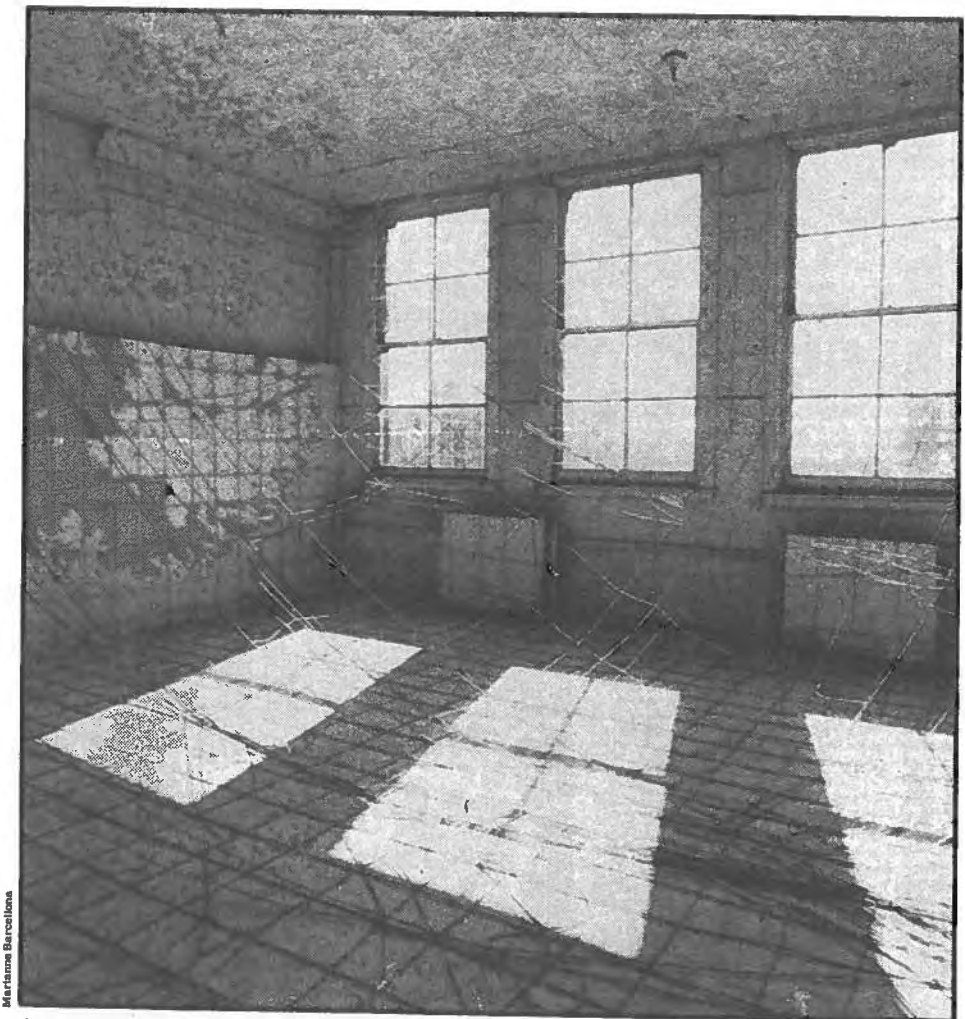
It is the law of life in this country that if you don't like it where you are you get up and go someplace else. The option in question is lifelong. It applies to the boy who is too bright for his local school, and it also applies to the senior citizen who no longer has reason to be anywhere in particular. In Europe, moving house is regarded as a sign of instability. In America it stands for vitality, initiative and self-renewal.

So much is this taken for granted in American life that Americans have never felt the need to give it a name. But in the art world, and over the last 10 years or so, it has come to take a particular form, and that form has been given a particular name. People speak of "the alternative space" for art and for artists. By this they mean something that was badly needed but had never before been so neatly defined.

The alternative space is here to stay. It can be many things: where the artist lives, where he makes his work, where he shows his work. It can also be where he leaves his work behind him forever. What these places have in common is that they are not where tradition placed art, and placed the artist, before World War II. The house is not a house, the studio is not a studio, the gallery is not a gallery. And the reason for this is not necessarily that artists dislike or disdain the traditional house, studio or gallery. It is more likely to be that these things are either out of reach or out of style, and that the alternative space has turned into the imperative space.

This is a worldwide phenomenon. Europe is full of cities which, if not destroyed during World War II, were predicated on industrial systems that are now obsolete. Every such city has its alternative spaces, and it wasn't long before artists got around to using them. In Kassel, Germany, where World War II left some particularly spectacular ruins, the international exhibition called "Documenta" has been held for many years in beat-up buildings of great distinction in which only minimal reconstruction work has been undertaken. In London in the 1960's artists by the score found working spaces in a huge deserted warehouse building on the river Thames called St. Katherine's Dock. In Vienna, some of the best artists in town have working spaces on the perimeter of a track where trotting horses go flying by seven mornings a week. Even in Moscow, and even in Leningrad, the alternative space is a way of life.

In New York City the alternative space has as its most conspicuous rep-



Among the many "alternative" places in New York where art works are displayed is P.S. 1, formerly a derelict school. Above, an environmental work by Brenda Miller.

representative the formerly derelict school building called P.S. 1, which stands at 46-01 21st Street in Long Island City. P.S. 1 is a gigantic building, executed in red brick in a style mis-called "Romanesque" by its admirers. It was put into approximate shape by the Institute for Art and Urban Resources. As of now and through April 6 it has on view a survey of Afro-Ameri-

can abstraction, curated by April Kingsley; a series of special project rooms in which a total of 19 artists (some of them very good indeed) will take part; a multi-disciplinary program, and a series of Sunday video presentations. P.S. 1 is open on Thursdays through Sundays from 1 P.M. to 6 P.M. and anyone who wants to know the meaning of the words "alternative

space" need look no further for freshman orientation.

Within Manhattan itself the Clocktower at 108 Leonard Street, just south of Canal, has the structural oddity that marks the authentic alternative space. The elevator gives out some way from

Continued on Page 27

# Art in Unexpected Places

Continued from Page 1

the top, the distant hum of municipal activity dies into the distance, and the clock tower itself might have prompted Ibsen's Master Builder to one of his more somber outbursts. But the experience is one with real heft behind it, work of every kind looks well in the Clocktower, and if at the end of your tour you can make it up the spiral staircase at the top you will be rewarded with some of the world's finer metropolitan views.

There are many other alternative spaces in Manhattan. There is, for instance, the building at 105 Hudson Street in which Helene Winer and others have been active since 1972. There is the Association of Artist-Run Galleries, which in SoHo itself includes the Amos Eno, the Phoenix, the West-broadway, the Prince Street and the Ward-Nasse galleries, to mention only a few. There is the Kitchen for Video and Music at 59 Wooster Street. There is Marcia Tucker's New Museum at 65 Fifth Avenue, which since it opened in May 1977 has lived up to its somewhat presumptuous name. There is a veteran artists' cooperative at 55 Mercer Street, and there are also cooperatives of women artists: notably, the A.I.R. Gallery at 97 Wooster Street and SoHo 20 at 99 Spring Street. There are other galleries, and other spaces of a less well-defined sort, in which art can be shown quite independently of the market place as it is generally conceived.

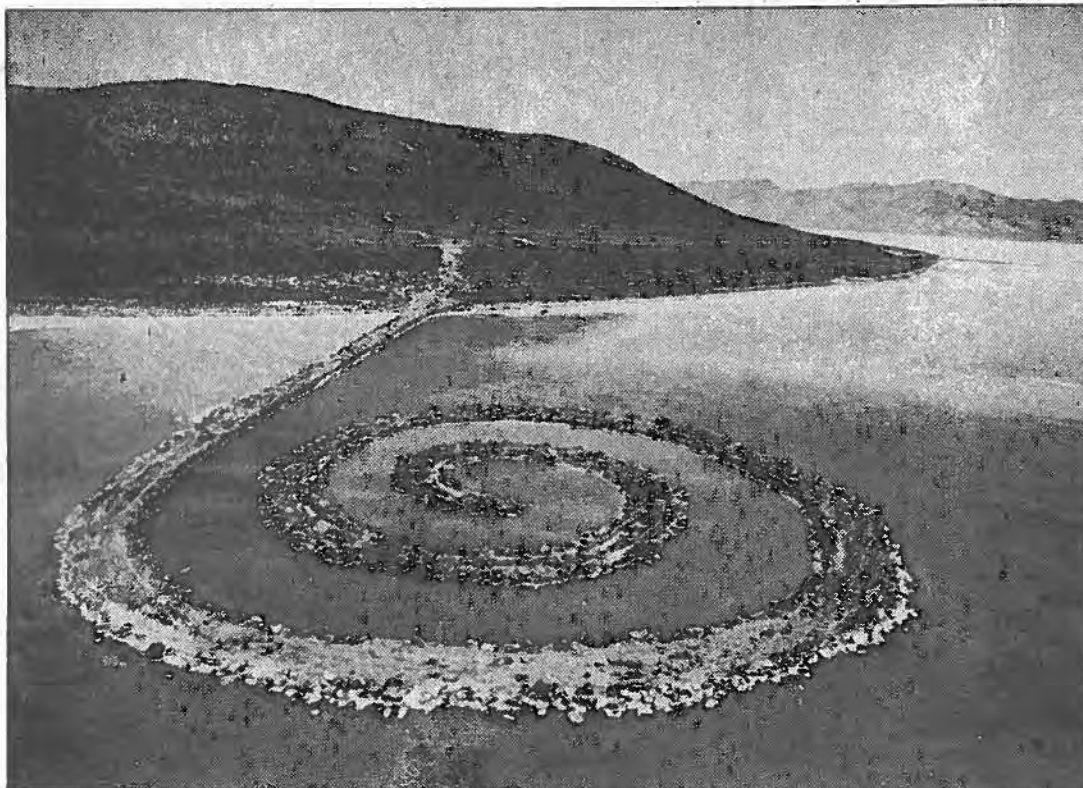
There is, indeed, a larger sense in which the whole of Manhattan can be considered as one huge alternative space in which one or two conventional spaces find a grudging acceptance. Doubtless there are in Manhattan one or two surviving studio houses in the old grand sense, but real artists are more likely to be found living in a disused button factory, or in a savings bank in which the tellers have long ago said their last "And how would you like your money?" There are still some grand dealers' galleries in the European style, with buttoned velvet sofas, rubber plants all over the lobby, security men bulging at the door and eleven millionaires on hold in the inner office. If what you are after is an Old Master painting or a newly discovered bust which just might be by Bernini, you may well feel that older art needs older ways and is not seen at its best in an automobile

showroom that went out of business around the time when the Ford Motor Company thought up the Edsel.

But the art of our own time is another matter. New York has been used to the alternative space ever since the Armory Show of 1913. And ever since Alfred Stieglitz opened his little gallery at 291 Fifth Avenue, well before 1914, New Yorkers have known better than to be taken in by outward show when it comes to the art of their own time. When it comes to dealing in living art, Leo Castelli by universal consent has no equal. But he has never found it necessary to have an inner office in which to box himself away with favored clients. (He has his own ways of dealing with a bore, but ducking out of sight is not one of them.)

Besides, it is not only art that benefits by the alternative space in New York. We no longer find it odd that very good theater can sometimes be found in churches. Some of the best chamber music to be heard downtown has been at the Paula Cooper Gallery in Wooster Street. Merce Cunningham and his dance company happen to be at the City Center Theater this week, but those who regard Cunningham as creativity personified are used to seeing him and his company everywhere but in a conventional theater. And what is our threatened free Shakespeare in Central Park, and our threatened free concerts by the New York Philharmonic all over the city in summer, if not the use of alternative space on an exceptional scale?

Once again, this is a worldwide phenomenon. When a theater company from Georgia, U.S.S.R., gave a sensational performance of Shakespeare's "Richard III" in London the other day, they appeared not in a conventional theater but in a converted locomotive shed. When Jean-Louis Barrault and Madeleine Renaud move house in Paris yet once again, it will be to a former skating rink with Proustian overtones and not in the kind of theater which our grandfathers took for granted. In England, Peter Maxwell Davies and Alexander Goehr have done wonders with the concept of small-scale music-dramas that can be taken anywhere and performed by not a great many people. The most astonishing theatrical experience that Spain has to offer at this moment is a performance by the Claca, a troupe for which the



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A view of the spiral jetty built in the Great Salt Lake by Robert Smithson

veteran painter Joan Miró has designed puppets that are way above lifesize; and the Claca has no home, but can perform anywhere, any time, like the strolling players of whom Honoré Daumier gave an unforgettable account in the 19th century.

It is important in all this, even so, to disentangle the social from the esthetic element. It is also important to disentangle the role of economics in the concept of the alternative space. We acknowledge and applaud the role of quality, where we can find it, but we must also acknowledge the extent to which alternative spaces bind up some of the wounds of our society. We also have to consider why it is that the concept of the alternative space finds extreme expression in the work of artists who make art in remote and uninhabited places. When the art is finished, they leave it there, to be discovered and puzzled over by wondering travelers the way Angkor Wat and Easter Island were puzzled over by the first men who stumbled upon them.

To take quality first: it is beyond argument that in our century alternative spaces, alternative materials and alternative forces have prompted supreme achievement. What are the *papiers collés* of Picasso and Braque, if not feather-weight alternatives (in physical terms) to traditional oil painting? What is Arnold Schoenberg's "Pierrot Lunaire," if not an alternative to traditional forces in the concert hall? What is Stravinsky's "The Soldier's Tale," if not an entertainment of genius which was devised to be given in any available space? What are the artists' books of the Russian avant-garde, with their rudimentary hand-stamped printing and their rough and ready physical structure, if not an alternative to the old-style luxury edition? All these manifestations of the alternative space are by now 60 or 70 years old, but they set absolute standards of quality.

Those masterpieces had moreover a common derivation. They came into being, that is to say, as alternatives. Schoenberg couldn't count on the Vienna Philharmonic (then as now one of the most conservative of all great orchestras). Picasso and Braque had so many ideas in their heads that they just couldn't wait for the long-pondered processes of oil painting. Stravinsky was in exile in Switzerland, had no money, and couldn't afford to think in terms of big-scale opera. The Russians were faced with a world in upheaval, where printers, ink and paper were hard to come by. People of genius turned disadvantage to great account, in all these cases.

Disadvantage plays a great part in today's alternative spaces, too. There are gifted people who can't rent a Broadway theater, can't get Solti and the Chicago Symphony to play their work, and can't get to paint pictures on the scale of Clyfford Still, let alone find anyone to show them. There are also gifted people who don't want to do any of these things and think that Broadway is for the birds, that the

symphony orchestra should have died with Gustav Mahler, and that conventional painting is an effete by-product of the commodity market. Given their views, these are people for whom the alternative space is the only space.

So we have already two quite distinct kinds of people to whom the alternative space is irresistible. There are those who would go along with the establishment but are finding it very hard to gain admission. There are those who wish to continue the 20th-century tradition of alternative action at the highest level of quality. (It is never wise to discount the possibility that one of them might succeed in this ambition.) And there are also those for whom the alternative space is a way of life: a place to come into from an unfeeling outdoors. Within this group there are many for whom the alternative space is a form of therapy: a freewheeling year-long rap session in which the wrongs of the world are mulled over in congenial surroundings and anyone who is in a responsible public position can be torn apart with impunity. In dealing with the alternative spaces which in recent years have proliferated all over the United States and in Canada as well, we should bear in mind that although these three groups will not rank as equals before the bar of history they all have needs of a human sort which the alternative space does much to assuage.

There is, by the way, yet another tradition of the alternative space, and it is in particularly good shape at this moment. This tradition can be summed up in the great early 19th-century cry of "Anywhere, anywhere out of the world!" Anywhere, that is to say, which is not tainted and corrupted by the white Western establishment. In one way or another this is the cry that sent Arthur Rimbaud to Abyssinia, sent Paul Gauguin to the South Seas and made the Douanier Rousseau dream of a bare landscape in which tigers, guitars and beautiful girls cohabit. It is a cry that powered much of exploration, much of anthropology and much of archeology in the days when the inspired amateur still had a part to play in those activities. The alternative space in those days was the limitless space; and it is with the almost limitless space that art has most memorably concerned itself in recent years.

The art which results can be an art of discretion, as it is when the English artist Richard Long goes to the Himalayas, builds a broad white line in a place where few will ever follow him, photographs the result, and comes back down again. It can be an art of self-assertion, as it is when Michael Heizer builds an ever larger and ever less-destructible fastness in the American desert. And it can have a poetic thrust like nothing that was ever done in the world before, as is the case with the spiral jetty that Robert Smithson built in the Great Salt Lake in Utah exactly 10 years ago. It is the privilege of these works of art to persuade us for awhile that the alternative space is the only space, and that it has been put to the best possible use. ■



the village VOICE

Gay Theater Festival:  
Risky or Merely Risqué?  
Gordon Rogoff (P. 77)  
Michael Feingold (P. 77)

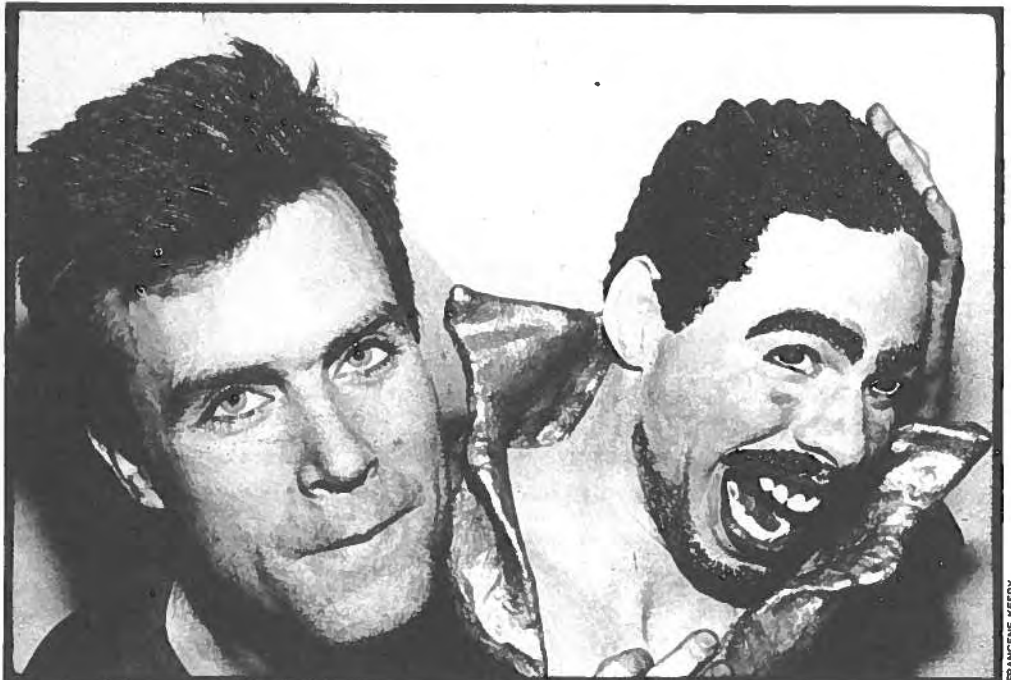
VOL. XXV No. 24 THE WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF NEW YORK JUNE 16, 1980 75¢

# The First Radical Art Show of the '80s

By Richard Goldstein

"The Times Square Show," which opened June 1 in an abandoned massage parlor at 201 West 41st Street, is the first major exhibition of radical art in the '80s, not because of individual pieces but because the way they work together announces the emergence of a new aesthetic among young artists, what you might call a school.

This style—actually a concordance of styles—is often referred to as Visual Punk, though half the artists in this show would probably (Continued on page 31)



Artist John Ahearn at "The Times Square Show"

FRANCENE KEERY



Joe Lewis

SYLVA PLACHY

# Three Chord Art Anyone Can Play

By Richard Goldstein

(From p. 1) object. It has surfaced in after-hours clubs and para-fashion boutiques, "breaking" occasionally in the alternative spaces (and even more occasionally in the galleries) to the pointed distress of nearly everyone. The collectible edge of Punk may indeed be racist and sexist, but the movement also has a radical edge, a rank and file of artists who are rarely funded and seldom shown.

By bringing together dozens of artists who work outside the funding structure, "The Times Square Show" calls into question the system's claim that everything significant gets subsidized. It raises the uncomfortable possibility that corporate and government funders are not aesthetically neutral, and reveals a level of creative activity that is beyond the pale of patronage. If you want to glimpse the difference between official and unofficial culture, take a subway from Times Square to the Battery Park City landfill, where a funded extravaganza called "Art on the Beach" opens June 14. What you will see at the Battery is ample evidence that artists today are interested in gracefulness and coherence. But "The Times Square Show" is a throwback to issues Hilton Kramer thinks are settled. It proves that not all artists are willing to offer up the quid pro quo of harmony in exchange for subsidy.

Everything about "The Times Square Show" says "This is not an artist's space." The floor is ankle-deep in sawdust and sludge. The windows are paneless and open to the street. On a ripe afternoon, damp wood and cracked plaster complete the illusion that you've wandered into a haunted house off some obscure interstate and will soon be asked to pay to see Siamese twins in a jar of formaldehyde.

The environment is overpowering and chaotic, the work crammed together indiscriminately—video on fresco, performance over portraiture—very little of it signed.

The art suggests a certain fondness for cheap shots: A rack of old coats spray-painted gray, a sink overflowing with rock salt, a corridor lined with shards of glass, walls affixed with rats and dollar bills.

"Nothing is too obscure, I don't think, in this show," says John Ahearn, a sculptor. "There's no art-about-art type thing." Yet "The Times Square Show" is rampant with aesthetic notions, none more traditional at this point than the determination to make artless art. What makes this show work is the extraordinary variety of conclusions it is possible to draw from that age-old assumption. If art ought to be about something other than itself, we see how decisively the "something" depends on the artist's education and experience.

The artists were given scant instructions: To present work that comments on the Times Square environment. Among the men, a typical response is cautious and remote. "Across the street we swam to Peeland, to the live nude girls," reads the text of a Brechtian peep-show. "We put in our silver dollars and could see the girls." But the women confront the issue and seem to revel in its possibilities. Jane Sherry, who works in a woman-owned bar in the area called Tin Pan Alley, has gotten together with Aline Mayer to install a creche of old clothes and negligees, incriminated with graffiti like "Cunt," "Whore," "Heat." Militance is everywhere—and women make up nearly half the show—but so is a reluctance to condemn the sexual response. In the lobby, Chi Chi (a/k/a Erika Van Dam) does a classic Times Square strip. O'Keefesque genitalia surround the working urinals.

There is a good deal of grumping—especially among the women—about work that is "politically incorrect," but no one demands that any of it be taken down. The cry to suppress offensive work may be raised when an art gallery (or film studio) excludes the opposition. This time, the

artists have assured that every thesis will be accompanied by its antithesis, through the simple expedient of inviting anyone and everyone to show, and then piling the works upon each other in the indiscriminate splendor of a flea market. Mimi Gross's busts of men who died in the abortive hostage-rescue attempt seem oddly whimsical next to John Ahearn's plaster casts of South Bronx residents, painted over to look like objects in an Orozco botanica. Ann Marie Rousseau's utterly earnest portraits of homeless women in the Times Square area face an anonymous collection of piss and enema shots. A motorized James Brown shakes against a gift-wrap scrim, while a figure representing Joanne Chesimard—chicken wire on scorched bedsprings—reads a Bible open to the prayer for the dead.

Of nearly 100 artists in this show, 12 are Latin or black, a diversity unheard of outside specially sanctioned third world events. Most of the black artists are as hostile to minority galleries as the white artists are to alternative spaces—though for very different reasons. "I don't support apartheid in South Africa, and I won't support it here," says Joe Lewis, co-director of Fashion Moda, a fine arts space in the South Bronx. Lewis wants access to the mainstream as much as most white artists his age (26) want out of it. For him, that means downtown, so despite "the virulent racism practiced by the art community," he shows downtown. Of the Aunt Jemima school of Punk, Lewis says, "It's their ass that's on the line, not mine." But later, while setting up a collage in broken glass, he confides, "You don't know how out you are until you're in."

"The Times Square Show" lets a certain class of artists in for the first time. Some of them have never shown except on the street—in Bobby Ganes's case, 125th Street, since the cops kicked him out of Greenwich Village. Ganes carves and varnishes chunks of wood on the terrace of

his Harlem apartment. For a living, he polishes stainless steel at the World Trade Center, which is where he met Coleen Fitzgibbon, an artist who earns her living programming computers. They got to talking about art, and he accepted her invitation to "show on the inside" for the first time. Are there other places where an artist can take his work? he wanted to know. Can you just go up to a museum, and if they like it, do you have to pay?

There is a moment when artists who choose to show on the street are like artists who *must* show on the street, a point at which their aesthetics touch. David Hammonds, a black artist who collects empty wine bottles and "recycles" them into shards of glittering glass ("you know, like when we brush snow on the sidewalk and it becomes a path") belongs with Christy Rupp, a white artist whose iconography of rats is meant to suggest the ecology of city life ("if rats don't survive, neither will we, because they need much less than we do"). Samo, the graffitist, seems perfectly at home amid the poststructural scribbling on these walls. John Ahearn's South Bronx torsos do resemble botanica art, and David Wells's mock-up of James Brown *does* resemble a record-store display. The less art becomes sanctioned, the more like art the object it imitates becomes, so that we must look again at the botanica and the record store, and that doubletake enhances the original.

Willie Neal, a South Bronx artist who transforms the limbs of trees into canes studded with marbles, does not perceive the preciousness of Punk. He sees only its capacity to scavenge and invent (author's note: graffiti artists of the early '70s used the word "invent" to mean "swipe"). There is only this difference, according to Neal: "As a person who comes from the streets, I haven't done no rebellious pieces. But I have done primitive work, as far as taking sticks and adding things."

"The Times Square Show" is the work of Collaborative Projects, known as Colab among the artists who comprise its revolving leadership. Colab was founded three years ago, by artists who realized that public funding was routing money into the hands of arts administrators. It proposes instead that funding be distributed directly to artists by artists, an idea whose time will come only when a system is devised to prevent them from subsidizing their friends. In the meantime, Colab has marshaled its meager forces behind work that is collectively produced and shown outside the alternative spaces. It has sponsored an exotic assortment of magazines, cable, TV shows, and exhibitions such as "The Real Estate Show," in which artists seized a condemned building on Delancey Street and proceeded to instruct the neighborhood about development—until the city shut them down.

"We're interested in taking up situations that activate people outside the art world," says Charles Ahearn, a filmmaker and John's twin brother. Not all the artists in "The Times Square Show" approve of Colab, and more than one complains about its domination by "Tribecanese," which is code for Punk. For environmental artists, many of whom live on the Lower East Side, Punk's fascination with violence and mutilation is untenable. There was considerable recoil when a Colab-sponsored cable TV show called *Red Curtain* broadcast a film by Tom Otterness, in which the artist executed his dog. After the broadcast, Otterness went underground, and Colab says it lost \$1500 in funding from the Kitchen.

Otterness is in "The Times Square Show," but so are a photographer from the Bread and Roses program of District 1199, and a group of Czech and German muralists called Normal. Among the scheduled events are films by Third World Newsreel as well as Jean Genet, a live

Continued on next page



FRANCENE KEERY

Mick Roddy

*Continued from preceding page*  
martial arts show, requisite reggae, and an ur-spectacle by Jack Smith called *Exotic Landlordism of the World*.

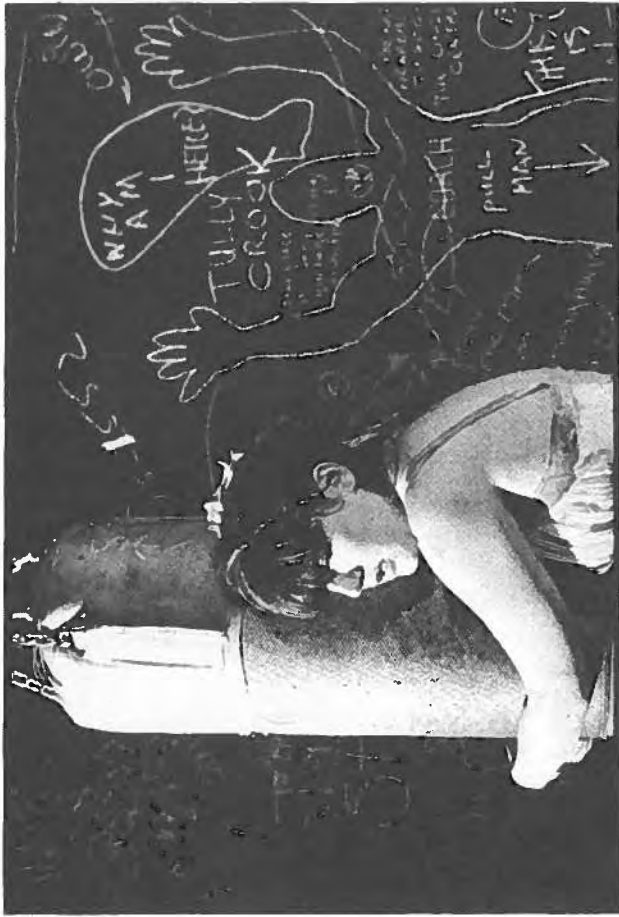
"This is about as different from P.S. 1 as from the Museum of Modern Art," says Charles Ahearn. As if racial diversity weren't distinction enough, there is also the moral stance of artists outside a system that was created only a few years ago to let them in. Unlike the commercial galleries, which never claim to be inclusive, alternative spaces presume to represent the artist; exclusion is supposedly impossible, except on the grounds of quality. "The Times Square Show" means to expose this sham in an exhibition as ambitious as 1918's Armory show.

One problem—the rebels have attracted patrons of their own. "The members of this collective are dedicated to the principle of art in the context of everyday life," writes Henry Geldzahler, in a letter

to potential sponsors. "They have shown themselves to be . . . committed to presenting an art exhibition both relevant and attractive," adds the 42nd Street Development Corporation. "Any support which you could offer would . . . aid in the revitalization of Times Square."

As it happens, the city is much more active in Times Square than it ever was in Soho, what with the proposed Convention Center, the Portman project, and the construction of two hotels on 42nd Street east of Fifth. Forty-Second Street Development, a nonprofit corporation funded by the Ford Foundation (whose headquarters are adjacent to all this action) and the large banks along 42nd Street, is a quality control for Times Square, or as it's known in developese, Midtown West. With the aid of another quasi-public agency, Midtown Enforcement, 42nd Street Development has closed about 100 sex-related businesses in the past four years. What happens to these abandoned spaces? Midtown Enforcement offers to help landlords find "good use" tenants, and more often than not, landlords who have been "encouraged" to evict massage parlors cooperate. To date, Midtown Enforcement has helped struggling theatre groups find rehearsal space in an area where 42nd Street Development built the nine-house complex known as Theatre Row. But that's not all. In a restaurant that once catered to a transvestite clientele, Midtown Enforcement placed Women Against Pornography. Among the businesses it wants to see leave Times Square is the Barracks, a male bath house.

There is a vague foreboding among the artists in "The Times Square Show," a sense expressed by David Wells, who did the James Brown piece, that "we're caught up in a big game plan." They are delighted that the city has commissioned a mural by Richard Haas for a building purchased by 42nd Street Development, but they are aware that the *trompe l'oeil* approach to urban renewal might mean replacing the real thing with its representa-



FRANCENE KEERY

Susan Shapiro and friend

tation, the real pornography with art about porn.

For Mimi Gross, the best-known artist in this show, "The commercial conflict is ongoing—it's forever been that way." She and her husband, Red Grooms, were denied permission to show Ruckus Manhattan in Times Square in 1976. She is gratified by the change in city policy and proud to be represented in this show. "What's curious is that so many artists from so many places are into the same thing," she says. "Of course, it's very available. You don't have to go to school to learn to make that look."

Yes, folks, it's three-chord art that anyone can play, and like punk rock it aspires to be sold at a price commensurate with its value as labor. "I notice a lot of artists making things for sale," Gross says. "They buy the parts for \$1 and sell it for \$10." "The Times Square Show" has a store in the lobby, with multiples for sale—rats and pornographic fans. "It has an edge to it," Gross observes. "It's not oriented to

Fiorucci." (Yet).

A lot about this group reminds me of Fluxus, the legendary '60s collective that staged guerrilla shows in storefronts and on the street. Its members settled in illegal co-ops along the neglected stretch of lower Manhattan now known as Soho. In the end, they were driven out, along with their founder, George Maciunas, who died hounded by the attorney general and blinded in a scuffle with the mafia. There may be no way this new wave of artists can stick it out. Wealth still beckons, and obscurity still nags. Already, Colab is talking about a collector's night, a black-tie affair at which Tom Otterness can meet Ivan Karp over wine and cheese (or dogmeat on toast?).

It may well be, as Christie Rupp suggests, that there is a moment between negligence and control, a moment of uncertainty when art flourishes. In five years, Punk may be too pornographic for Midtown West. So catch "The Times Square Show." While you can.



Reagan, in front of sign emblazoned on slum building in South Bronx, speaks to press

## Reagan Is Heckled By Crowd in Bronx

By Alison Mitchell

New York—Just three hours after he outlined his program to help the urban poor, Ronald Reagan encountered some of the very people he had spoken about—and was shouted down by a hostile South Bronx crowd demanding to know what he could do for their neighborhood.

Yesterday's confrontation—the most volatile of the campaign—erupted on Charlotte Street where Reagan stopped to portray the broken promises of President Carter, who had visited the same spot three years ago, pledging a massive federal restoration program that has yet to materialize.

But the visit hardly turned out as expected, as the Republican presidential contender was heckled on camera by about a hundred angry blacks whom he initially tried to ignore. Upon arriving, he stepped from his motorcade to a rubble-strewn lot to address waiting reporters, his backdrop a building with the words "BROKEN PROMISES" among those painted on its side.

As Reagan began to chronicle the Democrats' failure to rebuild the area, his words were drowned out by cheers, boos and chants of "speak to the people, not to the press." And "One, two, three—boo."

Prompted by his press secretary, Lyn Nofziger, Reagan walked across the street to address the group, but the catcalls only increased. Shouts of "What are you going to do for us?" "What are you going to do for blacks?" came from all sides. Asking for quiet, Reagan who has been suffering a sore throat for about a week, said, "I'm getting pretty hoarse."

Retorted a woman in a blue bandanna, "That's what they all say."

Losing his usual calm, Reagan shouted, "I can't do a damn thing for you until I get elected," and later, "I am trying to tell you that I know now there is no program or promise that a president can make, that the federal government can then come in and wave a wand" to rebuild the area.

From the back of the crowd, Debra Dozier, 21, shook her head. "He's making too many promises," she said. "I wanted to see what he would do. What he did eight years ago in California isn't going to help us here." She said she would vote for Carter.

Later, speaking to reporters in the back of his charter plane, Reagan tried to put the best face on the incident. "The mistake was when we saw those people there we should have gone over and talked to them," he said, adding that the residents' living

conditions made their anger understandable. He called the South Bronx the worst area he had seen since "London during the blitz."

In Chicago, a visit to civil rights leader Jesse Jackson brought more mixed results. Jackson said he welcomed Reagan's visit. Jackson said Reagan was "recognizing that it would be suicidal for the Republican Party to ignore" 17 million potential black voters. But Jackson also issued a searing, point-by-point attack on Reagan's urban policy speech to the National Urban League in New York City.

For his part, Reagan said he had learned from Jackson that his candidacy had been endorsed by a Ku Klux Klan group. "I repudiate such an endorsement," he said. "I have no tolerance whatsoever for what the Klan represents and will have nothing to do with anything of that kind."

Reagan's speech to the Urban League here outlined an urban revitalization plan emphasizing private and local enterprises to create jobs and revive the economy. He also called for an urban home-steading program to return abandoned housing to the tax rolls by virtually giving it away to families for redevelopment. Other items in his speech were tax incentives to lure private business into the inner cities, a reduced minimum wage for youths, and a cut in federal taxes and regulations.

Although the audience applauded politely at several points during the speech, a number of people said afterward they would not vote for Reagan.

"You know I didn't feel—and I tried to be objective—there was much hope in what he had to say," said Jim Edwards, 42, of New Jersey. "He wasn't helpful enough as far as the black community is concerned."

"I don't think he specifically talked about issues and concerns to bring parity economically to the disadvantaged," said Jeannette Parsons, 34, of Manhattan, a member of the Urban League staff.

Reagan returned to Los Angeles last night, ending a three-day trip to New York and Chicago that had been designed to bolster his urban strategy for election in the fall. Reagan had hoped to gain support from minority and moderate voters in the cities of the East and Midwest.

As the day ended, Reagan aides said they were satisfied by the Urban League's polite response to the speech. "We showed them he doesn't eat babies," said one staff member. "That's all you can expect the first time around."

# Enter the Anti Space

"It's not a space," says Bobby G, indignantly; his eyes nearly as wide as the plastic frames around his glasses. "It's a place!"

ABC No Rio certainly is a place. Smack dab in the heart of what Jacob Riis once called "the typhus ward," this storefront at 156 Rivington Street is among the least likely places to be included in the New Museum's walking tour of artists studios.

"It's stuck in this really tight sweet domestic Hispanic five blocks," says Becky Holland, with only a twinkle of irony. She points out the faded sign across the street—ABOGADO NOTARIO—from which ABC No Rio takes its name. The store was a gift from the city, a settlement following the "para-legal action" by these artists last New Year's Day; they seized an abandoned building on Delancey Street as the setting for a didactic spectacle, *The Real Estate Show*. To the city's pointed distress, the artists had liberated the cornerstone of an urban renewal project being fought over by Latins, Chinese, and Jews. The city closed them down, which is the highest tribute government can pay to art.

Tremors from *The Real Estate Show* helped create a public for the movement to wrest control of art from museums, galleries, and alternative spaces that were created only a few years ago to let young artists in. "The alternative spaces warehouse artists," says Alan Moore, a founder of ABC No Rio. Here, where the rain has made a gash in the ceiling, there are no perfectly formed *objets* against white-washed walls. Here, there is no curator to assign a rubric to your work. Among people who suffer from more than sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll, the artist takes a stand. On a wall papered with contributions to ABC No Rio's Fall show, *Murder, Suicide, Junk*, is a crayoned drawing of a tall man plunging a knife into the heart of a small woman. The drawing is based on an incident witnessed by the nine-year-old daughter of the woman killed. She lives in the building above.

ABC No Rio is the latest manifestation of Colab, known on funding applications as Collaborative Projects. You may remember Colab from its sponsorship of *The Times Square Show*, in which artists transmogrified a massage parlor off 42nd Street. It is a phantom affiliation of young ferrets who have settled in neighborhoods where the name Ivan Karp evokes only *bacalao*. They also show in these neighborhoods, which is where the experiment begins.

Much of the Colab sensibility germinated in the South Bronx, where an Austrian artist named Stefan Eins operates Fashion Moda, the original anti space. Like ABC No Rio, it is located in a

formerly abandoned storefront, this one at 1803 Third Avenue, in the once-bustling "Hub." Like Bobby G, Eins disdains the word "space," preferring to call his establishment "a cultural concept." He, too, rejects the alternative space movement for its failure to vest authority in the individual (artist or curator), and for its exclusivity. "European culture in the past 2000 years has been carried by elites," he says. "At first, the scope broadened to include the bourgeoisie. Maybe now we are ready for a total inclusion of all people. I see Fashion Moda as participating in that trend." The name refers to style in its broadest sense, ("Moda" is not an acronym, but the Spanish word for fashion) and the administration includes Joe Lewis, a black New York artist, and William Scott, a 15 year old from the neighborhood.

Last week, the walls of Fashion Moda were covered with canvases executed by teenagers who usually work in the subways. The curator of this show, Crash, stood to one side with his girlfriend, while a man in a torn bomber jacket took a quick look at the art and asked for spare change.

Though the presence of artists who have never seen the inside of a gallery is Fashion Moda's hallmark, Eins insists that's not the reason he left Manhattan two years ago. It was to free artists from "the hooking of sensitivity and big money," by placing them in an environment completely void of references to fine art. Eins insists the South Bronx forces artists to devise solutions that are independent of the marketplace. It also forces them to confront a minority culture that isn't American. All the anti spaces are located in Hispanic neighborhoods, heightening the illusion that seems essential to this movement: New York as a crossroads where alienated Europeans meet outcast Americans before a bemused third world.

Eins seems uneasy about the influx of French and German artists, but in fact, their prosperity—and our decline—has made the postwar dream of a unified Western aesthetic viable on other than American terms. Art in the '80s is a multinational event, and the anti space movement is very much an expression of European ideas about the strength of collective action. It is, to use a handy referent, the Frankfurt School come home to roost.

Which brings me to the most profoundly social of the anti spaces, Group Material, at 244 East 13th Street. Here, in the heart of the up'n'coming East Village, artists five years younger than the Colab crowd have opened an exhibition space that offers advice about lowering your rent—in Spanish. People from the block donated all the furniture; local children

# ART BEAT

*The Politics of Culture*  
BY RICHARD GOLDSTEIN

wander in, giggling at the walls. At the opening last month, 400 people gobbled fish fritters cooked by the woman upstairs. It was so successful, as art events go, that Group Material has already earned the enmity of New Wave artists far and wide. "Real cute," smirks one. "Well read," snarls another.

The members of Group Material return the compliment. "We don't identify ourselves as New Wave artists," says Beth Jaker. "It seems to be a very reflective art," her colleague Tim Rollins adds, "a camp critique, the middle class making fun of itself. It's like the warning Walter Benjamin gave about the danger of aestheticizing politics. We're less interested in reflecting than in projecting out into the community."

A great deal about Group Material resembles Fashion Moda: the emphasis on community involvement, the rebellion against art that expresses a primarily formal concern, the determination to circumvent galleries and alternative spaces. Since Group Material is not located in an abandoned building, each artist contributes \$45 a month toward the rent. Shows are curated by committee; artists address a given theme. The current show is described as "a survey of the new cultural militancy emergent in the work of artists, collectives, and nonartists in the U.S. and Europe." There is much *assemblage* of image and text, as if the artists were trying to coax you away from a purely visual interpretation. Tim Rollins: "If anything has to do with Group Material, it's reinventing the dialectic through art."

Marxism and sexual politics of a special sort inform their work. Two women in the group are involved in an upcoming issue of *Heresies* on human sexuality; yet they object to art that "addresses genital icons"—i.e., Judy Chicago. "We prefer to comment on femininity as a social phenomenon," says Beth Jaker. Most of the men in the group are openly gay, yet they are skeptical about the recent wave of male iconography. Pat Brennan: "I don't think a work of art should be gay, because it isn't. The person who made it is." Tim Rollins: "By creating a gay art work, you





STEVEN MARK NEEDHAM

Hallowe'en at Group Material

presume a separation from society. I absolutely refuse to ghettoize myself."

Ideology equips these artists to control the presentation of their work, and the terms on which they court success. I wouldn't say the same for most of Colab's membership. During the gift-giving season, there will be two outlets for Colab product: the A. More Store on Broome Street, and the Brooke Alexander Gallery on 57th Street, which one artist calls "the pay more store." Alexander has reportedly offered to show anything Colab wants to hang on his walls, and agreed to take only 10 per cent of the gross—a steal in art-world terms. "People will be selling their talismans," Alan Moore of ABC No Rio predicts. We await the acquisition by Mr. and Mrs. Burton Tremaine of a rat by Christie Rupp.

Not every artist in Colab is tickled by its gallery debut. John Ahearn, whose busts of South Bronx residents were (arguably) the most enriching work in *The Times Square Show*, has reportedly fled to the Grand Concourse, pursued by collectors who want to be cast. But most of the membership would probably agree with Bobby G. that 57th Street is "where the power is. It's an audience that needs to be influenced. And I'd rather see people who will be responsive to the power" showing there.

As the art world turns, assault becomes less provident than signatures of assault, evidence that a departure has occurred. Unable to sell the object, the gallery sells "documentation"—proof that the object existed. The artist who moved away from the epicenter of commerce finds that its boundaries have been extended. The original act of rebellion has become a standard by which other artists measure their contempt.

Group Material measures itself against *The Times Square Show* and concludes that only analysis can save artists from becoming the victims of their own enthusiasm. Yet, in the process of demystifying the image, something is lost. The art is so bluntly subordinate to its intention that it seems sedate. I leave the storefront gratified, but unmoved. Horribly enough for someone as earnest as myself, I much preferred *The Times Square Show*, which left me skeptical but aroused.

Perhaps that's just my way of being "an educated consumer." Which puts me in mind of an anecdote about Brecht, who kept a china jackass on his desk. To it he had affixed the words, "I too must understand." In this case, the jackass is form. ■

## In the Works

**ABC No Rio:** Beginning November 15, Christie Rupp brings *Animals Living in Cities* to the Lower East Side. See rats, roaches, sparrows—"a living museum." Says Rupp: "Artists can use their skills to teach people stuff." Coming up: another "para-legal action" by the folks who brought you *The Real Estate Show*.

**Fashion Moda:** Three artists who wouldn't know the Bronx from Brest put down roots. They are part of *Une Idee En L'Air*, in which the French government sponsors young artists to show in all the best alternative spaces. In December, Fashion Moda and the New Museum jointly present artists from New Orleans, Oakland, and the Hub. Given federal regulations requiring publicly funded galleries to show minorities, look for this show to be very mix-and-match.

**Group Material:** November 21: *Alienation* "describes and explains the modern break-up of reality"; in December, *Revolt-ing Music* features "the revolutionary hits of the past three decades." Also in the Hopper (sic): *Gender* ("analyzes the construction of erotic desire"), *The Aesthetics of Consumption* ("lectures on commodity fetishism"), *Food and Culture* ("organizes . . . the cooking of the Lower East Side").

—R. G.



# The New Collectives — Reaching for a Wider Audience



The New York Times / Lou Manna

Directors of Fashion Moda, William Scott, Joe Lewis and Stefan Eins, left to right, in the group's South Bronx studio—"challenging art as an elitist thing."



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By GRACE GLUECK

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“I found the art scene in Manhattan too closed in,” says Stefan Eins, a 39-year old artist from Austria who has been living in New York since the 1960’s. “I felt it lacked nourishment, and a broad enough audience. I said, why not move to a really bad area of the city, and see if I can establish a base there.”

And so two years ago, Mr. Eins took himself to the South Bronx, rented and cleared out a rubble-filled storefront, then opened Fashion Moda, “a Museum of Science, Art, Technology, Invention and Fantasy.” Presenting a wild mélange of shows by artists, community residents, children, graffiti-makers and other creators, Fashion Moda has been a resounding success with its South Bronx audience, and, despite the disapproval of critics, has attracted the attention of the glossy art world that it left behind in Manhattan.

Now Fashion Moda’s work has appeared, in a recent show at the New Museum on Lower Fifth Avenue. The show is a part of the exhibition called “Events,” which marks a growing movement of artists who work collectively, outside of the conventional art world boundaries. They aim to reach a wider, less-sophisticated audience than the upper-middle-class art patrons who frequent the established system of galleries, museums and alternative spaces around the city. “Events” represents the first show at the museum completely organized and presented by artists’ groups. The second, and current, “Event” is mounted by Taller Boricua, a collaborative group of 10 Puerto Rican artists, currently exhibiting the work of four members (through Feb. 5). The third organization, Collaborative Projects, Inc. (CoLab), an association of between 35 and 50 young artists that last June put together the much-talked-about Times Square Show in a scruffy 41st Street massage parlor, was to have mounted a presentation of its own on Feb. 14. But at the last minute CoLab cancelled its plans, on the grounds that it stood to gain less from the collaboration than its host.

The three groups have a lot in common. They are all composed of relatively young artists who believe in community involvement, and whose funky or ethnic tastes are out of step with the preference for cool, elegant art that still prevails on the Madison Avenue/SoHo circuit. Taller Boricua, for example, is deeply involved with Puerto Rican culture. There is a lot of fraternization between Fashion Moda and CoLab artists, who include photographers, performance and conceptual artists, film and video makers, as well as artists who work in the more traditional disciplines. Their work tends to celebrate urban decay, and it has a raw, gritty vitality that is influenced by comic strips, commercial signs and symbols, street culture and the energy of Punk Rock. Not actually all that new, it also harks back to the 1960’s Pop preoccupation with street imagery.

Members of all three groups organize their own shows in offbeat spaces such as lofts and storefronts that are close to the audiences they seek to involve. (A general CoLab policy is that its shows are open to all who want to exhibit, regardless of membership in the group.) For two months before Christmas, for example, CoLab, which describes itself

as “an artist-sponsored exhibition network,” ran the “A. More Store” on Broome Street, purveying “directly from the artist to the customer” paintings, sculpture, prints, drawings, multiples, clothes and accessories. Prices ranged from 50 cents to \$900. CoLab’s grungy “Times Square Show” last June, with the collaboration of Fashion Moda, packed a rundown former massage parlor and bus depot at Seventh Avenue and 41st Street with art works, films, fashion items and other creations whose street-smart display engendered a lively exchange with the neighborhood people.

The three groups are more successful, however, as artists’ organizations promoting the interests of their members than as esthetic messiahs. The work of Taller Boricua’s artists, who deal in traditional ways with traditional materials such as paint on canvas, is more amenable than that of the other groups to straightforward critical evaluation. But because of the preoccupation in CoLab and Fashion Moda with “anti-art” — graffiti, political slogans, pornography, and so forth — many critics tend to dismiss them out of hand.

To some professional eyes, the work is beneath serious consideration because it contains, as one critic put it, “the shock of schlock.” For example, they deplore the celebration of illegal sprayings that are used to deface public property — although the point could be made that it’s better to see graffiti in museums than on public monuments. On the other hand, some dealers and critics attuned to new art see the work as the latest trend, like it or not. Writing in Arts magazine, the critic Kim Levin spoke of the Times Square show as containing “some of the freshest art around. . . irreverent, raw, rebellious, messy.” In Artforum, Lucy Lippard, a critic sympathetic to socially-oriented art, wrote that she enjoyed the Times Square show more than she admired it. Describing it as “a cry of rage against current art-worldiness and a ghastly glance into the future of art,” she decried the “superficial fantasies” in much of the work.

All three groups — Taller, Fashion Moda and CoLab — get partial funding from public agencies, but they are strictly artist-run. Their members are ambivalent about making it as “stars” in the “system” — i.e., museums, publicly funded alternative spaces, and commercial galleries — that gets art shown and sold. Stefan Eins refers to Fashion Moda as a “cultural concept,” and elaborates, “the people who work here have a keen awareness of the limits of traditional art forms and their audience as opposed to the mass media.” Speaking for CoLab, Walter (Mike) Robinson, the young artist who serves as president, says, “What we’re about is artists using the power that we have. We want control of our own work. A lot of our original inspiration was based on opposition to the established gallery situation and also to the alternative spaces. With public agencies picking up the tab, the people who run them don’t have to push the work they show. Also, by our grouping together, it’s much easier to get public funding for our own shows than as individuals.”

Besides mounting shows, CoLab members produce a

weekly half-hour cable TV show called "Potato Wolf" on Manhattan Cable Channel C, run a theater group called "Nightshift Theater," publish "Spannor," a journal of artists' work, and plan another magazine called "Bomb," incorporating film, video, music, fiction and comment. CoLab's socially activist ideas find expression in ABC No Rio, an affiliate group comprising 10 or so young artists who hold forth in a bare-bones, city-owned building in a depressed Hispanic neighborhood on the Lower East Side. (The name ABC No Rio is taken from a faded sign in Spanish, with several unreadable letters, on a store across the street.)

There, the group invites local citizens to participate in such "political" shows as the recent "Murder/Suicide/Junk," whose theme was drug addiction and other problems of the neighborhood. ABC No Rio members are helping to set up art programs in local schools, and they go out in the streets to raise consciousness about neighborhood politics. "We're a place for the people here to come and see and participate in making art," says Christy Rupp, an artist who does images of animals and who recently staged at No Rio a "live" show — whose contents ranged from dogs to pigeons to cockroaches — entitled "Animals Living in Cities."

At Fashion Moda, in a blighted shopping area at Third Avenue and 149th Street, neighborhood amateurs and graffiti-makers show their work along with that of professionally trained artists. "Sometimes people come in off the street and do things," says Mr. Eins. "We're interested in bringing community people and artists together. We want to challenge the assumption that art is an elitist thing; the base has to change. Art is not a question of art school background; it's vitality and a way of looking at things that doesn't have to take a formalist tack."

In its show at the New Museum, Fashion Moda gave a representative sampling of the "anti-esthetic" work it has presented in its South Bronx space, a mix of crude amateur and highly professional efforts by Hispanic, black and white artists ranging in age from 15 to 62. There was an environment by Candace Hill-Montgomery, an abandoned "outdoor" picnic site of packing cases and wire baskets with remnants of food

left on paper plates; a group of true-to-life Hispanic heads, cast in plaster by John Ahearn; a satirical painting by Robert Colescott entitled "Eat Dem Taters," a takeoff on van Gogh's "The Potato Eaters" with a broadly caricatured black cast of characters.

A back wall bore a huge collage of photos of jazz personalities assembled by Ray Ross. On the floor lay "Puddle," by Carmen Spera, a cluster of cutout plastic pieces linked together by rubber cables that evokes the human figure. Stefan Eins himself contributed a series of Fashion Moda posters, and Jane Dickson showed a group of humorous black-and-white drawings focusing on male genitals. Reactions to the show, culled from observers by this reporter, ranged from "unspeakable" and "they should have been toilet-trained earlier" to "fascinating" and "of real cultural significance."

Taller Boricua (pronounced Ta-yay Bo-reek-wa, and meaning simply Puerto Rican Workshop), the oldest of the three groups, was established by artists 10 years ago to provide a community-based cultural center promoting Puerto Rican culture and esthetics. Some of its founding members were involved with the now-defunct Art Workers Coalition, a politically oriented group that in the late 1960's attempted to mobilize artists against the Vietnam War, and staged demonstrations against museums and galleries for their lack of involvement with the city's ethnic communities. Now occupying capacious quarters in a city-owned building at 1 East 104th Street, next door to the Museo Del Barrio, Boricua offers community-oriented workshops, programs, and performances in the fine arts, music, poetry and film. It invites young artists to share the studios of its founding members, and in the last several years, it has mounted and locally toured over 400 shows from the United States and abroad.

"We felt there was no chance to show our work in the downtown galleries," says Jorge Soto, one of Taller's founders. "They aren't ready to deal with our Puerto Rican forms of art. And I didn't feel any identification with the art forms they were exhibiting.

When I came to Taller, I felt comfortable, and that brought about a change in my work. When you interact with other artists, a dynamic seems to happen: there is support and a subtle influence. Here, we have a strong, cohesive philosophical-esthetic base, going back to early forms developed by the Indian, African and Spanish cultures of the Caribbean."

At the New Museum, Taller is showing the work of four of its principals: Mr. Soto, who's done a group of drawings and paintings that take off from a monumental work by Francisco Oller, a 19th-century Puerto Rican artist based in Paris; Marcos Dimas, whose canvases present a kind of mythological Puerto Rican landscape; Fernando Salicrup, a creator of intricate fantasy drawings and paintings that refer to cultural crossovers between Puerto Rico and Manhattan, and Gilberto Hernandez, a graphics artist who makes all of the workshop's strongly themed posters.

Meanwhile, as if to prove that artists these days can never really bite the hands that feed them, some trend-conscious galleries are already eyeing the work of CoLab and Fashion Moda exhibitors. Two CoLab members actually have upcoming shows scheduled with SoHo dealers: Robin Winters at the Mary Boone Gallery and Mike Glier at the Anina Nosei-Weber gallery. Last December, CoLab itself had a benefit show at Brooke Alexander, an established uptown gallery, which grossed nearly \$5,000. CoLab has even received the endorsement of Henry Geldzahler, the city's Cultural Commissioner, as "making important contributions to the community and the larger art world." "Actually, one test will be whether group activities will dissipate as members pursue individual careers in the gallery-museum system," says Walter Robinson, who himself writes regularly for the respectable uptown publication "Art in America." "One of the functions of the group might be to serve as an intermediate school before members graduate into galleries. After all, one aim of artists is to make a living — you can't fault them for that." ■

# ART 1

## Time running out for spaces

JOHN PERREAU

TURN on the radio and you hear WBAI begging for money. On the tube it's WNET. Open your mail and you hear from the New York Public Library.

Inflation is eating holes in everyone's pockets. Or is it recession? Few seem to know. And just when we expect the government to step in to help, the government steps out. The private sector is supposed to take over. Reaganites pin their hopes on donations from rich people and corporations that get tax breaks when they give to charity and nonprofit institutions. But now the most they can be taxed is 50 percent, so those donations mean much less than when 70 percent was the top rate.

Even the art world is feeling the pinch. I don't mean the commercial art world; that's booming. Where is the money coming from? One probably shouldn't ask. Some of it is mad money, money better spent on hard goods now — art that might keep or increase its cash value — than socked away to dwindle. It is the noncommercial art world that is hurting, the world of alternative spaces. Fundraisers abound.

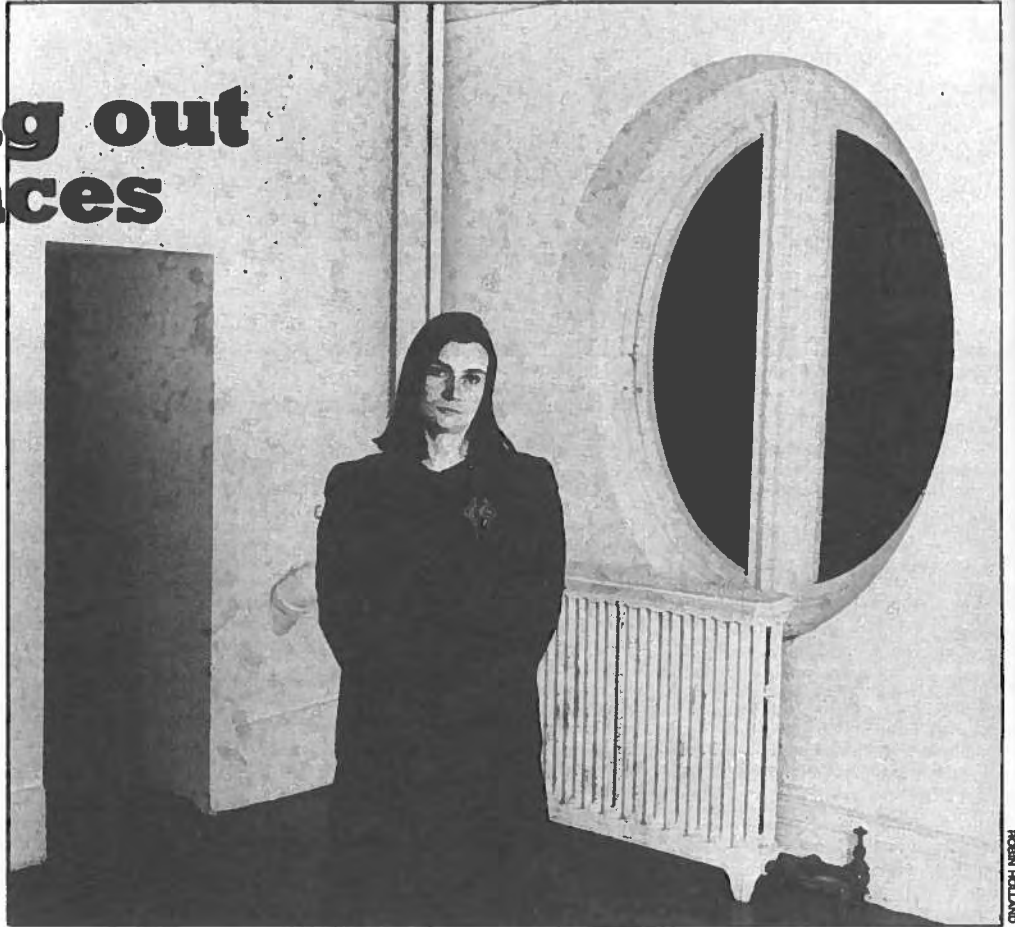
We have entered the period of the art benefit. The people are expected to pay. The Alternative Museum just closed its benefit

exhibit. Even CAPS (Creative Artists Public Service Program), a New York State fellowship program for individual artists, had a benefit show (at the Alan Frumkin and Terry Dintenfass galleries). The latest benefit exhibit is for one of our prime alternative spaces, Artists Space (105 Hudson Street, through December 24).

Alternative spaces, as we now know them, began in the early '70s. Memories may differ about why they were created, but it's fairly safe to say that they were formed in response to a frustrating situation: too many artists with too few places to show their work. Commercial galleries and the museums were unable or unwilling to handle the huge numbers of artists clamoring for exposure; new and experimental work was having a particularly hard time of it. Non-commercial, alternative spaces such as the Clocktower, P.S. 1, the Alternative Museum, and Artists Space came into being, assisted by federal and state arts funding. Simultaneously, the co-op gallery was reborn as the artist-run gallery (55 Mercer, A.I.R., etc.) but that's another part of the story.

Thus a great deal of pressure was taken off commercial galleries and the major museums. Should the alternatives collapse that pressure would return. Therefore, it is in the interest of commercial galleries and museums to offer financial support to the alternatives. The museums, of course, will quickly respond that they are having troubles of their own; the commercial galleries have no excuse.

The alternatives are now an integral part of the art system. No matter what the original intentions, they do not present a parallel system or a new culture. Without the alterna-



Linda Shearer of Artists Space: pushing the vanguard, shoved by supply-side

tives, where would new artists get to try out their wares, experiment with public presentation? Where would galleries get their pretested artists?

Perhaps this is why there are constant mutterings about starting alternatives-to-the-alternatives. We already have Fashion Moda in the Bronx, well on its way to becoming another research and development institution. This is exactly what the so-called alternatives are: art world R&D. Without them the art world might easily grind to a halt; its fragile capitalism, ever dependent on new products, might wither, for few commercial galleries seem willing anymore to support untried artists for longer than the one-shot trial.

The benefit at Artists Space, called "35 Artists Return to Artists Space," may represent the first step in getting commercial galleries to take up some of their responsibilities. It is a splendid show. When I spoke to Linda Shearer, Artists Space's executive director, she was optimistic. Artists Space will survive. But it's going to take a lot of fundraising, and, paradoxically, Shearer has less time to visit artists' studios than when she was associate curator at the Guggenheim.

All 35 artists in the show got their start at

Artists Space and all but three of these are now represented by commercial galleries. Pricing is at current market rates, but Artists Space gets 25 percent; artist and dealer split the rest according to their usual percentages. Strictly speaking, there are no bargains. (If you want bargains, you should have combed the Alternative Museum's recent benefit.) But if you were going to buy a Scott Burton table or an R.N. Fisher lamp anyway — or a David Salle drawing, a piece by Jonathan Borofsky, or a Laurie Simmons photograph — buy now and feel less guilty, knowing that some of the money will go to keep Artists Space going.

For the rest of us — we who look and do not buy — the show is a timely reminder of how much good art we owe to Artists Space and places like it. It's inevitable that most of the art that gets shown is going to be tentative or of no interest. That's the price one pays for attempting to encourage new art. The alternative to this is deadly. Who would want to look only at art that has been totally validated?

Shearer intends to keep the basic format she inherited from former director Helene Winer (now with Metro Pictures) and curator Ragland Watkins (now with Concord — alternatives also feed gallery directors to the commercial spaces). This format consists of

showing four or five artists each time, with guest curators and also in-house group shows. Coming up are four installation artists and then new Fluxus artists, curated by Peter Frank and Ken Friedman. Do I detect a more "experimental" bias? Perhaps. Shearer explained that Artists Space was for artists who might end up inside the commercial system, but also for those who had no interest in it.

Though I, like many others, have been known to pick and carp at the alternative spaces — I always want them to do more than they are doing and, of course, come into line with my personal taste — even I have to admit that the art world would be a dull and dreary place without them.

Currently they are in jeopardy. Just Above Midtown/Downtown, a welcome and innovative addition to the pioneer alternatives, is trying every kind of group show and benefit performance possible. Alanna Heiss, director of the Institute for Urban Resources (the Clocktower and P.S. 1), seems to be holding on, but P.S. 1 has enormous maintenance costs — try heating an old schoolhouse and keeping the roof from leaking! — and group shows are now up for twice as long, which means half the art is being shown. Geno Rodriguez just may be able to keep the Alternative Museum afloat. He certainly has the energy. Smaller, less established spaces already seem doomed.

So until Reagan has a change of heart — quite unlikely — or time allows the government funding to creep back to former levels (even that would not be enough), the alternatives need all the help they can get. There are no alternatives — or there'll be no alternatives.

In the world of alternative spaces, fundraisers abound. We have entered the period of the art benefit — Reagan cuts, and the people are expected to pay

## ***Derelict Tenements In the Bronx to Get Fake Lived-In Look***

By **ROBERT D. McFADDEN**

Scores of crumbling, abandoned tenements in the Bronx — part of a swath of blight that has become a national symbol of urban decay — will soon sport vinyl decals over their gaping windows depicting a lived-in look of curtains, shades, shutters and flowerpots.

The decals will be placed on derelict, city-owned buildings along the Cross Bronx Expressway between the Harlem River and the Bronx River Parkway. The funds for the effort will come from a \$300,000 Federal grant to expand a three-year-old city program to improve the images of rundown neighborhoods.

City officials acknowledge that the decorative decals, along with some demolition and repair work, are cosmetic brushstrokes on an area that resembles a bombed-out city. Tens of millions of dollars would be needed to rehabilitate the area.

But the idea, they say, is to spruce up the neighborhood, lift the morale of residents, discourage vandals and addicts who haunt abandoned buildings and make a better impression on the thousands of motorists, some presumably investors, who pass the area daily.

"We want to brighten up the face of

Continued on Page B5, Column 1

## ***Building Ruins In Bronx to Get Lived-In Look***

Continued From Page A1

the neighborhood while waiting for new Federal programs to rebuild the neighborhood," Anthony B. Gliedman, the Commissioner of Housing Preservation and Development, said yesterday in an interview.

"I recognize that this is superficial," he added. "We don't want anybody to think we're doing this instead of rebuilding. But that will take years and require tens of millions or hundreds of millions of dollars. And while we're waiting, we want people to know that we still care."

Using the \$300,000 community development block grant solely for rehabilitation work would be almost futile, the Commissioner said, because it would cover the refurbishing of only about a half dozen apartments.

Instead, he said, about a third of the money will go for decals and the rest for demolition jobs, masonry repairs and other minor work aimed at improving the neighborhood's image and morale.

"Morale is very real," Mr. Gliedman said. "Perception is reality."

The program to stick decals of curtains, venetian blinds, house plants and other amenities onto the boarded-up windows and doors of vacant eyesores was begun by Mr. Gliedman's department in October 1980 at two decrepit buildings on Eagle Street in the Greenpoint section of Brooklyn.

Public reaction to the fancied-up facades ranged from skeptical to let's wait and see. Residents gawked at the images with smiles, smirks and some guffaws.

### **\$100,000 Spent So Far**

Since then, about \$100,000 has been spent on the program, and decals have been placed on about 325 vacant city-owned buildings in dozens of neighborhoods in Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan and the Bronx. Yesterday Mr. Gliedman and other city officials said the program had been quite successful.

"It makes a difference in terms of how people feel about their neighborhood," said Bruce J. Gould, a city housing official who was one of those responsible for starting the program in 1980.

Martin Gallent, vice chairman of the City Planning Commission, said, "It's been very successful, for limited purposes, to prevent that yawning, vacant look, to give a semblance of life around a building and to prevent vandalism."

Commissioner Gliedman noted that the decals, each costing about \$8, had been put up in buildings primarily at the request of community boards, block associations or other neighborhood groups. As a result, he said, "the neighbors have a sense of pride and participation."

"We want them to know," he said, "that we know about them, that we're interested and that we care. We want people to feel good about their neighborhood."

### **Drop in Vandalism Reported**

Moreover, Mr. Gliedman said, vandalism and break-ins at buildings with the decals have been only "a small fraction" of such trouble at other vacant city tenements. Asked why that might be, he said: "The decals are a little off-putting to the person breaking in. They show that the neighbors care."

Until now, the decal program has focused on neighborhoods where the residents have requested them. But under the \$300,000 block grant made by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, the city plans to extend it to buildings along heavily traveled corridors, such as the Cross Bronx Expressway.

"The image that the Bronx projects — and projects to potential investors — is the image you see from that expressway, and our goal is to soften that image so people will be willing to invest," said Robert Jacobson, director of the Bronx office of the City Planning Commission. "Business people make decisions based on perception."

# When Artists Start Their Own Galleries

By LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

**T**oday, we tend to view the art gallery and the system of exhibiting and selling art it implies as an inevitable fact of artistic life. But the commercial art gallery in the form we know it is only a little more than a hundred years old. When public exhibitions first started, most new art was shown in large exhibiting societies run by artists. These were annual or biannual mixed shows in which freely invented, uncommissioned art was seen in unpremeditated profusion.

There were some art dealers before then, of course, but the pattern of small shops cultivating specialized markets assumed its present form in Europe in the 1870's. One of the functions of the gallery was to shrink the random, artist-run exhibits, often to the display of a single sensibility or the one-artist show. Paul Durand-Ruel, the dealer of the French Impressionists, was the great early entrepreneur in this field. He rapidly extended his Paris-based gallery to London, establishing the international character of the gallery business, a fact richly confirmed by such developments as the current American and European campaign on behalf of Neo-Expressionism.

The success of the gallery has been

*Lawrence Alloway is a freelance art critic whose study of Roy Lichtenstein will appear in the fall.*

extraordinary, as everyone who now accepts it as a fact of nature unwittingly testifies. Over the past century, art dealers have come to dominate the distribution of art and the formation of taste. But during the past 30 years, this monopoly has begun to be questioned and challenged by the so-called "alternative space movement" — a movement generated mostly by art-

their relationship to dealers.

That relationship, in the past 30 or so years, had come under particular strains. It has always been true that dealers could not endlessly take in new artists at the same speed as new work has been produced. To some extent, galleries depend on short lists of artists whose scarcity becomes part of their value. But with the greater

artists' desire to affirm American art at a time when the galleries were still biased toward European art and the School of Paris in particular. The point was timely and inarguable: native identity became not the possession of a few cowboys and contemplatives but a part of the stylistic diversity of a densely populated art world. The by now celebrated group of co-ops, in and around East 10th Street included the Brata, Camino, Hansa, James, March and Tanager galleries. Most of them lasted under 10 years, with the Phoenix Gallery, now located uptown, as the sole survivor.

While the first co-ops grew out of a kind of bohemian camaraderie, those founded in the 1960's tended to be based on a much stronger sense of social awareness and ideological alignments — whether the ideology was stylistic or political. Among the first of this second wave of co-ops was 55 Mercer, which opened in December 1969 and recently celebrated its 12th anniversary. Close to it in time was the founding of three style-based co-ops — the Bowery, the First Street, and Prince Street Galleries, all still active. They grew out of meetings of the Alliance of Figurative Artists, the realist equivalent of the earlier Artists' Club. (Realists turned out to generate opinion as abrasive and turbulent as the preceding generation of abstract artists.) The Tanager Gallery had been pro-realist 10 years earlier, but the Bowery, First Street and Prince Street Galleries were repre-

*Continued on Page 30*

## Resistance to commercial galleries, called the alternative space movement, covers a variety of artists' initiatives.

number of artists and the rapid pace of stylistic change after the war, the question of selection became more problematic; galleries began to leave artists out not only because of the quantity of new work being produced, but also because they weren't always willing to accommodate the range and diversity of new artistic styles.

It was in response to such problems as these, and the growing desire of artists to take their own destiny into their own hands, that the first wave of artists' co-operatives in New York — galleries founded, financed and run by artists — evolved in the 1950's. One motive for starting these co-ops was

ists and propelled by artists' desire to exercise greater control over the selection of art for public display and the conditions under which it is shown.

The "alternative space movement" by now has its own, quite substantial history — but initially, several factors contributed to its development. In the past several decades, such matters as the distribution of the finished art products, and the connections between production and consumption of art have come to be scrutinized by writers and art critics. Perhaps not so coincidentally, artists themselves began to be aware of the conditions implicit in the gallery system and in



sentational on principle; while no manifestos exist, the artists involved in founding these galleries agreed on the necessity for art based on perceptual observation.

In 1972, the first women artists' cooperative started, the A. I. R. Gallery. Neither A. I. R., or SOHO 20, also a woman's co-op, is programmatically feminist; but a gender-based organization in the 70's, the decade in which the women's movement in art expanded remarkably, cannot be seen as neutral. The artists are not grouped stylistically, but on a socio-sexual basis. Let us say these co-ops are political in effect, if not in theory. And the fact that there are women's co-ops in Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Wakefield, R.I., as well as New York, shows that artist action and the women's movement are highly compatible.

In the 1970's, some artists turned to alternative spaces because of their interest in environmental display; not too many commercial galleries want to show site-specific work, which may be rebuildable, but not mobile or storable. Consider the monumental but expendable sculpture shown at 10 Bleecker Street in the early 70's: this was a rundown building, a shambling tier of lofts, which housed art in gaps in the schedule between normal real-estate uses. Before acquiring P.S. 1 in 1976, the Institute for Art and Urban Resources scavenged temporarily available buildings for art purposes; 10 Bleecker was one of its seedy but seminal locations.

The reasons for creating alternative spaces are various, and so are the kinds of associations and exhibition practices covered by this umbrella term. There are temporary coalitions of artists, in which they find and hire the showing space, publicize and install the show, on a once-only basis. P.S. 1 itself is a warren of studios in Long Island City, with state, city and corporate support. A condition of accepting work space there — artists are chosen by an executive committee — is that the artist's studio be accessible to the public on visiting days. Such activities, intermingling studio and display space, short-circuit the esthetic distance that galleries cultivate with works of art seen in isolation from the work space.

A similar principle of public accessibility was stated for "10 Downtown," a cluster of shows organized annually since 1968 by artists. In this case, changing groups of artists chosen by their predecessors open their studios for spring weekend visits each year. The informal, potentially tenuous chain of artists-selecting-next-year's-artists has in fact proved unexpectedly tenacious.

How effective have artists' co-ops been? We measure dealers by their power to sell art, infiltrate museums and generate art criticism. By these standards, the alternative spaces have not been all that successful; in general, they sell poorly, penetrate museums slowly, and get fewer reviewers than artists "with galleries."

Is this because the artists they sponsor are not as good as other artists, or because they are excluded from the support system dominated by dealers? The art world is not an entity ruled by a single standard of taste, but all its different styles are subject to the commercial galleries' interests, which range in their stylistic preferences from Brooke Alexander's to Allan Frumkin's Galleries, the Pace Gallery or Knoedler's.

Collectors like to buy from dealers they know and in whom they have confidence. Museum curators accept the idea that it is the function of the galleries to filter the masses of new artists, and indeed welcome the tidying hand. Some art magazine editors feel the need to square their editorial coverage with their advertising. And art critics enjoy the sense of company and orderliness that comes with topical commentary geared to current gallery schedules. Thus, dealers are central to the purchase, promotion and discussion of contemporary art — but the range of the art scene is wider than this, and alternative spaces seek to fill in some of the gaps.

The co-ops in the 1980's face two problems. First is their failure to engage the support system and the second is increasing financial difficulties. When 55 Mercer began, a member's annual dues were \$150, which reserved them a regular place in the exhibition schedule; today they are \$768. When SOHO 20 was at 99 Spring Street, members' annual dues were originally \$420, but when they left the premises for a more spacious gallery last year, the dues rocketed to \$1,200. In addition, of course, the expenses of exhibitions to the artist have increased: the printing cost of announcements or catalogues, mailing and advertising rates are all higher. The co-op has never been light in its demands on the money and time of its members, but inflation has intensified the problem. Most of the new New York co-ops are in SoHo, which means that the gentrification process launched by the original artist-residents, is now, ironically enough, squeezing them severely.

Some observers have speculated that, for all these reasons, co-ops may cease to attract young artists. But even if this occurs, the existing co-ops, will not have failed. On the contrary, the revolution in the distribution of art that they have initiated will have to be followed by something that performs a comparable function. A successor might be a version of the *Kunsthalle*, a museum-scale space without a permanent collection, concentrated upon temporary shows.

In any case, the need for alternatives to the commercial gallery system — or at least for greater diversity — seems to have been firmly established. Whatever form future alternative spaces might take, the co-ops, as they combine the close-up view of dealers' one-artist shows with the authenticity of artist-control, have changed our expectations of the exhibition system irreversibly. ■

# Reagan's Arts Chairman Brings Subtle Changes to the Endowment

By ROBERT PEAR

**T**he National Endowment for the Arts spends less than two-tenths of one percent of the Federal budget, and it accounts for less than 5 percent of all spending on the arts in the United States. But in the art world, it exerts an influence out of proportion to its budget.

It is, by far, the largest single source of support for the arts in this country. No other donor makes such a systematic effort to define and identify artistic excellence—or to survey and respond to the needs of particular artistic disciplines throughout the country. But more than that, a grant from the Endowment carries with it enormous prestige, and, for a recipient, it may be a help in obtaining money from other sources.

With each new chairman of the Endowment comes a different style of management, a different view of the proper relationship between government and the arts. After more than 18 months as chairman, Francis S. M. Hodsoll, a former aide in the Reagan White House, has made clear his priorities. He has, like all his predecessors, become an advocate for the arts.

But how does a conservative mandate affect the direction of the Endowment? A conservative agenda for the arts is difficult to define, involving, as it does, a possible conflict between marketplace economics and elitist esthetics. Moreover, Mr. Hodsoll has not, so far, proved himself to be a hard-line conservative, and the changes effected by him have been subtle. But he has brought to the Endowment a stricter managerial style. He has not hesitated to inject himself directly in the grant-making machinery and he has taken steps to encourage a much greater role for business in financing the arts. Indeed, his actions have led some observers to wonder whether a more dramatic conservative shift is in the offing.

Mr. Hodsoll insists that he has no political agenda for the Arts Endowment. "This agency has never been run on a partisan basis," the 44-year-old chairman says, and he notes that he was a "career civil servant."

The burly, 6-foot-4-inch lawyer had been a Foreign Service officer, a Commerce Department official, a member of the Reagan-Bush campaign team and deputy to the White House Chief of Staff, James A. Baker 3d, before he became chairman of the Endowment in November 1981.

"The criticism was that I looked like a political apparition coming over here," Mr. Hodsoll said, "but there has been no effort by the White House to run this agency."

Indeed, Reagan conservatives came to town determined to correct what one important study by the conservative Heritage

Foundation termed the "politicization" of the Arts Endowment under President Carter. They regarded the last chairman of the agency, Livingston L. Biddle Jr., as a "populist" who had shifted money away from "elitist" institutions to grass-roots arts organizations for political reasons rather than on grounds of merit. Mr. Biddle denied such criticisms.

It is not easy to measure the changes at the Endowment under Mr. Hodsoll because the heart of the agency's work, the evaluation of applications for Federal grants, is done behind closed doors, and only the winners are announced. Grants are awarded on the basis of recommendations by the National Council on the Arts, which is composed of 28 Presidential appointees, and peer-review panels com-

Continued from Page 1

posed of 500 artists and arts administrators in 12 disciplines. Since membership of the advisory committees changes slowly, there is no sudden shift in patronage after the election of a new President.

But there have been changes: Mr. Hodsoll quickly put his personal stamp on the agency. He has centralized authority in his office, controls day-to-day operations of the agency more tightly than his predecessors and displays an intense concern with detail. "We have gone from being loose as a goose to being tight as a fiddle," said Norman B. Champ Jr., a member of the National Council on the Arts, who is also a trustee of the St. Louis Art Museum.

Conservatives and neoconservatives have been appointed to key positions. President Reagan named Samuel Lipman and Raymond J. Learsy to the National Council on the Arts, an influential advisory committee to the Endowment. Mr. Lipman, a music critic for *Commentary* magazine, is publisher of *The New Criterion*, a monthly review dedicated to "the defense of high art." Mr. Learsy, an art collector and trustee of the Whitney Museum of American Art, has been active in the Conservative Party of New York and says he shares many of the political views of his brother-in-law, William F. Buckley Jr., editor of *National Review*.

Mr. Hodsoll has taken a more active role in overseeing and questioning the peer-review panels. He has challenged many grants and vetoed a handful recommended by the panels. Prior chairmen almost never used their power to overturn panel recommendations. The peer-review process was originally established because people feared that a "culture czar" might try to impose his taste in dispensing Federal largesse. Mr. Hodsoll has not gone that far. But some artists, arts administrators and veteran employees of the agency said they had begun to lose confidence in the integrity of the grant-making process.

For the first time in the history of the agency, its budget has declined. Soon after taking office, President Reagan proposed to reduce its budget from \$159 million in the fiscal year 1981 to \$88 million in 1982, but Congress—under considerable pressure from artists and arts organizations—backed and appropriated \$143 million. In his most recent budget, President Reagan requested \$125 million for the agency in the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1. In public, Mr. Hodsoll has loyally defended the President's budget requests, though it is said that behind the scenes he has cooperated with Congressional supporters of the agency who wanted to provide more money for the arts. However, the uncertainty about funding has led to a drop in the number of applications for grants, from 27,000 in the fiscal year 1981 to 17,000 last year.

Mr. Hodsoll emphasizes, more than his predecessors, the need for private industry to support the arts, in "partnership" with the Federal Government. He says that "a principal role of the Arts Endowment is to confer a stamp of approval," and that the actual amount of Federal support may be "less important." Arts organi-

zations, he says, can use the "impetus" of the Endowment to seek money from individual patrons, corporations and foundations. Mr. Hodsoll has created a new high-level, full-time position on his staff for a person who tries to arrange private sector support of the arts.

One of the Reagan appointees, Mr. Lipman sees a danger in too much Government support for the arts. He says he is not sure whether the Endowment should even exist "in the best of all worlds," but, as a "realist," he accepts its existence. At the last meeting of the council, Mr. Lipman sharply criticized a \$90,000 grant for the revival of old-time radio comedy,



The New York Times / George Tames

saying it was popular entertainment rather than high art.

Ruth Berenson, the Endowment's associate deputy chairman for programs, describes herself as a "Reagan conservative" and said she was a "political appointee recommended by the White House." She wrote art criticism as a contributing editor of *National Review*. She said that she reads "almost all" grant applications before they go to the chairman for approval.

The conservative appointees have not imposed their tastes on the judgment of the Endowment's professional staff and expert advisers. But neither did they leave their political convictions at the door when they walked into the Endowment. Arlene F. Goldbard, director of a national organization of neighborhood arts groups, said that "their ears are cocked to the right, and they are sensitive to criticism and pressure from the right."

Under Mr. Hodsoll, the Endowment has looked more carefully at how arts organizations and other applicants are managed and financed. The chairman has said that he wants to encourage cultural institutions to take on "the best aspects of business."

Anne G. Murphy, executive director of the American Arts Alliance, a consortium of more than 350 theater, dance and opera companies, orchestras and museums, said: "The Endowment spends an awful lot of time worrying about financing, as opposed to looking at art. The emphasis has moved from art to dollars."

Most major museums, symphony orchestras and opera companies receive grants from the agency. But the

Some observers see a more dramatic conservative shift in the offing.

Endowment also gives sums ranging from \$3,000 to \$25,000 as fellowships for individual poets, painters, choreographers, composers and playwrights.

New York, as the major national center for the arts, gets more than any other state: 29 percent of all the grants and 23 percent of all the money. But some of the dollars also turn up in unexpected places. The Endowment provided \$22,500 to a museum in Sitka, Alaska, to catalogue "one of the finest collections of Alaskan Indian and Eskimo art in the country." It provided \$22,835 to the North Dakota Council on the Arts to support a photo-documentary exhibition of wrought-iron funeral crosses. And Florida got \$22,600 to train apprentices in traditional arts such as Seminole patchwork design, basketry and old-time fiddling.

At a time of fiscal austerity, Mr.

ing social structures"; \$5,000 to the Waumbek Center in Jefferson, N. H., for workshops in the performing and visual arts; \$1,000 to the Bear Republic Theater in Santa Cruz, Calif., which presents feminist plays and mime shows; and \$5,000 to the Southern California Center for the Arts, to help artists find jobs with corporations in the Los Angeles area.

The Political Art Documentation group, which describes itself as a "left-to-socialist" organization, denounced the chairman's veto as an act of "political censorship," which he denied. Mr. Hodsoll said he had rejected panel recommendations for two main reasons: Either the project did not conform to the published guidelines for a particular field, or the file on an applicant, including the record of panel deliberations, failed to document artistic quality of "national

said they were pleasantly surprised when Mr. Learsy, a conservative businessman, defended the environmental art projects. Mr. Learsy, a collector of contemporary art, said it was a fallacy to believe that avant-garde art was the exclusive province of people on the political left. "Being conservative does not mean that you have to paint pretty pictures" in traditional styles, he said. The true conservative, he said, zealously protects the artist's right to express himself in any style, free of government interference.

Nevertheless, Mr. Hodsoll's action in holding up grants has caused anxiety in and outside the Endowment. Irvine R. MacManus, assistant director of the agency's museum program, said, "Once a grant has been approved by a panel, I don't think that decision should be second-guessed by the staff of the Endowment."

Mr. Hodsoll has gained respect from those who champion the arts in Congress. Representative Sidney R. Yates, Democrat of Illinois, said the chairman was doing as good a job as he could within the budget constraints imposed by the Reagan Administration. But Mr. Hodsoll still does not enjoy the full confidence of people in the art world. A recent article in *Afterimage*, a journal published by the Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, N. Y., which runs a graduate program in cooperation with the Rochester Institute of Technology, said that his vetoes of even a few panel recommendations "create vast seas of paranoia" and "repress artists' political dialogue since it seems that the grants being vetoed are politically not to Hodsoll's liking."

But what does it mean to be "conservative" in the arts? For some conservatives, it means that the Government's role in the arts, as in other fields, should be reduced to a minimum. Some conservatives would entrust the production and distribution of art to the marketplace laws of supply and demand.

However, intellectual conservatives tend also to support an elitist view of art. They want to promote "high" or "serious" art, and they lament the deterioration of standards. This attitude appears to contradict the one that says, "Let the marketplace decide." For popular taste prevailing in the

marketplace may well reject the formal standards favored by a conservative.

What is the solution? Conservatives tend to see two types of audience: a large audience for popular art and a smaller audience for serious art. They see a possible role for Government as a patron of last resort, where private patronage seems unable or unwilling to support art of permanent value.

Thus, in its 1980 report, the Heritage Foundation said that the National Endowment for the Arts "must finally acknowledge that the enduring audience for art is largely self-selecting, a relatively small public marked by the willingness to make sacrifices of other pleasures for the sake of artistic experience." That section of the report was written largely by Mr. Lipman.

Mr. Lipman wants the agency to concentrate on "high art." He defines such art as "an esthetic activity that aims, above all, at permanence; that attempts to tie together past, present and future; that sees itself as being beyond the moment."

But Mr. Hodsoll says: "I don't know how to define high art. Some basket-weaving is excellent. That Eskimo stuff is extraordinary. What is our culture? It's a tremendous kaleidoscope. To call something high art doesn't add much to the discussion."

One of Mr. Hodsoll's new efforts illustrates the difficulty of attaching political labels to cultural policy. In a test program, he is providing \$2 million to city and county arts agencies to see whether the Federal money stimulates local governments to provide additional support for the arts. The program advances the goals of President Reagan's "new federalism," which seeks to return decision-making authority to the local level. But it could just as easily have been started in the name of populism under President Carter.

The Reagan Administration alienated many artists and arts administrators when it asserted, in 1981, that "funding for artistic and literary pursuits is a relatively low-priority budget item." Mr. Hodsoll has said that his biggest job after taking office was to "rebuild a sense of confidence" in the Endowment. How successful he will be, and how his policies will affect the arts in America, remain to be seen.

## 'There has been no effort by the White House to run this agency,' says Francis S. M. Hodsoll, Arts Endowment head.

Hodsoll says, the Endowment must maintain its financial commitment to individual artists and smaller organizations, especially those in the avant-garde, at the "cutting edge" of the arts, who are "pushing the edges of the current esthetic criteria." But by temperament, he is cautious, and according to long-time employees of the agency, he tends to shy away from projects that might provoke controversy.

Since taking office in November 1981, Mr. Hodsoll has questioned 316, or 5.5 percent, of the 5,727 grant applications recommended for funding by peer-review panels. In most cases, the staff was able to answer his questions. But 34 of the 316 applications were returned to the panels for further discussion, according to statistics compiled by the chairman's office.

In other cases, Mr. Hodsoll took his concerns directly to the National Council on the Arts. In 15 cases, he rejected grant applications with the council concurring. In five cases, the council urged him to approve the applications, but he decided to reject them. He approved eight grants that he had taken to the council with questions or recommendations for disapproval. Thus, data collected by the chairman's office show that he ultimately rejected 20 of the 5,727 applications endorsed by the advisory panels.

His predecessor, Mr. Biddle, said he "cannot remember overturning either a panel recommendation or a council recommendation." That, he said, would be "a dangerous precedent" because the panel system is a "bulwark of strength protecting the Endowment from the whims and fancies of one person who is a Federal bureaucrat."

Mr. Hodsoll rejected these grants after they had been recommended by advisory panels: \$1,800 for New York's Heresies Collective/Political Art Documentation Distribution, to support public forums on "the role of the creative individual within chang-

or regional significance."

At the last meeting of the National Council on the Arts, Mr. Hodsoll raised questions about "environmental art" projects that seemed to stretch the definition of art. To be sure, this is a time in which the definitions of art are in constant flux, making judgments particularly difficult. The merit of some of the projects submitted to the Endowment is an issue on which reasonable people, politics aside, might well disagree.

The particular projects which Mr. Hodsoll questioned were described this way in confidential documents provided to council members:

• "Brooklyn Bridge Sound Sculpture," by Bill Fontana. "This project will involve mounting six to 18 microphones just below the steel grid road surface of the Brooklyn Bridge to capture the 'singing' tones produced by the vibrating metal structure."

• "Touch Sanitation Show," a public performance event produced by Mierle Laderman Ukeles. The performance includes "the arrival of a barge containing the work gloves of sanitation workers collected from the five boroughs of New York City" and "a large-scale sculpture utilizing sanitation vehicles frozen in gestures of their working day."

• "Dance of Machines," an interdisciplinary work sponsored by the Snake Theater/Nightfire Division in Sausalito, Calif. Cranes and heavy construction machines will "dance" at a large construction site in a performance featuring video projections and original music.

Mr. Hodsoll said these projects raised a basic question: "At what point does art end?" He was troubled, he said, because there seemed to be "no defined audience" for such public performance works. But, he said, he ultimately approved the grants after being persuaded that the artists had "serious intentions."

Some employees of the Endowment

## WARSAW: From Tradition to Modernity

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# Art

## GALLERY VIEW

GRACE GLUECK

### A Gallery Scene That Pioneers In New Territories

**M**aybe you thought that Gracie Mansion meant Mayor Koch's official residence? In the gentrifying East Village, it signifies something else — a tiny but up-and-coming art gallery that shows the work of new young talents. Gracie Mansion, and a handful of other spaces — some "alternative," or not for profit — are part of a growing East Village gallery scene that threatens to erupt into Manhattan's third art district, after Uptown and SoHo. Its principals are apt to be young and mainly artists themselves, the neighborhoods they're in are still hairy enough for the word "dealer" to have a double meaning, and the art they show — which includes some very prettied-up graffiti — tends to be flashier, more "political" and quicker in its appeal to a broader public than frequents Manhattan's more rarefied art zones. As it does elsewhere, a wild and funky figuration prevails, but while the work of some very good artists can be seen in these galleries, the range is very uneven, including a good deal that can at best be labeled kitsch.

The area, largely working class and possibly the city's most ethnically diverse, runs roughly from, say, Houston to 14th Street, and from Second Avenue to the East River, incorporating Tompkins Square Park. A counterculture hotbed in the 60's, it has always had a mix of artists, writers and musicians, drawn by the cheap housing and casual street life. The galleries, cases in the seedy terrain, range from flashy, post-punk hot spots like the Fun Gallery on East 10th to serious-minded alternative spaces such as the Kenkeleba Gallery, ensconced in what amounts to a combat zone on East Second Street and Avenue B. Though SoHo is hard by geographically, it's at a distance emotionally for East Village dealers and gallery directors, more than a few of them artists in their own right who started out by going public with their studios to show their work and that of friends. They tend to view their turf as cozy, down-home and alienated from Establishment art-marketing methods.



Left, "Man on the Top" by Joel Otterson, who shows at Nature Morte— The works in these galleries must perform be on a much smaller scale.

David Wojnarowicz's "Myth Fragment No. 2110" on view at Civilian Warfare— The East Village scene is drawing curators and gallery people from Europe.

"We're somewhere between an alternative space, a co-op and a struggling commercial gallery," says Peter Nagy, a 23-year-old graphics designer who with Alan Belcher, 26 and also a graphics designer, runs the Nature Morte Gallery on East 10th Street. "Artists are basically our audience. While the new Expressionist figuration has taken over in SoHo and on 57th Street, we look for other types of work, to show there are alternatives." Rich Colicchio, 25, a painter who with a partner, Ed Kurpell, runs the 51X Gallery on St. Marks Place (closed for the summer, it has reverted to Mr. Colicchio's studio) adds, "All of us who deal in art here are friends. We're concerned to create an alternative gallery system to 57th Street and SoHo, with a different attitude, a system not so much commercial as artistic."

Material disparities add to these philosophical differences. Exhibition spaces, run practically on air by their young proprietors, are mostly small and street-level (several dealers actually live in the back of the store). And the pompous uptown custom of naming galleries after their proprietors is out — the exhibition spaces here bear such designations as Fun, Civilian Warfare, New Math, Piezo Electric, Nature Morte and, simply, East 7th Street. "I kind of think of the gallery as my living room," says Dean Savard, a 24-year-old painter who with his partner Alan

Barrows runs Civilian Warfare, a minuscule storefront gallery at 526 East 11th Street. "We cook in the back and we all eat dinner out here."

There are other departures. By and large, SoHo galleries began with uptown emporia needing downtown loft footage to show the ever-larger works their artists were creating. But in the tenement housing of the East Village, art must perforce be made and exhibited on a much smaller scale. "I'm opposed to the SoHo galleries, showing those great big paintings that no one can afford but museums," says Joanne Mayhew-Young, a painter from Pittsburgh whose adopted moniker and that of her East 10th Street gallery is Gracie Mansion.

As part of their alternative modus operandi, East Village dealers tend to have much looser arrangements with their exhibitors. "Artists represent themselves today, they're all free agents," says Dean Savard. "They're very careful about who they join up with, since once their work starts selling, they lose control of it; it becomes a commodity. Now they show wherever they like and do what they feel is best for them." Some East Village talents have already made it to shows in SoHo or uptown — among them Mike Bidlo, Betsy Rosenwald and the sculptors Michael Byron and Kiely Jenkins; and some have made it big, notably Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring.

*Continued on Page 30*

# Pioneering in New Territories

Continued from Page 27

Kenny Scharf, and Mark Tansey.

The slickest — and the oldest — of the new East Village spaces is the Fun Gallery, at 254 East 10th Street, opened in 1981 by Bill Stelling and Patti Astor, an actress in underground films. Fun specializes in graffiti artists, among them such famous scribblers as Leonard Hilton (Futura 2000) and Frederick Brathwaite (Freddy Fab 5). But its stable is eclectic enough to include the painter Kenny Scharf, one of its earliest finds, whose raucous comic strip art — managing to combine humor with apocalyptic references to nuclear holocaust — was a sensation last month at the Tony Shafrazi Gallery in SoHo. Along with the graffitiists, Mr. Scharf's work and that of Kiely Jenkins, a sculptor whose small tableaux make funny, telling comments on life in New York and Middle America, can be seen in the gallery's current group show.

"I feel we're injecting a little humor into the art scene," says Mr. Stelling. And Miss Astor adds, "Our artists are coming from a different, ghetto culture, and they are also influenced by politics: they comment more on society. Their work has a new kind of beauty."

A touch more staid is Gracie Mansion, around the corner at 337 East 10th Street, whose storefront window faces Tompkins Square Park. After a stint of showing art in the bathroom of her tenement floor-through, its ebullient proprietor brought the gallery down to ground level a year ago, in collaboration with another painter, Sur Rodney Sur. Now Gracie Mansion's diverse "stable" ranges from the veteran artist Carmen Cicero, around since the '50's, to such young talents as Rhonda Zwillinger, an assemblagist of glittering celebrity portraits, and Paula Coltery, whose small images of persons and animals are built up of painted wax on canvas (a show of her work opens June 28).

"We're visited by a lot of curators and gallery people from Europe," says Miss Mayhew-Young. "I think they find the art more exciting than the predictable things they see in SoHo."

Civilian Warfare, at 526 East 11th Street, opened 13 months ago when Dean Savard, using the former ice cream store as a painting studio, decided to show the work of friends and acquaintances clamoring for exposure. "The name seems to fit the area," says Mr. Savard. "But actually, the street is full of families with small children, who are horrified by the drug scene. They like us because we bring a little bit of legitimate business to the neighborhood."

The gallery is currently presenting the work of David Wojnarowicz, a painter who has shown in SoHo's Milliken Gallery and at alternative spaces around town. His sometimes stirring images — violent, erotic, and political — are painted over supermarket food posters, on garbage can lids, found pieces of metal and other materials, and they seem right at home in the gritty street ambience that surrounds them.

The East Village art scene is viewed by Peter Nagy of Nature Morte (pronounced Naychur Mort, with a New York twang) as a reinvestment of the "young energy that in the 70's went

into the rock music scene. A lot of the bands in the 70's were former art school students disillusioned with the art world," he says. "But the success of 'new figuration' art has given young people new confidence to be artists. Once again, they're getting respect from the general public." The gallery is currently showing the work of Michael Byron, a young sculptor of Expressionist talents who makes painted wax candles in the shape of fantastical demons and beasts, then burns them ceremonially.

The East Village's few not-for-profit arenas include Painting Space 122, run by a board of 17 artists in a reclaimed schoolhouse on First Avenue at 9th Street, and El Bohio, part of a Hispanic community center at 605 East 9th Street — also in a reclaimed schoolhouse — managed by a community organization called CHARAS. Both have closed their seasons with shows political in nature: "New-space" at P.S. 122, curated by Robert Costa, is a rather weak array of work commenting on news media; and "Not for Sale: A Project Against Gentrification," was an elaborate sociopolitical roundup — produced by

## Some East Village talents have already made it to shows in SoHo or uptown.

Political Art Documentation/Distribution — of work by artists protesting neighborhood upgrading that sacrifices low-cost housing and its occupants.

The most esthetically impressive space, however, is Kenkeleba, at 214 East Second Street, run by a loose collective of local creative talents and directed by Joe Overstreet. Its handsome, immaculate gallery rooms are devoted to the work of third world artists, much of it too experimental to be saleable. But the last show this season, before Kenkeleba swung into a summer children's art program, was a lively roundup of the work of 18 New York artists of Asian descent, curated by John Woo and perfectly fit for uptown consumption.

Kenkeleba, struggling heroically for survival in a slum area where drugs are openly hawked on the street, inhabits a city-owned building that the collective has slowly renovated, with nine studios rented to needy artists approved by its board. "One of the great blessings of this area is that all kinds of people live here," says Corrine Jennings, Kenkeleba's coordinator. "The co-existence has produced some marvelous people and ideas, and I wouldn't want a plastic SoHo, where the richness of the community is compromised by a commercialism."

Though the East Village seems a long way from that, the highly visible energy here is certainly creating a Scene.

# Surprising Costs of the Co-op Boom, and Who Might Pay

**T**HE conversion of apartment buildings into cooperatives or condominiums has become commonplace in New York City. So much so, that the pace of the conversions and their broad effects on the life of the city have sometimes been overlooked. In the past three years, plans for the conversion of almost 100,000 apartments from rental to owned units were approved by the State Attorney General. That's almost equal to the number of apartments converted to co-ops and condominiums in all preceding years. From approval to actual conversion can take years, but in the long run such shifts in housing seem likely to bring profound changes to the city's social character, its economy, perhaps even its politics. The Week in Review last week asked three experts — two professors of urban affairs and an assistant attorney general who works in the office that reviews conversion plans — to speculate on the changes wrought by the city's new housing arrangements. Excerpts follow.

## George Sternlieb: For Some, a City Of Fun and Games



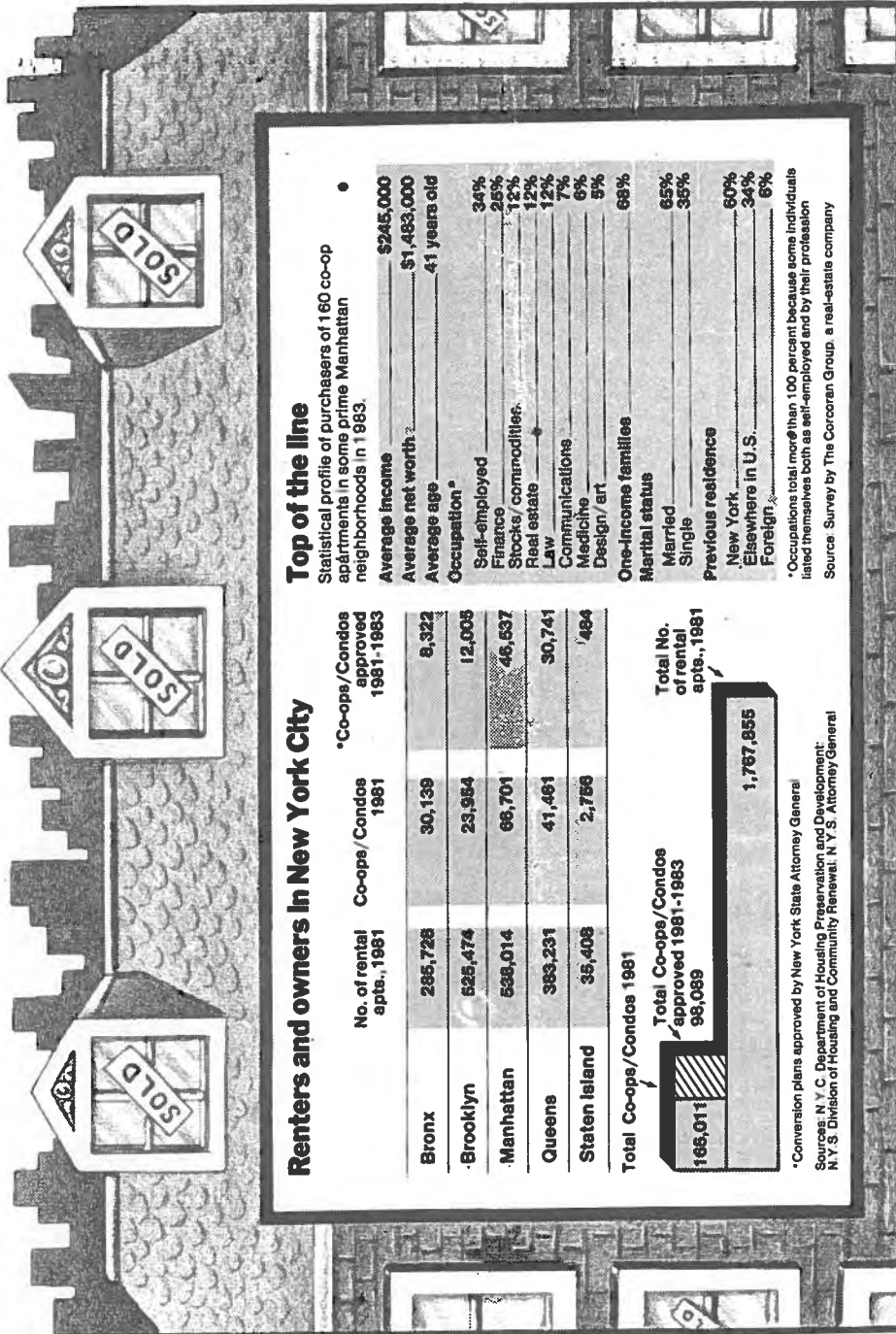
Director Center for Urban Policy Research Rutgers University

tionally. In New York you now have close to the same thing in one city. It's a tribute to the city's economy coming back in this unique fashion.

**Q. How has co-oping changed the culture and political economy of New York City?**

**Question.** Have other cities in the United States had a significant proportion of their rental apartments converted to co-ops or condominiums?

**Answer.** It varies enormously across the country. You never have a precise figure. The general orientation, however, is that New York is unique now in the scale of conversion. Only in New York do you have a market of this magnitude. The whole of condo conversion, which was an enormous thing, through 1981 amounted to 300,000 units nationally.



Drawing by Candice Walker; The New York Times / Fred Conrad, Larry C. Morris, Neal Bezzel

A. Previous studies all over the United States have indicated that you have a very significant shift in political orientation, in attitudes toward taxation, municipal services, even voting, as functions of ownership. The same person who is a renter is a very different person, in terms of behavior, when he is an owner. They've got a stake in the system. Surveys in New York and elsewhere indicate that, for most Americans, even though they're going to die of old age renting, their vision is that ultimately they're going to be an owner. And this is increasingly the case as tax law and inflation drive people into some kind of refuge, namely homeownership, from inflation and from a 50 percent marginal tax bracket.

## Ann Meyerson:

# Caught in the Squeeze

**Q** WHAT are some of the financial pressures that encourage co-op conversion?

A. Many analysts have pointed to factors such as many young couples earning two salaries. The household size of families in the city is smaller and they have smaller space needs. You have childless couples, singles; you have elderly 'empty nesters' who sell their suburban homes and come to the city. These are reasons there is consumer demand for conversion. On the other side, conversion is very lucrative for owners of rental housing. Analysts point to the decline in the profitability of rental housing; most people talk about rent regulations as the culprit.

But more significant perhaps are changes in the mortgage finance system that severely limit profits on rental property. Traditional providers of mortgage credit to older residential buildings, the savings and loan associations and the savings banks, have invested in mortgages outside the city. The nation (also) experienced an unprecedented rise in interest

rates, and the savings and loans and the savings banks were particularly vulnerable. The rates caused an earnings squeeze and a loss of deposits. The thrifts had most of their investments in low-interest mortgages. It culminated in a crisis when hundreds of savings and loans and savings banks nationwide collapsed or were merged. They were bailed out by Congress and were given further latitude to diversify away from mortgages. In 1965, New York City headquartered savings banks had about 80 percent of their assets invested in real estate. By 1976, they had only 64 percent and it has declined even further.

Most rental buildings are financed with 'balloon mortgages,' in which at some point a big sum of money, the remainder of the mortgage, comes due. At that point the bank traditionally refinances the mortgage. What's been happening is that the banks haven't wanted to refinance or have done so at much higher rates. In that kind of situation many owners will choose conversion rather than refinancing.



Assistant Professor,  
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**Q. There are those who argue that converting a substantial portion of the city's rental apartments into owned units hurts the poor, the working class and the young, who can't afford to buy and must rent apartments.**

A. Before you can make that statement, you have to raise the issues: Are the people who are buying the co-op previous renters? Are they newcomers to the city? How many of them are going to be nonresident owners, renting out the unit? This is a complex thing. If you say simply that 100,000 units have gone co-op, that doesn't mean that you've lost 100,000 rental units. Also, you not only diminish rental units when they become owned, but you also diminish the number of people who seek to rent. This becomes a safety valve.

**Q. Are there people who are hurt by co-op conversions?**

A. I think you have to view this in the context of that unique settlement that we now call most of Manhattan. The city of Manhattan and its boroughs — pardon me, and its colonies — are flourishing. This is the epitome of the post-industrial professional technical elite moving in. There's a young swinging city emerging within the old one.

Credible what you have is an incredible dichotomy emerging in New York. On the one hand, the welfare rolls are expanding quite sharply. Nobody's really noticed that. We know that the number of jobs in New York is expanding and on the other hand, the number of New York city residents who are working actually has gone down. This indicates a sort of mismatch between the old city and the new city. The folks who can afford to buy co-ops and condos are part of the new city. This is a new world city, it's not a manufacturing city. It's a city of services, it's a city of fun and games. And they're making out like bandits. They represent the 21st century. Left behind, both in lifestyle and income, are the folks who either have fallen off the train or are in the car. And, unfortunately, that's a majority of the city.

One issue is that New York has, in terms of income, at least, a very substantial black middle-class that's growing quite rapidly. But I stress income because the financing available for your typical co-op involves very substantial down payments, not uncommonly a minimum of 25 percent,

more typically 40 or 50 percent. Blacks in America with money are the first generation, typically, who have made a decent living. They don't have stored wealth. They can't depend upon what we refer to as the 'new G.I. financing,' which is good in-laws. We just completed a series of studies in suburban areas of New York and you see blacks of equivalent income simply don't have the down payment that whites making the same income have. And that means that they're frozen out of this new co-op movement.

**Q. Is co-opping likely to alter politics in New York?**

A. I think there's a very strong probability that, if this continues to expand, you're going to see a very real shift. The people who are moving into co-ops, based upon our study at least of loft conversions, are people who are not dependent upon municipal services, but are interested in the libraries, parks, museums, recreation facilities. Those are just the areas that have been starved and have been cut back in real dollars over the last 15 years. They are much less concerned, let's say, with health, education and use public health facilities. A great many of them either don't have any kids, or have one kid and they'll fight to get him or her into a prestigious private school. And they certainly aren't on the welfare rolls. So you begin to get a very real split of interest in the pocket.

We've always seen in New York an intriguing blend of the elite concerned with the poor and a middle-class hostile to both ends of the spectrum. Will this new technocratic and managerial class continue to exhibit this concern from above? They sure don't have it in California. There have been significant studies of the new elite coming out of Silicon Valley and the like and they don't give to charity and they tend to vote on a very conservative level. My guess in New York is that it would be a somewhat similar evolution.

**Q. Some people have expressed concern about the impact of this infusion of new capital into the city's housing. They contend that tenants purchase a building for three or four times what it's worth as a rental property and that all they get for that investment is a fancier elevator and a spruced-up lobby.**

A. One, there's no shortage of capital moving into housing in New York. There may be a shortage of housing for the capital to move into, which obviously yields the kind of price inflation that we see. Two, don't minimize the level of capital infusion in terms of major capital improvements. Part of the function of rent control has been living off capital. We've kept rents artificially low, and we've subsidized tenants in part out of landlords' profits, but also in part out of the delayed maintenance. So if you look at those castles on West End Avenue, masonry structures on the outside don't show the wear and tear that's taken place inside. And this is one way of getting the city's capital stock spruced up.

# Commentary: The Problem with Puerilism

The history of modernism can be read (and recently it has been) as a series of unequal exchanges between the culture industry and the various urban subcultures which come into existence on the margins of, and resist assimilation into, controlled social life—exchanges mediated by the avant-garde.<sup>1</sup> The recent establishment of a culture-industry outpost in Manhattan's East Village—a neighborhood of multiple racial and ethnic, deviant and delinquent subcultures—is the latest episode in that history. An attempt magically to resolve a classic overproduction crisis (overproduction by artists, overproduction of artists), this sudden expansion of the market is also a textbook case in modern cultural economy; as such, it can be analyzed differently than it has been in the preceding pages.

What has been constructed in the East Village is a simulacrum of the social formation from which the modernist avant-garde first emerged: I am referring, of course, to *la bohème*, the milieu in which exchange between high and low sectors of the cultural economy takes place. By the mid-19th century, the progressive marginalization of the artistic profession, and the erosion of artists' social and financial standing which this marginalization frequently entailed, had resulted in loose, shifting alliances between artists and other social groups—the ragpickers, streetwalkers and street entertainers, etc., who appear in the poetry of Baudelaire, the paintings of Courbet, Manet, Daumier, etc. From the very beginning, however, the avant-garde's relation to subcultural types was ambivalent; hence, its celebrated irony—Baudelaire's recommendation that beggars wear gloves—which allowed contradictory attitudes to exist side by side.

Avant-garde irony was not, of course, reserved for the underclasses, but was often turned on the bourgeoisie as well; in either case, what it expresses is the avant-

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garde's intermediary position between the two. As Stuart Hall, who has written extensively on the politics of subcultural formations, observes, "The bohemian subculture of the *avant-garde* that has arisen from time to time in the modern city, is both distinct from its 'parent' culture (the urban culture of the middle class intelligentsia) and yet also a part of it (sharing with it a modernising outlook, standards of education, a privileged relation vis-à-vis productive labour, and so on)."<sup>2</sup> The fact that avant-garde artists had only partially withdrawn from the middle-class elite—which also constitutes the primary, if not the only, audience for avant-garde production—placed them in a contradictory position; but this position also equipped them for the economic function they would eventually be called upon to perform—that of broker between the culture industry and subcultures.

Subcultures demonstrate an extraordinary ability to improvise, out of the materials of consumer culture, ad hoc cultural forms which function as markers of both

(group) identity and (cultural) difference. (Hall: Subcultures "adopt and adapt material objects—goods and possessions—and reorganize them into distinctive 'styles' which express the collectivity of their being-as-a-group.") Grounded in concrete social practices, these "styles" offer an alternative to the sterility of museum culture, and have periodically been appropriated as such by the avant-garde. Here is an (extremely condensed) description of this process:

Improved [subcultural] forms are usually first made saleable by the artisan-level entrepreneurs who spring up in and around any active subculture. Through their efforts, a wider circle of consumers gains access to an alluring subcultural pose, but in a more detached and shallow form as the elements of the original style are removed from the context of subtle ritual which had first informed them. At this point, it appears to the large fashion and entertainment concerns as a promising trend. Components of an already diluted stylistic complex are selected out, adapted to the demands of mass manufacture, and pushed to the last job-lot and bargain counter.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, thanks to the "pioneering" efforts of the avant-garde, difference first becomes an object of consumption.

Within the last few years in New York we have witnessed a series of isolated attempts to begin this process again: the reconsolidation of SoHo around established high-art traditions has propelled young, sometimes radical artists out to new marginal locations—the South Bronx, an abandoned massage parlor just south of Times Square—where they have regrouped with new subcultural recruits. The recent centralization of this tendency in the East Village provides it with both a geographic and, more importantly, an economic base, a network of artist-run commercial galleries established specifically for the marketing of subcultural productions (graffiti, cartooning and other vernacular expressions) or puerile imitations of them. (The youth of the new avant- or, rather, "enfant-garde" indicates that Youth itself has become an important subcultural category.) The prevalence of subcultural models in contemporary "avant-garde" production—both the "new" British sculpture and the French *figuration libre*, to cite but two examples, are entirely dependent upon them—suggests that this is a global, rather than local, phenomenon; but it also documents the importance subcultural appropriation in the maintenance of a global cultural economy.

If we regard the East Village art "scene" as an economic, rather than esthetic, development, we can account for the one characteristic of that "scene" which seems to contradict more conventional notions of avant-garde activity. I am referring to the surrender, by the East Village artist-entrepreneurs, to the means-end rationality of the marketplace: "Paintings are doorways to collector's [sic] homes," one East



Village painter proclaims in a recent interview, no doubt hoping his candor will be mistaken for cynicism. Despite attempts to fabricate a genealogy for the artist-run galleries of the East Village in the alternative-space movement of the '70s, what has been constructed in the East Village is not an alternative to, but a miniature replica of, the contemporary art market—a kind of Junior Achievement for young culture-industrialists.

Even this aspect of the "scene" is familiar: it repeats Warhol's open acknowledgement of the marketability of an alluring avant-garde pose—a pose created, moreover, through affiliation with a variety of deviant and delinquent subcultural types. (Recently, an East Village artist staged a simulacrum of the Factory—itsself a simulated Bohemia—thereby confirming Warhol's precedence.) Whether ironic or not, Warhol's acquiescence to the logic of the culture industry—his transformation of the studio into a Factory, his adoption of the techniques of serialized production, etc.—stands as a pivotal moment in the history of the avant-garde, the point at which its function in the mechanisms of cultural economy first became visible. (Without Warhol, the above analysis of the avant-garde would not have been possible.) By destroying the avant-garde's pretense to autonomy, Warhol has left subsequent "avant-gardes" two alternatives: either they openly acknowledge their economic role—the alternative pursued by the East Village "avant-garde"—or they actively work to dislodge an entrenched, institutionalized avant-garde production model.

If Warhol exposed the implication of the avant-garde in cultural economy in general, the East Village demonstrates the implication of that economy in broader social and political processes. For



this expansion of the market also participates in the ongoing "Manhattanization" of New York—the uprooting and displacement, by a coalition of city politicians (headed by the Mayor) and real-estate speculators, of the city's subcultural populations, and their replacement with a young, upwardly mobile professional class. Artists are not, of course, responsible for "gentrification"; they are often its victims, as the closing of any number of East Village galleries, forced out of the area by rents they helped to inflate, will sooner or later demonstrate. Artists can, however, work within the community to call attention to, and mobilize resistance against, the political and economic interests which East Village art serves (as the artists affiliated with PADD, who are responsible for the illustrations accompanying this text, have done).

The East Village is not only a local phenomenon, but also a global symptom. Exhibitions of East Village art have been mounted as far afield as Amsterdam; its reception in the European and, now, the American art press has been ecstatic. An all too familiar reaction to the increasing homogenization, standardization, rigidification of contemporary social life, this reception is yet another manifestation of what Jacques Attali describes as our "anxious search for lost differences within a logic from which difference itself has been excluded."<sup>4</sup> Searching for lost difference has become the primary activity of the contemporary avant-garde. But as it seeks out and develops more and more resistant areas of social life for mass-cultural consumption, the avant-garde only intensifies the condition it attempts to alleviate. The appropriation of the forms whereby subcultures resist assimilation is part of, rather than an antidote to, the general leveling of real sexual, regional and cultural differences and their replacement with the culture industry's artificial, mass-produced, generic signifiers for "Difference"—in the present instance, the empty diversity and puerilism of the East Village "avant-garde."  
—Craig Owens

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PAD/D (Political Art Documentation/Distribution) Project against Displacement: Posters by Day Geeson & Dennis Thomas (opposite), Jerry Kearns (above right), Nancy Sullivan (above), all 1984.

1. See Thomas Crow, "Modernism and Mass Culture in the Visual Arts," in Buchloh, Guilbaut and Solkin, eds., *Modernism and Modernity*, Halifax, The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1983, pp. 215-64. Although I would argue with Crow's tendency to treat the modernist avant-garde as a resistant subculture, the following treatment of culture-industry-subcultural relations is indebted to his.
2. Hall and Jefferson, eds., *Resistance through Rituals*, London, 1976, p. 13. Also cited in Crow, p. 259.
3. Crow, p. 252. For a more complex analysis of these mechanisms, Crow's entire section VIII (pp. 251-55) should be consulted.
4. Jacques Attali, "Introduction to *Bruits*," *Social Text* 7 (Spring/Summer 1983), 7.

# When Artists Seek Royalties on Their Resales

By ROBERTA SMITH

**A** LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY WAS made earlier this month — and a little bit was resurrected, too — when "On Social Grease," a 1975 work by the Conceptual artist Hans Haacke, was sold for \$90,000. It was the first time that a work by Mr. Haacke had ever come up at auction, and the transaction, part of the sale of the Gilman Paper Company collection of Minimal and Conceptual art, set a price record for the artist. Consistent of six magnesium wall panels reminding of corporate plaques, each quoting some prominent business or political leader on the usefulness of the arts to business, "On Social Grease" went for more than double the Christie's estimate of \$30,000 to \$40,000 or, for that matter, any previous price paid for Mr. Haacke's work.

But, even more unprecedented was the fact that "On Social Grease" was subject to a "transfer agreement and record," or, in art-world parlance, an artist's contract, a document that, like much of the work in the Gilman sale, was the product of the esthetic and political ferment of the early 1970's, and in particular of the activist atmosphere around the now-defunct Art Workers Coalition. The contract, which was primarily the work of Seth Siegelbaum, an art dealer who organized some of the first Conceptual art exhibitions, and Robert Projansky, a lawyer then active in the art world, attempted to place the artist's post-sale connection to his or her work on a more permanent footing.

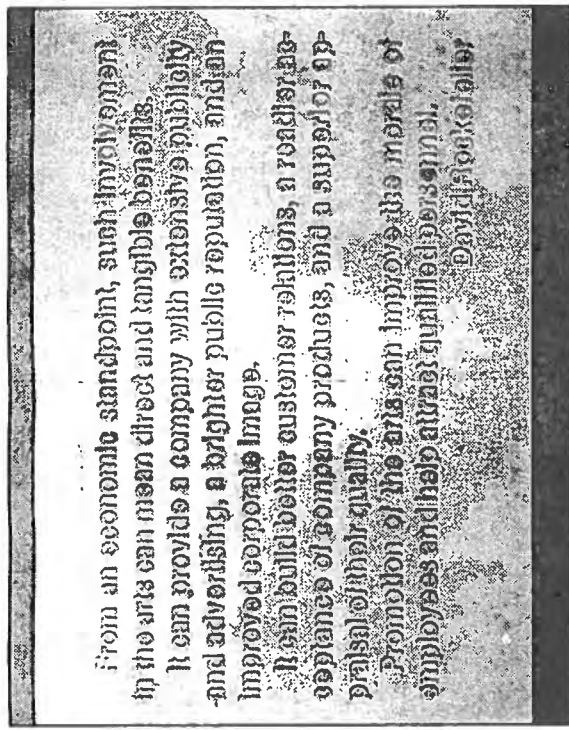
In effect, it suggested that this connection overrode all others, proposing what Mr. Haacke calls "a partnership between the maker of the work and the person who eventually owns it." The contract stipulated a royalty fee: 15 percent of the profit from any resale of the work would go to the artist. It also stated that the artist must approve of loans to any group exhibitions and that the work could not be altered in any way. It permitted the artist to borrow the work for exhibitions of his own choosing (Mr. Haacke's contract stipulated 60 days out of every five years), and, of course, it enabled artists to keep track of a work's current location. (This last point is stickier than generally assumed, especially where it concerns secondary market dealers who often prefer to keep their clients' identities secret.)

The artist's contract was always viewed as

something of a double-edged sword: good for artists in principle, but bad for business in fact. Nonetheless, times have changed since the phenomenon emerged nearly 20 years ago and the sale of the Haacke work could come to represent a watershed in the document's short and spotty history. The Projansky contract, as it was sometimes called, was printed as a form with fill-in blanks so that artists could adjust it to their individual needs. Controversial from the beginning, it was viewed as unenforceable, time-consuming and detrimental to sales — all of which proved to be true to varying degrees. Says Mr. Projansky, "We never expected this to become the standard of the art world, but we wanted to raise the subject and maybe influence some legislation."

It had some influence. In the late 1970's, California passed a resale law that entitles any artist or any artist's estate to 5 percent of the total price on the resale of his work in the state. This law, a kind of added tax that doesn't broach the "partnership" Mr. Haacke has in mind, is observed only fitfully by art dealers in California, although auction houses adhere to it.

In general, the contract itself was not an idea that caught on with any universality. It has been used by only a few artists, most consistently and completely by Mr. Haacke himself. The French artist Daniel Buren also uses it, according to his dealer, John Weber (who is also Mr. Haacke's dealer) — but he



Walker Russell

Above, detail from Hans Haacke's "On Social Grease," which consists of six etched magnesium wall panels. Below, part of the artist's contract providing for resale royalties on the work, which sold for \$90,000 at Christie's this month.

the Work from Artist, subject to all the covenants herein set forth (for the price of \$90,000) within thirty days of receipt of which is hereby acknowledged (at the agreed valuation for the purposes of this agreement of \$90,000).

**FUTURE TRANSFERS, ARTICLE TWO:** Collector covenants that in the event Collector shall hereafter sell, give, grant, barter, exchange, assign, transfer, convey or alienate the Work in any manner whatsoever or if the Work shall pass by inheritance or bequest or by operation of law, or if the Work shall be destroyed and insurance proceeds paid hereon, Collector, personally or through his personal representative shall (a) file a current TRANSFER AGREEMENT AND RECORD in the form and containing the information set forth and called for in the specimen hereto annexed and made a part hereof, completed and dated and subscribed by Collector, Collector's personal representative and collector's transferee, with the artist at the address set forth above (in block capital letters) within thirty days of such transfer, distribution, or payment of insurance proceeds, and shall (b) pay a sum equal to fifteen percent (15%) of the Applicable Value (as hereinafter defined), if any, as calculated by such transfer or distribution or payment of insurance proceeds to artist at the address set forth above (in block capital letters) within thirty days of such transfer, distribution, or payment of insurance proceeds.

**PRICE/VALUE, ARTICLE THREE:** The Applicable Value of the Work shall be determined by a TRANSFER AGREEMENT AND RECORD.

uses it without the 15 percent resale clause, primarily to control the exhibition and installation of his exceedingly site-specific work. And both Edward Kienholz and Carl Andre have been known to use similar contracts intermittently.

Like many other artists, Mel Bucher, whose work was also part of the Gilman collection and its sale, remembers being opposed to the contract — even though he "liked the idea of trying to protect artists' rights" — primarily because it seemed unenforceable. "The last thing I was interested in," said Mr. Bucher, "was the forfeiture of more bureaucracy of another kind of art police. Also, I didn't want to be the custodian of my own past." Mr. Bucher also voiced his suspicion of the idea that "everything was going to increase in value forever," and, giving the argument a little twist, said he felt that if artists wanted to share in the profits, they should be prepared to pay the collector a percentage of any decline in value if the work sold for less than its original price.

The artist Jackie Winsor, who produces post-minimalist sculptures that are heavy, painstakingly made and surprisingly fragile, used the contract throughout the 1970's, for a total of 15 sales (there have been two resales), and then stopped using it once her prices began to rise. In the beginning especially, when she was selling her sculptures for almost less than it cost to make them, Ms. Winsor seems to have used the contract as a device to establish, in her words, "my sense of their own value" and as a way "to get people not to be stupid with them," and it usually worked.

"When the collectors became engaged with me on that level," she says, "by the time they signed, I had such a sense of their integrity that it almost didn't matter if they signed or not." Says Ms. Winsor of her decision to discontinue using the contract: "Once the pieces got more expensive, the value was culturally much clearer. If it cost more, it's insured; if it's insured, it's handled better; it's created, and so forth." Ms. Winsor-and her dealer, Paula Cooper, admit, as does Mr. Haacke, that some sales were lost because of their insistence on using the contract. They also recall — despite the apparent simplicity of Siegelbaum-Projansky form — the endless amounts of paperwork and negotiating time that went into each sale, factors that made its use impractical. Thus, by the late 1970's, the artist's contract was, with few exceptions,

Continued on Page 30

# Seeking Royalties on Art Resales

Continued from Page 29

out of sight and out of mind in New York, until the Gilman sale inadvertently brought it back and put it to its first really public test. During the public viewing at Christie's, the entire contract was placed on a pedestal next to "On Social Grease," where it resembled nothing so much as an autonomous work of Conceptual art in its own right.

Not surprisingly, Christie's seemed a bit wary of the situation. At lot No. 60, "On Social Grease" was one of the last lots of the auction, and the allusion to the contract in the catalogue suggested that it applied only to the Gilman Paper Company, rather than to all subsequent owners of the work. This in turn made Mr. Haacke and his dealer, Mr. Weber, wary: Christie's was sent a registered letter stipulating that the auctioneer must read the main clauses of the contract out loud just prior to the sale of lot No. 60. This was done to the general amusement of the audience and one art dealer was heard to comment "pass on it." However, bidding on the work was brisk and, as the final price reflects, quite competitive.

The purchaser of the work was Gilbert B. Silverman, a Detroit collector in the real-estate business who already owns several works by Mr. Haacke as well as pieces by Mr. Buren and Mr. Kienholz, and who is

reversals would, he admits, "be shooting too high."

Whether the test that "On Social Grease" has passed with such flying colors applies to anyone else's art is hard to tell. The sale might be seen to affirm once more the official acceptance of Conceptual art and to suggest, as well, that Mr. Haacke's work can be co-opted and commodified as thoroughly as any other successful artist's. It might also be seen to imply the reverse: that Mr. Haacke's work, which takes the exploitation of culture as one of its subjects, knits so well with the thinking behind the contract that it almost becomes part of his own aesthetic. Mr. Weber maintains that the desire to own a Haacke work in the first place "tacitly implies agreement with its socio-political posture."

As for the larger picture, Mr. Haacke, like Mr. Projansky, also looks for a trickle-down effect. Of the contract he says: "The more artists who use it, the more it can become part of our culture and the more it will help those who are weaker."

Ironically, in the midst of the 1980's art boom — when more artists are more successful and wield more economic power than ever before — the time would seem to be ripe for a return of the artist's contract, or at least the ideas behind it. There seem to be some trickle-down effects of this power, and perhaps of the contract itself. One example is that certain dealers, when involved with the resale of a work by an artist whom they repre-

sent, automatically pass on a portion — which can be as much as 50 percent — of the resale profit to the artist. The dealer Mary Boone has made a practice of this in resales of works by such artists as Brice Marden, Eric Fischl and David Salle. Paula Cooper, who has done the same, says, "It's fair and, if you represent the artist, it's wise."

Still, most artists and dealers remain loathe to put anything on paper; most seek agreements with each other and with collectors built on an implicit, almost intuitive trust that they feel cannot be contractualized. Artists in demand seem able to pick and choose among galleries and even among collectors. Nonetheless, it is also clear that artists get extremely upset when their work changes hands quickly and a handsome profit is realized, without their directly benefiting from it, something that happens more and more these days. The perceived violation is complicated and conflicted, both financial and moral: It reveals the way artists can see their art as both a means of income and something akin to their own flesh and blood.

Even though artists' individual values, resistance to conformity and pure self-interest have worked against its acceptance, the Projansky contract agreement — and its various permutations — accounts for the complicated connection between artist and artwork to a remarkable degree. This may be its legacy. If the artist's contract itself remains a practice whose time has not yet come, the concepts it articulates are more and more on people's minds. □

## Certain dealers

### pass on a portion

### of the resale

### profit to artists

### whom they

### represent.

thus no stranger to artists' contracts. A man who feels that collectors are "only temporary landlords of the art; they don't own it 100 percent," Mr. Silverman dropped out of the bidding for "On Social Grease" at \$50,000 and then jumped back in again, deciding that "I would hate myself if I didn't get it."

The ease with which Mr. Haacke's work, contract and all, changed hands was quite gratifying for the artist and his dealer, especially in the presence of the skeptics at Christie's. Mr. Haacke says he felt "a bit of vindication" and that he is "very glad the contract was tested and is not an impediment." He will make about \$10,000 from the resale, or two-thirds of the original \$15,000 sale price. But he also expresses anger that the Gilman collection — which is unusual in its emphasis on Conceptual and Minimal art — has been disbursed, saying that it was his understanding at the time of the sale to the Gilmans that the collection would eventually be donated, intact to a museum. Additional clauses in the contract to limit such

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## ART AND BUSINESS

Allan Schwartzman

# The End of an Alternative

Recently helped organize an exhibition for the Franklin Furnace of the sketchbooks of Ree Morton, an artist whose work and life (she died in 1977 at the age of 40) were an inspiration to many. Ree studied art in the late Sixties when she already had a husband, three children, and a career as a nurse. She referred to her life as a feminist classic tale, "out of the kitchen and into the studio." In the mid-Seventies, before overtly decorative art had burst forth and then faded from center stage, Ree's work celebrated the blatantly decorative and sentimental with complexity, irony, and wit. In the last decade her work has withered from public attention.

Ree came of age as an artist at a time when process was more important than product. During that period, in the early and mid-Seventies, established hierarchies were being uprooted and the sky was the limit. A generation of artists like Morton were drawn in countless directions and considered that openness to be good. In looking over documents of the period and talking to a number of its artists, it becomes evident that a strong sense of community, the kind of collaborative spirit of happenings and Fluxus, brought a collective combustion which enabled such rapidly developing experimentation to flourish.

In the early and mid-Seventies, artists began to open their own spaces for the development and exhibition of their art in lofts, low-profile storefronts, and cheap apartments. Robert Newman's Gain Ground, Jeffrey Lew's 112 Greene Street Workshop, and collector Holly Solomon's 98 Greene Street, for example, provided situations that artists responded to, where they made art and showed it to their peers. Artists as diverse as Vito Acconci, Laurie Anderson, Scott Burton, Juan Downey, and Gordon Matta-Clark were in many ways formed by this ad-hoc, marketless system.

Most of the artist-initiated centers lasted only a few years and were replaced by a network of alternative spaces, like Artists Space



Laurie Hawkinson and Henry Smith-Miller, Redesign proposal for Gallery Nature Morte, 1988. Proposal calls for a rotating storefront propped by a mobile display cart. Courtesy Gallery Nature Morte.

## ART AND BUSINESS

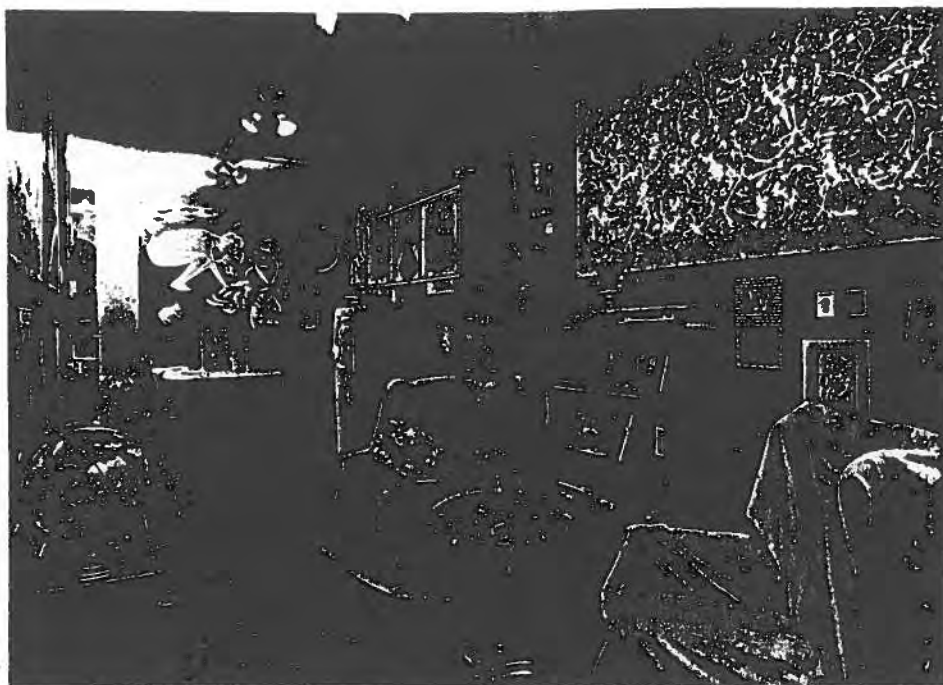
Allan Schwartzman

**On July 24th this latest artist-initiated alternative system came to an end when Nature Morte closed its final show.**

and P.S. 1, which were being run by a new generation of arts professionals who knew both where the art was and how to write grants and administer public funds. Over time, the art changed, the market and competition grew, public dollars became tighter, and private and corporate support became essential, causing the edges to soften. Today the alternative spaces feed and are fed by the same system they were created as alternatives to. So it was fitting that we were installing the show of Ree Morton's sketchbooks at the Franklin Furnace, one of New York's few remaining artist-run spaces. The Furnace collects inexpensive artists' books and ephemera, and has therefore not cultivated the sexiness that has attracted collectors and their corporate peers to other arts organizations. The Furnace's main private support comes from artists like Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, Lawrence Weiner, Sol Lewitt, Leon Golub, and John Baldessari, who believe alternative activity remains essential for the healthy development of art.

Artist-initiated activity is by no means unique to recent anti-modernist efforts. Whenever artists feel they are shut out by the prevailing system, they establish their own spaces, associations, and schools. Sometimes these alternatives become the mainstream, but more frequently they remain separate, serving as essential access routes for young artists, and then dying out. Could the upheaval in nineteenth-century art have happened without the critical mass made possible by alternatives like the *Salon des Refusés*? Where would American art be without the Armory Show? Dada without the Cabaret Voltaire? Or architecture and design without the Bauhaus?

In the early Eighties, with no more than cheap spaces, a few months rent, some friends, and Mickey-and-Judy drive, a new generation of young artists shunned the status quo of 57th Street, SoHo, and the prevailing alternative system, and opened their own galleries in the East



Installation view of Salon Show at Gracie Mansion Gallery, February 1984. Courtesy Gracie Mansion Gallery.

Village. Initially, just about all the East Village galleries were begun by artists: Gracie Mansion, Nature Morte, Civilian Warfare, 51X, Mo David, Cash Newhouse, International with Monument. Gracie Mansion began her gallery as a spoof of a gallery, with a show of Timothy Greathouse's photographs in her railroad flat loo. "It wasn't in actuality a serious gallery," she recalls. "It was very much a statement about the art world and an excuse for having a party." Nature Morte was begun by Alan Belcher and Peter Nagy as a studio, a place to hang their friend's art, and a way to meet people.

Few had the organizational skills or the desire to mail announcements or keep books. Most considered their galleries to be art projects and did not expect to make much, if any, money. According to Belcher, he and Nagy (both of whom continued to hold down jobs for almost four more years) did not go the not-for-profit route in order to avoid committee decision-making and all the paperwork. But the spirit that was the East Village caught on, generated colossal quantities of hype, transformed an impoverished neighborhood into a real estate war zone, and is largely responsible for the shifts in the attentions of the market we experience today.

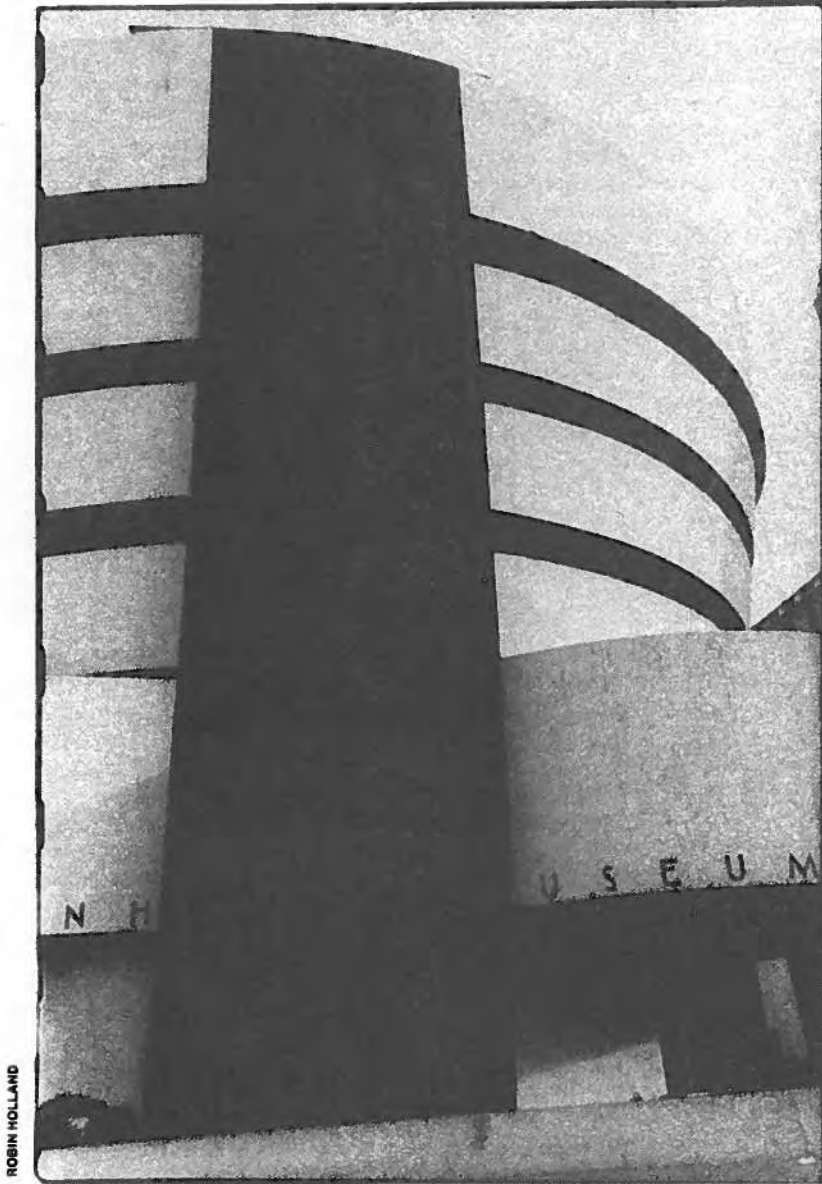
On July 24th this latest artist-initiated alternative system came to an end when Nature Morte closed its final show. Most of the artists who opened galleries in the East Village have

turned to art-making full-time and have found prominent places for themselves in the existing gallery/collector/museum structure. Even Gracie Mansion, who remains a gallerist, now runs a mainstream operation, which she intends to move to SoHo.

While we were installing the Ree Morton show, my co-curator, Cynthia Carlson, spoke about the Gordon Matta-Clark retrospective she had just seen at the Brooklyn Museum. Walking through that exhibition, looking at the photographs and the slices of floors and walls which are all that remain of Matta-Clark's colossal carvings, Carlson became nostalgic for that time in the early and mid-Seventies "when ideas were flashing through the air." I told her that a number of people objected to the Matta-Clark retrospective in that it misrepresented his work by displaying the residue of his sculptural actions as sculptures themselves. That one exhibition most concisely illustrated how strongly our focus has shifted from situations in the Seventies to objects in the Eighties.

With the closing of Nature Morte there is no evidence yet of new artist-initiated activity in New York to challenge the status quo, no critical mass of new energy to redirect our gaze and refocus our thoughts. □

*Allan Schwartzman writes regularly about art for Manhattan, Inc. His column on art and business appears regularly in Arts.*



**The Guggenheim Museum's startling announcement of  
"A Day Without Art": bigotry and loss are the issues**

# 'A Day Without Art'

**BY DAVID DEITCHER**

One night during the summer of 1988, a group of men and women met in a loft on West 24th Street to talk about what they, as a group of visual arts professionals, could do to contribute to the fight against AIDS. Aware, on the one hand, of activist groups like ACT UP, and of fundraising concerns like "Art Against AIDS" on the other, they decided to pool their considerable resources as well-connected administrators, art writers, and curators to increase public awareness of the ongoing health emergency and to promote further action to end it. Back then it was unclear precisely

## ART

what "Visual AIDS" (as they called their collective) would do, but before long its members resolved to start by honoring the legacy of those in their field who have died of AIDS.

On Friday, December 1—the date chosen by the World Health Organization as its second annual "AIDS Awareness Day"—Visual AIDS will stage what it has called "A Day Without Art." Strictly speaking, the intended moratorium on art was never practicable, and for fairly obvious reasons: art is big business these days and, despite what you may have

galleries in Manhattan I found that quite a few intend to observe the day—without closing to business altogether—by darkening their exhibition spaces. There are exceptions; at the Castelli Gallery, for example, the person who answered the phone told me, without missing a beat, "We're closing." At Simon Watson (where an exhibition dealing with the representation of civil disobedience and political activism will be in place), Mr. Watson has deposited 15,000 questionnaires in the mail, thus inaugurating (in collaboration with Visual AIDS and Creative Time) "The Witness Project," a record of the names and achievements of those in the cultural community who have died of AIDS, and the names of those who have remembered them. In addition to serving as a resource for curators, scholars, and anyone else who wants, this data base is intended to facilitate swift political mobilization. Some galleries will install special shows for the day or have arranged thematically related ones for the month (see box). Many more will conduct business as usual.

It is tempting to generalize that the smaller the New York institution, the more thoughtful the observance. On Thursday, November 30 at 7 p.m., the Jewish Museum, in cooperation with the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, will stage a five-part "Call to Healing and Action: A Jewish Perspective on AIDS."

heard, people in the art world are, as a rule, no more enlightened, emotionally generous, or "sensitive" than people anywhere else. Moreover, it's hard to convince those who run institutions on the imperial scale of, say, the Metropolitan Museum or MOMA to sacrifice the gate and the profits from their boutiques for so much as one day. That such a sacrifice would commemorate the decimation of people who so easily are relegated to the perpetual otherness of "risk groups" hardly makes such a tribute more likely.

Nevertheless, even at such sacred precincts as the Met, pragmatic and determined members of the staff have figured out ways to observe the day, ways that will prove more persuasive and no less dignified than silence. The plan at the Met, for example, may even be worthy of that overused term, "intervention." On Friday, Picasso's *Portrait of Gertrude Stein* will be absent from its site, displaced by a statement that will testify to the continuing loss of life that the painting's absence symbolizes. Posters in the "Great Hall" will alert visitors to this singular event and—perhaps even more remarkable—literature on AIDS will be available at the information booth.

With over 400 museums, galleries, and arts organizations participating nationwide, I can only hint at the breadth and diversity of this day "without art." Many of the most thoughtful events will take place as far away from here as Seattle,

The artist Humberto Chavez organized an exhibition entitled "Images and Words: Artists Respond to AIDS," which was scheduled to open at the Henry Street Settlement on December 1; Chavez cancelled it when the Settlement refused to display a banner by Gran Fury consisting of the statement: "ALL PEOPLE WITH AIDS ARE INNOCENT"

Typical of its commitment to the community, the Bronx Museum of the Arts combined forces with the Bronx AIDS Community Service Project to cohost an entire week of events. Through December 3, two panels from the Names Project quilt will be on view; so will a videotape by José Gutiérrez-Gómez that mimics the form of the popular illustrated novella *Ojos que no ven* (*Eyes That Cannot See*—Spanish and English versions alternate continuously). On December 3 the mezzanine lobby will be turned over to representatives of the BACSP, who will inform visitors about AIDS, and at noon a performance by Teatro Vida will take place. The Brooklyn Children's Museum is offering a performance about AIDS for kids, distributing AIDS information to adults, and highlighting children's books about AIDS in its library. At the Baruch College Gallery the lights in the Franz Kline show will be turned off, and a video monitor turned on to show a blank videotape, blank but for its audio track, which contains a reading of the names of some

where Artist Trust, a granting organization for artists, has helped—with other groups—to coordinate activities. These range from a dozen window installations for storefronts throughout the city to panel discussions such as the one at the Seattle Art Museum that concerns artists' contributions to "AIDS Housing of Washington," a care and/or housing facility for PWAs at any stage of illness.

Meanwhile, in Texas, the Dallas Museum of Art plans to construct black walls around which visitors will have to walk in order to enter the galleries, with a wall text to explain this dark detour. The DeCordova Museum in Lincoln, Massachusetts will drape works it has loaned to corporate subscribers with shrouds, each inscribed at its center with a statement concerning "the impact of AIDS on the art world and the community at large."

In Pasadena, Keith Haring will paint a mural at the Art Center College of Design. Virtually every gallery and museum in Pittsburgh will dim its lights from 11:55 a.m. to 12:05 p.m. In cities and towns across the country, lectures and commemorative services have been planned, performances scheduled, exhibitions mounted, art shrouded, building facades draped, and AIDS information prepared to observe "A Day Without Art"—now also known as "A National Day of Action and Mourning in Response to the AIDS Crisis."

In an entirely partial survey of the art

in the art community who have died of AIDS

Finally, on Friday, Visual AIDS will send a delegation to Washington, D.C. to keep up the pressure on the NEA, congress, and John E. Frohnmayer, who—lest we forget—would not abide what, to this taxpayer, are the eminently reasonable remarks of David Wojnarowicz in the exhibition catalogue of "Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing." What difference is there between withholding governmental support to a gay artist because his work upsets you, and denying governmental support to fight AIDS because of the homosexuality of those who are among the first to die? I'd say no difference at all, since bigotry is the central issue here. In addition to honoring the dead, it looks like Visual AIDS will also be looking out for the living—whether or not they happen to be members of the art world. ■

## Art/Kay Larson

# DARKNESS VISIBLE

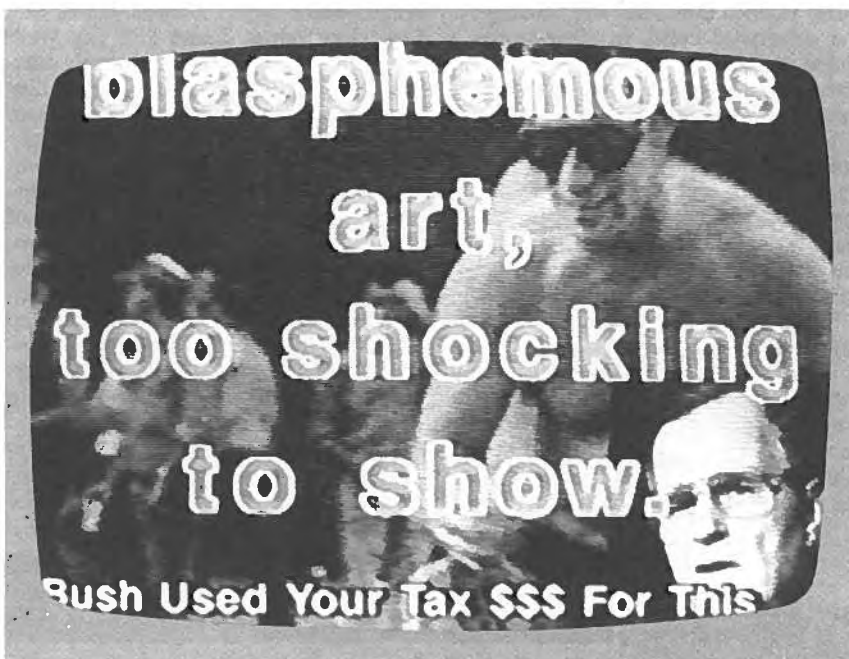
“. . . The crackdown on the NEA is walloping the small art spaces, which are being punished randomly, globally, and after the fact. . . .”

PAT BUCHANAN'S SCORCHED-EARTH campaign in the Georgia primaries has repositioned the debate over the National Endowment for the Arts. When I pointed to the decline of state and city funding for cultural institutions a few weeks ago ["Art: The Money Jungle," February 3], the NEA—the third leg of the triangle of public funding—seemed assured at least of survival.

But then Buchanan raised the T-shirt on the vast American underbelly. Taking a cue from Jesse Helms's successful re-election campaign, Buchanan's television ads accused the NEA of being the "upholstered playpen" of the "eastern liberal establishment." Showing snippets of the PBS documentary *Tongues Untied*, about black men in the gay community, Buchanan assaulted George Bush for investing tax dollars in "so-called art [that] has glorified homosexuality, exploited children, and perverted the image of Jesus Christ."

This purple vitriol bears no relation to reality, but that doesn't slow Buchanan. Bush did as much to Michael Dukakis with the Willie Horton ads in 1988. However amusing it is to watch Bush out-Willed and protesting he is shocked—shocked!—that a candidate would play fast and loose with truth, Buchanan has already had an impact on Capitol Hill. After the close call in New Hampshire, Bush shoved NEA chairman John Frohnmayer out of his job, accurately perceiving that his departure would go unmentioned among all those his wafflings had alienated—artists, progressives, and conservatives alike. (The White House denies the timing was anything but coincidental. A commentator on public radio has proposed a "Ho Ho" test for the Bush administration: If you can't hear its explanations without laughing, what are they worth?)

Frohnmayer leaves his post on April 30. The NEA reappropriation hearings will not begin before mid-May. With Bush positioning himself closer to the right wing, the leaderless endowment is entering the most critical time in its 26-year history. "The president supports the NEA," Republican state senator Roy Goodman insisted to me during a meeting for New York arts leaders at the Metropolitan Museum. But the president also desperately wants to win in November. So do the Democrats, for that matter. Congress



NEA-BASHING: The controversial Buchanan ad.

likes to make easy public votes against "obscenity," expecting to repair the damage in private. Now it is forced to declare itself, and that's trouble.

Here are the facts: The grants Buchanan is attacking were actually made during the Reagan administration. The NEA has awarded almost 100,000 grants to museums, art programs, local and regional art agencies, and artists across the nation; fewer than 20 have provoked a reaction of any kind. No direct grant to an artist in the Visual Arts category has ever run into trouble. The four performance artists denied funding (including Karen Finley and Tim Miller) were in a category that no longer exists.

The pain has settled on institutions: the Southeast Center for Contemporary Art (for "Awards in the Visual Arts," which included Andres Serrano), the Philadelphia Institute of Contemporary Art (for Robert Mapplethorpe), PBS (for the American Documentary's *Tongues Untied*). Each time, professionals, making professional judgments, chose the works.

The crackdown on the NEA is walloping the small art organizations. They are being punished randomly, globally, and

after the fact. I'm sure it's unnerving for an artist to have the whole weight of the federal government descend on him. Still, a good scourging by Jesse Helms can launch a career (as it did with Finley and Miller). Mapplethorpe's eminence hasn't suffered. Serrano is showing everywhere.

But the organizations that presented or commissioned those works—and thousands of others by thousands of artists—are being launched into no-man's-land. A show put on in 1988 can destroy its institution in 1992, like a silent computer virus. The rules change overnight, depending on who's campaigning. The right's war against artists is actually a war against art institutions, and it is aimed at total demoralization. If the small places disappear, they take with them America's most remarkable and successful invention in the international art arena: the independent, noncommercial, flexible, egalitarian alternative exhibiting space, born in the early seventies and nurtured for twenty years by the NEA. What the right wing is destroying is the art world's great contribution to American populism.

In February, two awards recommended by peer-review panels according to stan-

dard NEA procedure were reversed by the National Council. One was to a Santa Monica performance space run by Tim Miller. The other was to Franklin Furnace, the art space in TriBeCa. The Furnace's proposal included a videotape of a female artist performing nude.

Two things are striking: First, Franklin Furnace's *entire* Visual Arts request of \$40,000 was reduced by the peer panel, then eliminated altogether when the National Council reviewed the panel recommendations. The reason given: The National Council didn't like the "quality" of the videotaped event. In other words, a single mediocre performance by a naked artist *in the past* was enough to cancel a future award for operating funds.

The second striking thing: Franklin Furnace *submitted* that videotape. Why? So director Martha Wilson could feel like a martyr? So she could prove the government was prejudiced? The naïveté is almost unimaginable. Is the art community willingly collaborating with its destroyers?

But look at it from the other side. A little shoestring storefront space like the Furnace is being asked to play Washington-style hardball with some very tough characters. It's probably reluctant to compromise its independence and ignorant of the nasty possibilities. Still, let's get real. If someone is trying to mug you, do you offer him a knife?

The culture of art is not the culture of bankers. At the Andrea Rosen Gallery this week is a wry, self-mocking show by the neophyte Sean Landers, who develops his social and artistic ineptitude and his inability to pay back his student loan into a rambling, witty, confessional installation. Like Bart Simpson, he's funny because he's so outrageously irresponsible.

At the Drawing Center, a nonprofit space that undoubtedly has NEA money somewhere in its history, is a razor-sharp slide into the abyss called "Darkness Visible." Its artists—Mark Beyer, Charles Burns, Sue Coe, Gary Panter, Suzan Pitt, Gig Wailgum, Sue Williams—would probably scandalize half of Georgia. You can bet they don't fit into a bland "Don't worry, be happy" worldview. Their style is cartoon *noir*: bleak, grisly, perturbing, semi-autobiographical tales told in the comic-strip format. To suggest their lineage, copies of *Raw* line the shelves. Coe's nauseating impression of the agony of cows in the slaughter house challenges the steak-eating aesthetic of 90 percent of the nation. Williams's meandering wall drawing includes a few handwritten lines of self-examination: "How they see us—They hate us and for good reason."

The culture of art involves a kind of excavation. Sniffing a fresh act of psychological burial, the artist digs up the

corpse. The Puritan, his shovel still covered with dirt, attacks with the full Freudian fury of someone who expected his *bête noire* to stay buried. That's why this isn't about money. It isn't essentially about tax dollars—a tactic used only because it works. It's about threatening ideas. Thoughtful counterarguments make no headway. The NEA's advocates have not figured out that only rationalists listen to reason.

The urge to destroy the NEA is coming from the far political fringes, but the odd thing about this moment is the ability of the fringes to intimidate and control the center. The NEA won't be dismantled entirely, at least not without great effort. The real casualties will be places like Artists Space (attacked by Helms for a catalogue essay by David Wojnarowicz), the Cincinnati Contemporary Art Center (prosecuted for "obscenity"), the Buffalo art space Hallwalls (which is doing a pro-choice exhibition), or some Idaho space doing a show on Darwin.

Once you allow any group's moral qualms to dictate any part of arts law, you open the door for everyone's objections. The result is a quagmire beyond saving. Yet I have a hard time believing Americans, if asked, would want to see the NEA disappear. Perhaps there should be a national referendum: The NEA as it was, or nothing. Then we would really see where the center stands. ■



# Arts & Leisure

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## Alternative Art Spaces: Survival Of the Nimblest



Norman Y. Lane for The New York Times

By ALLAN SCHWARTZMAN

**L**ONG BEFORE WARNER BROTHERS had signed up Laurie Anderson, before David Salle, Cindy Sherman, Robert Longo and Jeff Koons had been subjects of museum retrospectives, before Eric Bogosian had ever written and starred in a movie, before Barbara Kruger had made it to the cover of Newsweek, there were some funky, fledgling arts groups that nurtured them — an Artists Space, a Franklin Furnace, a P.S. 1. These front-line nonprofits, known as alternative spaces, were the center of American artistic life in the 70's. They arose from the counterculture spirit of the time to counteract museums and commercial galleries, which were seen as either sterile and opposed to experimentation or tainted by commercialism.

But by the mid-80's, this spawning ground

had fallen into a state of artistic depression and spiritual malaise. Contemporary art had become big business, and commercial galleries had usurped the function of spotting new talent. Alternative spaces were left with minor artists. Nevertheless, government and private foundations encouraged the alternative spaces to grow.

Then, unexpectedly, the money dried up. State arts councils cut their budgets. New York's budget, larger than all the others combined, was slashed in half. Private foundations turned their attention to issues like AIDS and homelessness.

Jolted into an awareness of their plight, the 300 or so alternative spaces scattered across the country (a quarter in New York City) are trying to regain their position at the center of contemporary artistic thought. With the collapse of the art market several years ago and the emergence of a new generation, the art community sees a growing need for alternative spaces. Whether they can recover their vitality is another question.

When these groups came into being in the  
Continued on Page 29

A miniature golf course set up at Artists Space produced a windfall.

# Alternative Spaces: Survival of the Nimblest

Continued From Page 1

early 70's, alternative was a noble word. Today it has come to mean deviant. And when alternative spaces have been called upon to defend themselves, they have unintentionally created greater difficulties. In the 80's, when money was still flowing and experimental art came under attack, grant-givers urged them to behave more like museums. Many did, which made them richer for a time but more bureaucratic; grumbings were heard across artistic circles that the alternative spaces no longer had their fingers on the pulse of new art. But few of the groups have seriously questioned whether they have outlived their usefulness.

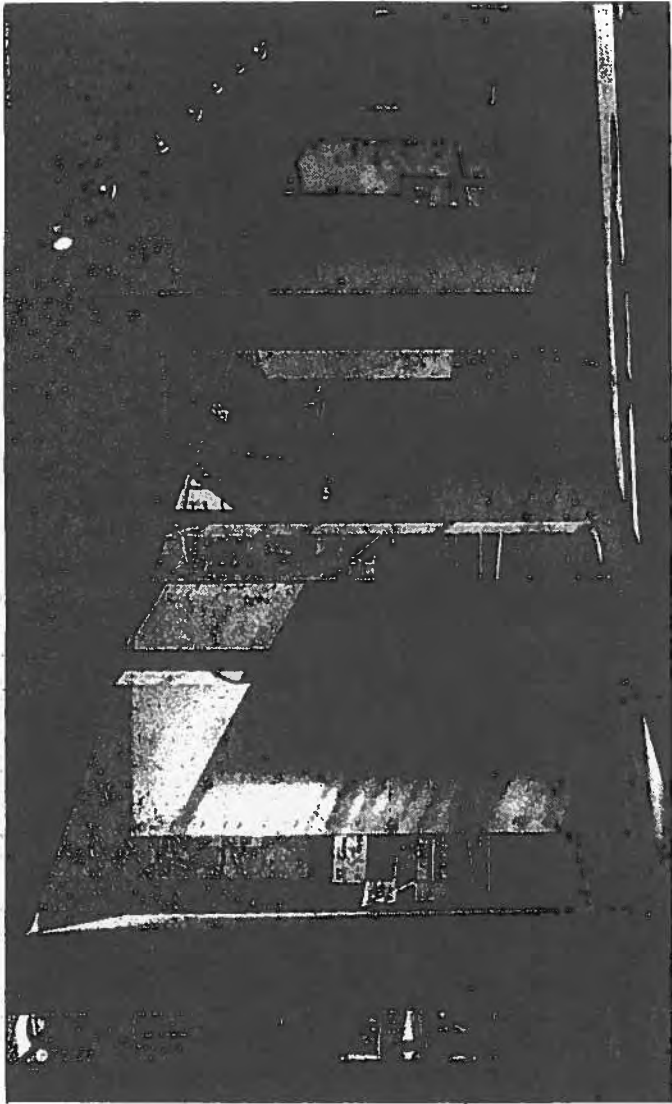
Artists Space, formed in SoHo in 1973 by the arts council to provide grants and exhibition opportunities for emerging artists, became especially skillful at raising money. In the 70's it introduced literally dozens of artists who went on to be the most influential of their generation. But in the 80's, even as its budget swelled to a hefty \$1 million, it failed to introduce a single notable artist.

"We finally realized we had to do something," says Caroline Alexander, a board member, "when we noticed how much time was spent contemplating how immaculate the wall labels were." The board brought in a new director, who reduced the full-time staff from 12 to 5 and cut the budget nearly in half. But after two years the board still found the artistic direction wanting, and it has just recruited another director.

To meet the challenge, some alternative spaces have been casting about for alternative ways of finding money. Two summers ago Artists Space was in danger of having to close its doors. As a lark, it turned itself temporarily into a miniature golf course each hole designed by a different artist. The show was such a success that in two months it earned enough to pay the bills, with \$85,000 left over. But because of this windfall, two foundations decided to withdraw grants they had intended to award the organization.

A second group that claims to have been penalized for its resourcefulness is the Drawing Center, an alternative space devoted to works on paper. In November it mounted an exhibition based on the Surrealist game known as exquisite cadaver, whereby several artists contribute to a single work without knowing what the others have done. Critics liked the show — but because the works were sold to benefit the space, no government agency or foundation would contribute. Another victim of change was Franklin

Alan Schwartzman, who writes about the international art market, helped found an alternative space in the 1970's



Paul Wurdahl

The Storefront for Art and Architecture, from the inside looking out — Visionary in its approach to financing.

Furnace, an alternative space known for its performance-art program and, especially, its archive of "artists books," a category of modest artwork in book form that became popular among artists in the 60's but was not valued by museums. In 1990, Franklin Furnace lost a quarter of its government funds. Martha Wilson, its founder, chose a radical solution: in December she sold her famous collection of artists' books to the Museum of Modern Art, a convert to the medium. "The collection had grown to such an extent that it had come to consume most of our space," she said. "Now we can get back to championing grass-roots ideas and movements."

Working in Ms. Wilson's favor, perhaps, is a change in climate at the National Endowment for the Arts, where Jane Alexander, the chairman, is seeking to increase the level of tolerance for artistic activity that some people may find objectionable: "When I was a young actor, that's what we were all about — experimentation," she said in a recent telephone interview.

But alternative spaces are increasingly being called upon to prove their worth. When Mayor Giuliani's office recently floated the idea of shifting city aid to big art institutions

Cindy Sherman bailed out Artists Space by donating \$55,000 worth of her art.

that draw tourists, the announcement sent shudders through the art community. "What we do is not measurable instantly — not by tourist dollars," said Cec Brown, director of Creative Time, a group that organizes public art projects, performance and film events. "But there wouldn't be contemporary programming at places like the Brooklyn Academy of Music or Lincoln Center without programming like ours."

Anne Philbin, the director of the Drawing Center, also sees alternative spaces as essential to the artistic food chain. "The reason New York City is the cultural capital of the world," she says, "is because culture is still made here."

With government and foundations looking closely at attendance figures as a kind of

Nielsen raling to determine their levels of support, the financial picture is bleak for the alternative spaces. The N.E.A. is operating on a reduced budget, and Ms. Alexander intends to apply cuts across the board. Foundations and corporations have reduced or frozen their arts budgets. And unlike museums, alternative spaces rarely have a pool of rich supporters who can be called upon in a crisis. (Cindy Sherman, who had her first show at Artists Space and is now a board member, bailed it out last summer by donating artwork that were gobbled up for \$55,000. Most of her peers have been far less generous in giving back to the system that launched them.)

Some have already streamlined their organizations to the bare bones. Creative Time now sponsors more than 20 projects a year with only one full-time employee. The group is especially dependent on the city, which provides one-third of its annual budget. "If the city cuts our funds," Mr. Brown says, "we will be in trouble. I have no place left to cut but the programs themselves."

Things are worse for newer alternative spaces, those that have arisen since the core group established its relationships with its

financial supporters. The newer ones find it virtually impossible to gain access to a shrinking money pool.

So young artists are once again taking matters into their own hands, organizing exhibitions designed to provoke dialogue, much in the spirit of the original alternative spaces. They have been banding together to organize shows in tiny storefronts, in artists' lofts, in the shells of commercial galleries that have gone out of business, not only in downtown Manhattan, in Brooklyn and in Queens but also in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Atlanta, Houston and Seattle. Shows take place in hotel rooms and empty offices, in locations that are open one month and gone the next. They operate on a shoestring. For example, 4 Walls, a collaboration of four artists, takes place in an artist's studio in Brooklyn once a month. A show is mounted for a single evening, capped off by a lively discussion. Each show is paid for almost exclusively from the \$2 door fee. Without corporation papers or grants, these new alternatives seem to have the greatest vitality in the art community at the moment.

As a younger, less institutionalized alternative space, the Storefront for Art and Architecture — in an impossibly narrow wedge-shaped Lower East Side space — has always been eager to rethink itself, so much so that it recently got the artist Vito Acconci and the architect Stephen Holl to collaborate on a deconstruction of Storefront's crumbling storefront. They tore it down and replaced it with a wall of puzzle-shaped windows and doors that pivot, enabling it to open itself to the street. Both formally and conceptually intelligent, it is one of the most successful collaborations between an artist and an architect in recent years.

But because it is a newcomer, Storefront is having difficulty entering the funding cycle. With an annual budget of \$180,000, the group is small even by alternative standards. Yet it is one of the country's most vital arts groups, and one of the few institutions anywhere where architects can exhibit. It is working on a host of projects, including one with architects, botanists and microbiologists to clean up a hazardous asbestos site on Corcoran, where the most popular beach is black because of asbestos contamination.

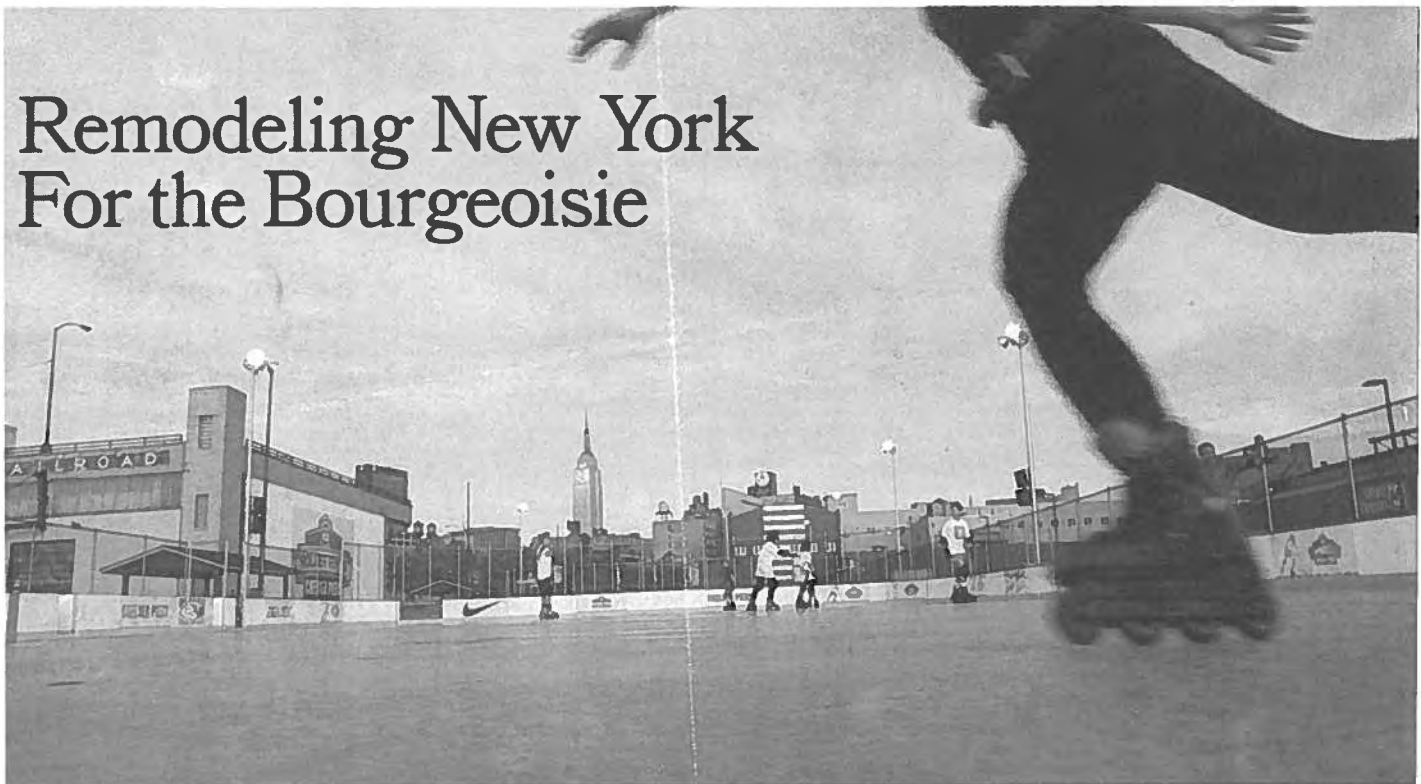
Storefront receives only nominal funds from the state, and its last six applications to the N.E.A.'s Design Arts division, which exists specifically to support architectural programs, have been rejected. But Kyoung Park, Storefront's founder, remains something of a visionary about artistic ideas and how to pay for them: "We would like to get out of this housing project called art," he says. "We'd like to work with the Defense Department and with the Environmental Protection Agency to get our projects funded."



# Arts & Leisure

Section 2

## Remodeling New York For the Bourgeoisie



Photograph by Librado Rosero/The New York Times

By HERBERT MUSCHAMP

**T**HE RESTORATION OF BRYANT PARK, completed in 1992, is one of the nicest things New York City has done for itself in a long time. And the park's inviting new restaurant, designed by Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer, is a fine place from which to savor the view. With its arcadian, trellised facade, accented by the Mediterranean resort chic of white canvas umbrellas, the restaurant offers a perch from which to enjoy the trees, grass and fountains, the surrounding cityscape and, above all, the cheering prospect of people enjoying a public space without fear that something awful is going to happen. No wonder the restaurant, which opened for business last spring, has been hailed as an urban miracle.

The true miracle, perhaps, is that the restoration has recaptured not only a place but also a time, a period

**A newly inviting park, cozy coffee bars, a Grand Central mall: A cityscape tailor-made for the business class.**

before the park fell into disrepair. When the city was prosperous enough to create parks and New Yorkers were not afraid to use them. And yet the sensation is not purely one of nostalgia, for the restoration and the restaurant are also oddly representative of the present era in the city's history. Though Bryant Park resembles an oasis, its revival is not an exception. It is of a piece with many other projects that also seek to reinscribe secure middle-class values within the urban center.

They range in scale from large-scale residential

enclaves like Queens West and Riverside South, both loosely modeled after Battery Park City, to the Starbucks-style cafes that have sprouted all over town. Across the city, Business Improvement Districts have been devising design guidelines, as well as providing security and sanitation, once provided by the public sector. In the city's rusting industrial districts, new zoning proposals would encourage the rise of suburban-type "superstores," while chain emporiums like Bed, Bath and Beyond have invaded the city's heart.

The transformation of 42d Street into a family entertainment center; the proliferation of theme restaurants on 57th Street; the renovation of Penn Station and Grand Central Terminal into upscale shopping malls, with trains attached: there's no sweeping master plan coordinating these projects. If anything, they signify the capitulation of the public planning process to private enterprise. That's one reason it's not easy to grasp what these projects portend. Taken individually

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— a park here, a chain store there — the projects are of limited significance. Their meaning arises from the aggregation.

And it's a perplexing meaning, because it contradicts the narrative that has ruled the city throughout much of this century: the departure of the middle class and the city's polarization into extremes of rich and poor. These new urban projects fall between those extremes: too accessible and affordable to hold adequate snob appeal for the rich but beyond the reach of the lower economic echelons, they are pitched to those in the middle. Not the lower middle, not even the middle middle, but white-collar professionals. Bed, Bath and Beyond is not, after all, Porthault, and Starbucks is not Petrossian. Perhaps, in honor of the increasing influence of Business Improvement Districts, we ought to call this new city Business Class.

It is not a new development, nor is it unique to New York. Many older American cities have sought to reverse their economic decline by fostering a kind of hybrid urban-suburban culture, an ethos that fuses suburban security and standardization with urban congestion and pizzazz. Festival marketplaces, like those developed by the Rouse Corporation in the 1970's, were among the first manifestations of this genre. The gentrification of old brownstone neighborhoods, the conversion of lofts from manufacturing to residential use, the rise of the gay subculture as a stable force in the urban economy: these, too, have contributed to the impression of an urban revival.

If that image has become more conspicuous in the past few years, that is partly because the extremities of the preceding decade — the giltz development of the 1980's, the homelessness of the early 1990's — have receded from the foreground of urban consciousness.

Is that a good thing? Earlier this year, when employees of programs intended to aid homeless people in the Grand Central business district were accused of assaulting them instead, it became apparent that there is something misleading, or at least incomplete, about the Business Class image. Suddenly the difference between a genteel gated suburban community and Business Improvement Districts did not seem so profound. If anything, the Business Improvement District looked more sinister because

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**The general level of architectural design in the city is higher than it has been in a generation. But it seldom risks greatness.**

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its gates were invisible. While these districts preserve the city's traditional image as a place of social accessibility, image and reality no longer coincide. Rich and poor are still polarized, but the gap between them is less conspicuous.

It's hard not to be of two minds about this development. On the one hand, those who care about the city's future can only welcome the social and economic stability that a middle class provides. Even if what we're seeing now is in large part image, that isn't necessarily a bad thing. Images can sometimes engender reality: a burnished urban image is far more likely than a tarnished one to attract and maintain businesses, tourism and other forces pivotal to the city's economic well-being.

Even the most favorable trend, however,

has its price, and the cost of the Business Class city needs to be much more talked about. There's a moral authority to the city's openness, for example, a democratic interplay between freedom and equality that has long been central to New York's identity. This stands to be eroded if the urban center is remade into a fortress. Of course, moral authority isn't worth much if there is no city left to embody it. But without that authority, what is the difference between a city and a mall?

**P**OVERTY, RACIAL PREJUDICE, environmental abuse: a lot of critical issues are dimly concealed by the veneer of middle-class affluence. Compared to them, it may seem the most trivial of pursuits to talk about the look of the veneer itself: about design, about taste, about art. And yet, it's precisely because the veneer has the potential to deceive that talking about it in visual terms takes on social significance. What lies beneath the veneer is significant, but so is the veneer itself. Does it reflect who we are?

The old Barnes & Noble sale annex on lower Fifth Avenue had orange industrial carpet over floorboards that creaked and it felt like a firetrap. The new Barnes & Noble store over on Avenue of the Americas has lush green carpet, classical music noodling softly in the background and a cafe perched on a balcony. It's so pleasant that you want to linger for hours.

It is pleasant to go into those Starbucks-style coffee bars; the coffee is good and the atmosphere is pleasant. Shopping at the World Financial Center in Battery Park City is pleasant. It is particularly pleasant to see those depressing bunlon ads on the subways giving way to bold designs boosting upscale products.

When pleasantness begins to pall, one can go in for excitement. The new Chelsea Piers are exciting! The plunging two-story escalator at Sony's Lincoln Square multiplex is exciting! The interior David Rockwell has designed the "Official" All Star Cafe, a sports-theme dining and restaurant going up in Times Square, will be very exciting! Pleasant. Exciting! Pleasant. Exciting! Is this architecture? Or an experiment in mass Pavlovian response? Design? Or a drug?

"Middle class" is often taken as a synonym for the safe, the stodgy, the mediocre. But being middle class in New York is supposed to mean being culturally aware. Yes, you get some material rewards: a decent place to live, nice clothes, a tasty dinner. But you also keep up with movies, painting, theater. You read a book. If Mark Morris or Laurie Anderson is appearing, you try to get in. You care about what that new curator at the Whitney is going to make of the opportunity. Even if you do not take an active interest in these things, you still have the reassuring knowledge that you're living in a place where almost any cultural appetite can be satisfied.

But if your appetite is for contemporary architecture, you're out of luck. If you go to Paris, London, Barcelona, Los Angeles, Tokyo and many other cities, there's usually a new building that you have to see, or you will die. You may hate it, but your life depends on it. But when visitors from abroad come here, what do you show them? There's the skyline, of course, and the street gridiron, two of the greatest architectural spectacles of all time. But when it comes to recent buildings of stature, where do you look?

A few weeks ago I was out walking with the fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi, and at

one point we strolled past the Millennium, the new luxury high rise on the Upper West Side. I like the building and was planning to write something favorable about it. But Mizrahi said, "Well, you'll have to tell me what you like about this. Because to me, it's just another eyesore. Maybe a slightly better eyesore."

I wanted to respond, "Well, how would you feel if someone took a look at one of your dresses and said, 'Ugh, another rag on a hook?'" But I had to admit, the man had a point. It's been some time since people could look up and see a building with something fresh or startling to say about the contemporary city and the creativity that drives it.

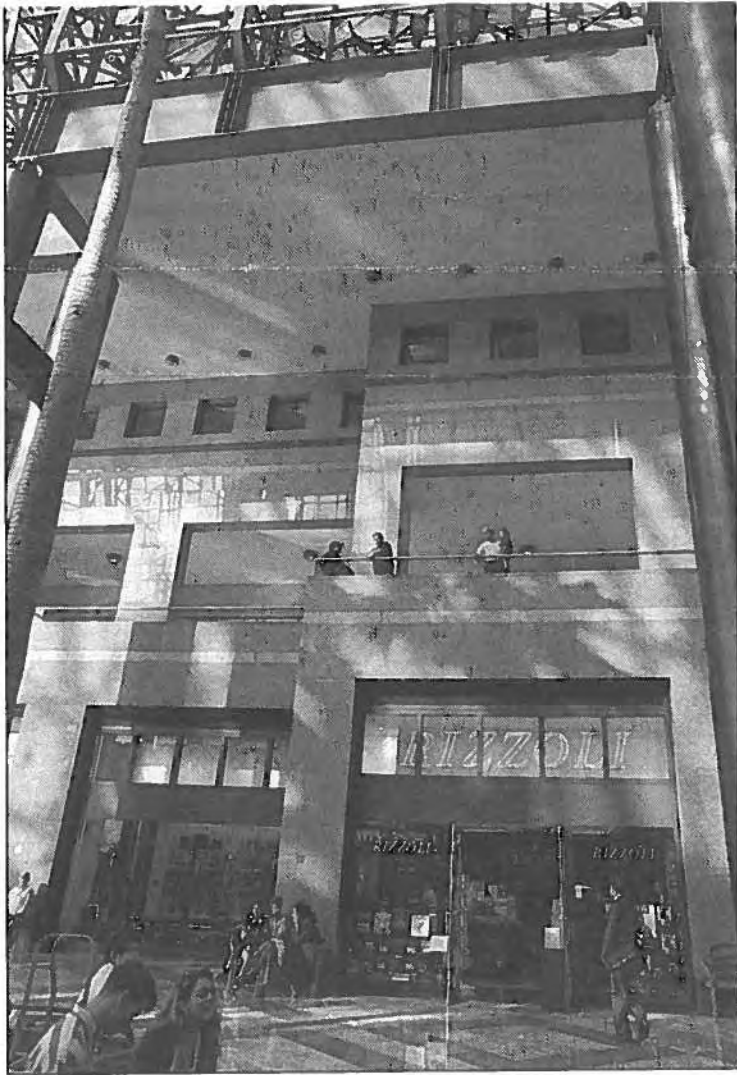
Thirty years ago, the cityscape found room for works by Mies van der Rohe, Wallace Harrison, Eero Saarinen, Marcel Breuer, Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius and Gordon Bunshaft. Not all of their buildings were great; some were terrible. But what they contributed was much more than a handful of potential future landmarks. Even the worst of their projects, like the Pan Am Building, helped create a picture of the city as an open-ended, ongoing project, a place that recognized the power of architecture to symbolize a city's willingness to respond to change with fresh ideas. That symbolism went far toward securing New York's reputation as a global cultural center in the postwar decades.



That's what's missing from this emerging picture of a Business Class New York: some show of public awareness that the city remains a dynamic experiment. Yes, we love to shop, and we deserve a comfortable refuge from urban turmoil. But we're also a city that historically recognizes the difference between creating and consuming. Where are the buildings strong enough to carry that tradition forward?

The irony is that the general level of architectural design in New York is higher than it has been in a generation. The firms that garner many of the most prominent commissions — offices like James Stewart Polshek & Partners, Beyer Blinder Belle, Fox & Fowle, Alexander Cooper & Associates — do superior work. Their sensitive, urbane designs represent an enormous advance over the days when architects approached a building site as an island unto itself. But it is Business Class architecture, not world-class architecture. It seldom risks greatness.

It should be a source of civic pride that some of the world's most celebrated archi-



Shops in the lobby of the World Financial Center, above, and the exterior of the superstore Bed, Bath and Beyond on Avenue of the Americas.

itects live and work in Manhattan and a matter of shame that many of the most gifted seldom build here. And their few New York projects are distant from the center. Richard Meier hasn't built in New York for 20 years — his entire mature career to date — and his last building was in the Bronx. Rafael Vinoly, designer of the most important public building now in construction in Tokyo, built an excellent gymnasium last year, in the Bronx. Peter Eisenman built a little fire station 10 years ago in Brooklyn. I'm not a great fan of the skyscraper Gwathmey Siegel built on Broadway at West 48th Street, but I respect it. It's architecture, and it's centrally located.

**S**ITE, THE FIRM THAT, ALONG with Frank Gehry, won this year's Chrysler Design Awards, has built nothing here except interiors. Ditto Emilio Ambasz. Michael Graves has designed a shop. John Hejduk has renovated one building. Diana Agrest and Mario Gandelsonas, active in projects from Des Moines to China, have designed, I believe, a townhouse. Aldo Rossi, who has maintained a New York studio for the past decade, has built nothing here. Arata Isozaki, who also maintains a local office, has designed a discothèque and has collaborated with James Stewart Polshek on the Brooklyn Museum expansion.

Among the younger generation — arguably the most highly educated in history — it's even worse. While their contemporaries in Los Angeles have built enough to be

called the Santa Monica School, Steven Holl, Tod Williams and Billie Tsien, Henry Smith-Miller and Laurie Hawkinson, Hariri & Hariri, have been confined locally to interior renovations.

Then there is the long list of world-class architects whose work one might expect to see in a city that prides itself on being a cultural capital; to name a few: Tadao Ando, Renzo Piano, Frank Gehry, Rem Koolhaas, Richard Rogers, Rafael Moneo, Toyo Ito, Jean Nouvel, Antoine Predock, Zaha Hadid.

Of course, cities have more important things to do than collect trophy buildings by famous designers. And architecture encompasses important things besides esthetics. But it's not as if New York were setting new standards in environmentally or socially responsible design, either. And since we are still putting up buildings, and architects are still designing, why can't at least a few of them be alert to the moment we live in?

Some people might prefer architecture to remain confined to consenting adults in the privacy of their converted lofts. The idea has taken hold that architects are to be regarded as rampaging egos, user-unfriendly, contemptuous of the city and its traditions. Though there may be some truth to this, there is also something profoundly anti-urban about making New York endlessly atone for excesses committed by modern architects in Jane Jacobs's day. Most architects have learned their lesson since then. Some have a lot to teach. □

# ACCORD IN HOUSE WOULD KILL FUNDS FOR ARTS BY 1997

## G.O.P. FRESHMEN PREVAIL

### Leaders Agree to Early Cutoff — Humanities Program Is Also Seen as Imperiled

By JERRY GRAY

WASHINGTON, July 13 — Faced with a freshman-led mutiny, House Republican leaders agreed today to cut off all Federal funding to the National Endowment for the Arts within two years — a year earlier than they had planned and five years ahead of the Senate's schedule.

The House, mired in a daylong debate over a bill appropriating \$11.96 billion for the Interior Department for 1996, did not reach a similar agreement to shorten the life of the National Endowment for the Humanities. But two amendments wending through the House and toward likely approval would set in law the 1997 deadline for both the arts and humanities agencies.

Another of the conservatives' favorite cultural targets, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, is also in line for a phaseout of Government financing. An Appropriations subcommittee has approved a \$240 million subsidy for 1996, a reduction of \$20 million, or 7.7 percent, from 1995. While the cutback is far smaller than had originally been threatened, the subcommittee has put the corporation, too, on the road toward an end of all Federal financing. A proposal to that effect could come before the full House as early as next week.

The future of the endowments has become the focal point of the debate over the Interior Department's appropriations bill.

The bill would cut financing for the endowments by 40 percent over their current budgets — leaving arts and humanities each with \$99.5 million for 1996, while heading them toward an end to all Federal financing.

The bill would also immediately eliminate financing for President Clinton's national service program, Americorps, and for new land purchases. And it would terminate the agency that helps compile the endangered species list, the National Biological Service, transferring its duties to the United States Geological

*Continued From Page A1*

Survey; begin the phase-out of the Bureau of Mines, and provide only nominal financing, \$1, for a proposed new Federal park in the Mojave National Preserve. Current language in the bill extends a 14-year-old moratorium on any new offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration but removes a ban on new mining patents.

Supporters of some of the programs targeted in the bill are depending on the more moderate Senate to mitigate the cuts, as it did with the package of midyear budget reductions. But early in the House debate today, Republican floor leaders insisted that they would hold fast to their timetable on the endowments in conference with the Senate.

The battle over the arts and humanities programs opened with a curious skirmish.

Before debate can begin on a bill, lawmakers must first approve the rules or guidelines under which the debate will proceed. With 232 Republicans in the 435-seat House, Republican leaders had expected to push through the Interior bill over Democratic opposition, by adopting a rule that would have limited both debate and the opportunity for amendments to restore money for the endowments and other programs.

But that plan fell apart late Wednesday night when dozens of Republicans, most of them freshmen, joined Democrats to reject that rule, 238 to 177. While Democrats wanted the chance to put money in, conservatives were angry that the rule would also have denied them the chance to kill Federal funding immediately for the arts and humanities.

Bowing to those angry rumblings from the Republican freshmen, the House leadership this morning put forward a new rule, which was approved by a 229-to-195 vote, that not only opened the floodgates for dozens of amendments but also included language that would end the arts endowment funding in two years unless Congress later authorizes new spending.

The original House legislation had specified three more years of funding, and the Senate has indicated it would settle on seven years. After losing on the first rule, House Republican leaders suggested as a compromise phasing out the endowment subsidy over five years.

That idea was met this morning with swift and angry rejection from conservative and mostly junior Republicans.

"That doesn't demonstrate that we're moving toward the fiscal disci-

pline many of us came here to accomplish," said Representative John Shadegg of Arizona, a freshman Republican.

Just about half of the appropriation — \$6 billion — would go toward financing the Interior Department programs that manage and study the country's animal, plant and mineral resources. The rest of the money is allocated among programs dealing with culture, art, agriculture, energy and Indian affairs, all of which have traditionally been lumped together for budget purposes.

The total appropriation is \$1.56 billion less than in 1995 and \$1.85 billion less than the Clinton Administration requested. A majority of the cuts come from budgets for the arts and culture — \$72.6 million from the humanities endowment; \$62.9 million from the arts endowment; \$12 million from the Smithsonian Institution, which will receive \$350 million; \$7.7 million from the Institute of Museum Services, which would leave it with \$21 million; \$6.9 million from the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, which would receive \$6.2 million.

Only the National Holocaust Museum, where the attendance is four times greater than projected, received a major increase. The bill provided \$28.7 million, \$2.1 million more than in 1995 and the same as the President requested.

Conservatives have criticized the arts endowment for financing controversial, some say obscene, projects and have maintained that the National Endowment for the Humanities has favored liberal causes in doling out money for media grants, museums, and historical organizations.

Officials of the two programs have been reluctant to comment on proposed cuts out of concern that they would be seen to be lobbying legislators.

While much of the wrangling of the past two days has focused on the endowments, Democrats have also charged that the Republicans are using the Interior appropriations bill to weaken environmental laws and programs. Representative David R. Obey of Wisconsin, the ranking Democrat on the Appropriations Committee, called the cuts in the National Biological Service "a back-door means of gutting the Endangered Species Act."

The bill provides \$53 million for the protection of endangered species, \$16 million less than in 1995. But it does not provide money for expanding the endangered species list, pending reauthorization of the 22-year-old Endangered Species Act.

*(Continued on Page A17, Column 1)*

# Arts Phase-Out Stays on Course in House

By JERRY GRAY

WASHINGTON, July 17 — Advancing toward a vote that would end all Federal financing for the national endowments for the arts and the humanities in two years, the House of Representatives tonight turned aside efforts both to extend that time frame and to shorten it.

After four hours of debate, Republicans and Democrats agreed to continue talking tonight on about a dozen amendments but to delay a vote on them and the final bill until Tuesday. But members left little doubt that the final outcome would be to adhere to a decision reached last week to finance the endowments at \$99.5 million a year for 1996 and 1997 and then cut off all Federal money.

When the House does complete its debate, the long battle by conservative politicians and organizations to end Government aid to the endowments will shift to the Senate, where there is strong support to continue Federal support, albeit at a reduced level.

Tonight, with barely a fourth of the House present, members by voice vote rebuffed efforts to end aid immediately. The losers requested a recorded vote, carrying the official results but hardly any suspense over to Tuesday.

Earlier, Republicans adopted a rule that blocked most attempts to restore money for the programs and limited the time of debate on each amendment to 20 minutes. Representative John D. Dingell, Democrat of Michigan, called the Republican-drafted rule "punitive."

"It's a bad rule for a bad piece of legislation," Mr. Dingell said. "It establishes bad precedent. It confines members to a straitjacket with regards to the amendment process."

The National Endowment for the Humanities and, particularly, the National Endowment for the Arts have long been under attack because of their sponsorship of controversial projects that have included themes dealing with homosexuality, nudity and religion.

But the Republican majority in the House began the most serious challenge in the agencies' 31-year histories when it opened debate last week on a bill that included language to strip the programs of all Government funding.

On Thursday the House accepted the first of three rules that included language that would kill financing for the arts endowment in two years. The debate tonight centered on efforts by members of both parties to overturn or circumvent that rule. Supporters, mostly Democrats, wanted to save the program, and opponents, mostly Republicans, wanted to kill it immediately.

Current Federal aid to the National Endowment for the Humanities is \$172.1 million. The National Endowment for the Arts receives \$162.4 million. The House legislation would reduce the endowments to each of the programs to \$99.5 million in the 1996 budget year, with a goal of ending all Federal funding after 1997.

Proponents of continued Federal support have looked to the more moderate Senate to save the programs. There are moves in that chamber, too, to wean the programs off of Federal aid, and the issue flared there unexpectedly today over two contradictory plans — one to make small, nonlethal cuts to the programs and another, by Senator Spencer Abraham, Republican of Michigan, to put them in private hands.

But there is also formidable bipartisan support for the endowments, including from a well-placed subcommittee chairman, Senator James M. Jeffords of Vermont, who today repeated his challenge to his Republican colleagues in the House.

"They're the irresistible force and we are the immovable object," said Senator Jeffords, the chairman of the Labor and Human Resources subcommittee on education, arts and humanities, which has jurisdiction over the endowments. "We are going to resist any total dissolution of the endowments."

The first major Senate action on the issue is to come on Wednesday when Mr. Jeffords's subcommittee considers the budget for arts and culture programs. Also on the agenda is an amendment by Mr. Jeffords that would reduce Government aid to each endowment by 5 percent in each of the next five years.

Mr. Abraham, a freshman, also intends to introduce his amendment before the subcommittee on Wednesday. Using the 1995 budget as the base line, Mr. Abraham's proposal would reduce the endowments' budgets by 20 percent each year over a five-year period. It would allow the programs to use part of their budgets for promoting private fund raising during the phase-out.

Mr. Abraham conceded in a "dear colleague" letter that he distributed last week that there were still enough votes in Congress to save the endowments "in their present form for a few more years." But he argued that his plan might be the only salvation for the programs.

"Sooner or later the endowments are going to fund one more project so offensive that the public will rise up and demand their elimination," Mr. Abraham said. "And then there will be no time to assemble an alternative mechanism to fund the arts and humanities on a national level."

The House debate over aid to the arts and humanities is part of a larger debate over a bill appropriating \$11.96 billion for the Interior Department.

Late Friday the House completed the first half of the debate on the bill when it approved \$6 billion for the Interior Department programs that manage and study the country's animal, plant and mineral resources.

# **ALTERNATIVE ARTECONOMIES**

**ART,  
CITIES AND  
THE  
CREATIVE  
CLASS**



# Struggling with the Creative Class

JAMIE PECK

## Creative class, rising

'Be creative — or die' is how *Salon* writer Christopher Dreher summarized the new urban imperative: 'cities must attract the new "creative class" with hip neighborhoods, an arts scene and a gay-friendly atmosphere — or they'll go the way of Detroit' (2002: 1). The occasion was an interview with Richard Florida, whose newly-released book, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And how it's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* was already on the way to becoming both an international bestseller and a public-policy phenomenon. The book's thesis — that urban fortunes increasingly turn on the capacity to attract, retain and even pamper a mobile and finicky class of 'creatives', whose aggregate efforts have become the primary drivers of economic development — has proved to be a hugely seductive one for civic leaders around the world, competition amongst whom has subsequently worked to inflate Florida's speaking fees well into the five-figure range. From Singapore to London, Dublin to Auckland, Memphis to Amsterdam; indeed, all the way to Providence, RI and Green Bay, WI, cities have paid handsomely to hear about the new credo of creativity, to learn how to attract and nurture creative workers, and to evaluate the latest 'hipsterization strategies' of established creative capitals like Austin, TX or wannabes like Tampa Bay, FL: 'civic leaders are seizing on the argument that they need to compete not with the plain old tax breaks and redevelopment schemes, but on the playing fields of what Florida calls "the three T's [of] Technology, Talent, and Tolerance"' (Shea, 2004: D1). According to this increasingly pervasive urban-development script, the dawn of a 'new kind of capitalism based on human creativity' calls for funky forms of supply-side intervention, since cities now find themselves in a high-stakes 'war for talent', one that can only be won by developing the kind of 'people climates' valued by creatives — urban environments that are open, diverse, dynamic and cool (Florida, 2003c: 27).

Hailed in many quarters as a cool-cities guru, assailed in others as a new-economy huckster, Florida has made real waves in the brackish backwaters of urban economic-development policy. As the conservative critic Steven Malanga (2004: 36) has observed, the 'notion that cities must become trendy, happening places in order to compete in the twenty-first century economy is sweeping urban America . . . A generation of leftist policy-makers and urban planners is rushing to implement Florida's vision [just as] an admiring host of uncritical journalists touts it'. In the field of urban policy, which has hardly been cluttered with new and innovative ideas lately, creativity strategies have quickly become the policies of choice, since they license both a discursively distinctive and an ostensibly deliverable development agenda. No less significantly, though, they also work quietly with the grain of extant 'neoliberal' development agendas, framed around interurban competition, gentrification, middle-class consumption and place-

Thanks to Chris Gibson, Graham Haughton, Wendy Larner, Marc Levine, Andrew Leyshon, Dave McBride, Eugene McCann, Rianne Mahon, Peter Marcuse, Ann Markusen, Phil O'Neill, Norma Rantisi, Nik Theodore and Anthony Vigor for comments on an earlier draft of this paper, and to participants at the *Studies in Political Economy* conference, York University, Toronto, 3-5 February 2005, where this article was first presented. Responsibility for the arguments here is mine.

marketing — quietly, in the sense that the banal nature of urban creativity strategies *in practice* is drowned out by the hyperbolic and overstated character of Florida's sales pitch, in which the arrival of the Creative Age takes the form of an unstoppable social revolution. These claims are large and loud, and they have undeniably enlivened urban-policy debates. *The Rise of the Creative Class* has been described as 'the most popular book on regional economies in the past decade' (Glaeser, 2004: 1), having garnered awards and acclaim from sources as varied as the *Washington Monthly*, *Harvard Business Review*, the *Modesto Bee*, Entrepreneur.com, *Money* magazine, the *Phoenix New Times*, and actress Cybill Sheppard. 'Although the idea of a professor of regional development being a celebrity', Dreher knowingly observes, 'seems like a contradiction in terms . . . Richard Florida is managing that feat' (2001: 1).

Somewhat implausibly, the architect of this feat claims not to have seen this coming. Apparently, some confluence of the deep currents of historical destiny and the froth of happenstance placed this particular surfer atop the wave of creativity, one who purports to be 'amazed by how quickly city and regional leaders began to use my measures and indicators to shape their development strategies' (Florida 2002: x). The critiques and attacks were also ostensibly unanticipated. Pointed, sarcastic, and in some cases plain nasty criticisms have come from the right, from economically conservative bastions like the Manhattan Institute and from a tawdry band of anti-immigrant and homophobic groups, who variously construct Florida's thesis as an attack on (big) business-oriented development strategies and suburban lifestyles, if not a frontal assault on 'family values'. Responses from the left have been more patchy but in some respects just as vigorous, ranging from skeptical screeds in the Democratic Leadership Council's *Blueprint* magazine to snide cultural critique in *The Baffler*. Innocent, aloof, or tactically perching on the fence, Florida maintains that:

Such heated rhetoric puzzles me; I harbor no hidden agendas. I am a political independent, fiscal conservative, social liberal, and believer in vigorous international competition and free trade. Over the course of a twenty-year academic career, I have voted for and served under Democrats and Republicans. Today, I work closely with mayors, governors, business, political, and civic leaders from both sides of the aisle on economic development issues, and a good deal of the time, I cannot even tell who is Republican and who is a Democrat (2004b: ii).

This ambiguity is echoed in the politically ambivalent arguments contained in *The Rise of the Creative Class*, which mixes cosmopolitan elitism and pop universalism, hedonism and responsibility, cultural radicalism and economic conservatism, casual and causal inference, and social libertarianism and business realism. The irreverent, informal, sometimes preachy, but business-friendly style is in many ways a familiar one, echoing as it does the lifestyle guides, entrepreneurial manuals, and pop sociologies of the new-economy era (see Frank, 2000; Maliszewski, 2004). As one of Florida's former teachers, Peter Marcuse (2003: 40), said of the book: 'Well written in an almost chatty style, it reads like a series of well-crafted after-dinner speeches at various chamber of commerce dinners'. Recall also that the new-economy discourse of the late 1990s, epitomized by magazines like *Fast Company*, was replete with paeans to the creativity, if not artistry, of its casually-dressed entrepreneurial heroes (Cox, 1999; Thrift, 2001). The vast how-to literature that sought to 'manualize' the associated techniques and habits of mind, so as to meet and make a market for creative aspirants, often did so, moreover, by proclaiming the productive virtues of heterodox association, of *mixing* heterogeneous ideas, actors, processes and things (see Osborne, 2003). Florida's street-level analog of such attempts to 'harness' creativity comes in the form of a celebration of the buzzing, trendy neighborhood, a place where everyday innovation occurs through spontaneous interaction, a place literally 'seething with the interplay of cultures and ideas; a place where outsiders can quickly become insiders' (2002: 227). For Florida, such places are the very founts of creativity, essentially because they attract creative *people*. Ensuring that creatives are 'welcomed', by extension, becomes the new task for cities. 'Thus, the old mode of people moving to follow jobs is turned on its head', Baris



(2003: 42) writes, as in order to compete in the new race for talent, cities 'must restructure themselves for the Creative Class's needs much as companies have already done'.

Even as *The Rise of the Creative Class* retreads some familiar ground, deploying some established discursive routines, it also does some very distinctive work of its own. While clearly tapping into many of the same 'cultural circuits of capitalism' as its new-economy predecessors (see Thrift, 2001) — *Fast Company*, for example, is featured on Florida's bulging and bright [www.creativeclass.org](http://www.creativeclass.org) web site as one of 'our allies' — the book opens up new territory by yoking these new managerial orthodoxies to a specific, and in many translations strikingly concrete, urban development agenda. While the new business knowledges of the 1990s helped *make* new kinds of managers, establishing novel ways of ordering, reading and acting in the world, and establishing a 'kind of grammar of business imperatives' (Thrift, 2001: 416), the creative-cities script has found, constituted and enrolled a widened civic audience for projects of new-age urban revitalization, anointing favored strategies and privileged actors, determining what must be done, with whom, how and where. And the tone is appropriately declarative and direct: 'I like to tell city leaders that finding ways to help support a local music scene can be just as important as investing in high-tech business and far more effective than building a downtown mall' (Florida, 2002: 229). This is a script that gives urban actors significant new roles, while prodding them with talk of new competitive threats, and on recent evidence they have been extremely keen to get in on the act. A strikingly large number of cities have willingly entrained themselves to Florida's creative vision.

Notwithstanding the issue of the intrinsic value of Florida's insights, a perhaps more pertinent question concerns why they have struck such a chord amongst urban elites. Where, in other words, did the *audience* for Florida's arguments come from? Apart from his obvious promotional and presentational skills, what made him 'the toast of city conferences from Toronto to Auckland' (Steigerwald, 2004: 1)? Why was the mayor of Denver moved to buy multiple copies of the book, distributing them as bedtime reading for his senior staff, while initiating a strategy to rebrand the city as a creative center (Shea, 2004)? Why was the Government of Singapore moved to relax its absurd restrictions on homosexuality, and for that matter busking and bungee-jumping, in the name of spurring urban-economic innovation (*Economist*, 2004)? Why was the Governor of Michigan so profoundly taken by Florida's arguments that she posed in fashionable shades when launching a 'Cool Cities' program across the state, in order to attract and retain those 'urban pioneers and young knowledge workers who are a driving force for economic development and growth' (Michigan, 2004a: 1)? Why did a large group of chosen ones embark on a creative pilgrimage to Memphis, TN in order to appoint themselves as 'the Creative 100', issuing a *Memphis Manifesto* (see Figure 1), and publicly committing its principles of 'helping communities realize the full potential of creative ideas' (Creative 100: 2003: 2)? What, in other words, motivates the disciples of the new-found cult of urban creativity? What does the demand side of the creative-cities phenomenon look like? As Gibson and Klocker (2004: 431) point out, for all the rapid international diffusion of Florida's prescriptions, 'little critical attention [has been] paid to the structures and networks that support, sustain and profit from [their] circulation'. These are the questions addressed here. The first step, though, must be to get a fuller sense of the vulgate itself. Welcome to the Creative Age . . .

## Creative juices

Florida's argument in *The Rise of the Creative Class* is, at the same time, straightforward and rather elusive. Its gist is that we have entered an age of creativity, comprehended as a new and distinctive phase of capitalist development, in which the

The Creative 100 are dedicated to helping communities realize the full potential of creative ideas by encouraging these principles:

- 1) Cultivate and reward creativity. Everyone is part of the value chain of creativity. Creativity can happen at anytime, anywhere, and it's happening in your community right now. Pay attention.
- 2) Invest in the creative ecosystem. The creative ecosystem can include arts and culture, nightlife, the music scene, restaurants, artists and designers, innovators, entrepreneurs, affordable spaces, lively neighborhoods, spirituality, education, density, public spaces and third places.
- 3) Embrace diversity. It gives birth to creativity, innovation and positive economic impact. People of different backgrounds and experiences contribute a diversity of ideas, expressions, talents and perspectives that enrich communities. This is how ideas flourish and build vital communities.
- 4) Nurture the creatives. Support the connectors. Collaborate to compete in a new way and get everyone in the game.
- 5) Value risk-taking. Convert a "no" climate into a "yes" climate. Invest in opportunity-making, not just problem-solving. Tap into the creative talent, technology and energy for your community. Challenge conventional wisdom.
- 6) Be authentic. Identify the value you add and focus on those assets where you can be unique. Dare to be different, not simply the look-alike of another community. Resist monoculture and homogeneity. Every community can be the right community.
- 7) Invest in and build on quality of place. While inherited features such as climate, natural resources and population are important, other critical features such as arts and culture, open and green spaces, vibrant downtowns, and centers of learning can be built and strengthened. This will make communities more competitive than ever because it will create more opportunities than ever for ideas to have an impact.
- 8) Remove barriers to creativity, such as mediocrity, intolerance, disconnectedness, sprawl, poverty, bad schools, exclusivity, and social and environmental degradation.
- 9) Take responsibility for change in your community. Improvise. Make things happen. Development is a "do it yourself" enterprise.
- 10) Ensure that every person, especially children, has the right to creativity. The highest quality lifelong education is critical to developing and retaining creative individuals as a resource for communities.

**Figure 1** The Memphis Manifesto (*source: www.memphismanifesto.com*)

driving forces of economic development are not simply technological and organizational, but *human*. In essence, the book seeks to describe a *new* new economy, in which human creativity has become the 'defining feature of economic life . . . [It] has come to be valued — and systems have evolved to encourage and harness it — because new technologies, new industries, new wealth and all other good economic things flow from it' (Florida, 2002: 21). Creative types have always been critical to capitalist growth, of course, but in the past few decades, so the argument here goes, they have grown both in number and influence, such that they now account for some 38 million US workers (or about 30% of the workforce), and therefore justify proper-noun status — 'the Creative Class has become the dominant class in society' (Florida, 2002: ix). This discovery having been made, the challenge is to understand what makes the members of this class tick, how they like to spend their money and their (precious) time, what they *want*. As the source, apparently, of all good economic things, the Creative Class must be nurtured and nourished, its talents must be harnessed and channeled. And the stakes here could hardly be higher: in addition to getting the technological basics right, companies and cities must make purposive efforts to establish the right 'people climate' for the favored class of creatives, 'or they will wither and die' (Florida, 2002: 13).

Yet while this is an urgent task, it is by no means an easy one, because figuring out what the Creative Class wants means adopting an entirely new analytical and political mindset, and, even then, learning to accept that creatives will not be pushed around, that their behavior will be difficult to predict, and that above all they need space to ‘actualize their identities’. The old categories of class analysis are manifestly inadequate to this task, because in this ‘post-scarcity, post-material’ stage of capitalism, the ownership and control of property in the physical, bricks-and-mortar sense no longer matters, since the only property with any salience is the new überclass’s ‘creative capacity [which] is an intangible because it is literally in their heads’ (Florida, 2002: 68). Such is the radical nature of this challenge to extant systems of social and economic order, which Florida equates to the transition from feudalism to factory capitalism, that the rules of the game have forever changed. Modestly, Florida claims no unique insight into these new realities, but instead presents his argument as a voyage of discovery (2005a: 1). The voyage began in 1999, somewhat inauspiciously, with a series of focus groups with Carnegie Mellon management students, assembled with a view to answering the innocuous question, ‘How do you choose a place to live and work?’ From here came what Florida describes as the ‘initial hunches’ concerning the rise of the Creative Class (quoted in Dreher, 2002: 2). This group of aspiring professionals, it transpired, were not simply motivated by material rewards, like salaries and stock options and suburban security, but instead wanted to live exhilarating lives in interesting places, to be challenged and stimulated 24/7. Particular jobs would come and go — such is the nature of the new, creative economy. What really mattered, the as yet unnamed creative class revealed, were these magnetic ‘qualities of place’. As Florida explained of this revelation, his focus-group respondents had precise demands to match their precocious talents, wanting their city ‘to be creative, we want it to be exciting, we want all kinds of amenities, we want to have outdoor sports, extreme sports, rollerblading, cycling, art scene, music scene’ (quoted in Dreher, 2002: 2–3). The creatives, apparently, wanted it all, but this should not be confused with some shallow expression of cultural hedonism or conspicuous recreation, about which so much was made in the new-economy era of the late 1990s. The fateful events that were soon to pass — the tech bust and 9/11 — would underscore the profound nature of this incipient social transformation:

Economic shifts are . . . altering the structure of everyday life. The rise and decline of the New Economy did not cause these changes, though it did help push them to the surface and make them more noticeable. In a deeper and more pervasive way, the September 11, 2001, tragedy and subsequent terrorist threats have caused Americans, *particularly those in the Creative Class*, to ask sobering questions about what really matters in our lives. What we are witnessing in America and across the world extends far beyond high-tech industry or any so-called New Economy: It is the emergence of a new society and a new culture — indeed a whole new way of life. It is these shifts that will prove to be the most enduring developments of our time. And they thrust hard questions upon us. For now that forces have been unleashed that allow us to pursue our desires, the question for each of us becomes: *What do we really want?* (Florida, 2002: 12, emphasis added).

If the NASDAQ crash exposed the lie that technology alone would secure the economic future, 9/11 sent the Creative Class on a search for its calling. Florida himself was so shaken by these events that he canceled his speaking engagements for a time, and watched TV.

It is this shared awakening of an incipient Creative-Class consciousness that Florida sets out both to chronicle and to enable, typically adopting a second-person mode of communication, while weaving often excruciating details of his own biography, lifestyle and consumption habits into a new-age narrative of individual freedom, economic destiny and slowly-dawning social responsibility. Not infrequently, these less-than-analytical musings descend into self-indulgent forms of amateur microsociology and

crass celebrations of hipster embourgeoisement.<sup>1</sup> By implication, the choices made by Richard and his Creative Class, which right down to the selection of kitchen utensils and hairstyles are minutely documented in the book, are validated because they are being made by the Chosen Ones. And play and consumption really matter here because creatives confront the unique challenge of fitting these in around their demanding work schedules,<sup>2</sup> squeezing in a quick bike ride or latte at the art gallery before starting the second shift. While many members of this class are understandably absorbed in the tasks of nurturing their own creativity through work and play — the fusion of which Florida terms the ‘Big Morph’ — they also bear an (as yet unrealized) responsibility, a responsibility to *lead*. Florida (2002: 315, 326) informs his fellow creatives that they ‘need to see that their economic function makes them the natural — indeed the only possible — leaders of twenty-first century society . . . [W]e must harness all of our intelligence, our energy and most important our awareness. The task of building a truly creative society is not a game of solitaire. This game, we play as a team’.

Glimpses of the kind of society the creatives might build are to be found, we learn, in the distinctive locational decision-making of the talented, whose revealed preferences are quite unambiguous. The Creative Class seek out tolerant, diverse and open communities, rich in the kind of amenities that allow them precariously to maintain a work-life balance, together with experiential intensity, in the context of those demanding work schedules. Uniquely suffering from a relentless ‘time warp’, creatives gravitate towards ‘plug and play’ communities, where social entry barriers are low, where heterogeneity is actively embraced, where loose ties prevail, where there are lots of other creatives to mingle with, where they can ‘validate their identities’ (Florida, 2002: 304). One of the primary indicators of these diagnostically critical conditions — of openness and tolerance — is the conspicuous presence of gays and lesbians, characterized here as the ‘canaries of the creative economy’, because of the way in which they signal a ‘diverse, progressive environment’, thereby serving as ‘harbingers of redevelopment and gentrification in distressed urban neighborhoods’ (Florida and Gates, 2005: 131). Should these avant-garde economic indicators somehow be overlooked, more concrete clues — which have not been lost on urban planners and consultants — include ‘authentic’ historical buildings, converted lofts, walkable streets, plenty of coffeeshops, art and live-music spaces, ‘organic and indigenous street culture’, and a range of other typical features of gentrifying, mixed-use, inner-urban neighborhoods.<sup>3</sup> Creatives want edgy cities, not edge cities. They contemptuously reject suburbia, the ‘generica’ of chain stores and malls, and places that are oriented to children or churches. Indeed, many of the mundane and time-consuming tasks of social reproduction are also spurned by creatives, amongst whom ‘marriage is often deferred and divorce more common’; they

- 1 ‘The person who cuts my hair’, Florida (2002: 76) informs us, ‘is a very creative stylist . . . and drives a new BMW. The woman who cleans my house is a gem [who will] suggest ideas for redecorating; she takes on these things in an entrepreneurial manner. Her husband drives a Porsche’. Meanwhile, bicycling is hailed as a ‘*de rigueur* social skill’ for creatives, who can’t get enough of the experiential thrills associated with ‘the up-and-down pumping of the legs’, since ‘to climb onto a bicycle and become the engine is a truly transformative experience – a creative experience’ (Florida, 2002: 174, 181–2). Chris Lehmann (2003: 167) responds that, ‘the bicycle supplies an apt metaphor for the kind of commentary we get in an intellectual world that grows steadily more indifferent to questions of economic fairness and narrowing social opportunity. Its inhabitants find themselves speaking confidently on behalf of recombined new elites and entire economic orders. They are pleased to see their consumer choices ratified by history, and their own taste preferences elevated as models for new networks of production, urban geographies, and, indeed, for the sprawling new complex of global democracy. Their minds race and their hearts beat faster. But they ignore the ground speeding by beneath their feet’.
- 2 ‘Creative Class people literally live in a different kind of time from the rest of the nation’ (Florida, 2002: 144).
- 3 For a fuller description of the geographies of ‘cool’ that attach to such conspicuously, but often fleetingly, funky neighborhoods, see *The Economist’s* (2000) casual observations on the locational characteristics of the London scene.

prefer more spontaneous associations in localized 'mating markets' (Florida, 2002: 177). Meanwhile, the 'absence of a support spouse crunches time' even further (Florida, 2002: 151), inducing yet greater reliance on a wide range of local services and 'amenities'. *Homo creativus* is an atomized subject, apparently, with a preference for intense but shallow and noncommittal relationships, mostly played out in the sphere of consumption and on the street.

Much of *The Rise of the Creative Class* is given over to celebratory descriptions of the work, play and consumption habits of the Creative Class — which Marcuse (2003: 41) curtly summarizes as an 'engaging account of the lifestyle preferences of yuppies' — occasionally punctuated by finger-wagging over the negative externalities of these forms of free-market self-actualization. At various points, Florida concedes that the crowding of creatives into gentrifying neighborhoods might generate inflationary housing-market pressures, that not only run the risk of eroding the diversity that the Class craves but, worse still, could smother the fragile ecology of creativity itself. He reminds his readers that they depend on an army of service workers trapped in 'low-end jobs that pay poorly because they are not creative jobs' (2002: 322), while pointing soberly to the fact that the most creative places tend also to exhibit the most extensive forms of socio-economic inequality (Catalytix and Richard Florida Creativity Group, 2003b; Florida, 2005b). Ultimately, though, since it is the creatives' destiny to inherit the earth, it is they who must figure out how to solve these problems, in their own time and in their own way, as part of what Florida characterizes as their 'growing up'. The uncreative population, one assumes, should merely look on, and learn. Certainly, there is no space here for 'obsolete' forms of politics, like unions or class-aligned political parties, all of which are breezily dismissed; what matters is the capacity of the Creative Class to generate 'new forms of civic involvement appropriate to our times', based on a 'shared vision' of universal and humanistic creativity (2002: 316–17).<sup>4</sup>

## Biscotti and circuses

Cities loom significantly in Florida's account of the Creative Class, as settings for the most salient social processes, as the germinal sites of new cultural and economic imperatives, and as reconstituted places of culturally inflected political agency. On the analytical side of this account the argument goes that all three T's — technology, talent and tolerance — are necessary to ignite the economic sparks of creativity. Technological capacity is a prerequisite, but on its own is manifestly insufficient — just look, we are told, at the bleak social landscapes of the suburban nerdistan. Flows of talented individuals, the second T, are essential and necessary, since this restless-but-critical factor of production has become the carrier of creativity. But the third T, tolerance, is the crucial magnet, the supply-side foundation upon which creative clusters are built. Florida's principal method is to rank cities according to multiple direct and stand-in measures of these phenomena, both in isolation and combination — a transparently calculated but also highly effective means of popularizing the creative cities thesis. Urban regions are ranked on everything from the number of patents per head to the density of bohemians and gays, on their respective shares of immigrants, credentialized knowledge-workers, and even 'fit versus fat' residents,<sup>5</sup> the endlessly manipulated

4 Most twentieth-century forms of progressive politics – the civil rights, women's, peace and labor movements – are written off as relics of a defunct, preCreative era, the achievements of which apparently pale into insignificance alongside the transformative power of creativity (Florida, 2002: 203).

5 Florida also correlates his rankings with those from a series of popular publications, such as *Wired*, *Places Rated Almanac*, *Yahoo! Internet Life*, *Forbes*, *The Walking Magazine*, *Money* magazine and *Men's Fitness*. The latter is his source for a surely spurious correlation between creativity and body weight, since 'the fittest cities were those that scored highly on my Creativity Index' (Florida, 2002:



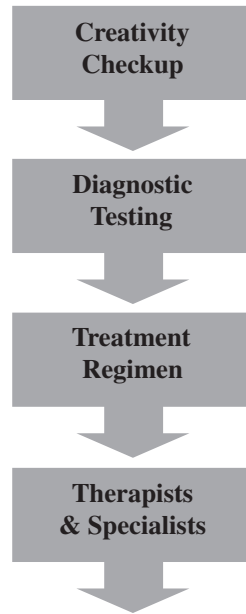
combinatorial outcome of which is Florida's 'Creativity Index'. The declared winners in the big-city race are San Francisco, followed by Austin, TX, Boston, and San Diego; atop the midsize cities category are Albuquerque, NM, Albany, NY, and Tucson, AZ; and at the next level down in the new urban hierarchy come Madison, WI, Des Moines, IA, and Santa Barbara, CA. 'Nothing', Paul Maliszewski (2004: 76) observes, 'can quite guarantee a book national media attention, reviews in local newspapers, and a shot at becoming a best seller than a list like this, declaring authoritatively that some stuff is better than other stuff, but only one is best of all'. The received and, one might say, fairly obvious appeal of cities like Seattle and San Francisco is translated into a new kind of currency in Florida's rankings. Rather than plodding through a complex causal argument, the mobilization and manipulation of extant urban images functions here to great effect. Positive urban images are crudely quantified, then recast as objects of deference — as places to be emulated. As Florida explained to *Money* magazine, 'what makes a place hot' is, well, being hot:

As a paid consultant, Florida often suggests that cities should look to successful role models like Austin or Seattle at the same time that they nurture their own unique qualities . . . [Florida believes] that buzz and energy are very real factors in a city's popularity (Gertner, 2004: 88–9).

Almost at a stroke, a new dimension of urban competition was constituted by Florida's league tables (which are periodically revised, just to maintain the attention) and the relentless marketing of his supporting thesis. They allow some city leaders to congratulate themselves on a job well done, even if this had been achieved subconsciously, while the rest have something, or somewhere, to aim at. Playing to this newly constituted gallery, Florida confidently asserts that *any* big city, with the right political will, 'can turn it around', and most of the other urban centers can at least have a shot, if they possess the essentials — like a good university, some 'authentic' neighborhoods, a handful of high-tech employers. In fact, there are very few entirely 'hopeless places', like Enid, OK and Youngstown, OH, which languish as technologically backward and tragically unhip locations at the very bottom of the league table. Here, but just about only here, it is not even worth the effort, because these are 'small places with huge working-class backgrounds, or places that are service-class centers that aren't tourist destinations' (quoted in Dreher, 2002: 6). These are, in other words, the wrong kinds of places.

Outside Youngstown and Enid, most cities do have hope, at least once they have recognized the significance of the creativity imperative. These aspirant cities are Florida's audience, and his market. And a large number have been ready, willing and able to join the new market for hipsterization strategies. Those cities seeking a more finely-grained analysis of their creative health can order a standard-format report for just \$495 from Catalytix, the organization in the Richard Florida Creativity Group with proprietary rights over the Creative Class database ([www.catalytix.biz](http://www.catalytix.biz)). The next step might be, as the web site suggests, 'having Richard Florida come to your city or region to speak', usually at a price tag well into the five-figure range. This provides an opportunity for the mayor and other civic leaders to appear on platforms, invariably in appropriately bohemian locations, with local creative entrepreneurs and arts activists. And typically there will be several hundred in the audience, including the local press, and as many people with purple hair as gray. Florida evidently attends scores of such events every year, in major cities across the United States and (increasingly) overseas, as well as in plenty of less exotic would-be hipstervilles. The market here can extend as far down the urban hierarchy as Green Bay, WI, which trailed in at number 45 in the original ranking of 124 small cities, and which was suddenly induced to set its sights

177). The direction of the causality between talentlessness and tubbiness, however, Florida will not be drawn on, though he remarks that 'the body [has become] an arena for creative expression', while finding it irresistible to recycle the 'pernicious stereotype [that] an in-shape person is often perceived to be more reliable and more presentable to the public than someone who is, say, overweight' (2002: 177–9).



**Figure 2** The creativity treatment (*source: www.catalytix.biz*)

on a newly visible set of creative competitors, like La Crosse, WI, Lubbock, TX, and Fargo, ND. The letter of gratitude from the Green Bay organizer, posted on the Creative Class web page, characterized Florida's appearance at the Northeast Wisconsin Creative Future Event as:

an invigorating and eye-opening experience . . . [O]ur lives have been changed for the better. We are in a period of incredible growth and excitement in our region as the concepts you brought to light are being shared, embraced, and built upon on a daily basis. My phone has been ringing off the hook since the day you left . . . I knew we were paying for professionalism and knowledge when we made the decision to invest in your visit to our region, but what I had not expected was the passion and purpose you showed for helping us to shape our future. You practice what you preach — it is all about people. Rather than a flashy trend, you have brought to us insights and language which will serve us well as we explore new directions for successful economic and community development . . . [Y]our work with us [has been] a true catalyst for infusing creativity into our workplaces, communities and individual lives.<sup>6</sup>

Cities that want to go one step further might recruit Catalytix, or for that matter any one of a countless number of urban-development consultants that have become suddenly active in the creativity business, to provide customized analysis and advice, and to help fashion local strategies. Many of these efforts involve increasingly elaborate benchmarking — a long-established urban consultancy activity that has been rejuvenated by the challenge of developing new metrics for fields like the arts — together with comparative evaluations of peer-city strategies. Increasingly, creativity strategies exude a distinctly off-the-shelf quality, their production now being subject to largely routinized methodology. Even the 'treatment regimen' of the market leader, Catalytix, resembles a combination of a trip to the repair shop and a course of new-age psychoanalysis (see Figure 2).

6 Letter from the Executive Director of the Employers Workforce Development Network, Inc., Green Bay WI, 21 October 2003 ([www.creativeclass.org/inquotes.shtml](http://www.creativeclass.org/inquotes.shtml), accessed 5 January 2005).

In a fashion that recalls the way in which a few 'turnaround' entrepreneurial cities, like Cleveland and Baltimore, were celebrated during the 1980s for pioneering property-led and partnership-facilitated downtown revitalization (see Hall and Hubbard, 1998), a new set of extant and aspirant creative cities has quickly risen to prominence on the back of the work of Florida and his followers. Cities like San Francisco and Austin are continuously invoked, and are subject to instrumental practices of 'case study', since these are the places that define the new urban genre. Typical of such emulative efforts was the response of Memphis, TN. Spurred into action by its near-bottom location on the Creativity Index, the chamber of commerce and several local-government agencies commissioned a study of the city's image amongst 'young urban knowledge workers', benchmarking themselves against 'high-performing' creative cities, and dissecting Austin's experience in order to identify 'hopeful signs of what happens when a city actively fosters creativity' (Memphis Talent Magnet Project and Coletta & Company, 2003: 8). Similarly, Portland, OR has also been promoted as a 'compelling case study' of urban creativity, the replication-friendly lessons for other cities from which include: identifying creative leaders; building new systems of communication within the local community; enabling artists and other creatives to build sweat equity in emerging creative neighborhoods; promoting the adaptive reuse of buildings; supporting festivals and other street-level events; and, above all, being 'authentic' (see Bulick *et al.*, 2003).

But rhetorically and practically more important, in many ways, are the earnest efforts of creative strivers, since these experiences suggestively place the goal of creative transformation within reach, even for 'ordinary' places. They also help concretize the creativity script, through its performative enactment in the domain of everyday urban policy. So, Providence, RI, for example, is (perhaps prematurely) celebrated for 'emerging as one of the nation's and the world's leading Creative Hubs', apparently on the basis of the city's 'commitment to a creativity-driven economic development strategy', the efficacy of which will surely be reflected in 'move[ment] steadily upward in the rankings' (Catalytix and Richard Florida Creativity Group, 2003c: 1). Currently, the city sits in an underwhelming 36<sup>th</sup> position amongst 61 cities with a million-plus population, a ranking that it hopes to improve — quite reasonably, one assumes — having enlisted the support of Catalytix in fashioning a local strategy. Amongst other things, this has involved the creative development of consultancy products, such as surgically precise benchmarking techniques, measuring the city's balance of trade in talented people according to a newly developed Brain drain/gain index (Catalytix and Richard Florida Creativity Group, 2003a). Such comparative metrics are accompanied by concerted processes of symbolic (and financial) revalorization of extant creative and 'people-climate' assets, such as the well-established example of local event art, *WaterFire*, which involves floating bonfires down the town's three rivers, now revalidated as a 'community-building event', and local performance and project spaces like AS220 (which has been active for more than a decade): 'When Richard Florida visited Providence in late 2002, young African-American hip-hop poets performed their work in the main venue space [of AS220]' (Catalytix and Richard Florida Creativity Group, 2003c: 2). Notwithstanding the presentational benefits of linking contemporary art and culture to economic development efforts, the awkward question is what is meaningfully deliverable from a public-policy standpoint. Investments in the 'soft infrastructure' of the arts and culture are easy to make, and need not be especially costly, so the creativity script easily translates into certain forms of municipal action. Whether or not this will stimulate creative economic growth, however, is quite another matter. Florida's confident message, of course, is that the treatment will work, and the long list of cities that have signed up for the treatment only reinforces this message. Increased public subsidies for the arts, street-level spectacles, and improved urban façades, with expected 'returns' in the form of gentrification and tourist income, run the self-evident risk that such faux-funky attractions might lapse into their own kind of 'generica'. The creatives' restless search for authentic experiences may, of course, lead them to spurn such places. As Florida's critics frequently point out, the production of authentic



**Arching Strategy 1: Position Providence as the Authentic Creative Hub in the Southern New England Region**

*Tell the Providence story of creativity, open-mindedness and its unique status as an authentic, quirky place – featuring design, biomedical science, technology, and arts and culture.*

*Project for 2003:* Make the creative hub the unifying vision, driving city design, planning and economic development. Execute a marketing campaign . . .

**Arching Strategy 2: Build a Creative Community That Attracts and Retains Creative People**

*Foster a culture of creativity, diversity, art and science for all people. Foster creativity-based education in high school and college; reduce brain drain and attract new talent.*

*Projects for 2003:* Establish an Office of Cultural Affairs in city government, open to all creators, serving as a resource and broker for artists, an “aggregator” of projects . . . Do a cultural audit and provide a common calendar of events . . . Turn pioneers into owners by providing the technical and financial assistance to develop more artists-owned work/live spaces, including artist co-ops, artist trusts, mixed income and mixed use spaces . . . Reduce the brain drain by connecting young people to creative companies and authentic neighborhoods through credit-bearing internships . . . Invest in emerging creators through a program of creativity grants . . .

**Arching Strategy 3: Grow the Creative Economy with Emphasis on the Design and Business Innovation and Biomedical Research Clusters**

*Help diverse types of entrepreneurs to build companies of different scales in the core and other neighborhoods throughout the city, targeting design in the core and biomedical research in the Jewelry District.*

*Projects for 2003:* Grow the biomedical industry . . . Take advantage of what colleges and hospitals provide the creative economy . . .

**Arching Strategy 4: Build an Integrated Infrastructure to support Economic Development and foster an Entrepreneurial Climate**

*Ensure that the city’s economic development function and network supports the growth of the creative economy. Foster an entrepreneurial climate composed of diverse investors, entrepreneurs and innovative business-building practices.*

*Projects for 2003:* Create a Providence Office of Economic Development that supports the growth of the creative economy . . . Increase support for venture formation . . . Explore the feasibility of hosting a best practice conference in Providence for other cities in the country building creative economies.

**Arching Strategy 5: Build Quality and Authentic Places for Creative People**

*Connect creative people to the sense of place in neighborhoods as a way of retaining our authenticity and minimizing displacement.*

*Projects for 2003:* Grow Downcity as a creative neighborhood and place. Implement the Business Improvement District (BID) for downtown . . . Revitalize neighborhood centers. Identify and amplify organically evolving nodes of creative energy . . . Connect creative people to the outdoors. Develop the city’s bikeway system to the next level.

**Figure 3** Providence’s call to action (*source:* Providence Foundation, New Commons, Inc., and Rhode Island Economic Policy Council, 2003)

neighborhood cultures through deliberate public-policy interventions is a daunting, if not infeasible, task.<sup>7</sup>

This may not be the biggest challenge for Providence, however, since its weakest T is perhaps the most expensive one: ‘Technology is frankly the region’s weakspot’ (Catalytix and Richard Florida Creativity Group, 2003c: 2), the irrefutable evidence of which is to be found in its sorry, bottom-half position in the national ‘Tech-pole’ league table. While Catalytix can talk up the ‘strong local universities’, these are apparently not strong enough when it comes to Florida’s own measures like the rate of registration of patents, while mere ‘proximity to the Cambridge-Boston intelligence complex’ sounds like a point-stretching attempt to ride someone else’s creative coattails. However,

7 Those predisposed to be skeptical of public-policy capacities, in particular, have a field day with this issue: ‘Not only does [Florida] believe that marginal attractions like an idiosyncratic arts scene can build economic power, but he thinks that government officials and policymakers like himself can produce those things artificially. He doesn’t seem to recognize that the cultural attributes of cities he most admires are not a product of government planning but have been a spontaneous development, financed by private-sector wealth’ (Malanga, 2004: 45).

there remains important work for Providence's dons to do, in their unrealized role as agents of gentrification — creating 'a whole new model of university-community redevelopment', universities can play a leading role in the 'adaptive reuse of older urban facilities, renovating the downtown core and surrounding areas as a seamless work-live-learn-play environment' (Catalytix and Richard Florida Creativity Group, 2003c: 2). This initiative is embedded within a strategic framework for the city, which combines creative exhortation with the prioritization of a series of 'doable' projects (see Figure 3). In addition to plucking some low fruit — like using creativity as a keyword in marketing and promotion campaigns, establishing new offices of cultural affairs and (creative) economic development in City Hall, and fixing up the bike paths — Providence also pledges, in a much more bold but unspecified way, to 'grow the biomedical industry'.

Now, while such strategies may have some limitations, certainly if measured against Schumpeterian-cum-Konratievan rates of technological productivity and economic growth, the delivery of most of their modest supply-side components is at least feasible within the parameters of local electoral horizons and fiscal constraints. They also have an apple-pie quality, which has the dual effect of generating a certain degree of warm-and-fuzzy support, while disarming local opposition. This said, there is often a rather large credibility gap between the means and ends of creativity strategies. Consider Michigan's Cool Cities program, which seeks to reverse the state's 'alarming' negative balance of trade in young 'knowledge workers' on the basis of an 'economic development strategy that puts "creative people" first' (Michigan, 2003: 3). Governor Granholm, despite having recently enacted the largest spending cuts in state history — 'twisting the wet towel of government tight, to wring out ounce after ounce of inefficiency' (including limiting cell-phone usage and out-of-state travel, turning off lights and canceling subscriptions) — was nevertheless able to eke out funds for the Cool Cities program, a central component of the state's strategy for economic and social revitalization:

Michigan's greatest economic successes have always been tied to the creative and productive power of our cities. From the Furniture City to the Motor City to the Cereal City — the fates of our industries and cities have been intertwined from their beginnings. [W]e will grow . . . by spurring strong regional economies anchored by cool cities. . . [T]his is a bottom-up movement in which nearly 80 of our communities have local commissions on cool that are uncorking the bottle of creativity and unleashing the genie of possibility — planning everything from bike paths to bookstores to attract more people and new businesses. I applaud the creativity and enthusiasm of these cities from Calumet to Kalamazoo from Saginaw to Saugatuck.<sup>8</sup>

The mechanism for achieving this feat is a series of \$100,000 'catalyst' grants, awarded to cities that have demonstrated some measure of faith by establishing a Local Cool Cities Advisory Group, to be spent along with funds from the state's 'Resource Toolbox' (a package of 113 preexisting funding measures, modestly retasked around cool-cities goals). These grants are expected to achieve measurable results within one year in neighborhoods that are (*already*, to an identifiable extent) 'vibrant, mixed-use [and] happening' (Michigan, 2004b: 2). Neighborhoods that are not experiencing at least early-stage creative gentrification, in other words, need not apply. A more concrete sense of what it takes to meet the criterion of 'neighborhoods with potential' is provided by the following indicative list of characteristics, the specification of which implies the targeting of public resources not to socio-economic need, but creative *potential*:

- Mixed-income housing opportunities
- Pedestrian-friendly environment

8 Governor Jennifer M. Granholm (2004) 'Our determination, our destination: a 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy', State of the state address, 22 January ([www.michigan.gov/gov/0,16077-168-23442\\_21981-84911--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/gov/0,16077-168-23442_21981-84911--,00.html), accessed 25 January 2005).

- Commercial retail (basic goods and services, as well as entertainment venues)
- Championing neighborhood/organizing mechanisms . . .
- Higher density
- Clean/cared for public and private space
- Food venue options (restaurants, grocery stores, etc.)
- Historic districts . . .
- Recreation opportunities/parks
- Arts — galleries, shops, venues
- Accessibility (Michigan, 2004b: 2).

Eligible activities within the Cool Cities program include rehabilitation or new construction of buildings (specifically, theaters, galleries, mixed-use housing), physical infrastructure development, farmers' markets, streetscaping and public art, façade improvements, outdoor recreation facilities, greenspace, parks, pavilions and demolition ('where viable historic resources are not damaged').<sup>9</sup> Spending on ephemeral items — like festivals, cultural events, or consultancy — is, however, expressly prohibited. Even though the creative-cities thesis rests precariously on a series of elusive 'intangibles — excitement, attitude, open-mindedness, buzz' (Gertner, 2004: 88), its translation into urban-development practice, in states like Michigan, entails both literal and metaphorical forms of concretization.

In Michigan, the creative awakening was an abrupt one. Within a few weeks of the Cool Cities program announcement, some 129 communities across that state had been mobilized for action, and just a few weeks later 20 had developed full proposals for funding, nearly all of which rather unimaginatively parroted the State Government's guidelines — most were for mixed-used, pedestrian-friendly initiatives, leveraging public and private resources to revalorize historic districts through the construction of lofts, bike paths, riverwalks and other street-level cultural amenities.

In their specifics, each of these proposals recycled a rather narrow repertoire of newly legitimized regeneration strategies. The recurrent themes are unmistakable, and they are already on the way to being routinized. With apologies for repetition, for this is really the point: the City of Saugatuck proposed to convert a dilapidated pie factory into an arts center; Flint's Uptown Reinvestment Corporation sought assistance in converting a historic bank building into a 16-unit loft development; turning a parking lot into an ice-rink and performance space was the priority project for the City of Marquette; Detroit Jefferson East Business Association called on the State to subsidize desirable business clients — in the technology and entertainment sectors — for a mixed-use complex containing 28 lofts, a TV studio, an ice cream parlor, 'an upscale bar, an art gallery . . . and a coffee shop that will double as a music production and education café'; a heritage riverwalk was the centerpiece of the proposal from the City of Alpena; Grand Rapids proposed streetscaping and public art installations around a 35-unit loft complex; the City of Ypsilanti sought help to make its historic downtown neighborhood 'more intriguing', ostensibly by turning a vacant office building into a retail gallery and overflow space for the nearby Riverside Arts Center; the City of Warren, along with General Motors Corporation, sought help with the construction of a new city square, part of a \$75 million downtown plan, which also includes 96 newbuild brownstones and a few public facilities in order to 'provide an environment necessary to help businesses like GM attract the most talented young professionals [to its Warren Technical Center]'; and in practically the only proposal that did not tout its pedestrian-friendliness, the Southwest Detroit Business Association sought subsidies for the renovation of a historic building to house a 'Neighborhood that built the car' cultural-tourism center.<sup>10</sup>

9 Michigan State Housing Development Authority (2004: 3).

10 Michigan Cool Cities Pilot Program, project summaries ([www.michigan.gov/mshda](http://www.michigan.gov/mshda), accessed 31 December 2004).

While such bricks-and-mortar methods have become increasingly commonplace in the competitive race to attract talent workers, other cities have focused on 'softer' strategies to build and sustain their communities of talent. Creative TampaBay, for example, which was established in the wake of Richard Florida's visit to the city in the Spring of 2003 and which boasts four signatories of the Memphis Manifesto, focuses its energies on events, social activities and information-sharing, including 'regular discussion salons and cultural encounters'. And in another widely emulated strategy, the city's cultural pioneers like to recharge their creative batteries by getting together regularly for early-evening walks. The Creative TampaBay web site<sup>11</sup> mixes yuppie futurology with an undercurrent of urban entrepreneurialism — so alongside the universalizing statements to the effect that '[c]reativity resides in everyone, everywhere', and that 'building a community of ideas means empowering all people with the ability to express and use the genius of their own creativity', come sobering revelations that 'a demographic wave is sweeping across our nation'. This will be 'a decisive force in shaping the economic destiny of Tampa Bay [because as] cities move increasingly into a knowledge-based economy, the kind of talented people each attracts will determine whether it wins or loses in the campaign for future prosperity'. The spur for action in this case is the yet-more-sobering fact that Tampa Bay has been on the losing side of the interurban war for talent — the area being ranked almost bottom of 50 metro regions in terms of its attractiveness to the 'young and restless' population of 25–34 year-olds (Impresa and Coletta & Company, 2004). The formation of Creative TampaBay, which rushed to host the first creative cities 'summit' in September, 2004, represents a response to this newly appreciated strategic deficit. While describing itself as a 'grassroots organization', Creative TampaBay also has the backing of a number of local institutions, including Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce, Tampa Bay Partnership, the Pinellas and Hillsborough Arts Councils, Tampa Downtown Partnership, Tampa Bay Technology Forum, and the Florida High Tech Corridor. The region's civic leaders have begun to focus on the vexing question of how to reproduce a 'San Francisco or Austin or Boston or Florida's gulf coast [albeit] with a uniquely Tampa Bay flavor' (Trigaux, 2003: 1E). However, the consultants hired to probe the hopes and desires of the young and restless reported that Tampa Bay has a long way to go to realize this goal. Genueflecting before focus groups of young creatives, and earnestly reporting their lifestyle preferences as indicators of some new cultural reality, has become a *modus operandi* for this form of creative consultancy. So, the faltering public-school system is not simply a social and public-policy problem in its own right, but worse still, it is producing an insufficient supply of 'equally educated partners' for the rising class. The city's creative leaders were also informed that the radio stations must be improved and that the nightlife-deficient downtown just 'sucks' (Impresa and Coletta & Company, 2004: 17). Potential remedies were, however, conveniently at hand in the form of a 'Toolkit for Cities', which is illustrative of the kind of new consultancy products that are being developed to serve the new market for (ostensibly authentic and homegrown) creativity strategies:

- Deliver an 'appealing reality', because 'young people are very savvy in assessing cities'
- Put values on display, *demonstrating* how the city 'welcomes newcomers and new ideas'
- Keep in touch with former residents, and find ways to have them 'return to your city'
- Create opportunities for civic involvement, deliberately seeking out the opinions of young people
- Use internships to connect with young adults
- Survey young adults regularly, including 'exit interviews'
- Celebrate young entrepreneurs and civic contributors
- Communicate development plans to young adults

11 [www.creativetampabay.com](http://www.creativetampabay.com), accessed 21 January 2005.

- Promote your city: 'place marketing works best when it is based on authentic stories that people are willing to tell about their cities'
- Promote a young adult lifestyle, particularly 'active nightlife', and do not be fearful that this might 'scare off the soccer moms' (Impresa and Coletta & Company, 2004: 64–65).

For his part, Florida (2002: 294) also emphasizes that 'an environment attractive to young people *must* be part of the mix' for contemporary cities. In some cases, following this advice has led cities to endorse targeted promotional campaigns as a substitute for, or low-cost complement to, orthodox urban-regeneration policies. Another Florida-inspired, though also ostensibly 'grassroots' group, Cincinnati Tomorrow, has produced a strategy that focuses almost exclusively on redefining the city's battered image, proposing that marketing brochures should hitherto feature fewer 'cityscape photos' and more 'shots of busy streets in the urban core'. It is advisable, moreover, that neighborhoods should have 'more pronounced identities', in order that the 'creative class can better find the area that best suits their needs', the Creative City Plan suggesting that marketing consultants be brought in to help with this pressing task, while a new website will help employers and realtors 'locate new residents that fit the broad "creative class" profile' (Cincinnati Tomorrow, 2003: 8, 16). As public and private agencies are mobilized around these goals — which the Mayor was prepared to endorse, if for no other reason than 'Our image sucks' (quoted in Trapp, 2003: 2) — they are also reminded of the 'demanding' nature of the creatives' lifestyle requirements: 'Creative class members are looking for experiences, not commitments. Their busy schedules and tangential approach to life constrain them from joining organizations or taking on new responsibilities. Instead, they seek out activities . . . where they can make quick, temporary, and stringless attachments' (Cincinnati Tomorrow, 2003: 15). This insight is presented next to an image of a group of well-dressed young women, drinking.

While Florida has voiced concerns about how 'some cities have oversimplified his ideas',<sup>12</sup> at the same time, he lambastes those places that 'just don't get it,' since these cities are clearly 'trapped by their past', suffering as they do from a form of 'institutional sclerosis' that blinds them to the emergence of new social and economic norms, norms that he finds dazzling (2002: 302–303). The city that defines this negative condition, for Florida, is Pittsburgh: 'Trapped in the culture of a bygone era, it has great difficulty opening up the social space in which members of the Creative Class can validate their identities' (2002: 305). As if to prove his own theory, Florida left Pittsburgh, his home for 17 years, in 2004, taking time before his departure to inform the local newspaper, the *Tribune-Review*, that the city needed to get rid of both its Mayor and its '1950s country club' culture (quoted in Steigerwald, 2004). His relocation to Washington, DC clearly represented an upward move — from 36<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> place on the Creativity Index.

12 National Public Radio, *Morning Edition*, 7 September 2004. Alternatively, for an 'authorized' form of trivialization, see the creative-city quiz developed by Florida in association with *Fast Company*, the readers of which are invited to assess whether their 'city is on the cutting edge . . . or just on the edge'. Multiple-choice questions enable readers to assess their cities according to whether gays and immigrants 'are prominent amongst our business and civic leaders', or 'try to avoid suspicion by driving pickup trucks with American flags'; just as it pointedly asks if 'bike lanes and footpaths are everywhere' and 'local firms have started a fund to support the grassroots music scene', or if instead the city is blighted by 'new stadiums, a convention center, and a downtown mall with a Hard Rock Café'. The quiz also gently, though perhaps a little recklessly, pokes fun at Florida's prime constituency, those 'earnest good-government types launching initiatives to fund biotech incubators, wire coffee houses, and outfit the public parks with rock-climbing walls'. And what do locals, in the creative capitals, make of a quiz like this? 'The mayor thinks it's a hoot [and the] newspapers reported our high scores' ([www.fastcompany.com/articles/2002/07/cityquiz.html](http://www.fastcompany.com/articles/2002/07/cityquiz.html), accessed 22 January 2005).



## Florida recount

One of the primary objectives of *The Rise of the Creative Class* was to show ‘cities how to operate within the new paradigm’, in the form of a ‘smart, energetic “how to” manual, loaded with supporting statistics and examples’ (Cronheim, 2004: 934). The foundation for this policy advocacy is a sweeping theoretical assertion. ‘With little in the way of academic studies or literature to guide me’, Florida (2002: 223) reports, he street-tested his homegrown theory in interviews and focus groups,<sup>13</sup> later turning to regression analyses for verification, before confidently concluding that ‘regional economic growth is driven by the locational choices of creative people — the holders of creative capital — who prefer places that are diverse, tolerant and open to new ideas’. The basis of this argument, that urban growth is a function of a privileged set of supply-side, human-capital attributes, has some support in the orthodox urban economics literature (see Glaeser, 2000). What is distinctive in Florida’s thesis is the more specific claim that bohemian places function as ‘talent magnets’, and the urban-policy prescriptions that are derived from this assertion.<sup>14</sup>

Edward Glaeser, while conceding the point that human capital (broadly defined) has become a principal determinant of urban fortunes, risked an alliterative brawl by insisting that the fundamental forces at work were not Florida’s three T’s but, instead, the three S’s of ‘skills, sun, and sprawl’ (quoted in Shea, 2004: D1): ‘Most [creative people] like what most well-off people like — big suburban lots with easy commutes by automobile and safe streets and good schools and low taxes’ (Glaeser, 2004: 2). Running his own regressions against Florida’s data, Glaeser concludes that human-capital endowments basically explain US urban population growth in the 1990s, with little or no evidence of an independent ‘Bohemian effect’. In the service of a much more critical, conservative critique of Florida’s thesis, Malanga (2004) contends that the best-performing cities on measures like employment and population growth, or the rate of formation of high-growth companies, are not creative capitals like San Francisco or New York, but low-tax, business-friendly cities like Las Vegas and Memphis, ostensibly the ‘creative losers’. Demonstrating, if nothing else, the ease with which urban league tables can be manipulated, Malanga mischievously suggests that Florida constructed his measures in such a way as to elevate a predetermined set of favored liberal-leaning cities, linked to the 1990s technology boom. In a classic circular fashion, certain conspicuous features of these cities are then ascribed causal significance as foundations of economic creativity. But the arguments are scrambled. Street-level cultural innovation and conspicuous consumption may just as easily be consequences of economic growth, rather than causes of it. And loose correlations between economic development and certain cultural traits may be no more than contingent, or easily challenged by counterfactual cases. This is the Las Vegas critique: high growth, lousy culture, *how come?* For their part, right-wing critics will use such arguments, but rather than taking issue with the eccentric economics, they seem more offended by the liberal cultural politics and exhortations to urban intervention that they see all over the Florida thesis:

Yes, you can create needed revenue-generating jobs without having to take the unpalatable measures — shrinking government and cutting taxes — that appeal to old-economy

13 Many of the claims in *The Rise of the Creative Class* are, in fact, very loosely attributed to focus-group discussions and unspecified ‘interviews’, which irritated Peter Marcuse (2003) so much that he started to count these references to unattributed sources, reaching a total of 43.

14 To his credit, Florida has taken the argument directly to social conservatives, editorializing against the policies of the Republican Right in locations like *USA Today* and beltway publications like the *Washington Monthly* (Florida, 2003a; 2003b); though whether reactionary social policies are most effectively opposed on the grounds of their supposed economic inefficiency, rather than on human-rights or other progressive principles, remains (highly) debatable.

businessmen (sic), the kind with starched shirts and lodge pins in their lapels. You can bypass all that and go straight to the new economy, where the future is happening now. You can draw in Mr. Florida's creative-class capitalists — ponytails, jeans, rock music and all — by liberal, big-government means: diversity celebrations, 'progressive' social legislation and government spending on cultural amenities. Put another way, Mr. Florida's ideas are breathing new life into an old argument: that taxes, incentives and business-friendly policies are less important in attracting jobs than social legislation and government-provided amenities . . . Not only does he believe that marginal attractions like an idiosyncratic arts scene can build economic power, but he thinks that government officials and policy makers like himself can figure out how to produce those things artificially . . . Concerned with inessentials, cities under Mr. Florida's thrall can easily overlook what residents really want (Malanga, 2004: 40, 45).

Writing in the New Democrats' *Blueprint* magazine, Kotkin and Siegel (2004: 16) also take issue with both the analysis and the policy prescription in what they dismissively characterize as a 'creativity craze'. Like Malanga, they contend that in the aftermath of the dot.com bubble, growth has been shifting to 'less fashionable but more livable locales' like Riverside, CA and Rockland County, NY. Such 'family-values' places are the locus points for a still-suburbanizing economy, Kotkin (2003: 34, 33) argues, dominated as they are by far-from-trendy characteristics like 'single-family homes, churches, satellite dishes, and malls', all of which are held to add up to the kind of 'cultures attractive to ordinary families'. The deliberately marked contrast here is to Florida's favored population of 'homosexuals, sophistos, and trendoids'. After all, if the geography of economic growth does not align with the spatial distribution of this population, then the basis of Florida's argument — which rests on correlation rather than causality — is undermined.

*The Rise of the Creative Class* has also attracted criticism for its relative neglect of issues of intraurban inequality and working poverty. A swelling contingent economy of underlaborers may, in fact, be a necessary side-effect of the creatives' lust for self-validation, 24/7 engagement, and designer coffee. Baris (2003: 44) observes that the 'overall tone [of the book] is unequivocally celebratory', the possibility that there might be serious downsides to unrestrained workforce and lifestyle flexibilization strategies warranting no more than a passing — if moralizing — mention. *The Rise of the Creative Class* both glorifies and naturalizes the contracted-out, 'free-agent' economy, discursively validating the liberties it generates, and the lifestyles it facilitates, for the favored class of creatives. Florida is inclined to revel in the juvenile freedoms of the idealized no-collar workplaces in this flexibilizing economy,<sup>15</sup> while paying practically no attention to the divisions of labor within which such employment practices are embedded. There is little regard for those who are on the thin end of Florida's 'thick labor markets', beyond the forlorn hope that, one day, they too might be lifted — presumably acts of sheer creative will — into the new overclass.<sup>16</sup> There is certainly no

15 'Pittsburgh and Detroit were still trapped in that Protestant-ethic/bohemian-ethic split, where people were saying, "You can't have fun!" or "What do you mean play in a rock band? Cut your hair and go to work, son. That's what's important!". Well, Austin was saying, "No, no, no, you're a creative. You want to play in a rock band at night and do semiconductor work in the day? C'mon! And if you want to come in at 10 the next morning and you're a little hung over or you're smoking dope, that's cool!"' (quoted in Dreher, 2002: 6).

16 Baris (2003: 44) notes that Florida's assessment of labor-market flexibility is positive and one-sided — his argument focusing narrowly on the consequences for creativity, business efficiency and middle-class consumption — while there is scant regard for those 'unwilling "free agents" — temps and day laborers, who are forced into flexible work patterns'. In fact, when Florida visited Tampa Bay — which has the dubious distinction of being the most 'temped' urban labor market in the United States (Theodore and Peck, 2002) — he was 'schmoozed at a private gathering . . . at the headquarters of the Tampa staffing company Kforce Inc' (Trigaux, 2003: 2E). Always keen to associate itself with positive messages concerning labor-market contingency, the temporary staffing industry would later anoint Florida 'one of our patron saints' (Grantham and Ware, 2004).

need for unions or large-scale government programs, creativity-stifling institutions that these are held to be, since Florida's vision of a creative meritocracy is essentially a libertarian one (Maliszewski, 2004).

Rather evasively, the creativity credo holds that *everyone* is — at least potentially — creative, that '[t]apping and stoking the creative furnace inside every human being is the great challenge of our time' (Florida, 2005a: 4; see also Shaw, 2003). If only a way could be found, Florida (2005a: 5) muses, to pull the two-thirds of society currently stranded in 'deadening' jobs within the working and service classes into the creative economy, then all might share the fruits of the creative Eden. This, in effect, is a curious form of class analysis, in which there are no meaningfully enduring class *divisions*. Leaving unanswered, then, the nagging question of who will launder the shirts in this creative paradise, Florida exhorts his fellow creatives to show others the path — indeed portraying this as a moral duty. Ultimately, however, the solution seems to be that the working and service classes need to find a way to pull themselves up by their creative bootstraps. So while all people are creative, some are evidently more creative than others, and there are some that simply 'don't get it'.

Creative individuals, in other words, are the drivers, the lumpen two-thirds are merely passengers; the Creative Class generates growth, the rest live off the spoils. In his interview with *Salon*, Florida insists that his 'supercreative core' of scientists, artists and techies 'is really the driving force in economic growth', just as it has become evident that '[w]hat drives a city...are good places to live, great neighborhoods, great cafes, night life, places to have fun'; and then comes the moral imperative:

We have to take responsibility for the society we're driving. If not, the social and political consequences are dire. The creative class has to look beyond itself and offer members of society a vision in which all can participate and benefit from (sic). That's the challenge of our age (quoted in Dreher, 2002: 8).

The frequent resort to such driving metaphors in *The Rise of the Creative Class* not only sends strong signals about who is in the driving seat and the direction of the traffic, at a more implicit level it also suggests causality. So, growth derives from creativity and therefore it is creatives that make growth; growth can only occur if the creatives come, and the creatives will only come if they get what they want; what the creatives want is tolerance and openness, and if they find it, they will come; and if they come, growth will follow. The causal mechanisms themselves, however, are not specified (Marcuse, 2003). Instead, Florida's arguments are largely fashioned on the basis of some suggestive correlations, for example between gays and technology-intensive growth, whereas in the text, 'the arguments for [the] connection' between various stand-in measures of cultural openness and 'the actual processes of regional economic development are virtually nonexistent' (Sawicki, 2003: 90).

Florida has responded to his critics in a number of ways. Some he has dismissed as 'squelchers [who] divert human creative energy by posing road blocks and saying "no" to new ideas' (2004b: ii), offering offhanded and selective responses, in some cases without even taking the trouble to cite his interlocutors (see Florida, 2005a: 20–5). When challenged on his rankings, Florida has responded by effortlessly requantifying urban economic performance in various ways, thereby restoring the chosen creative cities to the top positions. The clear implication from Florida's responses to the 'squelchers' is that his critics on the right are afflicted by tunnel vision, tinged with social nostalgia, while those on the left seek to restore a lost era, their affliction being economic nostalgia: 'if social conservatives can't turn back the moral clock to a time when every family resembled the Cleavers, neither can the left magically restore a time when forty or fifty percent of the workforce toiled in blue-collar factory jobs', the get-with-the-program conclusion being that: 'The creative



economy is not going away' (Florida, 2004b: vi).<sup>17</sup> Or, as the events page on the Creative Class web site pompously puts it, quoting Victor Hugo, 'You can resist an invading army, but you cannot resist an idea whose time has come'.<sup>18</sup>

As for the argument that creativity and inequality may be mutually dependent, Florida increasingly portrays such negative externalities as a pressing analytical, political, and indeed moral challenge for the Creative Class, not least since his own subsequent researches have confirmed the connection between creativity and polarization (Catalytix and Richard Florida Creativity Group, 2003b), a link that only had the status of a passing observation in *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Having recognized that the creative haves do rely upon, as well as preferring occasionally to mingle with, the creative have-nots, and that this 'massive functional division of human labor produces the bulk of our income divide [and also] threatens our national competitiveness' (Florida, 2003c: 30), Florida is left with little, however, but a series of 'open questions'. Having lauded the creative overclass for its achievements, having accounted for its privileged position as the consequence of intrinsic talent, and having made the case for increased public subsidy for this elite group, Florida's own arguments reduce the uncreative two-thirds to an afterthought, defined largely in terms of its creative deficits. While some members of this majority underclass appear in Florida's account — usually waiting tables or cutting hair — most are absent. In terms of economic growth and development, those who are not dependent on the creative class seem to be little more than deadweight. But if only in response to the looming threat of 'social unrest' (Florida, 2005b: 246), or to realize this untapped reservoir of potential creativity, *something* must be done.

The Creative Class, having become a uniquely restless factor of production, motivated by extrinsic rewards and the 'pursuit of happiness', is apparently sorting itself into like-minded enclaves (see Bishop and Florida, 2003),<sup>19</sup> with little concern for the wider social consequences, maybe little concern for wider society. The creative capitals are actually more unequal than the rest of the United States, an uncomfortable fact that had previously only been acknowledged in terms of soft-focus recognition of urban 'diversity'. If the pop sociologies of the Creative Class are to be trusted, then openness to cultural diversity may indeed be more of a lifestyle choice than a political trait, which might explain why it can coexist with apparent indifference to social inequality. Creatives, fellow traveler Charles Shaw (2003: 5, 7) writes, seem to have little interest in public-sector jobs, neither are they 'big on Solidarity'; they 'don't care much for news or politics, and hold a special contempt for things that they are not directly involved in'. Asking creatives to pay higher taxes is bound to be a 'tough sell', Florida (2003c: 31) warns, because '[h]igh-end creative workers, who often send their kids to private or elite public schools, may have to be persuaded to pay higher taxes for educating children other than their own'. The challenge is to persuade this group of precocious individualists that they should become less self-absorbed and self-oriented, though the main lever that Florida and his followers have is moral exhortation. This may fall on deaf ears, however. As Shaw (2003: 6) observes, the politics of the creative class stem from their self-image as an unruly tribe of independent consultants — 'the *élan vital* of the Creative Class is "take me as I am and facilitate the use of my unique skills, but

17 'If you look at the critics of my work, look at where they come from, they come from the socially conservative right and they come from the far left . . . I can show you two quotes, one coming from the Democratic Leadership Council's *Blueprint* magazine and the other coming from the (conservative Manhattan Institute's) *City Journal*. Both critiques are political. And both critiques are essentially saying, "Don't let the genie out of the bottle. Don't let these creative people get their way. Let's control, control, control. Let's squelch!" (quoted in Steigerwald, 2004: 3). The task of 'building a . . . prosperous, creative society', Florida (2005b: 245) implausibly counters, is a 'nonpartisan, nonideological issue'.

18 [www.creativeclass.org/events.shtml](http://www.creativeclass.org/events.shtml), accessed 24 January 2005.

19 These 'social congealing' processes are contributing to, if not 'driving' the polarizing political geography of the US, since mobile individuals are held to be increasingly moving to cities for cultural reasons, to be amongst their own, rather than merely following jobs (Bishop and Florida, 2003: B5).

don't expect me to buy into some corporate culture that requires me to change who I am"'.<sup>20</sup>

Earnest attempts to graft social inclusion and antipoverty objectives onto the basic creative-cities script — which are clearly evident in the Canadian and British debates, for example (see Cannon *et al.*, 2003; Bradford, 2004b), pay insufficient attention to the script's predication on, and infusion with, the realpolitik of urban inequality. The less creative underclasses have only bit parts in this script. Their role is secondary and contingent, in economic terms, to the driving and determinant acts of creativity. Their needs and aspirations are implicitly portrayed as wrongheaded and anachronistic, their only salvation being to get more creative. And the libertarian politics that envelops the creativity thesis, in as far as it concerns itself with the underclasses at all — for the most part, these are portrayed as servants of the creative class, or the stranded inhabitants of 'hopeless' cities — peddles only voluntaristic and usually moralizing solutions. This, in effect, is a recipe for creative (market) distribution, not social redistribution, one that is entirely compatible with a low-tax, market-oriented polity. For example, Dublin is praised for offering 'tax breaks to culturally creative people', like the members of U2, Liam Neeson and Andrew Lloyd Webber (Florida, 2002: 301).

Skeptical of big government solutions, Florida instead advocates a form of creative trickle-down, with the lumpen classes of noncreatives eventually learning what the overclass has already figured out, that 'there is no corporation or other large institution that will take care of us — that we are truly on our own' (2002: 115). This is familiar neoliberal snake-oil, of course — insecurity as the new freedom.<sup>20</sup> So, it is supposedly reassuring news that waves of layoffs in the millennial slowdown of the US economy produced 'no picket signs, no demonstrations, not a peep from the politicians', because this reveals the essential truth that the now-dominant class of creatives are at one with the flexibilized labor market — 'we simply accept it as the way things are and go about our busy lives' (2002: 115). Once contingent workers and the laboring poor come fully to share this revelation, throwing off their entitlement mindset, then they too may be able to join the creative class. Florida (2003c: 28–9) concedes that while a 'living wage is still essential', what the poor really want to is not so much a 'chance to get rich', but an opportunity to 'reap intrinsic rewards from [their] work', just like the creatives. As he explains of his politics:

Where I share common ground with some Republicans and libertarians, is that I think that old-style government programs have become a huge impediment to leveraging the creative age and allowing it to emerge. That said, I think there is still a role for government to set up the parameters in which market-based actions take place... If you asked me what the problems of our current structure are, I'd say it is oriented toward large-scale political institutions and large companies when it should be oriented to entrepreneurial efforts, small firms and to people's energy. We have to move away from large-scale government programs to community-oriented efforts (quoted in Steigerwald, 2004: 2).

While Florida implores his fellow creatives to 'grow up' (2002: 315), his critics bristle at how the discourse of creativity simply sidesteps many of the concerns of grown-up politics, intractable challenges and distributional questions. From the right, Malanga (2004: 40) characterizes this form of liberal hedonism as 'the equivalent of an eat-all-you-want-and-still-lose-weight-diet', which evades what he sees as the most pressing imperative of cutting taxes and downsizing government. Addressing an audience of New Democrats, Kotkin and Siegel (2004: 17) reveal a lot about where the center of gravity now lies in the American political conversation when they complain that the Memphis Manifesto is 'an urban strategy for a frictionless universe. There is no mention of government or politics or interest groups. There is no recognition of the problems produced by outmoded regulations, runaway public spending, or high taxes'. Yet this

<sup>20</sup> 'The old employment contract was group oriented and emphasized job security. The new one is tailored to the needs and desires of the individual' (Florida, 2002: 135).

neoliberalized urban environment is, in fact, the backdrop for Florida's performance. His plea is really for a new kind of urban *liberalism*, framed in this restructured context, and some of the reactions to his work say as much about this context as they do about the thesis itself.

Florida's quite appropriate and entirely understandable skepticism about the value of old-school urban-economic development — based on business subsidies, convention centers, sports stadia and shopping malls — has produced an orthodox cultural recoil in the form of a rejection of his brand of hipster elitism: affordable and safe suburban lives, his critics respond, is what the middle classes *really* want (Kotkin, 2003; Malanga, 2004). And Florida's relatively modest proposals for fostering creative ecosystems — things like small-scale arts subsidies, support for grassroots cultural activities; communitarian creativity strategies, if you like — are derided by fiscal conservatives of the center-left as well as the right. Amongst Republicans, they are hysterically portrayed as a 'kind of aggressive, government-directed economic development (albeit with a New Age spin)' (Malanga, 2004: 45). This exaggerated response also has its echoes on the center-left, where Florida has been accused of offering the false promise of a way around those urban roadblocks that ostensibly *really* deter business — 'schools that fail to improve, despite continuous infusions of money; contentious zoning and regulatory policies; and politically hyperactive public-sector unions and hectoring interest groups that make investment in cities something most entrepreneurs studiously avoid' (Kotkin and Siegel, 2004: 16).

(Over)reactions like these allow Florida to position himself outside the neoliberal mainstream and above the political fray, but they belie the fact that the creative credo is only modestly disruptive of neoliberal models of development. Self-described as fiscally conservative and socially liberal (see Steigerwald, 2004), Florida's proposals ultimately amount to a plea for grassroots agency with a communitarian conscience amongst a privileged class of creatives, lubricated by modest public-sector support for culturally appropriate forms of gentrification and consumption. There is no challenge to the extant 'order' of market-oriented flexibility (see DeFazio, 2002; Lehmann, 2003); indeed, this environment is presented as the natural habitat of the Creative Class. Florida is not asking for a blank check for new government programs, for major concessions to be made to the noncreative underclasses, nor even for regulatory transformation. His calls for creative empowerment can be met in relatively painless ways — by manipulating street-level façades, while gently lubricating the gentrification processes. This, critics justly complain, is cappuccino urban politics, with plenty of froth.

In this sense, Florida's ideas may have traveled so far, not because they are revolutionary, but because they are so modest. Kotkin and Siegel (2004: 17) recognize this in a curious way when they state that, 'mayors, city councils, and urban development officials seem ready to embrace any notion of reform that holds out hope without offending entrenched constituencies that resist real reform'. While Kotkin and Siegel's version of 'entrenched constituencies' evidently does not extend far beyond public-sector unions, big bureaucracies, and social-advocacy groups, the shared enemies of most neoliberals and many third-wayers, the rather more deeply entrenched constituencies of the business community and mainstream city politicians are in practice no less positively inclined towards this low-cost, market-friendly urban placebo. Surely, Florida's notions would not be 'sweeping urban America' (Malanga, 2004: 36) if they fundamentally ran counter to these latter interests? In truth, establishment constituencies have little to fear from conspicuous urban consumption, key-worker attraction strategies, and gentrification-with-public-art. For the average mayor, there are few downsides to making the city safe for the creative class — a creativity strategy can quite easily be bolted on to business-as-usual urban-development policies. Why not, as Mayor Bloomberg of New York has asked, have *artists* step up to the tasks of transforming 'communities that are down on their heels' (quoted in *Next American City*, 2004: 20), rather than bother elected officials with this niggling and somewhat intractable task? Where is the harm in Cincinnati's creativity strategy, which espouses self-organization

and self-help amongst the nascent creative community, assisted only by a low-cost rebranding strategy and modest efforts — like putting together nightlife guides and ‘help[ing] young creatives who want to try adventurous food experiences’ (Cincinnati Tomorrow, 2003: 39)? The reality is that city leaders from San Diego to Baltimore, from Toronto to Albuquerque, are embracing creativity strategies not as *alternatives* to extant market-, consumption- and property-led development strategies, but as low-cost, feel-good *complements* to them. Creativity plans do not disrupt these established approaches to urban entrepreneurialism and consumption-oriented place promotion, they *extend* them. Florida (2004b: ii, v) perhaps implicitly concedes as much when pointing out, in response to his critics’ axe-grinding attacks, that he works with ‘civic leaders from both sides of the aisle on economic development issues’, disarmingly observing that ‘[w]hatever pundits might say about our findings, business and civic leadership in city after city has taken them to heart’.

### Fast urban policy

More than fifteen years ago, David Harvey (1989) called attention to the rise of ‘entrepreneurial’ urban strategies, pointing to emergent features of the city-political terrain that have since been, to all intents and purposes, normalized. Describing the responses of deindustrializing cities in the 1980s, where the accelerating retreat of the Fordist economy was compounded by diminished urban fiscal capacity and a political turn against redistributive spending and social programming, Harvey portrayed the rise of interurban competition as a disciplining and coercive force. Confronted by an extremely limited repertoire of politically feasible options, cities threw themselves into a series of zero-sum competitions for mobile public and private investments, thereby inadvertently facilitating (indeed subsidizing) the very forms of capital circulation and revenue competition that were major sources of the problem in the first place. In this climate of beggar-thy-neighbor competition, cities turned to a restrictive suite of supply-side and promotional strategies, which were serially reproduced and emulated in the scramble for mobile investment, jobs and discretionary spending. None of this, of course, increased the aggregate amount of available investment, though it certainly contributed to its increasing rate of circulation.

Recall, though, that the 1980s imperative was not only to attract jobs and mobile corporations, both of which were in short supply, but to reposition cities within the spatial division of *consumption*. ‘Above all’, Harvey (1989: 9) explained, ‘the city has to appear as an innovative, exciting, creative and safe place to live or visit, to play and consume in’, as festivals, spectacle and display, cultural events and the arts were increasingly appropriated as ‘symbols of [a] dynamic community’. Symptoms of this intensification of urban competition included the overproduction of certain urban forms, resulting in their simultaneous devaluation and — hamster-wheel style — even more aggressive, anxious and ultimately futile competitive behavior. In terms of the built form of cities, these moves were associated with the abandonment of comprehensive planning in favor of the selective and piecemeal development of ‘urban fragments’, particularly those with some kind of market potential, usually with the aid of gentrification and image makeovers:

[The] urban terrain is opened for display, fashion, and the ‘presentation of self’ in a surrounding of spectacle and play. If everyone, from punks to rap artists to the ‘yuppies’ and the haute bourgeoisie can participate in the production of an urban image through their production of social space, then all can at least feel some sense of belonging to that place (Harvey, 1989: 14).

From these inauspicious origins, it is but a short hop to one of Florida’s creative epicenters, where members of the Creative Class today indulge their ‘passionate quest

for experience' and expressive consumption amid the throb of 'indigenous street-level culture — a teeming blend of cafes, sidewalk musicians, and small galleries and bistros, where it is hard to draw the line between participant and observer, or between creativity and its creators' (Florida, 2002: 166). This is not simply a matter of learning to live with gentrifying cities, not even merely to accommodate the process; it is to go several steps further, in asserting the ostensibly *productive* nature of creative gentrification within what Florida calls the 'Eminem economy'. Rapping, he discloses, is a creative act, and while it might be unwise to suggest that large numbers of young people can realistically make a living from rapping, 'conceptually, it's in the right ballpark', since the challenges of tapping talent are a 'pretty good starting point for a serious debate on how to keep our economy healthy' (Florida, 2003c: 29).<sup>21</sup> Florida's idea of the 'New Deal for the creative age' turns out to be a pious call for 'investment' in the creativity of all, not just the high-tech entrepreneur, but the would-be hip-hop poet from a disadvantaged neighborhood. This philosophy has been compared less than favorably with the previous New Deal, in which 'society's challenge was to improve the lives of *everyone* in that disadvantaged neighborhood, not to seek out one individual and tap him (sic) with an entrepreneurial wand, making him briefly and unimaginably rich' (Maliszewski, 2004: 78–9).

The ethos of the Creative Age, however, is an anti-entitlement one; it is about nurturing and rewarding creativity, not compensating the creative have-nots. The hard news for civic leaders is that while they can, and must, do whatever is in their power to cultivate creativity, there is no way of knowing where the creative sparks will ignite. As Florida counsels: 'We cannot know in advance who the next Andy Warhol, Billie Holiday, Paul Allen, or Jimi Hendrix will be, or where he or she will come from' (2005a: 5); yet it would appear to be a racing certainty that these as-yet unborn supercreatives will want to live in Austin, TX, or somewhere very much like it. And they will likely ride into town by mountain bike. The duty of civic leaders, in the meantime, is to make sure that a network of bike paths connects the funky neighborhoods and authentic entertainment districts, so that the creatives will feel 'welcomed'. This is another variant of the Papua New Guinean cargo cults, in which airstrips were laid out in the jungle in the forlorn hope of luring a passing aircraft to earth.

The creative cargo cults of today are consequently little more than retreads of some very familiar local strategies. Urban creativity strategies facilitate and extend the 'third generation' forms of gentrification, in which the (local) state assumes an increasingly active role in '[r]etaking the city for the middle classes' (Smith, 2002: 443). Discourses of creative competition, moreover, serve to enroll cities in more far-reaching forms of cultural commodification and artistically inflected place promotion, targeted at a new audience. Pioneers of some of the early rounds of urban entrepreneurialism, like Baltimore, quickly discovered that the allure of 'innovations' like waterfront redevelopment schemes and tourist-retail complexes can quickly fade (see Levine, 1987; Harvey, 1989). The leapfrogging logic of these investments meant that cities could never stand still, but always had to be on the lookout for the next big thing. No surprise, then, that we should find the City of Baltimore unveiling its own strategy for the Florida Age, rather-less-than-creatively entitled *Creative Baltimore*. In Baltimore, where civic leaders joke that they 'should be so lucky to have [the] problem' of gentrification,<sup>22</sup> the scope for actually delivering on creativity-led urban regeneration may be limited, but the costs of trying are not especially high. Mayor O'Malley, doing his part by fronting a Celtic rock band in his spare evenings, clearly has his work cut out — amongst other things, trying to reduce the murder rate, while dealing with a locally racialized AIDS epidemic

21 Bordering on self-parody, a hip-hop tribute to Florida is featured on the Creative Class web site: 'The Rise of the Creative Class/Thirty eight million and growing fast/Building community and having a blast/When it comes to money rollin' in cash . . .' (quoted in Gibson and Klocker, 2004: 430).

22 Tom Wilcox, President of the Baltimore Community Foundation, quoted in *Next American City* (2004: 21).



— but even in the face of a protracted budget crisis, he has found some additional funding for a creativity strategy. The Mayor's Plan involves the creative retasking of a long list of existing programs (City of Baltimore, 2004a), complemented with a rather shorter set of 'new ideas', including, in addition to the mandatory bike paths . . . establishing a mentoring scheme for creative wannabes; extending liquor licensing hours to 4am; ridding Howard Park of its drug dealers and vagrants, so that it might be made safe for dog-walkers; creating a street performers program; converting unused industrial buildings to art studios and live-work spaces; setting up a city-wide music festival and arts parade; memorializing creative locals like Frank Zappa and Billie Holiday; initiating a duckpin bowling tournament, in which the Mayor's team would take on challengers from the business and cultural communities; welcoming newcomers to the city with a 'fun networking event', including three minutes face time with the Mayor himself; placing chess tables outside City Hall; promoting offbeat and eccentric events that are unique to Baltimore, including the American Dime Museum, John Waters and Edgar Allan Poe, and the Night of 100 Elvises; developing 'stick around stipends' for creatively inclined college students; overcoming residual 'squeamishness', which apparently stretches to 'covert bigotry' in some quarters, around the idea of a strategy for attracting gays, not least because 'Florida makes no bones about [this]' in his advice to the Mayor (City of Baltimore, 2004b). Just in case creatives might inadvertently stray into the wrong neighborhoods, possibly encountering the wrong kind of buzz, the Baltimore plan also proposes an arts shuttle service for secure transit between cultural attractions. For his part, Mayor O'Malley seems to have completely absorbed the creative-cities script:

Economist Richard Florida, author of *The rise of the creative class*, joined us at our arts town hall this year. His major thesis is that our country's economy is now fueled by the growing creative class, a diverse and expanding class of Americans whose economic and social lives are organized not by employers but by place, by cities . . . Cities that are diverse, cities that nurture creativity, cities that are culturally alive, and cities that preserve their history are cities that thrive — because they create a better quality of life . . . they create new businesses . . . they create living neighborhoods, they retain and they attract members of this growing creative class . . . We make our city welcoming, not with stadiums or by subsidizing corporate relocations from other cities, but by having great parks, and walkable neighborhoods, and authentic buildings, and galleries and music clubs, and restaurants and shops, and by respecting, indeed, treasuring diversity.<sup>23</sup>

Creativity strategies, even as they have promptly become clichés in their own right, are in many ways tragically appropriate for late-entrepreneurial cities like Baltimore, the cities that have already tried practically everything, including, of course, building stadiums and offering corporate inducements. Today, hopes are pinned on 'an increasingly standardized narrative of "creativity-led urban economic development"' (Gibson and Klocker, 2004: 431), one which nevertheless reorganizes the stakes, sites and scales of urban competition — around creative individuals and their favored neighborhood habitats.

Rather than 'civilizing' urban economic development by 'bringing in culture', creativity strategies do the opposite: they commodify the arts and cultural resources, even social tolerance itself, suturing them as putative economic assets to evolving regimes of urban competition. They enlist to this redoubled competitive effort some of the few remaining pools of untapped resources; they enroll previously-marginalized actors for this effort, enabling the formation of new governance structures and local political channels; they constitute new objects of governance and new stakes in interurban competition; and they enable the script of urban competitiveness to be performed — quite literally — in novel and often eye-catching ways. And they do all of this within

23 Mayor Martin O'Malley, State of the city address, Baltimore, MD, 2 February 2004 ([www.baltimorecity.gov/mayor/speeches/sp040202.html](http://www.baltimorecity.gov/mayor/speeches/sp040202.html), accessed 6 January 2005).

the framework of an inherited complex of new urban 'realities', that variously contextualize, channel and constrain 'creative' urban politics — including the material and social artifacts of gentrification, as a definitionally uneven process of financial and symbolic valorization; a proclivity for 'soft', pliable and task-oriented modes of urban governance, organized around short-term, concrete projects (like funding competitions or development schemes), rather than progressive and programmatic goals (such as poverty alleviation or environmental sustainability); and a substantially neoliberalized urban policy environment, within which a range of competitive and market-oriented metrics, techniques and rule regimes are displacing urban-Keynesian systems, like comprehensive planning, bureaucratic delivery, needs-based approaches, and progressive socio-spatial redistribution. In the short run at least, the discursively privileged actors on this stage are not the (distracted and self-absorbed) members of the Creative Class itself, since these are the ones who must be *catered to*, but those 'regional leaders' with the vision and the will to adopt 'aggressive measures' (Florida, 2005a: 151–2).

Creative-city strategies are predicated on, and designed for, this neoliberalized terrain. Repackaging urban cultural artifacts as competitive assets, they value them (literally) not for their own sake, but in terms of their (supposed) economic utility. In order to be enacted, they presume and work with gentrification, conceived as a positive urban process, while making a virtue of selective and variable outcomes, unique neighborhood by unique neighborhood. And with almost breathtaking circularity, it is now being proposed that these gentrification-friendly strategies should be evaluated, not according to hackneyed metrics like job creation or poverty alleviation, but according to more relevant measures like . . . increased house prices! So Robert Sirota, an advocate of the *Creative Baltimore* plan, enthuses that many of the city's newly constructed downtown housing units 'are leasing for higher than anticipated rents to what we might call Creative Class types' (quoted in *Next American City*, 2004: 20), while Florida himself muses that there may be a need to develop alternative measures of economic growth, like 'house prices [since these] indicate how the market views the "attractiveness" of various places — the real *demand* for place, if you will' (2004a: 5, original emphasis). As if this were not circular enough, it is increasingly common for cities to evaluate the effectiveness of their creativity strategies according to their shifting position in Florida's league tables (Duxbury, 2004).

Both the script and the nascent practices of urban creativity are peculiarly well suited to entrepreneurialized and neoliberalized urban landscapes. They provide a means to intensify and publicly subsidize urban consumption systems for a circulating class of gentrifiers, whose *lack* of commitment to place and whose weak community ties are perversely celebrated. In an echo of the Creative Class's reportedly urgent need to 'validate' their identities and lifestyles, this amounts to a process of public validation for favored forms of consumption and for a privileged class of consumers. In fact, indulging selective forms of elite consumption and social interaction is elevated to the status of a public-policy objective in the creative-cities script. 'The challenge before us', Cincinnati Tomorrow (2003: 15) for example intones, 'is to help young creatives develop ties with each other and connect with the events, places, and experiences they crave'.

Moreover, and no less significantly, the notion of creative cities extends to the urban domain the principles and practices of creative, flexible autonomy that were so powerfully articulated in the libertarian business ideologies of the 1990s (see Frank, 2000; Thrift, 2001), for all the knowing distinctions that creativity advocates ritually draw with their new-economy forebears. As Lehmann (2004: 163–4) notes, 'the core values that Florida charts as the key to the "creative ethos" — individuality, meritocracy, diversity, and openness — are all by now slogans of first resort for the same corporate economy that [he] claims is being displaced by high-tech innovators in no-collar workplaces and edgy neighborhoods'. Discourses of urban creativity seek to normalize flexible labor-market conditions, lionizing a class of workers that can not only cope with, but positively revel in, this environment of persistent insecurity and intense,



atomized competition, just as they enforce modes of creative governmentality based on 'compulsory individualism, compulsory "innovation", compulsory performativity and productiveness, compulsory valorization of the putatively new' (Osborne, 2003: 507). This is achieved, in part, by the suggestive mobilization of creativity as a distinctly positive, nebulous-yet-attractive, apple-pie-like phenomenon: like its stepcousin flexibility, creativity preemptively disarms critics and opponents, whose resistance implicitly mobilizes creativity's antonymic others — rigidity, philistinism, narrow mindedness, intolerance, insensitivity, conservatism, *not getting it*.

The urban creativity script also enables a subtle reworking of the scalar politics of the post-Keynesian era. Reflecting on the way in which Florida's work is being *read* by city leaders, it would seem that there is a predisposition to accept the most controversial steps in his thesis — that creativity is the root cause of growth, and this is borne by a mobile class of elite workers — in order to jump to the chase on the question of how to lure the creatives to town. The cities that grow will be those with cool people in them, and cool people will only go to cool cities. But 'what makes a city cool?' Michigan Governor Granholm rhetorically asks, 'We understood that the best place to look for the answer to this question was at the local level' (quoted in Michigan, 2003: 3). Uncool cities, it seems, have no-one to blame but themselves, while creative places stand to be rewarded both with economic growth and targeted public spending. Thus, the creativity script works seamlessly with the new urban realpolitik, neoliberal-style. Apparently operating on the presumption of a distant, dysfunctional, largely irrelevant, if not terminally hollowed-out national state, creativity discourses privilege the local and bodily scales as the locations both of determinate processes and meaningful social action. Florida insists that creative 'environments cannot be planned from above' (2004b: iii), just as he endows cities with significant degrees of agency: So Austin was not merely fortunate or well placed, according to Florida's account, its civic leaders 'really hustled', reportedly declaring that, 'We're going to make Austin really unique' (quoted in Dreher, 2002: 6; Gertner, 2004: 90). Meanwhile, the problem with 'institutionally sclerotic' cities that have not participated in the creativity explosion, like Detroit and Pittsburgh, is that they still 'just don't get it', or, worse still, 'they don't want to change' (quoted in Dreher, 2002: 6). In this respect, the creative-cities script is a mobilizing discourse: it spells out the nature of the challenge and the necessity for action, framed as a historic *imperative*; then it outlines a simple urban formula for creative turnaround, sternly warning that civic leaders had better take heed, or else. And increasingly, the threat is a global one: the competition for talented workers is no longer simply a domestic one, the next threat on the horizon is an *international* 'flight of the creative class' (Florida, 2005b). As Florida informed the readers of *Money* magazine, the talent war is globalizing and cities in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and Sweden will increasingly be the ones to watch:

[A] new global order will not pit Boston against Austin for jobs, but Boston against Dublin. 'I believe the US has the most amazing transformative capacity', [Florida] says, and also that we're still the leading country. But those places are beginning to become more open. They are beginning to see that our strength in the US has not been our market size, nor our own intrinsic genius, but that we've been open. We've always been the place that has attracted the tired, hungry and incredibly energetic. And I think these other countries are increasingly pursuing that (Gertner, 2004: 92).

The insidious 'scalar narrative' (Swyngedouw, 1997) of creativity has it that the bodies — or perhaps more accurately, the souls — of creative individuals have become the preeminent carriers of economic-development potential, so the pursuit of economic growth becomes neatly synonymous with the publicly funded seduction of the Creative Class. This is a uniquely mobile factor of production, a supply-side counterpart to the footloose corporation, whose locational reach is wide and therefore whose locational preferences *must* be accommodated. If the business-oriented strategies of yore involved building industrial parks and subsidizing corporate activities, this new variant of the

supply-side catechism has it that creatives will only come to cities that buzz. A premium is therefore placed on the capacity of cities to make their authentic, funky neighborhoods welcoming to monied incomers, whose inherent precociousness must be rewarded with additional gifts like bike paths and street-level entertainment, while the task of the residualized public sector is underwriting and subsidizing these developments with what tax dollars it has left. Florida does not pull his punches when advising city leaders: '[Y]ou need to have [these amenities] because if you don't have them, then people won't come to your city', since the question that creatives are asking, itinerant hedonists that they are, is: 'What kind of location offers me the full bundle of lifestyle choices with the diversity of amenities and options that I desire?' (quoted in Dreher, 2002: 4, 5).

Discursively subjected, in this way, to the soft discipline of creative-capital mobility, cities must quickly figure out how to act. Fortunately, help is on hand, since there is now a well-publicized and purposefully circulated repertoire of strategies that (may) work. Florida's has been but the most conspicuous contribution to this burgeoning business of manualizing local creativity strategies (see Kotkin and Devol, 2000; Landry, 2000; Partners for Livable Communities, 2001; Duxbury, 2004). The snake oil cannot be guaranteed, of course, because the finicky creatives may decide to stay on in Austin. But the allure of Dr Florida's prescription has been sufficient to secure robust domestic sales, and a growing international market. The sobering evidence of this lies in the sheer number of cities that have willingly entrained themselves to his course of treatment, not to mention the unmistakable zeal of its many converts. Particularly high doses of the urban-creativity medicine must be administered if the patient has been suffering from (institutional) sclerosis, or if earlier courses of (entrepreneurial) treatment have failed. Even so, some (probably delusional) patients in rustbelt regions may develop the feeling that they have been slipped another placebo. In a rare moment of reflection, Florida has pondered whether he may have 'inadvertently glorified' some creative urban strategies, which may not even be sustainable in their places of origin (quoted in Gertner, 2004: 90). Meanwhile, the contagion of urban creativity strategies continues to spread, to Europe and beyond (see National Economics, 2002; Bradford, 2004a, 2004b; Florida and Tinagli, 2004; *cf.* Gibson and Klocker, 2004). Audaciously upscaling his argument, Florida (2005b: 3) has recently asserted that 'the new global competition for talent . . . promises to radically reshape the world in the coming decades'.

The contemporary cult of urban creativity has a clear genealogical history, stretching back at least as far as the entrepreneurial efforts of deindustrialized cities. The script of urban creativity reworks and augments the old methods and arguments of urban entrepreneurialism in politically seductive ways. The emphasis on the mobilization of new regimes of local governance around the aggressive pursuit of growth-focused development agendas is a compelling recurring theme (see Leitner, 1990). The tonic of urban creativity is a remixed version of this cocktail: just pop the same basic ingredients into your new-urbanist blender, add a slug of Schumpeter lite for some new-economy fizz, and finish it off with a pink twist.

The flavor, though, is a distinctive one. Cities, and urban policies, remain substantially constituted by an ideologically amplified deference to 'external' competitive forces and threats, though the struggle to replace working-class jobs is partially superseded by a nouveau-bourgeois war for talent. The indiscriminate pursuit of growth is superseded by a new emphasis on rewarding, good-quality jobs, though these are reserved for the new overclass of interloping creatives. The competitively induced overbuilding of malls and convention centers morphs into the creatively impelled overbuilding of bike paths and artistic venues (as if this could grow the aggregate supply of creativity), the inevitable consequence of which must surely be devaluation, no doubt followed by yet more rounds of leapfrogging creative 'innovation'. The subordination of social-welfare concerns to economic development imperatives (first, secure economic growth, then wait for the wider social benefits to percolate through) gives way to a form of creative trickle-down; elite-focused creativity strategies leave only supporting roles for the two-thirds of the population languishing in the working and service classes, who get nothing apart

from occasional tickets to the circus. A new generation of entrepreneurializing subjects is formed, as the disciplines of creative productionism are extended to every aspect of self and soul, to the spheres of consumption and play, as well as to those of work, while the circumstances of those outside the favored class are rationalized according to a deficit model of creativity. And the strategic emphasis shifts from a narrow focus on the sphere of production to a deeper engagement with the marketizing and commodifying spheres of consumption and reproduction, positions within which become the primary markers of distinction in the creative city.

Finally, there is a question of speed. The extraordinary rate of adoption of urban creativity strategies can in some respects be explained in terms of the enduring legacies of entrepreneurial urbanism. The rapid diffusion and ultimate exhaustion of entrepreneurial-city strategies established a massive potential market for their creatively inflected successors, together with an elaborate infrastructure for cross-jurisdictional policy transfer (see Wacquant, 1999; Peck 2002). *The Rise of the Creative Class*, as a knowingly constructed 'mutable mobile', entered this hypertrophied sphere of circulation at a velocity that revealed less about its intrinsic qualities than it said about, firstly, the profound policy vacuum that characterized the neoliberalized urban realm, and secondly, the now-extensive circuitry of the fast-policy regime that has been constructed around cities. Whatever else it may be, Florida's creative-city thesis is perfectly framed for this competitive landscape, across which it has traveled at alarming speed. Agents and artifacts of fast-policy circulation help realize this process, though in themselves they surely cannot constitute the *demand* for creative fixes. The market for creative policy products is propelled by the endless pursuit of creative urban *advantage*, the (generally negative) distributional consequences of which are variously denied, obfuscated or finessed out of existence in the creativity script and its routinized practices. The creative cities discourse is both saturated in, and superficially oblivious to, the prevailing market ideology, such that the mere suggestion that creative advantage presupposes creative disadvantage, that there must be losers in the Creative Age, borders on the 'heretical' (Bradford, 2004b: 9). *Contra* the self-evident myth that every person and every place can be a creative winner, the creativity script represents a culturally inflected reinscription of these competitive relations.

In the creative economy, regional advantage comes to places that can quickly mobilize the talent, resources, and capabilities required to turn innovations into new business ideas and commercial products. Leading regions establish competitive advantage through their capabilities. They are vehicles for mobilization that can almost instantaneously bring together the resources required to launch new businesses and turn innovations into successful products. For these reasons, the nexus of competitive advantage shifts to those regions that can generate, retain, and attract the best talent. This is particularly true because creative workers are extremely mobile and the distribution of talent is highly skewed (Florida, 2005a: 49–50).

So packaged, creativity strategies were in a sense preconstituted for this fast policy market. They empower, though only precariously, unstable networks of elite actors, whose strategies represent aspirant attempts to realize in concrete form the seductive 'traveling truths' of the creativity script; they give license to ostensibly portable technocratic routines and replicable policy practices that are easily disembedded and deterritorialized from their centers of production — at least in a shallow, essentialized form — for all the talk of local 'authenticity'; they reconstitute urban-elitist, 'leadership' models of city governance, despite their ritual invocation of grassroots efforts; they foster experimental and mutually referential policy development processes, framed within the tight parameters of urban fiscal capacity, and manifest in the form of the serial reproduction of an increasingly clichéd repertoire of favored policy interventions, the value of which is eroded in the very act of their (over)construction; they legitimate new urban development models and messages, which travel with great speed through interlocal policy networks, facilitated by a sprawling complex of conferences, web sites, consultants and advocates, policy intermediaries and centers of

technocratic translation, the combined function of which is to establish new venues and lubricate new channels for rapid 'policy learning'; and they discursively and institutionally select subnational scales, highlighting in particular gentrifying urban neighborhoods as the preeminent sites for both privileged forms of creative action and necessary modes of political proaction, the places that *can and must* act. As such, creativity strategies subtly canalize and constrain urban-political agency, even as their material payoffs remain extraordinarily elusive. The cult of urban creativity is therefore revealed in its true colors, as a form of soft law/lore for a hypercompetitive age.

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**Planning and the Just City**

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The profession of city planning was born of a vision of the good city. Its roots lie in the 19<sup>th</sup> century radicalism of Ebenezer Howard and his associates, in Baron Haussmann's conception of creative destruction, and in the more conventional ideas of the urban progressives in the United States and their technocratic European counterparts. While the three approaches differed in their orientation toward democracy, in their content, and in their distributional outcomes, they all had their start in a revulsion at the chaotic and unhealthful character of the industrial city. Their common purpose was to achieve efficiency, order, and beauty through the imposition of reason (Scott, *Seeing like a State*).

Today planning is mostly characterized by modesty. Despite some exceptions, especially the advocates for the new urbanism, most planners and academic commentators argue that visionaries should not impose their views upon the public.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, skepticism reigns over whether it is possible to identify a model of a good city. Attacks on the visionary approach have come from across the ideological spectrum. The left has attacked planning for its class bias (Harvey 1978, Gans 1968), for its anti-democratic character (Davidoff and Reiner 1962, Yiftachel 1998), and for its failure to take account of difference (Thomas 1996). The right sees planning as denying freedom (Hayek 1944) and producing inefficiency (Anderson 1964) and regards markets as the appropriate allocators of urban space (Klosterman 1985). Centrists consider comprehensive planning inherently undemocratic and unattainable (Altshuler 1965) and see the modernists efforts to redesign cities as destructive of the urban fabric and

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<sup>1</sup> Plans for London's Thames Gateway and Manhattan's West Side are unusual in the scope of their ambition.

indifferent to people's comfort and desires (Hall 2002, Jacobs 1961). And indeed the history of planning practice seems to validate the critics: Postwar American urban renewal and highway building programs and European social housing development produced displacement, the break-up of communities, and unattractive, socially homogeneous projects. Now, the emphasis on economic competitiveness that tops every city's list of objectives causes planning to give priority to growth at the expense of all other values, providing additional evidence to the critics who see it as serving developer interests at the expense of everyone else.

Still, despite the theoretical critique, practical difficulties of implementation, and inequitable outcomes so far, the progressive/leftist ideal of a revitalized, cosmopolitan, just, and democratic city remains. Even while this vision seems forever chimerical, it remains a latent ideal. Its content tends to be assumed as self-evident, but it is the measure against which practice is found wanting. Thus, when particular cases of planning are examined, they are usually castigated for deadening the environment, producing unjust distributional outcomes, and failing to take into account the views of affected citizens. But using this critique implies that planning could do otherwise.

Thus, while the critical planning literature attacks planning in practice, it assumes that we know good and bad when we see it and that we do not need to make elaborate arguments justifying our criteria. My own work embodies such an obliviousness. In an article entitled "Cities and Diversity" (2005), I defined the just city in terms of democracy, equity, diversity, growth, and sustainability (philosophers might argue that this is the good city not the just city). These values, however, are problematic in that they all have undesirable potentials or risks. Illiberal majorities can make democracy

indifferent to minority rights; the high cost of achieving equity through redistribution creates resentment among those who must sacrifice, resulting in a legitimization crisis and even counter-revolution or civil war; diversity can lead to social breakdown; and growth, while making redistribution less of a zero-sum game, benefits most those who already have the most. Sustainability may diminish growth thereby producing unemployment and sacrificing desired consumption. At any rate, I did not attempt a justification for choosing these values but simply assumed agreement on them. The appropriate value criteria for urban development, however, require extensive analysis.

Likewise the question of whether to focus on “the city” or metropolitan area needs justification. Why not the region, the nation, the world? Is Paul Peterson (1981) right about city limits? In his book of that name, Peterson argues that while city administrations could foster economic growth, they could not engage in redistribution without stimulating capital flight and thus unemployment and a decreasing tax base. Manuel Castells (1977) conversely asserts that cities are not the sources of production—that this is a regional function. If this is the case, and if production is key to the formation of economic interests, is there any point to restricting analysis to cities or even metro areas?

To be sure cities cannot be viewed in isolation; they are within networks of governmental institutions and capital flows. Robert Dahl, in a classic 1967 article, referred to the Chinese box problem of participation and power: at the level of the neighborhood, there is the greatest opportunity for democracy but the least amount of power; as we scale up the amount of decision-making power increases, but the potential of people to affect outcomes diminishes. The city level therefore is one layer in the

hierarchy of governance. But the variation that exists among cities within the same country in relation to values like tolerance, quality of public services, availability of affordable housing, segregation/integration, points to a degree of autonomy. Justice is not achievable at the urban level without support from other levels, but discussion of urban programs requires a concept of justice relevant to what is within city government's power and in terms of the goals of urban movements (Fainstein and Hirst 1995). Moreover, there are particular policy areas in which municipalities have considerable discretion and thus the power to distribute benefits and cause harm; these include urban redevelopment, racial and ethnic relations, open space planning, and service delivery. Castells (1983), while minimizing cities' role in production, regards them as the locus of collective consumption—i.e. the place in which citizens can acquire collective goods that make up for deficiencies in the returns to their labor. Consequently he contends that urban social movements can potentially produce a municipal revolution even though he does not believe that they can create social transformation. According to this logic, then, urban movements do have transformative potential despite being limited to achieving change only at the level in which they are operating.

In this paper I present an example of urban injustice and ultimately discuss the value criteria which should be applied to it. I then examine more generally the issues arising from various value criteria and their applicability to urban issues. In order to discuss these criteria, I will examine some recent work within philosophy that can be usefully employed in the evaluation of urban development. The thoughts presented here represent the beginning of a larger project in which I attempt to develop an urban vision

that can frame goals for urban development without being vulnerable to charges of moral absolutism.

**An example: the Bronx Terminal Market**

To illustrate my discussion I will tell the story of a recent New York City planning decision with which I was peripherally involved as an advocate planner and which bears on the first three of the abovementioned policy areas (urban redevelopment, racial and ethnic relations, open space planning). It concerns the eviction of the wholesale food merchants at the Bronx Terminal Market, who have been forced to leave their premises so that the market site can be turned over to a development firm. The firm intends to build a million-square-foot, suburban-style retail development on the site where the Bronx Terminal Market had operated for nearly eighty years.

In February 2006 the New York City Council approved the rezoning of a parcel of industrially zoned, city-owned land in the South Bronx. Its purpose was to allow the Related Companies, New York's largest speculative developer, to build a complex, to be called the Gateway Center at Bronx Terminal Market. It will include a hotel, a big-box retailer, and a standard array of chain stores enclosed within a single structure. The eight existing market buildings, some of which have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, will be torn down. The wholesale food market, which lies directly beneath the Major Deegan Expressway, opened in the 1920s and was renovated and reopened with considerable fanfare by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia in 1935. Several of the last remaining firms could trace their origins back to those early days. Reflecting the city's ethnic diversity, the merchants sold their exotic produce, meats, and canned goods primarily to bodegas, African food stores, and other specialized retailers. The city leased

the market to a private firm, which collected rents and managed the facility. During the last few decades, however, its neglect had resulted in decrepit structures, potholed roadways, inadequate services, grim interiors, and filthy surroundings. Those merchants who hung on to the end had suffered from the failure of the market's manager to maintain the property. Yet as late as 2005, 23 remaining wholesalers (down from an original peak of nearly 100) and their 400 employees were still generating hundreds of millions of dollars in sales.

The chairman of the Related Companies, which bought the market lease from the previous leaseholder, is a close friend of the city's deputy mayor for economic development. Part of the project's financing depended on city and state subsidies, the plans had to be approved by locally elected public officials, and the site required a rezoning for retail use. But no meaningful give and take ever took place between the merchants' association and city officials. The Related Companies' glowing presentation of the project's putative benefits was never seriously challenged by any public official. Although the Bronx borough president, members of the community board, and council members expressed sympathy for the plight of the merchants, who had endured decades of mistreatment, their sentiments did not move them to stand in the way of the juggernaut that was pushing the project. The treatment of the market comprises one more example of the priority given to economic development by city officials and the deployment of the utilitarian argument that decision rules should be based on the (alleged) greatest good of the greatest number.

The market merchants fought their displacement in court and before various city forums, including the local community board, the City Planning Commission, and the

City Council. Sadly, however, the merchants lacked sufficient political influence to sway these officials either into willingness to integrate them into the Gateway project or to supply them with a suitable relocation site. By and large officials accepted the logic that the new mall represented necessary modernization and adaptation to the service economy.

Consultants to the market merchants proposed developing an integrated wholesale and retail market similar to the successful Pike Place Market in Seattle or New York's own Chelsea Market. Construction of a combined wholesale-retail facility would have differentiated the enterprise from cookie-cutter malls around the country, exploited its urban setting, and retained existing jobs. Use of a vacant city-owned site to the south of the market as well as a northern piece could have increased the area available for wholesale uses, but the city wished to reserve these areas for parkland as part of a swap for McComb's Dam Park, which it had designated as the location of a new Yankee Stadium. The developer of the shopping mall was pre-selected without solicitation of competitive bids or the opportunity for anyone to suggest other development strategies. Representatives of the city argued that since the developer bought the lease directly from the previous operator of the market, it was a purely private deal and thus required no competitive bidding. Thus, even though the city owns the land and the structures on it were leased to a manager who had neglected them for years, the leaseholder was nevertheless allowed to sell his interest without any requirement of competitive bidding or effort by the city to buy back the lease itself. The city excluded affected residents and businesses from participating in planning for the area, limiting their input to reacting to the already formulated plan. The developer provided the neighborhood with at best minor



concessions in the form of a community benefits agreement. Hundreds of well-paying jobs, almost all held by adult male immigrants, will be lost, replaced primarily by part-time, low-paid employment, and a once vital and viable business cluster will be destroyed.

The mall intended for the South Bronx will present long, blank exterior walls, offering only a few corridors into the surrounding neighborhood. In addition, the adjacent big-box store is strongly opposed by local unions because of the employment practices of this type of merchandiser. Much of the site will be dedicated to parking decks, The architects' renderings of the center show urbane visitors sipping cappuccino at outdoor sidewalk cafés flanking the mall. Presumably these boulevardiers would ignore the noise, soot, exhaust, and bird droppings drifting down from the highway immediately above them.

The justification for the project primarily stems from its economic contribution rather than the physical improvements it will contribute to the area. One of the claims of the Gateway Center's developer is that the impoverished residents of the South Bronx crave the opportunity to shop at deep-discount stores. This is probably true, as New York has seen rising poverty and a declining median income since 1990. Residents are caught in a vicious circle: they cannot afford to patronize independent shopkeepers because their wages are so low, and their wages are so low because large corporations have been able to force down the general wage rate, justifying their stinginess as required by competition. The introduction of a big box store into this part of the Bronx will create more poorly paid employees who can only manage to patronize businesses that pay exploitative wages.

A legal process was followed, as determined by judicial decisions, and the deal was carried out with approval of the Community Board, the City Planning Commission, and the City Council. It was entirely a matter of local decision-making, with no involvement of either the state or the federal government.<sup>2</sup> One could argue that structural forces (a changing economy, the need to compete) constrained decision-making. But the cases could have been decided differently and benefits could have been more equitably distributed.

One's immediate reaction to this story is that injustice was done. The benefits of the project accrued to a wealthy developer and nationally owned chain stores. There was discrimination against small, independently owned businesses that were based in minority ethnic groups. Open space planning was conducted in a way intended to assist the New York Yankees rather than local residents. Can we demonstrate that these outcomes were unjust, and if so, by what criteria?

### **Progressive Values**

For the most part, empirical analysis, policy development, and theoretical formulation have proceeded on separate tracks.<sup>3</sup> Thus, my story of the Bronx Terminal Market resembles numerous other case studies in the urban literature that describe redevelopment projects and trace their outcomes to the power of the pro-growth coalition or the urban regime (Mollenkopf 1983, Logan and Molotch 1987, Fainstein and Fainstein 1986). They rarely, however, propose alternative policies. On the other hand, theoretical

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<sup>2</sup> Some state tax benefits will accrue to the developer as a consequence of the site's location in an Empire State Development Zone. The state, however, was not an active participant in the decision-making process.

<sup>3</sup> . Some urbanists have started to formulate ethical theories (inter alia, Sayer and Storper, Forester, Sennett), and some political theorists and philosophers have directly or indirectly concerned themselves with urban issues (inter alia, Fischer, Nussbaum, Young).

development of value criteria usually neither deals with specific cases nor spells out appropriate policy.<sup>4</sup> I can, however, rattle out a list of values that urbanists generally regard as goods and bads:

1. public space
  - a. bad: lack of access, homogeneity
  - b. good: heterogeneity
2. quality of built environment
  - a. bad: inauthenticity, conformist architecture
  - b. good: historical accuracy; cutting edge architecture
3. planning
  - a. bad: rule of experts
  - b. good: citizen participation
4. social control
  - a. Bad: order/ domination
  - b. Resistance/ conflict
5. housing
  - a. bad: luxury dwellings
  - b. good: affordable units
6. segregation
  - a. bad: exclusion
  - b. good : mixing, even if conflictual
7. mega-projects
  - a. bad: large, top-down planned
  - b. good: popular, incremental, preservation
8. social services
  - a. bad: privatization, individualization
  - b. good: collective consumption
9. economic development
  - a. bad: entrepreneurial state
  - b. good: small business, cooperatives
10. environment
  - a. bad: laissez-faire
  - b. good: regulation; green development

Philosophers, in contrast to urban scholars, spend their time developing and elaborating their ideas concerning justice, but their scrutiny is rarely directed to urban

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<sup>4</sup> The work of David Harvey (2003,1992) particularly his discussion of Paris and his article analyzing the conflict over Tompkins Square Park, is an important exception to this generalization.

issues.<sup>5</sup> Contemporary discussions of justice within philosophy nevertheless do concern themselves with issues that are also of central importance to urbanists and can therefore be extended to evaluating urban policy. Foremost are the questions of equality, democracy, and difference.

### **Philosophical Approaches**

The work of John Rawls (1971) constitutes the usual starting point for discussions of equality. As is well known, Rawls begins by positing an original position where individuals, behind a veil of ignorance, do not know their status in whatever society to which they will belong. Rawls's first principle is liberty and his second, subsidiary principle is "difference," by which he means equality. His argument is that free individuals, acting rationally, will choose a rough equality of primary goods so as to assure that they will not end up in an inferior position. Rawls's approach has been so influential because it is able to justify equality without resorting to natural law, theology, altruism, Marxist teleology, or a diagnosis of human nature. Rather it presents a logical argument within a vocabulary acceptable to proponents of rational choice theory.

Feminists, communitarians, and multiculturalists accuse Rawls of paying insufficient attention to other values besides primary goods, an obliviousness to social differences resulting from nonmaterial causes, and a failure to understand that society itself (i.e. community, interpersonal relations) is a good that is excluded by his emphasis on the individual. The question of whether Rawls's definition of primary goods can stretch to cover nonmaterial considerations does not concern us here, but, as will be discussed below, issues of gender, cultural difference, and individualism do.

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<sup>5</sup> Iris Marion Young is unusual in having concerned herself specifically with urban questions, perhaps as a consequence of teaching for years within a planning program at the University of Pittsburgh.

Nevertheless, we can take away from Rawls for our purposes his justification of equality as a rational approach to organizing a “well-ordered society” or a well-ordered city.

Sen (1999) and Nussbaum’s (2000) capabilities approach offers a further avenue for establishing values appropriate to the just city. Capabilities are what people are able to do and be; they do not describe how people actually function (i.e. end state) but rather what they have the opportunity to do. One need not exercise one’s capabilities if one chooses not to (e.g. one can become a monk), but the opportunity must be available, including a consciousness of the value of these capabilities. According to this reasoning, each person must be treated as an end, and there is a threshold level of each capability beneath which human functioning is not possible. Thus, even if it could be demonstrated that the eviction of the Bronx merchants would produce the greatest good for the greatest number, the deprivation of their capability to earn a living could not be justified.

Nussbaum argues that capabilities cannot be traded off against each other. She lists, *inter alia*, life, health, bodily integrity, access to education, control over one’s environment (political and material) as necessary capabilities. Translated into a communal rather than individualistic ethic, the capabilities approach would protect urban residents from having to sacrifice quality of life for financial gain. Hence, for example, communities desperate for an economic base should not have to accept toxic waste sites because they lack any other form of productive enterprise. In contrast, conservative economists who support establishing market systems in pollution controls see such trade-offs as highly rational and to be desired.

Nussbaum further argues that false consciousness exists and that preferences are shaped, not simply there to be discovered. Thus, the welfare economics criterion of

maximizing choice becomes undermined if people are deluded regarding the nature of a particular preference. Again, to use the Bronx example, members of the City Planning Commission and the Bronx City Council delegation accepted unquestioningly the argument presented by the developers and city officials that residents of the Bronx would gain employment, amenities and purchasing power through the construction of a shopping mall. They never were provided a developed conception of alternative forms of development or of a refurbished wholesale food market catering to ethnic cuisines and consequently their preferences were insufficiently informed.

Of philosophers Jürgen Habermas has probably had the most influence on the discipline of planning (see Healey 2006, Forester 1993). The ideal speech situation and concepts of deliberative democracy have particularly resonated within planning theory. Habermas's thought brings into play concepts of rationality, truth-telling, and democracy; its assumption is that through discourse, participants in decision-making will arrive at the best decision resulting from the force of the best argument. While offering criteria for evaluating the decision-making process, this approach does not, however, as Sen and Nussbaum's capabilities do, provide a metric for evaluating policy outcomes.

Henri Lefebvre, like Iris Marion Young, is a philosopher who explicitly concerned himself with urbanism. His argument for "the right to the city" supports in particular the fight against the privatization of public space and the maintenance of heterogeneity within metropolitan areas (Lefebvre 1996; Mitchell 2003). As applied to the Bronx, it condemns the taking of public parks for a new Yankee Stadium and the takeover of the Market by a speculative developer. But, the "right" to the city" lacks specificity, both in terms of what is included in that right and what is meant by the city. It is a vague concept

that is more useful as a rhetorical device than a policy-making instrument. At the same time it is useful to urban theorists because of its explicit concern with space, a variable excluded in most philosophical writing.

These philosophers then offer a route for considering planning actions and identifying their contributions to individual self-realization. They do provide criteria for evaluating policy. The fairly glaring weakness of their arguments as practical tools is their lack of concern for the methods of achieving their ends, their lack of a formula for dealing with entrenched power, and their indifference to the costs and trade-offs that might be incurred by actually seeking to produce social justice. Nussbaum contends that it is unacceptable to trade capabilities against each other; that all must be achieved. This, however, may not be possible. Unlike Marx, who criticized the utopians for their failure to identify a means to achieving their ends, contemporary political philosophers apparently feel that implementation is someone else's concern. But planners, policy makers, and political activists, cannot wipe out history and act as if they start from scratch—they have to be contextualists. While utopian ideals provide goals toward which to aspire and inspiration by which to mobilize a constituency, they do not offer a strategy for transition within given historical circumstances. As Marx reminded us, people make their own history, but not under circumstances of their own making. Original positions, desired capabilities, ideal speech situations, and rights to the city seem remote from the actualities of the Bronx.

### **Practicalities**

All these endeavors at providing a normative framework need to be examined in relation to practical realities of regime formation, social exclusion, and the bases of



conflict, and they ought to take into account the variation among places. Each philosophical line of attack presents serious issues. Rawls justifies the value of equality by arguing that, in the original position, behind a veil of ignorance, each individual would opt for it. We are, however, never in the original position (as is argued by communitarian critics). Rawls's "difference principle" (ironically) evades questions of difference based on disability or multiculturalism (see Nussbaum 2006; Young 1990). Equality of primary goods does not compensate for physical incapacity or disrespect.<sup>6</sup> The Market merchants who sold goods to bodega owners did not receive the same deference as the owners of the New York Yankees. Not only were they treated unjustly in the sense that they did not receive fair compensation for their loss of business, but their outrage and alternative proposals were treated with indifference and even contempt.

Nor does the difference principle deal with the loss of liberty arising from obligations arising from family responsibilities and the limitations they place on liberty. Thus, Rawls has been criticized as overly materialistic (Young, 1990, p. 16; Nussbaum 2000, chap. 1; Hirschmann 1989; Jaggar 1983). Within rational choice theory it is always possible to compensate an individual for loss. In law, for instance, this outlook is codified in the payment of damages—you lose an arm in an industrial accident, and you receive X amount of dollars according to a Workman's Compensation schedule. But we know that an arm is not really equivalent to any amount of money. Likewise one cannot escape the obligations of parenthood by paying a babysitter.

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<sup>6</sup> Rawls (1971, p. 440) does state that self-respect is "perhaps the most important primary good." One of the two components of self-respect is "finding our person and deeds appreciated and confirmed by others."

Starting with the individual leads to a discussion of equality among individuals rather than of social relationships among collectivities. Much of philosophical discussion in relation to justice thus revolves around the question of the desirability of equality based on primary goods—for example, whether or not handicapped individuals should receive the same amount of primary goods as everyone else or whether they should receive additional, compensatory benefits (Anderson 1999; Nussbaum 2006). A more sociological discussion would employ the term equity instead and concern itself with redressing disadvantage as it affects groups.

Equity leads us to include a broad range of considerations that concern us as planners—for example, the impacts of environmentally degrading facilities on different social groups, or who has access to public space and for what purposes public space can be used. It points to the results of public policies rather than to simply the analysis of starting points. By examining outcomes in relation to groups we avoid utilitarian cost-benefit analyses that focus on aggregates and we also have a better handle on power relations and social structures.

Failure to acknowledge the coherence of collectivities and their structural relationships to each other evades a fundamental social issue of redistribution—how avoid imposing an unacceptable burden on the better-off. How much social conflict is an acceptable price to pay for greater justice? What circumstances allow the diminution of control (political and material) of those who have a disproportionate amount? The starting point of individual liberty also avoids questions that bear on the character of collective goods—e.g. a high-quality built environment—if they are not necessary for the development of capabilities or remedying inequality. A recent debate on Chicago that has

appeared on the urban sociology listserv has concerned whether the creation of a lively city with attractive amenities has widespread benefits or whether it is only pertinent to bourgeois consumers while low-income groups continue to suffer from social exclusion (Gilderbloom 2006). As phrased in this particular discussion, there seems to be an underlying assumption that low-income people do not care for amenities. In other words, it is implied that city beautification matters only to urban elites and that working class people care only for material benefits. Once, when I was teaching in New Brunswick, NJ, I asked a local minister, who was lecturing to my class, whether his congregation, which mainly resided in public housing, resented the transformation of downtown by brick sidewalks and street furniture. Did he feel that their space was being taken away from them for the benefit of young urban professionals. “Are you serious?” he replied. “Do you think my people don’t like to be somewhere that looks nice?” The right to the city ought to refer to more than mere inclusion—it needs to encompass access to an appealing city. Reaction against exclusionary practices seems to have devolved into regarding an association between low income people and ugly surroundings as desirable.

The capabilities approach can be usefully applied to urban issues but it is undeveloped for urban institutions and programs. In Sen’s (1999 chap. 3) attack on utilitarianism he argues against the analysis typically employed in the cost-benefit accounting that is used to justify urban capital programs. These analyses typically exaggerate benefits and underestimate costs (Flyvbjerg et al. 2003; Altshuler and Luberoff 2003), rely on aggregates, and do not concern themselves with distributional outcomes. A more sensitive form of analysis asks who benefits and assesses what outputs each group in the population receives. Then, applying either the difference principle or

the capabilities approach, we should opt for that alternative that benefits the least well off. The definition of the least well off, however, is subjective and is usually categorized according to social group affiliation. What we do know is that it is the group most lacking in political and financial power and thus in the real world least likely to prevail.

Philosophers have had to take account of the post-modernist/post-structuralist emphasis on the situatedness of the speaker and its assault on the existence of a unitary ethic. Those like Nussbaum (1999 chap 1) who seek to retain a universalistic ethic agree that social concepts of the good differ but still maintain that there is a broad common value structure, even if that structure embraces tolerance and difference itself. Rawls (1971; 2001) asserts that neither a socialist command economy nor capitalist laissez-faire one can achieve justice. Even the welfare state fails in this goal, because it concentrates the control of productive resources in one group and produces a disadvantaged class. Current developments in the welfare states of Northern Europe, where income support for unemployed citizens from mainly immigrant backgrounds does not succeed in quelling their anger at their situation, validates Rawls's argument. But the fact that economic disadvantage coincides with ethnic and religious difference means that simply equalizing primary goods would not overcome issues arising from lack of what philosophers term "recognition" (Fraser and Honneth. 2003).

Rawls opts for either a "property-owning democracy" (i.e. widely distributed ownership of productive assets) or liberal socialism as the basis for a "well-ordered society." The question comes up again: how do we get there? What arguments can make people accept redistribution if they already know that they are in an advantaged position? It cannot be simply how it would feel to be in the other person's place if we already know

we are not. This is a particularly acute problem if those who are advantaged identify the disadvantaged as “other” in terms of ethnicity, religion, or color. There needs to be an argument based on collective good—social rationality—rather than simply individual rationality (as in Rousseau’s concept of the general will), even though it need not be a strictly utilitarian one. And, in practical terms, it must be backed by the force of social movement or a supportive elite.

Is it feasible to move toward this desired state (of property-owning democracy or liberal socialism) at the urban level? It would be easier if more goods that are controlled at the local level were universally publicly provided. For example, in London the Labour government has eliminated entrance and user fees for publicly owned facilities even while taxing cars that enter central London; we take the public library for granted—why should not other entertainment/and educational providers also offer free or very inexpensive services? (New York City is going in the opposite direction and has just introduced fees into formerly free recreation centers and during the 1975 fiscal crisis ended free tuition at the City University) The more that the whole society has a stake in collective goods, the more reform (“voice”) rather than exit will operate to maintain their quality for everyone (Hirschman 1970).

Under the property-owning democracy formulation, home ownership becomes a desirable goal and the “taking” of private homes for economic development purposes is wrong.<sup>7</sup> Widespread home ownership makes available greater use values in housing for people, but it has the drawback of introducing a speculative financial element into the

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<sup>7</sup> The US Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Kelo v. New London* (June 23, 2005) that municipalities could use the power of eminent domain to take private property in order to turn it over to another private party in furtherance of the aim of economic development.

enjoyment of shelter as well as being inappropriate for households that do not have the resources to cope with system breakdowns or even routine maintenance.<sup>8</sup> We can, however, look to the examples of Amsterdam and Stockholm, where public ownership of land does not inhibit private development of structures but retains increases in land value for the public and makes renting a good choice for many. Even in New York City the World Trade Center and Battery Park City sites are publicly owned and the owners of structures pay land rent (although this situation did not save the Bronx Terminal Market merchants).

### **Growth, Equity, and Diversity**

The most politicized urban issues usually revolve around a conflict between the goals of growth and equity. There is a tendency among critics of redevelopment programs to regard growth as a negative aim—ecologically damaging, with its benefits going to the already affluent. But the benefits of growth would be more widely distributed if ownership were less concentrated, as in the property-owning democracy model.

I.M. Young starts with social institutions rather than individuals in her analyses. She deals especially with the relationships between diversity and equality, distinctive cultural practice and social exchange, difference and integration. In *Inclusion and Democracy* (2000) she takes the position that more democracy will produce more equality, but she considers that the concept of deliberative democracy, as it is usually framed, is impractical in mass societies—it is too time consuming and requires face-to-face interaction. It is not clear, however, as to why her approach, which accepts conflict

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<sup>8</sup> The US government's emphasis on home ownership and its subsidization through the tax code are generally repudiated by progressives. But ownership increases people's feelings of autonomy and protects them from exploitation by landlords. Limits on the size and use of the tax deduction, however, may be justified.

and irresolution, is more practical in terms of arriving at desirable substantive outcomes. And, in fact, it differs little from Habermas's, who also speaks of decentered democracy.

Young (2000) argues for “differentiated solidarity” rather than integration—i.e. geographical groupings with fuzzy borders. Here she does identify a realistic approach to the issue of multiculturalism, which is somewhat at odds with Lefebvre's right to the city and the criterion that public spaces should be highly heterogeneous. Efforts to force residential integration have too frequently been counter-productive—not just in terms of backlash but also in depriving groups of mechanisms for mutual support. Residential differentiation does not necessarily imply lack of mixing elsewhere—in public spaces, at work, in recreational areas, and at school. Cities need to be diverse in macro but not necessarily in the micro. There is criticism of Battery Park City as being a virtual gated community (Kohn 2004), yet anyone can in fact gain access to its open spaces (unlike the Bronx Zoo, which charges a steep admission fee despite its location in the heart of New York's poorest borough). A far greater danger than public spaces with iconography that seems forbidding to some is homogeneous municipalities of rich, poor, and middle on the periphery, not separation within the city itself, as long as internal boundaries are porous. Every public space need not be used by a full range of inhabitants, but should also not keep people out.

Conservative values of order and efficiency may clash with those of equality and diversity. The left dismisses the former as supportive of privilege and legitimated through propaganda. (Sennett, *Uses of Disorder*; Foucault). But these are values that enjoy wide popular support and are essential to the functioning of society. Hobbes's argument that maintenance of personal safety is the first duty of the sovereign cannot be dismissed as

simply a rationalization for authoritarian rule. We need to find out how to interpret these conservative values in humanitarian ways whereby they do not suppress dissent, produce sterile environments or only benefit the rich, but we cannot simply disregard them.

In past work I have portrayed Amsterdam as providing an actual model of social justice. Recently its success has been questioned as result of decline in the Dutch welfare state, ethnic friction, and the tightening of rules for immigration (see Kraamer 2006). Still, it continues to support a great deal of social and political equality, diversity and integration, planning and economic growth. The Amsterdam case implies democratic procedures and just actions flow from situations where rough social justice already exists. While the criteria of social justice may transcend particular social contexts, its implementation requires that elements of realization be already present. Achievement of the just is a circular process, whereby the preexistence of equity begets sentiments in its favor, democratic habits produce popular participation, and diversity increases tolerance. The sobering lesson of present-day Amsterdam, however, shows that even virtuous circles can be destabilized and that disruption, as occurred with the assassination of Theo Van Gogh, can precipitate a chain of events that easily breeds intolerance and fear of difference. Moreover victims can also be victimizers.

### **Process and Outcome**

When we think about planning for cities, we must realize that substance and procedure are inseparable. Open processes do not necessarily produce just outcomes. Proceeding from a situation lacking in supportive values to a more enlightened state presents baffling strategic problems, because mobilizing a force sufficient to overcome barriers to change demands a messianism that contravenes undistorted speech and can



provoke fierce reaction. But, just as substance and procedure must be contemplated simultaneously, so must desirable end states and the forces to achieve them. If Amsterdam presents a rough image of a desirable urban model, strategies and normative emphases will differ in respect to reaching that goal depending on starting point.

In the United States distributional issues are especially salient because social citizenship has not yet been won (Marshall 1965). Justice requires dampening of sentiments based on group identity, greater commitment to common ends, and identification of institutions and policies that offer broadly appealing benefits. As is, in the US no broad-based media exist to communicate alternative approaches to questions raised by urban economic development, metropolitan inequalities, and environmental preservation. The inherently divisive character of identity politics cuts against the building of such institutions and therefore is largely self-defeating.

The historically most effective approach to urban political transformation in the United States used group identity to bolster unity toward greater ends than symbolic recognition. During the 1960s successful movements in the US were based in groups that shared racial, territorial, and class statuses (Fainstein and Fainstein 1974). This neighborhood base, with community control as its objective, has, however, lost its force as a consequence of immigration, gentrification, and racial integration of the civil service (Fainstein and Fainstein 1996). In the new century, however, effectiveness probably means organizing around work status when it overlaps with racial, immigrant or gender situation (living wage movements). Whereas the urban social movements of the past centered on collective consumption (Castells 1977), future movements need to address the organization of work as well as concerning themselves with the consumption issues

of new types of workers. The changing nature of work calls for unions of temporary workers, household workers, and the self-employed rather than traditional organizing around the workplace. Such unions would have to emphasize their service role: job training and placement; establishment of benefit pools and portability of benefits; provision of legal services; credit unions and mortgage assistance. This also means continued organizing around affordable housing, but to be successful such programs would have to recognize the housing needs of the middle class, not simply call for assistance to the poorest. Narrowly targeted policies, however efficient, lack a sufficient constituency and seem unjust to those not benefiting.

Citizen participation's importance also varies with context. In most European cities, there is no absolute material need on the American scale. Especially in France and Germany, the plea for citizen participation, negotiation, and a less authoritative government makes sense. Within this context a more transactional approach represents reform. In the US, where most cities are dominated ideologically as well as politically by business-led regimes and homeowner groups rather than public bureaucracies, individual citizen participation will not provide a path to social transformation even though it can block destructive projects. Urban citizen participation mainly involves participants demanding marginal changes in the status quo or benefits that respond to their narrowly defined interests.

The movement toward a normative vision of the city requires the development of counter-institutions capable of reframing issues in broad terms and of mobilizing organizational and financial resources to fight for their aims. Castells (2000, p. 390) doubts the usefulness of abstract conceptions of justice; he fears that visionary projects

lead only to grief. But there is a need to persuade people to transcend their own narrow self-interest and realize that there are gains to be had from the collective enterprise. Such a mobilization depends on a widely felt sense of justice and sufficient threat from the bottom to induce redistribution as a rational response. Enough of the upper social strata needs to accept a moral code such that they do not resist and will even support, redistributive measures.

Thus, when thinking about just cities, we must think simultaneously about means and ends, social movement strategies and goals as well as appropriate public policy. In the past moves toward progressive ends have arisen from both popular demands and insulated bureaucracies (Flora and Heidenheimer 1987). We cannot know, *ex ante*, what will be the most fruitful source of change, but by continuing to converse about justice, we can make it central to the activity of planning. The very act of naming has power. If we constantly reiterate the call for a just city (as conservative forces forever refer to economic development and the Congress for the New Urbanism talk about smart growth and stopping sprawl), we change popular discourse and enlarge the boundaries of action. Changing the dialogue, so that demands for equity are no longer marginalized, would constitute a first step toward reversing the current tendency that excludes social justice from the aims of urban policy.

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**Urban Artists and the Politics of Visibility:  
A Conversation with Angela Davis** *is part of the Urban Artists  
and Social Change Speaker Series of the Pratt Initiative for Art, Community and Social Change (IACSC).*  
*This event is being held in conjunction with the week of activities on campus celebrating SCHOLAR IN  
RESIDENCE: ANGELA DAVIS.*

**Angela Davis** is known internationally for her ongoing work to combat all forms of oppression in the U.S. and abroad. An activist, writer, philosopher, and teacher, she was associated with the Black Panther Party (BPP) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in the late '60s and early '70s and ran for U.S. Vice President on the Communist Party ticket in 1980. In 1997 she helped found Critical Resistance, a national organization dedicated to dismantling the prison-industrial complex. Today she holds the University of California Presidential Chair in African American and Feminist Studies in the History of Consciousness Department at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

**Film: "The Farm: Angola, USA"**

Tuesday, April 22, 5 P.M.  
*Memorial Hall*

**Keynote Address: "Identifying Racism in the Era of  
NeoColonialism", Angela Davis**

Tuesday, April 22, 7 P.M.  
*Memorial Hall*

**Panel: Urban Artists and the Politics of Visibility:**

Wednesday, April 23, 12:30 P.M.  
*Memorial Hall*  
Angela Davis, Hank Willis Thomas, Dread Scott,  
Amy Sananman, KET

**Talk: "Anchored to the Real", Gina Dent**

Wednesday, April 23, 5 P.M.  
*Alumni Reading Room, Library*

The Pratt Initiative for Art, Community and Social Change (IACSC) promotes interdisciplinary collaboration between communities and organizations, faculty, students and staff from across the institute, and individual artists, for projects that raise awareness of the power of the arts as a catalyst for social change. Contact us through email: [InitiativeACSC@gmail.com](mailto:InitiativeACSC@gmail.com)



# URBAN ARTISTS and the POLITICS of VISIBILITY: A Conversation with Angela Davis

**Panelists:**

Angela Davis  
Hank Willis Thomas  
Dread Scott  
Amy Sananman  
Alan Ket

Community Participation Welcome!  
*Take G train to Clinton/Washington stop*

**April 23, 2008**  
12:30-2:30 pm  
Pratt Institute  
Memorial Hall

# One

of the unequalled powers of art has always been its ability to speak the unspoken and make visible the invisible—and nowhere is this more true than in New York City. On April 23rd, 2008, Pratt will host a conversation between Angela Davis and a range of New York-based artists exploring their shared passion for the “politics of visibility.” Like Davis, these artists defy the separations and silences imposed by institutions like prison, the police, and the military; by categories like race, gender, and class; and by the increasing division between public and private urban space. They work across genres including film and photography, graffiti and mural painting, theater and spoken word. And whether through creative content or social context, their work transcends the confines and conventions of the established art world, politicizing the collective act of seeing and making art, and making visible and audible issues and communities long marginalized in the contemporary city. The event will include short presentations and/or performances by the artists, an open discussion with Angela Davis, and Q&A from the audience.



**DREAD SCOTT** makes revolutionary art to propel history forward. He first received national attention in 1989 when his art became the center of controversy over its use of the American flag. He works in a range of media, including installation, photograph, screen printing, video and performance.



**AMY SANANMAN** is Groundswell Community Mural Project’s founder and Executive Director. Sananman conceived of Groundswell in 1996 with the mission to bring together professional artists, grassroots organizations and communities to create high quality murals in under-represented neighborhood.



**KET** is a Brooklyn native who became an artist while painting subway trains. He is an active aerosol artist traveling extensively to document the street art movement as well as to share his work. Most recently he faced a year long criminal case against the city and lost. He is now a convicted felon.



**HANK WILLIS THOMAS** works reflect on the symbols of commodity culture and the impact of violence in African American communities. He is interested in the subject of perception of reality as it is manipulated in photography and media.



**ART/SPACE**  
**A Conference Exploring the Intersections between**  
**Art, Culture, and Community Development**

**November 3, 2006**  
**Higgins Hall, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY**

As interest in the role of arts and culture in the vitality of cities heats up, how can we address both the opportunities and challenges posed by this new mode of urban development? In cities around the world, and in our own Brooklyn backyard, the fields of art, design, media, and architecture, are seen and used as increasingly powerful development tools. Cities are host to an ever-expanding number of film and theatre festivals, museums and performance spaces, arts districts and gallery rows, public art and iconic buildings. On the one hand such development is helping invigorate cities as great civic spaces. Urban residents are finding that arts and culture are unrivaled in their capacity to enhance the life of the community, to open new spaces for creative expression and political engagement, and to stimulate dynamic forms of economic development. Yet on the other hand, such development also poses new challenges that can't be ignored. As communities struggle over affordable housing and scarce public space, some strategies of "cultural-led growth" may increase the risk of gentrification, displacement, privatization, and the exclusion of certain kinds of art and culture altogether.

When and under what circumstances do arts and culture contribute to these divergent paths of urban development? How important is the broader context and coalitions in which arts and culture are situated—ie the place of arts in the city's urban planning vision, the relationship that artists create with local communities and arts institutions, and the involvement of the arts in urban social movements? And what impact are ongoing struggles over urban space having on the work and creative vision of local and emerging artists?

**ART/SPACE**

To explore these questions, Pratt Institute will host "ART/SPACE," a day-long conference on November 3, 2006, that will bring artists, designers, community organizers, urban planners, urban scholars, and real estate people into dialogue with one another. We will use a comparative approach, relating local dynamics in New York City, and Brooklyn in particular, with those in other parts of the US and the world. The day's events will include morning and afternoon panels, interwoven performances and film screenings, and an exhibit in the Higgins Hall Gallery entitled "Artists in Contested Spaces."

Our overriding goal is to open a dialogue around the intersections between art, culture and urban development so that we at Pratt Institute and around New York can envision new academic initiatives and collaborations in this area. The key themes of this dialogue will include.

- the increasingly powerful role played by arts and culture in community development
- the place of artists and the arts in current struggles over urban space
- the impact of the housing and studio space shortage on contemporary art practice
- innovative collaborations between artists and social movements addressing issues of sustainable urban development
- funding opportunities in the growing field of arts and community development

## **Participants**

We have invited the following artists, scholars, community organizations, neighborhood-based cultural institutions, real estate people, urban planners, and granting organizations.

“\*” = confirmed

- William Aguado, Executive Director, Bronx Council on the Arts \*
- Joe Amrhein, artist and founder of artist-run gallery Pierogi, the first gallery in Williamsburg
- Caron Atlas, writer and consultant on community arts \*
- Jonathan Bowles, Director, Center for an Urban Future, publisher of “The Creative Engine: How Arts & Culture is Fueling Economic Growth in NYC Neighborhoods” \*
- Claudine Brown, Arts Program Director for Nathan Cummings Foundation
- Jackie Chang, Arts & Special Projects Manager, El Puente, Brooklyn, NY \*
- Paul Chang, artist, New York City
- Jan Cohen-Cruz, Professor of Arts and Public Policy, NYU, and Action Lab Resident Scholar, The Bronx Museum \*
- Tom Finkelpearl, Executive Director, The Queens Museum
- Juan Flores, CUNY and Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College, for his writing on the history of casita culture in New York City
- Miguel Garcia, deputy director of Community and Resource Development, Ford Foundation
- Jacqueline Leavitt, urban planning professor, UCLA, speaking of her work on the Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice in East LA \*
- Rick Lowe, Houston-based sculptor and founder of Project Row Houses \*
- Ann Markusen, urban planner University of Minnesota and Director of the Arts Economy Initiative \*
- Rosie Perez, actress, filmmaker, and Develop Don’t Destroy Brooklyn board member
- Reverend Billy, preacher and performance artist
- Duke Riley, artist and MFA student, Pratt Institute, showing and discussing work from show at the White Box Gallery, addressing gentrification in New York City \*
- Maria Torres, President, The Point, The Bronx
- Vanessa Whang, Program Director, Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC/Artography), Boston
- Rosten Woo, designer, writer, policy analyst and principal at the Center for Urban Pedagogy
- Jawole Willa Jo Zollar Choreographer and Artistic Director, Urban Bush Women, Brooklyn.

## **Planning Committee**

The organizing of this conference is led by a committee of faculty, staff, and students from across Pratt, as well as an outside consultant.

- Conference organizers: Miriam Greenberg, Social Science and Cultural Studies and Ayse Yonder, Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment, and faculty fellow, Pratt Center for Community Development
- Exhibit Curators: Jim Costanzo, Digital Arts, and Brynna Tucker, Student Affairs
- Outside Consultant: Caron Atlas
- Graduate Assistant: Cynthia Turner, Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment

**Additional assistance from and thanks to:**

- Janelle Farris, Pratt Center for Community Development
- Margaret Fox, Pratt Center for Community Development
- Brad Lander, Director of the Pratt Center for Community Development
- Deborah Meehan, Media Arts
- Uzma Rizvi, Social Science and Cultural Studies and faculty fellow Pratt Center for Community Development
- Monica Shay, Chair, Arts and Cultural Management
- Kwabena Slaughter, Special Events Coordinator, Multi-Media Services
- Laura Wolf Powers, Chair, Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment

**Sponsors**

This conference has been made possible by generous donations from the following divisions at Pratt Institute:

The School of Architecture  
The School of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
The Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment  
The Pratt Center for Community Development  
The Department of Design Management  
The Program in Critical and Visual Studies  
The United Federation of College Teachers, Pratt Local  
The Pratt Film Society

Martha Rosler

# Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism

01/14

## PART ONE: ART AND URBANISM

When Abstract Expressionists explored the terrain of the canvas and Pollock created something of a disorientation map by putting his unstretched canvases on the floor, few observers and doubtless fewer painters would have acknowledged a relationship between their concerns and real estate, let alone transnational capital flows.

Space, as many observers have noted, has displaced time as the operative dimension of advanced, globalizing (and post-industrial?) capitalism.<sup>1</sup> Time itself, under this economic regime, has been differentiated, spatialized, and divided into increasingly smaller units.<sup>2</sup> Even in virtual regimes, space entails visibility in one way or another. The connection between Renaissance perspective and the enclosures of late medieval Europe, together with the new idea of terrain as a real-world space to be negotiated, supplying crossing points for commerce, was only belatedly apparent. Similarly, the rise of photography has been traced to such phenomena as the encoding of earthly space and the enclosing of land in the interest of ground rent. For a long time now, art and commerce have not simply taken place side by side, but have actively set the terms for one another, creating and securing worlds and spaces in turn.



Jackson Pollock in his studio.

My task here is to explore the positioning of what urban business evangelist Richard Florida has branded the “creative class,” and its role, ascribed and anointed, in reshaping economies



Meeting of the Situationist International, Göteborg, 1961.



Paris, May '68.



in cities, regions, and societies. In pursuit of that aim, I will consider a number of theories – some of them conflicting – of the urban and of forms of subjectivity. In reviewing the history of postwar urban transformations, I consider the culture of the art world on the one hand, and, on the other, the ways in which the shape of experience and identity under the regime of the urban render chimerical the search for certain desirable attributes in the spaces we visit or inhabit. Considering the creative-class hypothesis of Richard Florida and others requires us first to tease apart and then rejoin the urbanist and the cultural strains of this argument. I would maintain, along with many observers, that in any understanding of postwar capitalism, the role of culture has become pivotal.

I open the discussion with the French philosopher and sometime Surrealist Henri Lefebvre, whose theorization of the creation and capitalization of types of space has been enormously productive. Lefebvre begins his book of 1970, *The Urban Revolution*, as follows:

I'll begin with the following hypothesis: Society has been completely urbanized. This hypothesis implies a definition: An *urban society* is a society that results from a process of complete urbanization. This urbanization is virtual today, but will become real in the future.<sup>3</sup>

Lefebvre's book helped usher in a modern version of political geography, influencing Fredric Jameson, David Harvey, and Manuel Castells, among other prominent writers and theorists of both culture and the urban (Harvey, in turn, is cited as an influence by Richard Florida). In his introduction to Lefebvre's book, geographer Neil Smith writes that Lefebvre "put the urban on the agenda as an explicit locus and target of political organizing."<sup>4</sup>

Succumbing to neither empiricism nor positivism, Lefebvre did not hesitate to describe the urban as a virtual state whose full instantiation in human societies still lay in the future. In Lefebvre's typology, the earliest cities were political, organized around institutions of governance. The political city was eventually supplanted in the Middle Ages by the mercantile city, organized around the marketplace, and then by the industrial city, finally entering a critical zone on the way to a full absorption of the agrarian by the urban. Even in less developed, agrarian societies that do not (yet) appear to be either industrialized or urban, agriculture is subject to the demands and constraints of industrialization. In other words, the urban paradigm has overtaken and subsumed all others, determining the social relations and the

conduct of daily life within them. (Indeed, the very concept of "daily life" is itself a product of industrialism and the urban.)

Lefebvre's emphasis on the city contradicted the orderliness of Le Corbusier, whom he charged with having failed to recognize that the street is the site of a living disorder, a place, in his words, to play and learn; it is a site of "the informative function, the symbolic function, the ludic function."<sup>5</sup> Lefebvre cites the observations of the foundational urban observer Jane Jacobs, and identifies the street itself, with its bustle and life, as the only security against violence and criminality. Finally, Lefebvre notes – soon after the events and discourses of May '68 in France – that revolution takes place in the street, creating a new order out of disorder.

The complexity of city life often appears, from a governmental standpoint, to be a troublesome Gordian knot to be disentangled or sliced through. A central task of modernity has been the amelioration and pacification of the cities of the industrializing metropolitan core; the need was already apparent by the middle of the nineteenth century, when the prime examples were those at the epicenter of industrialism, London and Manchester.<sup>6</sup> Control of these newly urbanizing populations also required raising them to subsistence level, which happened gradually over the succeeding decades, and not without tremendous struggles and upheaval. Industrialization also vastly increased the flow of people to cities, as it continues to do – even in poor countries with very low-income levels per capita – to the extent that Lefebvre's prediction regarding full urbanization is soon to come true; since 2005, there are more people living in cities than in the countryside.<sup>7</sup>

In the advanced industrial economies, twentieth-century urban planning encompassed not only the engineering of new transportation modalities but also the creation of new neighborhoods with improved housing for the working classes and the poor. For a few brief decades, the future seemed within the grasp of the modern. After the Second World War, bombed-out European cities provided something of a blank canvas, delighting the likes of W.G. Witteveen, a Rotterdam civil engineer and architect who exulted in the possibilities provided by the near-total destruction of that port city by Nazi bombing in May 1940. In many intact or nearly intact cities in the US and Western Europe, both urban renewal and postwar reconstruction followed a similar plan: clear out the old and narrow, divide or replace the dilapidated neighborhoods with better roads and public transport.<sup>8</sup> While small industrial production continued as the urban economic



backbone, many cities also invited the burgeoning corporate and financial services sectors to locate their headquarters there, sweetening their appeal through zoning adjustments and tax breaks. International Style commercial skyscrapers sprouted around the world as cities became concentrations, real and symbolic, of state and corporate administration.

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Paris.

The theoretical underpinning for a renovated cityscape came primarily from the earlier, utopian “millennial” and interwar designs of forward-looking, albeit totalizing, plans for remaking the built environment. It was not lost on the city poor that so-called urban renewal projects targeted their neighborhoods and the cultural traditions that enlivened them. Cities were being remade for the benefit of the middle and upper classes, and the destruction of the older neighborhoods – whether in the interest of commercial, civic, or other forces, such as enhanced mobility for trucks and private cars – extirpated the haunts of those beyond the reach of law and bourgeois proclivities, adversely affecting the lives and culture of the poorer residents.

One may trace the grounding of the mid-century European group the Situationist International in a recognition of the growing role of the visual – and its relation to spatiality – in modern capitalism, and thus the complicit role of art in systems of exploitation. The core French group of Situationists – Lefebvre’s sometime students (and, some might say, collaborators and certainly occasional adversaries) – attacked, as Lefebvre had done, the radiant-city visions of Le Corbusier (and by implication other utopian modernists) for designing a carceral city in which the poor are locked up and thrust into a strangely narrow utopia of light and space, but removed from a free social life in the streets. (Le Corbusier’s housing projects called “Unités d’Habitation,” the most famous of which is in Marseille, were elevated above their garden surrounds on pilotis. The floors were called *rues*, or streets, and one such “street” was to be devoted to shops; kindergartens and – at least in the one I visited, in Firminy, near St. Etienne – a low-powered radio station were also located

within the building, together suggesting the conditions of a walled city.)

We will leave Monsieur Le Corbusier’s style to him, a style suitable for factories and hospitals, and no doubt eventually for prisons. (Doesn’t he already build churches?) Some sort of psychological repression dominates this individual – whose face is as ugly as his conceptions of the world – such that he wants to squash people under ignoble masses of reinforced concrete, a noble material that should rather be used to enable an aerial articulation of space that could surpass the flamboyant Gothic style. His cretinizing influence is immense. A Le Corbusier model is the only image that arouses in me the idea of immediate suicide. He is destroying the last remnants of joy. And of love, passion, freedom.

– Ivan Chetchevlov<sup>9</sup>



Paul Gavarni, *Le Flâneur*, 1842.

Perhaps it is the primacy of the spatial register, with its emphasis on visibility, but also its turn to

virtuality, to representation, that also accounts for architecture's return to prominence in the imaginary of the arts, displacing not only music but architecture's spectral double, the cinema. This change in the conduct of everyday life, and the centrality of the city to such changes, were apparent to the Situationists, and Debord's concept of what he termed "the society of the spectacle" is larger than any particular instances of architecture or real estate, and certainly larger than questions of cinema or television. Debord's "spectacle" denotes the all-encompassing, controlling nature of modern industrial and "post-industrial" culture. Thus, Debord defines the spectacle not in terms of representation alone but also in terms of the social relations of capitalism and its ability to subsume all into representation: "The spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images."<sup>10</sup> Elements of culture were in the forefront, but the focus was quite properly on the dominant mode of production.

The Situationists' engagement with city life included a practice they called the *dérive*. The *dérive*, an exploration of urban neighborhoods, a version of the nineteenth-century tradition of the *flâneur*, and an inversion of the bourgeois

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promenade of the boulevards (concerned as the latter was with visibility to others, while the *flâneur's* was directed toward his own experience), hinged on the relatively free flow of organic life in the neighborhoods, a freedom from bureaucratic control, that dynamic element of life also powerfully detailed by Lefebvre and Jane Jacobs. Both Baudelaire and Benjamin gave the *flâneur* prominence, and by the end of the twentieth century the *flâneur* was adopted as a favored, if minor, figure for architects wishing to add pedestrian cachet to projects such as shopping malls that mimic public plazas – thus closing the book on the unadministered spaces that the Situationists, at least, were concerned with defending.

The Western art world has periodically rediscovered the Situationists, who presently occupy what a friend has described as a quasi-religious position, embodying every aspiring artist/revolutionary's deepest wish – to be in both the political and the artistic vanguard simultaneously. The ghostly presence of the Situationists, including Debord, Asger Jorn, Raoul Vaneigem, and Constant, predictably took up residence at the moment the very idea of the artistic vanguard disappeared. The cautionary dilemma they pose is how to combat the power



Photograph by Richard Layman of poster in the collection of the Washington, DC, Department of Transportation.



of “spectacle culture” under advanced capitalism without following their decision to abandon the terrain of art (as Duchamp had done earlier). To address this question, context and history are required. Let us continue with the events of the 1960s, in the Situationists’ moment – characterized by rising economic expectations for the postwar generation in the West and beyond, but also by riot and revolt, both internal and external.

By the 1960s, deindustrialization was on the horizon of many cities in the US and elsewhere as the flight of manufacturing capital to nonunion areas and overseas was gathering steam, often abetted by state policy. In an era of decline for central cities, thanks to suburbanization and corporate, as well as middle-class (white) flight, a new transformation was required. Dilapidated downtown neighborhoods became the focus of city administrations seeking ways to revive them while simultaneously withdrawing city services from the remaining poor residents, ideally without fomenting disorder. In Paris, riven by unrest during the Algerian War, the chosen solution encompassed pacification through police mobilization and the evacuation of poor residents to a new, outer ring of suburbs, or *banlieues*, yoking the utopian high-rise scheme to the postwar banishment of the urban poor and the dangerous classes.<sup>11</sup> By 1967, the lack of economic viability of these *banlieues*, and the particular stress that put on housewives, was widely recognized, becoming the subject of Jean-Luc Godard’s brilliant film *Two or Three Things I Know About Her*.

In other countries, conversely, the viability of “housing projects” or “council housing” in improving the lives of the urban poor has been increasingly challenged, and it is an article of neoliberal faith that such projects cannot succeed – a prophecy fulfilled by the covert racial policies underlying the siting of these projects and the selection of residents, followed, in cities that wish to tear them down, by consistent underfunding of maintenance and services. In Britain the Thatcherist solution was to sell the flats to the residents, with the rationale of making the poor into stakeholders, with results yet to be determined, (although the pitfalls seem obvious). With the failure of many state-initiated postwar housing schemes for the poor supplying a key exhibit in neoliberal urban doctrine, postmodern architecture showed itself willing to jettison humanism in the wake of the ruin of the grand claims of utopian modernism. In the US, commentator Charles Jencks famously identified as “the moment of postmodernism” the phased implosion in 1972 – in a bemusing choreography often replayed today – of the

Pruitt-Igoe housing project, a 33-building modernist complex in St. Louis, Missouri. Pruitt-Igoe, commissioned in 1950 during an era of postwar optimism, had been built to house those who had moved to the city for war work – primarily proletarianized African-Americans from the rural South.

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Pruitt-Igoe housing project in the 1950s and in the process of implosion.

The abandonment of the widely held twentieth-century paradigm of state- and municipality-sponsored housing thus properly joined the other retreats from utopianism that constituted the narratives of postmodernism. Either blowing up or selling off housing projects has subsequently been adopted enthusiastically by many US cities, such as Newark New Jersey, which happily supplied a mediatized spectacle of eviction and displacement – but so far has not reached my home city, New York, primarily because, as a matter of policy, New York’s housing projects have never occupied the center of town. In post-Katrina New Orleans, however, the moment of Schumpeterian creative destruction allowed for the closure *tout court* of the largely undamaged, 1200-home Lafitte Public Housing Development in the Lower Ninth Ward. (The project was demolished without fanfare or fireworks in 2008).

Throughout the 1960s, as former metropolitan empires schemed, struggled, and strong-armed to secure alternative ways to maintain cheap access to productive resources and raw materials in the post-colonial world, the Western democracies, because of unrest among young people and minorities centering on increasing demands for political agency, were diagnosed by policy elites as ungovernable. In a number of cities, as middle-class adults, and some young “hippies,” were leaving, groups of other people, including students and working class families, took part in poor people’s housing initiatives that included sweat equity (in which the municipality grants ownership rights to those who form collectives to rehabilitate decayed tenement properties, generally the ones in which they are living) or squatting. In cities that have not succeeded, as New York and London have

e-flux journal #21 — december 2010 Martha Rosler  
Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism

done, in turning themselves into centers of capital concentration through finance, insurance, and real estate, the squatter movement has had a long tail and still figures in many European cities. In the US, the urban homesteading movement, primarily accomplished through the individual purchase of distressed homes, quickly became recognized as a new, more benign way of colonizing neighborhoods and driving out the poor. Such new middle-class residents were often referred to by real-estate interests and their newspaper flacks – not to mention an enthusiastic Mayor Ed Koch – as “urban pioneers,” as though the old neighborhoods could be understood according to the model of the Wild West. These developments surely seemed organic to the individuals moving in; as threatened communities began to resist, however, the process of change quickly enough gained a name: gentrification.

In some major cities, some of the colonizers were artists, writers, actors, dancers, and poets. Many lived in old tenements; but artists did not so much want apartments as places to work and live, and the ideal spaces were disused factories or manufacturing lofts. In New York, while poets, actors, dancers, and writers were moving to such old working-class residential areas as the Lower East Side, many artists took up residence in nearby manufacturing-loft neighborhoods. Artists had been living in lofts since at least the 1950s, and while the city winked at such residents, it still considered their situation to be both temporary and illegal. But loft-dwelling artists continued agitating for city recognition and protection, which appeared increasingly

likely to be granted as the 1960s advanced.

A canny observer of this process was New York City-based urban sociologist Sharon Zukin. In her book *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change*, published in 1982, Zukin writes about the role of artists in making “loft living” comprehensible, even desirable. She focuses on the transformation, beginning in the mid-1960s, of New York’s cast-iron district into an “artist district” that was eventually dubbed Soho. In this remarkable book, Zukin lays out a theory of urban change in which artists and the entire visual art sector – especially commercial galleries, artist-run spaces, and museums – are a main engine for the repurposing of the post-industrial city and the renegotiation of real estate for the benefit of elites. She writes:

Looking at loft living in terms of *terrain* and *markets* rather than “lifestyle” links changes in the built environment with the collective appropriation of public goods. ... studying the formation of markets ... directs attention to *investors rather than consumers as the source of change*.<sup>12</sup>

Zukin demonstrates how this policy change was carried forward by city officials, art supporters, and well-placed art patrons serving on land-use commissions and occupying other seats of power.

The creation of constituencies for historic preservation and the arts carried over a fascination with old buildings and artists’ studios into a collective appropriation of

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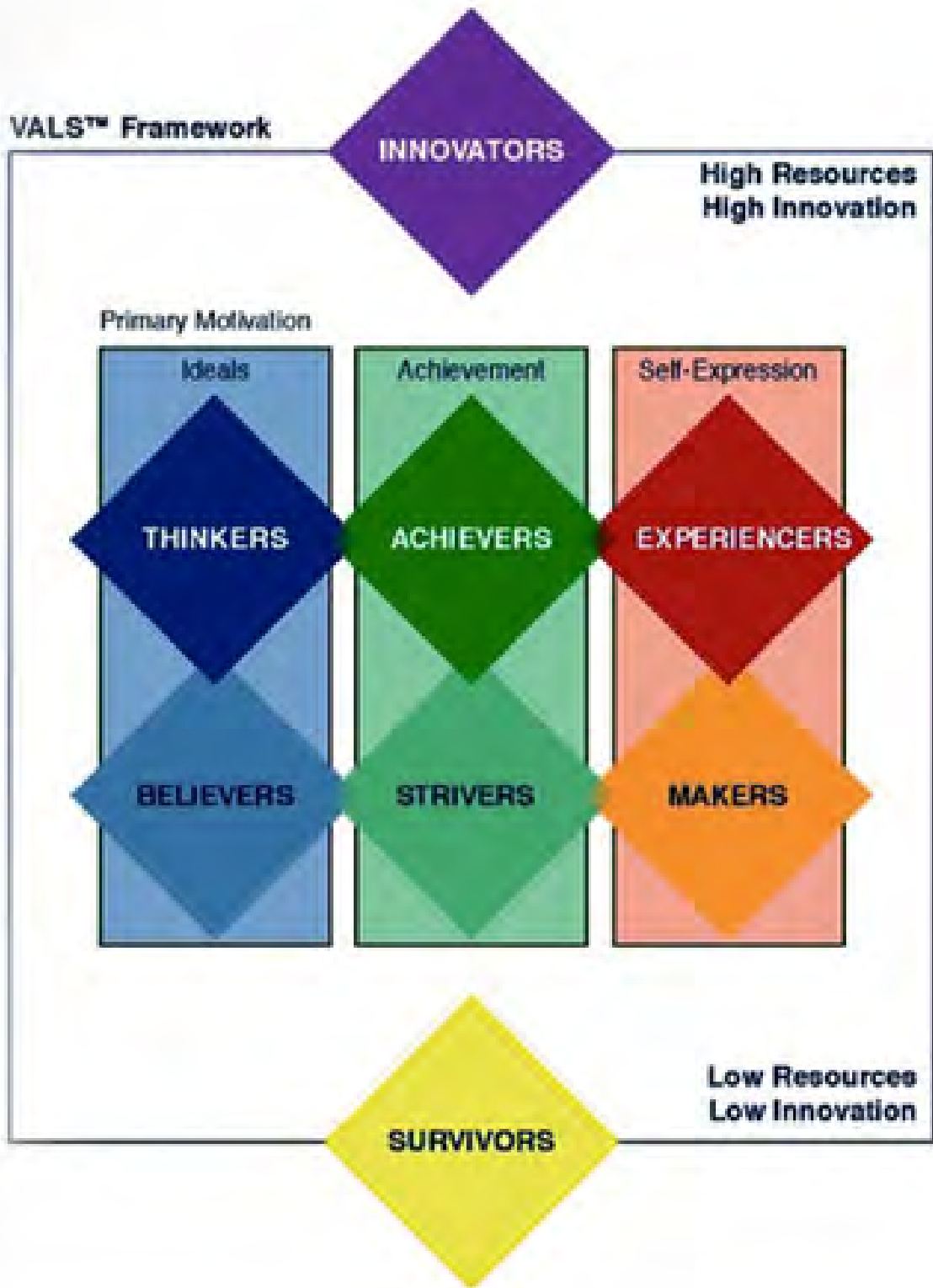


# Art means business for New York.

## Creative industries employ nearly 200,000 New Yorkers.

Source: Alliance for the Arts, “Arts as an Industry: Their Impact on New York City and New York State, 2006”

**VALS™ Framework**



VALS chart.

these spaces for modern residential and commercial use. In the grand scheme of things, loft living gave the *coup de grâce* to the old manufacturing base of cities like New York and brought on the final stage of their transformation into service-sector capitals.<sup>13</sup>

Reminding us that “by the 1970s, art suggested a new platform to politicians who were tired of dealing with urban poverty,” Zukin quotes an artist looking back ruefully at the creation of Soho as a district that addressed the needs of artists rather than those of the poor:

At the final hearing where the Board of Estimate voted to approve SoHo as an artists’ district, there were lots of other groups giving testimony on other matters. Poor people from the South Bronx and Bed-Stuy complaining about rats, rent control, and things like that. The board just shelved those matters and moved right along. They didn’t know how to proceed. Then they came to us. All the press secretaries were there, and the journalists. The klieg lights went on, and the cameras started to roll. And all these guys started making speeches about the importance of art to New York City.<sup>14</sup>

One of Zukin’s many exhibits is this published remark by Dick Netzer, a prominent member of New York’s Municipal Assistance Corporation, the rescue agency set up during New York City’s fiscal near-default:

The arts may be small in economic terms even in this region, but the arts “industry” is one of our few growth industries ... The concentration of the arts in New York is one of the attributes that makes it distinctive, and distinctive in a positive sense: the arts in New York are a magnet for the rest of the world.<sup>15</sup>

Many cities, especially those lacking significant cultural sectors, established other revitalization strategies. Efforts to attract desirable corporations to post-industrial cities soon provoked the realization that it was the human capital in the persons of the managerial elites were the ones whose needs and desires should be addressed. The provision of so-called quality-of-life enhancements to attract these high earners became urban doctrine, a formula consisting of providing delights for the male managers in the form of convention centers and sports stadia, and for the wives, museums, dance, and the symphony. An early, high-profile

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example of the edifice complex as proposed urban enhancement is provided by the John Portman–designed Detroit Renaissance Center of 1977 – a seven-skyscraper riverfront complex owned by General Motors and housing its world headquarters, and including the tallest building in Michigan – meant as a revitalizing engine in the car city that has more recently been cast as the poster child for deindustrialization. But eventually, despite all the bond-funded tax breaks paradoxically given to these edifices, and all the money devoted to support of the arts, cities were failing to build an adequate corporate tax base, even after the trend toward flight from city living had long been reversed. This strategy has continued to be instituted despite its failures, but a better way had to be found. The search for more and better revitalization, and more and better magnets for high earners and tourists, eventually took a cultural turn, building on the success of artists’ districts in post-industrial economies.



Detroit Renaissance Center.

During the turbulent 1960s, the rising middle-class members of the postwar “baby boom” constituted a huge cohort of young people. Whereas the older generation lived lives that seemed primarily to revolve around family and work, the upcoming generation seemed to center theirs primarily on other, more personal and consumerist sources, including the counterculture: music, newspapers, cheap fashion, and the like, coupled with rejection of the corporate “rat race,” majoritarian rule, repressive behavioral codes, and “death culture,” or militarism (nuclear war and Vietnam) – and often rejection of urbanism itself. This highly visible group was closely watched for its tastes. Advertising and marketing, already at what seemed like saturation levels, could segment the market, aiming one set of messages at traditionalist consumers and the other at young



people, and “culture” was transformed into an assemblage of purchases. The youth theme was “revolution” – political “revolution,” whether real, imaginary, or, as it gradually became, one centered on consumerism.

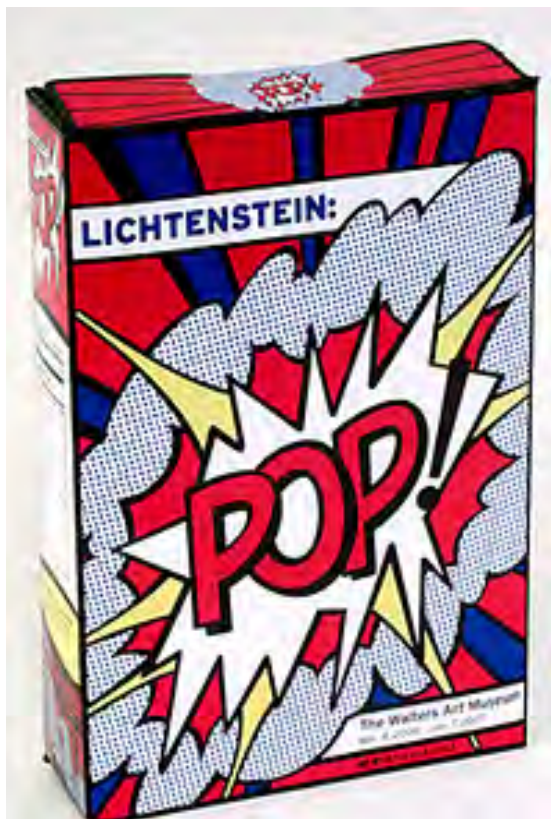
Constellations of consumer choice were studied by research institutes such as the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) based at Stanford, an elite private California university. Founded by Stanford trustees in 1946 to support economic development in the region, SRI International, as it is now officially known, currently describes its mission as “discovery and the application of science and technology for knowledge, commerce, prosperity, and peace.” It was forced off the university campus into stand-alone status in 1970 by students protesting against its military research.

“Lifestyle,” an index to the changes in the terrain of consumerism, was a neologism of the 1960s that quickly became comfortable in everyone’s mouth. In 1978, SRI announced a lifestyle metric, the Values and Lifestyles (VALS) “psychographic,” dubbed by *Advertising Age* as “one of the ten top market research breakthroughs of the 1980s.”<sup>16</sup> VALS today seeks “to find out about a person’s product ownership, media preferences, hobbies, additional

demographics, or attitudes (for example, about global warming).”<sup>17</sup> (Its categories are innovators, thinkers, achievers, experiencers, believers, strivers, makers, and survivors, which articulate in primary and secondary dimensions.) The VALS website establishes its connection to other survey vehicles that provide in-depth information, among other preferences, about how each of the eight VALS types uses, invests, and saves money. Such detailed data helped marketers early on to determine how to tailor their pitches – even for matters that should be subjects of debate in the public square.

Thus, the concept of taste, one of the key markers of social class – understood here as determined by one’s economic relation to the means of production – became transformed into something apparently lacking in hierarchical importance or relationship to power. Rather than representing membership in an economic or even a social group, taste aligns a person with other consumer affinities. In the 1960s, the Greenbergian paradigm based in a Kantian schema of faculties in which taste is the key operator for people of sensibility, also fell. While it would be absurd to conflate the Kantian faculty of taste with consumer taste, there remains a case to be made that the ideas

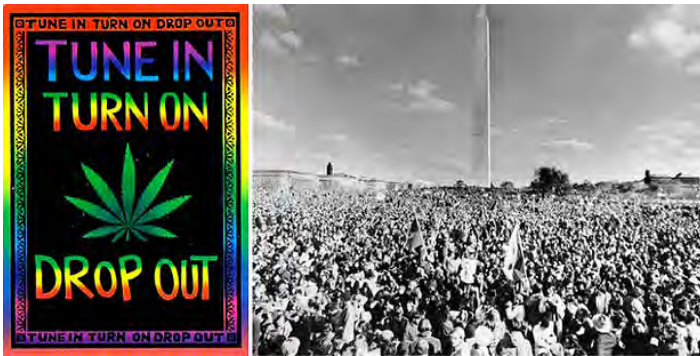
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Advertisement for a Roy Lichtenstein exhibition at the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, in late 2006.

energizing vanguard art shift along with shifts in the social worldview. In a pre-postmodern moment, so to speak, when artists were exhibiting a certain panic over the relentlessly ascending tide of consumerism and mass culture, and Pop art was bidding for a mass audience, the terms of culture shifted.<sup>18</sup>

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Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam, 1969.

A great deal has been asked of artists, in every modern age. In previous eras artists were asked to edify society by showing forth the good, the true, and the beautiful. But such expectations have increasingly come to seem quaint as art has lost its firm connections to the powers of church and state. Especially since the romantics, artists have routinely harbored messianic desires, the longing to take a high position in social matters, to play a transformative role in political affairs; this may be finally understood as a necessary – though perhaps only imaginary – corrective to their roles, both uncomfortable and insecure, as handmaidens to wealth and power. Artists working under patronage conditions had produced according to command, which left them to express their personal dimension primarily through the formal elements of the chosen themes. By the nineteenth century, artists, now no longer supported by patronage, were free to devise and follow many different approaches both to form and to content, including realism and direct social commentary.<sup>19</sup> Still, the new middle-class customers, as well as the state, had their own preferences and demands, even if a certain degree of transgression was both anticipated and accepted, however provisionally (the Salon des Refusés was, after all, established by Napoléon III). The fin de siècle refuge in formalist arguments, in aestheticism, or “art for art’s sake,” has been called by such scholars as John Fekete a defensive maneuver on the part of the era’s advanced artists, establishing a professional distance from the social and honoring the preferences of their high-bourgeois market following a century marked by European

revolutions and in the midst of industrial-labor militancy.<sup>20</sup> In the US, the lionization of art by social and political elites in the new century’s first fifty years had been effective in the acculturation of immigrants, and of the native working class to some degree. Especially in the postwar period, the ramping up of advanced, formalist art provided a secular approach to the transcendent. The mid-twentieth-century rhetorics of artistic autonomy, in the US at least, reassured the knowing public that formalism, and, all the more so, abstraction, would constitute a bulwark against totalitarian leanings. This tacit understanding had been especially persuasive in keeping prudent artists away from political engagement during the Cold War in the 1950s. Under those conditions, only autonomous art could claim to be an art of critique, but advanced, let alone abstract, art could hardly expect to address large numbers of people. Thus, the “professionalization” of art also doomed it to be a highly restricted discourse.<sup>21</sup>



“Sure, I was into revolutions back in the 1960’s. That’s one of my 45s and here’s a 33 and a 1/3.”

Let us look at taste not as a decision reflecting the well-formedness or virtue of an artistic utterance but through the wider popular meaning of the exercise of choice among a range of goods, tangible and intangible (but mostly the former) – that is, as an expression of “lifestyle.” Taste has expressed class membership and social status in every modern industrial society. In 1983, the American cultural historian and English professor Paul Fussell, author of the acclaimed book *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975), published a slim, acerbically acute book called *Class: A Guide Through the American Status System*.<sup>22</sup> There were earlier treatises on ruling elites, such as American

sociologist C. Wright Mills's *Power Elite* or British linguist Alan Ross's 1954 article on distinctions between U and non-U speech patterns, in which U refers to the "upper class" (a discussion that caused an Anglo-American stir when picked up by Nancy Mitford) and Arthur Marwick's *Class: Image and Reality* (1980), cited by Fussell.<sup>23</sup> Fussell meant his book as a popular exposé that taste is not a personal attribute so much as an expression of a definable "socioeconomic" grouping, and in his preface he gleefully describes the horrified, even explosive, reactions middle-class people displayed to the mere mention of class. His scathing description of the missteps of the non-elite are well situated in economic class categories; it is only when he arrives at a class of taste he calls Class X – of which he considers himself a member – that he loses his bearings, besotted by this motley group of self-actualizing people who are mostly university-based and float free of the demands of social codes of dress and behavior, pleasing only themselves. We should recognize in this group not just the expression of the counterculture, now grown up and college educated, but also of the gold mine that had just begun to be intensively lobbied by niche marketers, the "creative class" – a social formation and process that seems to have escaped Fussell's notice.

A couple of decades later in 2000, the conservative ideologue and US media figure David Brooks, in his best-selling book *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There*, quipped that "counter-cultural values have infused the business world – the one sphere of US life where people still talk about fomenting 'revolution' and are taken seriously."<sup>24</sup> His thesis is that in this new information age, members of the highly educated elite "have one foot in the bohemian world of creativity and another foot in the bourgeois realm of ambition and worldly success."<sup>25</sup> Brooks's barbed witticisms claim the triumph of capital over any possible other political world that young people different from him, in the Western democracies and particularly the US, had hoped to create:

We're by now all familiar with modern-day executives who have moved from SDS to CEO, from LSD to IPO. Indeed, sometimes you get the impression the Free Speech movement produced more corporate executives than Harvard Business School.<sup>26</sup>

To decode a bit: "SDS" denotes the emblematic 1960s radical group Students for a Democratic Society; "IPO" stands for a corporation's initial public offering; and the Free Speech movement was the student movement at the elite (though

public) University of California, Berkeley, that agitated on several fronts, sparking the worldwide student movements of the 1960s.

The French intelligentsia have derisively extracted Brooks's neologism "Bobos" from his celebratory analysis, and the book is worth dwelling on here only because of its concentration on taste classes and their relationship to power and influence, and, less centrally, their relevance to literature and criticism.<sup>27</sup> Brooks traces his own intellectual forebears to "the world and ideas of the mid-1950s," remarking regressively:

[W]hile the fever and froth of the 1960s have largely burned away, the ideas of these 1950s intellectuals [William Whyte, Jane Jacobs, J. K. Galbraith, Vance Packard, E. Digby Baltzell] continue to resonate.<sup>28</sup>

Lowering expectations of rigor, Brooks refers to his work as "comic sociology." He compliments his readers on their quirky tastes while ignoring those who do not fit his consumer taste class. The "conspicuous consumption" pattern first described by Thorstein Veblen in *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, published in 1899 during the robber baron era, seemingly does not fit the preferences of the Bobos, who unlike the gilded-age business (but not, it should be noted, technical) class, prefer to spend lots of money on things that appear to be useful and "virtuous" – an adjective often employed ironically in *Bobos*.

A decade later, the laid-back, tolerant wisdom of the benign "Bobo" class-in-ascendancy now appears ephemeral, since in the interim the ostentatious rich have led us into crushingly expensive wars, destroyed the financial markets, restored nepotism, and mobilized the old working class and rural dwellers using a dangerous breed of hater-malarkey to grab and keep political control, all the while becoming vastly richer. Reviewing Brooks, Russell Mokhiber writes,

Most people in the United States (let alone the world) do not share [the Bobos'] expanding wealth and may have markedly different views on important issues, including concepts of "deservedness," fairness, government regulation, and equitable distribution of wealth. For this majority of the population, more confrontation, not less, could be just what is in order.<sup>29</sup>



Richard Florida on TV.

Soon after the collapse of the millennial New Economy that was supposed to raise all boats, Richard Florida, in his best-selling book *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002), instituted a way of talking about the effects of the needs and choices of Sharon Zukin's, as well as, more broadly, Brooks's and Fussell's, target group that framed the positioning of the "creative class" – that cooperative group – as a living blueprint for urban planners.<sup>30</sup>

Turn-of-the-century changes in the composition of the productive classes in the United States and Western Europe as a result of "globalization" – in which mass industrial work shifted East and South and white-collar technical labor in the developed industries rose to ascendancy during the dot-com boom – led to further speculation on the nature of these workers, but seemingly these were more solidly empirical efforts than Brooks's mischievous rendition. Enter Richard Florida, professor at postindustrial Pittsburgh's Carnegie Mellon University, with theories catering to the continuing desire of municipalities such as Pittsburgh to attract those middle-class high-wage earners.

The next installment of this article will address Florida's hypotheses and prescriptions.

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To be continued in Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism, Part Two: Creativity and Its Discontents.  
This essay is an expanded version of a talk given at the third Hermes Lecture at Provinciehuis Den Bosch on November 14, 2010, arising from a suggestion by Camiel van Winkel to consider the work of Richard Florida. I thank Stephen Squibb for his invaluable assistance during the research and editing process. Thanks also to Alexander Alberro and Stephen Wright for their helpful responses.

Martha Rosler is an artist who works with multiple media, including photography, sculpture, video, and installation. Her interests are centered on the public sphere and landscapes of everyday life – actual and virtual – especially as they affect women. Related projects focus on housing, on the one hand, and systems of transportation, on the other. She has long produced works on war and the "national security climate," connecting everyday experiences at home with the conduct of war abroad. Other works, from bus tours to sculptural recreations of architectural details, are excavations of history.

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Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism



1  
See, for example, Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), *passim*. See also Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1971); Lukács, interpreting Marx on the development of abstract labor under capitalism, writes that “time sheds its qualitative, variable, flowing nature; it freezes into an exactly delimited, quantifiable continuum filled with quantifiable ‘things’ ... in short, it becomes space,” 90.

2  
A more substantial discussion would need to take account of how the space-time continuum privileges one or the other dimension and how the primacy of each changes with economic regimes.

3  
Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 1.

4  
Ibid., vii.

5  
Ibid., 18.

6  
Consider such basic matters as the management of violent crime, prostitution, sanitation, and disease.

7  
See Mike Davis, “Planet of Slums,” *New Left Review* 26 (March–April 2004): 6. “The present urban population (3.2 billion) is larger than the total population of the world in 1960. The global countryside, meanwhile, has reached its maximum population (3.2 billion) and will begin to shrink after 2020. As a result, cities will account for *all* future world population growth, which is expected to peak at about 10 billion in 2050.” (See also Davis’s subsequent book, *Planet of Slums* [London: Verso, 2006] for further data crunching.) Concomitantly, urban poverty is also increasing faster than rural poverty.

8  
I leave out of consideration here the reconstruction of cities and countrysides that served – primarily or secondarily – military and police functions, whether local ones on the order of Baron Haussmann’s mid-nineteenth-century reconfiguring of Paris, among other things securing it against insurrections, or more ambitious national ones such as the construction, under President Eisenhower, of the US’s Cold War-oriented interstate highway system.

9

Ivan Chhtcheglov, “Formulary for a New Urbanism,” trans. Kenn Knabb, *Internationale Situationniste*, no. 1 (June 1958). See <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/presitu/formulary.html>.

10  
Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1994), 12.

11  
Today, a few generations on, the dystopian effects of the relegation of the poor and the immigrant to these high-rise ghettos, are there for all to see, if not understood by French xenophobes, in the regular eruptions of fire and revolt among unemployed young men with no future. (Today, however, the young of France and elsewhere recognize in this only a more extreme version of their own condition of economic “precarity.”)

12  
Sharon Zukin, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 190–191.

13  
Ibid., 190.

14  
Ibid., 117–118.

15  
“The Arts: New York’s Best Export Industry,” *New York Affairs* 5, no. 2 (1978): 51. Quoted in Zukin, *Loft Living*, 112.

16  
See <http://www.strategicbusinessinsights.com/vals/about.shtm> l.

17  
See <http://www.strategicbusinessinsights.com/vals/presurvey.shtml>.

18  
See Alvin Gouldner, *The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology: The Origins, Grammar, and Future of Ideology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976).

19  
See Caroline A. Jones’s interesting study, *Eyesight Alone: Clement Greenberg’s Modernism and the Bureaucratization of the Senses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

20  
John Fekete, *The Critical Twilight: Explorations in the Ideology of Anglo-American Literary Theory from Eliot to McLuhan* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977).

21  
See the analyses of Pierre Bourdieu in many works, including *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* and “The Market of

Symbolic Goods,” Part One, Chapter One, of *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); as well as, following him, Jürgen Habermas, “Modernity, An Incomplete Project,” in Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic. Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983).

22  
Paul Fussell, *Class* (New York: Ballantine, 1983). The cover of the firstpaper back edition says “Class: A Painfully Accurate Guide Through the American Status System.”

23  
Alan S. C. Ross, “Linguistic class-indicator s in present-day English,” *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* (Helsinki) 55 (1954), 113–149; Nancy Mitford, ed., *Noblesse Oblige* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1956); Arthur Marwick: *Class: Image and Reality in Britain, France and the U.S.A. Since 1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

24  
David Brooks, *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000). The quotation is taken from a review by Russell Mokhiber, *YES! magazine*, posted Oct 27, 2000, at <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/a-new-culture-emerges/review-bobos-in-paradise-by-david-brooks>.

25  
Brooks, *Bobos*, 11.

26  
Ibid., 39.

27  
...and art. In the section “How to Be an Intellectual Giant” Brooks points out that rather than writing, say, *War and Peace*, it is better to seek success by presenting “a catchy new idea in a lively format and casting light on what it all means,” a formula dominating art reviewing and infesting art production, the arts section of periodicals, and much else.

28  
“Books like *The Organization Man*, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, *The Affluent Society*, *The Status Seekers*, and *The Protestant Establishment* were the first expressions of the new educated class ethos, and while the fever and froth of the 1960s have largely burned away, the ideas of these 1950s intellectuals continue to resonate.” Brooks, *Bobos*, Introduction, 11–12. Brooks is selective in those whom he cites; several reviews have suggested his indebtedness to the work of César Graña, a professor at UC San Diego, especially *Bohemian vs. Bourgeois* (New York: Basic Books, 1964); Graña, who had studied sociology, anthropology, and urban planning, published

several other works centering on bohemianism and authenticity but died in a car accident in 1986.

29  
Russell Mokhiber, *YES! magazine*, posted Oct 27, 2000, at <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/a-new-culture-emerges/review-bobos-in-paradise-by-david-brooks>.

30  
Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It’s Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

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→ Continued from “Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism” in issue 21.

## PART TWO: CREATIVITY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

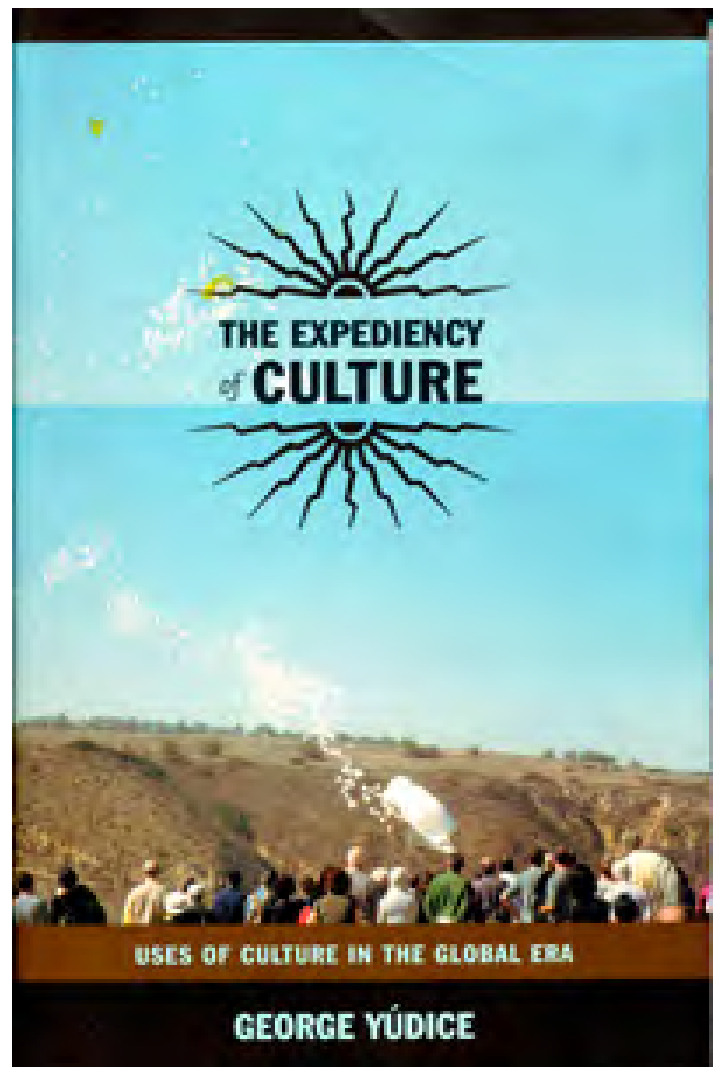
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Culture is the commodity that sells all the others.

– Situationist slogan

Soon after the collapse of the millennial New Economy that was supposed to raise all boats, Richard Florida, in his best-selling book *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002), instituted a way of talking about the “creative class” – the same class put center stage by Sharon Zukin, David Brooks, and Paul Fussell – in a way that framed it as a target group and a living blueprint for urban planners

# Martha Rosler Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism, Part II



Florida may see this class, and its needs and choices, as the savior of cities, but he harbors no apparent interest in its potential for human liberation. When Robert Bruininks, the

president of the University of Minnesota, asked him in an onstage interview, “What do you see as the political role of the creative class – will they help lead society in a better, fairer direction?” Florida was, according to faculty member Ann Markusen, completely at a loss for a reply.<sup>1</sup> Some who frame the notion of a powerful class of creative people – a class dubbed the “cultural creatives” by Paul H. Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson in their book of that name published in 2000 – see this group as progressive, socially engaged, and spiritual, if generally without religious affiliation, and thus as active in movements for political and social change. In general, however, most observers of “creatives” concentrate on taste classes and lifestyle matters, and are evasive with respect to the creatives’ relation to social organization and control.

Richard Lloyd, in *Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City*, in contrast to Ray and Anderson, finds not only that artists and hipsters<sup>2</sup> are complicit with capital in the realm of consumption but, further, that in their role as casual labor (“useful labor,” in Lloyd’s terms), whether as service workers or as freelance designers, they also serve capital quite well.<sup>3</sup> The Situationists, of course, were insistent

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on tying cultural regimes to urban change and the organization and regulation of labor. Sharon Zukin, in her ground-breaking book *Loft Living*, provided a sociological analysis of the role of artists in urban settings, their customary habitat.<sup>4</sup> But urban affairs, sociological and cultural analysis, and the frameworks of judgment have changed and expanded since Zukin’s work of 1982. In his book *The Expediency of Culture* (2001), George Yúdice leads us to consider the broad issue of the “culturalization” of politics and the uses and counter-uses of culture.<sup>5</sup> Concentrating especially on the United States and Latin America, Yúdice’s His concern is with explicating how culture has been transformed into a resource, available both to governmental entities and to population groups. He cites Fredric Jameson’s work on “the cultural turn” from the early 1990s, which claims that the cultural has exploded “throughout the social realm, to the point at which everything in our social life – from economic value and state power to social and political practices and the very structure of the psyche itself – can be said to have become ‘cultural.’”<sup>6</sup> Yúdice invokes Michel Foucault’s concept of governmentality, namely, the management of populations, or “the conduct of conduct,” as the matrix for the shift of



Judith Butler

services under neoliberalism from state to cultural sectors. Foucault's theories of internalization of authority (as well as those of Lefebvre and Freud) are surely useful in discussing the apparent passivity of knowledge workers and the educated classes in general. Yúdice privileges theories of performativity, particularly those of Judith Butler and Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick, over the Situationists' "society of the spectacle," describing how identities, including identities of "difference," are performed on the stage set by various mediating institutions.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, he positions the postwar marketing model – "the engineering of consent," in Edward Bernays's potent, widely quoted phrase – at the heart of contemporary politics and invokes the aestheticization of politics (shades of Walter Benjamin!) that has been fully apparent in the US since the Reagan administration.<sup>8</sup> As I have suggested, this channels much political contestation in advanced societies to consumer realms, from buying appropriate items from firms that advance political activism and send money to NGOs,<sup>9</sup> to the corporate tactic of appealing to identity-based markets, such as gay, female, or Latino publics; but also to the corporate need to foster such identities in hiring practices in the

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name of social responsibility.

In considering the role of culture in contemporary societies, it may be helpful to look at the lineage and derivation of the creative-class concept, beginning with observations about the growing economic and social importance of information production and manipulation. The importance of the group of workers variously known as knowledge workers, symbolic analysts, or, latterly, creatives, was recognized by the late 1950s or early 1960s. Peter Drucker, the much-lionized management "guru," is credited with coining the term "knowledge worker" in 1959, while the later term "symbolic analysts" comes from economist Robert Reich.<sup>10</sup>

Clark Kerr, a former labor lawyer, became president of the University of California, in the mid-1960s. This state university system, which had a masterplan for aggressive growth stretching to the turn of the twenty-first century and beyond, was the flagship of US public universities and established the benchmarks for public educational institutions in the US and elsewhere; it was intended as the incubator of the rank-and file middle class and the elites of a modern superpower among nations in a politically divided world. Kerr's transformative



educational vision was based on the production of knowledge workers. Kerr – the man against whom was directed much of the energy of Berkeley’s Free Speech Movement, derisively invoked by David Brooks – coined the term the “multiversity” in a series of lectures he gave at Harvard in 1963.<sup>11</sup> It was Kerr’s belief that the university was a “prime instrument of national purpose.” In his influential book *The Uses of the University*, Kerr wrote,

What the railroads did for the second half of the last century and the automobile for the first half of this century may be done for the second half of this century by the knowledge industry.<sup>12</sup>

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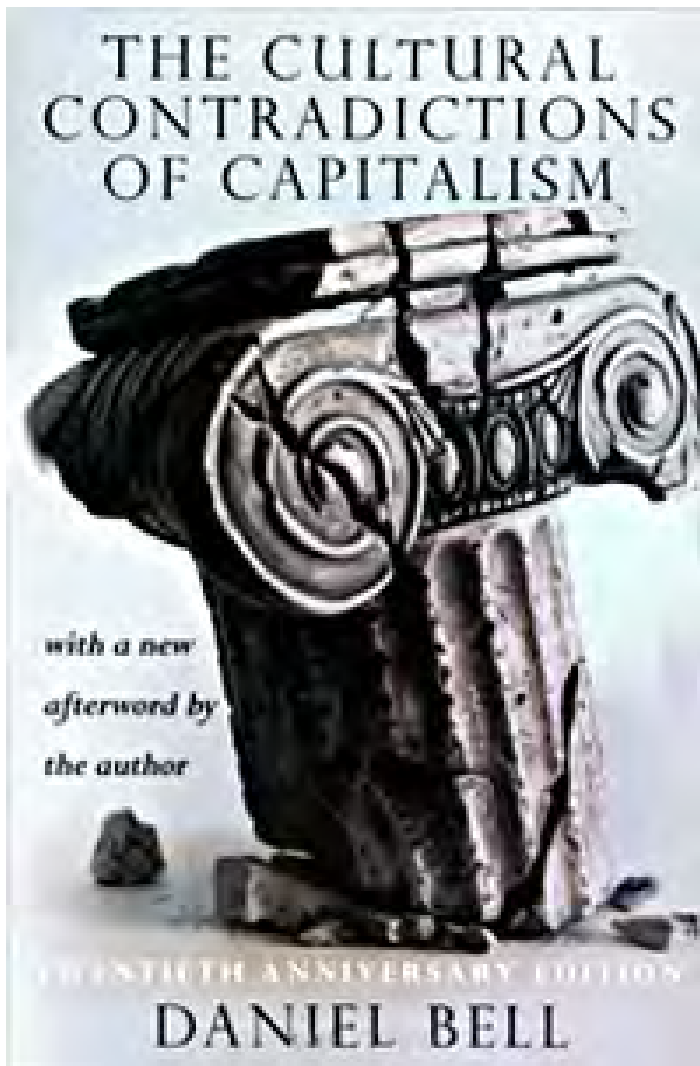
Florida claims Bell as a powerful influence.<sup>13</sup> The term post-Fordism, which primarily describes changes in command and control in the organization of the production process, is a preferred term of art for the present organization of labor in advanced economies, retaining the sense of continuity with earlier phases of capitalist organization rather than suggesting a radical break resulting from the rise of information economies and changes in the mode of conducting and managing the labor process.<sup>14</sup>

Theories of post-Fordism fall into different schools, which I cannot explore here, but they generally include an emphasis on the rise of knowledge industries, on the one hand, and service industries on the other; on consumption and consumers as well as on productive workers; on the fragmentation of mass production and the mass market into production aimed at more specialized consumer groups, especially those with higher-level demands; and on a decline in the role of the state and the rise of global corporations and markets. Work performed under post-Fordist conditions in the so-called knowledge industries and creative fields has been characterized as “immaterial labor,” a (somewhat contested) term put forward by Italian autonomist philosopher Maurizio Lazzarato. Within or overlapping with the broad category of immaterial labor are types of labor deemed “affective labor” (Hardt and Negri); these include not only advertising and public relations – and, many artists would argue, art – but all levels of labor in which the worker faces the public, which include many service industries, and eventually permeates society at large.<sup>15</sup> In “Strategies of the Political Entrepreneur,” Lazzarato writes:

If the factory can no longer be seen, this is not because it has disappeared but because it has been socialized, and in this sense it has become immaterial: an immateriality that nevertheless continues to produce social relations, values, and profits.<sup>16</sup>

These categories look very different from Florida’s.

Andrew Ross writes that the creative-class concept derives from Prime Minister Paul Keating’s Australia in early 1990s, under the rubric “cultural industries.”<sup>17</sup> Tony Blair’s New Labour government used the term “creative industries” in 1997 in the rebranding of the UK as Cool Britannia. The Department of National Heritage was renamed the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and promoted technological optimism, a youth cult, and, in Ross’s words, “self-directed innovation in the



Sociologist Daniel Bell, in his books *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973), and *Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1976), set the terms of the discourse on the organization of productive labor (although the visionary educational reformer Ivan Illich apparently used the term “post-industrial” earlier); Richard

# WHY MOVE?

PLACE WITH ENERGY!

THRIVING SCENE

DOING STUFF

RECHARGE BATTERIES

OPEN & EXCITING

WHERE BOHEMIANS (AND GAYS) LIVE!

FOCUS ON MINDS.  
NOT "BRAIN DRAIN" BUT "BRAIN CIRCULATION"



US DOMINANCE DEPENDENT UPON ABILITY TO ATTRACT & INSPIRE THE BEST TALENT FROM AROUND THE WORLD.



BUT THAT IS CHANGING.

OTHER MARKETS HAVE FIGURED IT OUT!



# creative class

TECHNOLOGY

AESTHETIC  
POLITICAL

SOCIAL



ALL CREATIVE PISTONS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- SCIENTISTS
- TECHIES
- ARTS + ENTERTAINMENT
- ARCHITECTS + ENGINEERS
- SOFTWARE
- DESIGNERS
- ENTREPRENEURS

LESSON 4

NEW ZEALAND

LOW SKILL PEOPLE TURN INTO HIGH SKILL PEOPLE!

LESSON 3

DON'T FOCUS ON ATTRACTING BUSINESS, BUT PEOPLE!

LOCAL EDUCATION → LOCAL SUCCESS

= 30% (THE OTHER 70% ARE UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE)

= 40 MILLION JOBS

= 1/2 WAGES



THEO LOVES U!

LESSON 1

VALUE COMES FROM DESIGN.

LESSON 2

VALUE COMES FROM PEOPLE (the carriers of Creativity)

WELCOME TO SILICON VALLEY A.K.A. ANERDISTAN



arts and knowledge sectors.” Both Ross and the social psychologist Alan Blum refer to the centrality of the idea of constant reinvention – of the firm and of the person – as a hallmark of the ideal conditions of the creative class. Ross points to the allure of the “creative industries” idea for a wide array of nations, large and small, of which he names Canada, the US, and Russia and China – we should add the Netherlands to this list – long before Florida’s particular configuration shifted emphasis away from the industries and to the very person of their denizens, and to biopolitics.

In describing the “creative class,” Florida credits Paul Fussell and gives David Brooks a brief nod.<sup>18</sup> Despite building on writers like David Harvey and perhaps other, unnamed theorists on the left, Florida offers the prospect of a category of “human resources” who will, all unbidden, and at virtually no cost to anyone but themselves, remake your city quite to your liking. Rather than portraying the right to the city, as Harvey had termed it, as the outcome of struggle, Florida’s path to action is predicated on the inevitability of social change, in which the working class and the poor have already lost. I will say more about that a bit later, but first, I’ll consider the creative class itself.

What Florida has called the rise of the creative class Sharon Zukin called, in *Loft Living*, the artistic mode of production.<sup>19</sup> Zukin, who never quite explains her phrase, describes the production of value and of space itself, interpretable in Lefebvre’s terms. Whereas Zukin traced the entire process from its inception to its present outcome, teasing out the structural elements necessary to bring about urban change and demonstrating how such change affects residents and interested classes, in Florida’s account the process disappears in a welter of statistical number-crunching and empirical markers by which to index the success of the creative class. Crucial to Zukin’s analysis is the eventual displacement of artists, a development not addressed by Florida, whose creative class encompasses high earners in industries extending far beyond artists, the vast number of whom do not command big incomes.

Zukin had already shown that integral to the artistic mode of production is the gradual expansion of the “artistic class,” suggesting how the definition of “artist” expanded and how the epistemology of art changed to fit the sensibilities of the rising middle class. Zukin – writing in 1982 – asserts:

The new view of art as “a way of doing” rather than a distinctive “way of seeing” also affects the way art is taught. On the one hand, the “tremendous production

emphasis” that [modernist critic] Harold Rosenberg decries gave rise to a generation of practitioners rather than visionaries, of imitators instead of innovators. As professional artists became facile in pulling out visual techniques from their aesthetic and social context, they glibly defended themselves with talk of concepts and methodology. On the other hand, the teaching of art as “doing” made art seem less elitist.... Anyone, anywhere can legitimately expect to be an artist ... making art both more “professionalized” and more “democratized.”... This opened art as a career.<sup>20</sup>

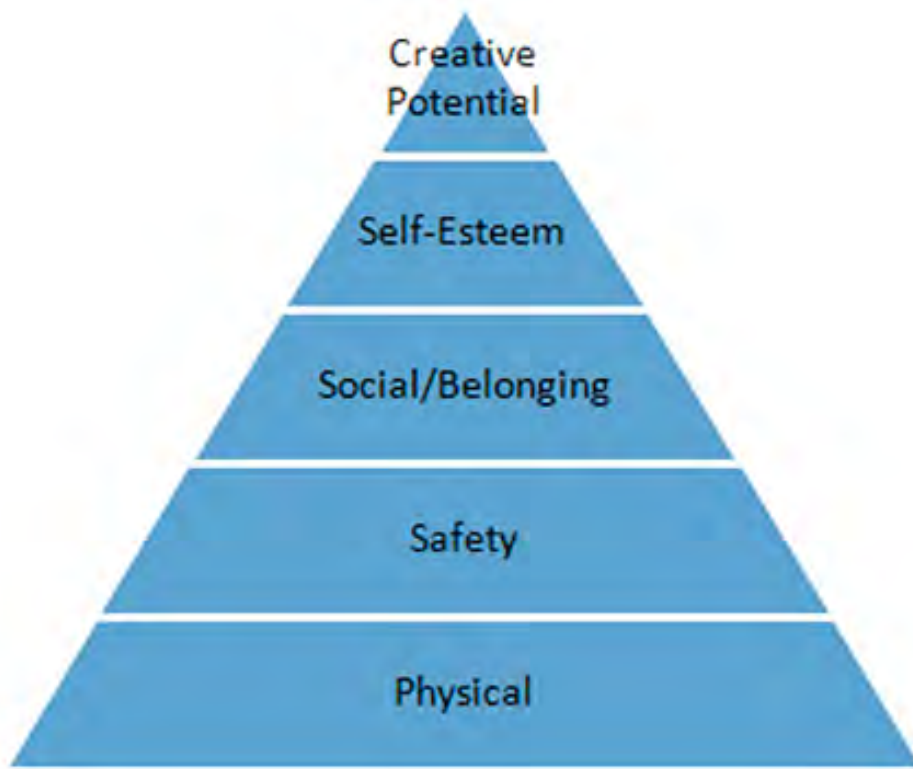
Zukin offers a sour observation made in 1979 by Ronald Berman, former chairman of the US National Endowment for the Humanities:

Art is anything with creative intentions, where the word “creative” has ... been removed from the realm of achievement and applied to another realm entirely. What it means now is an attitude toward the self; and it belongs not to aesthetics but to pop psychology.<sup>21</sup>

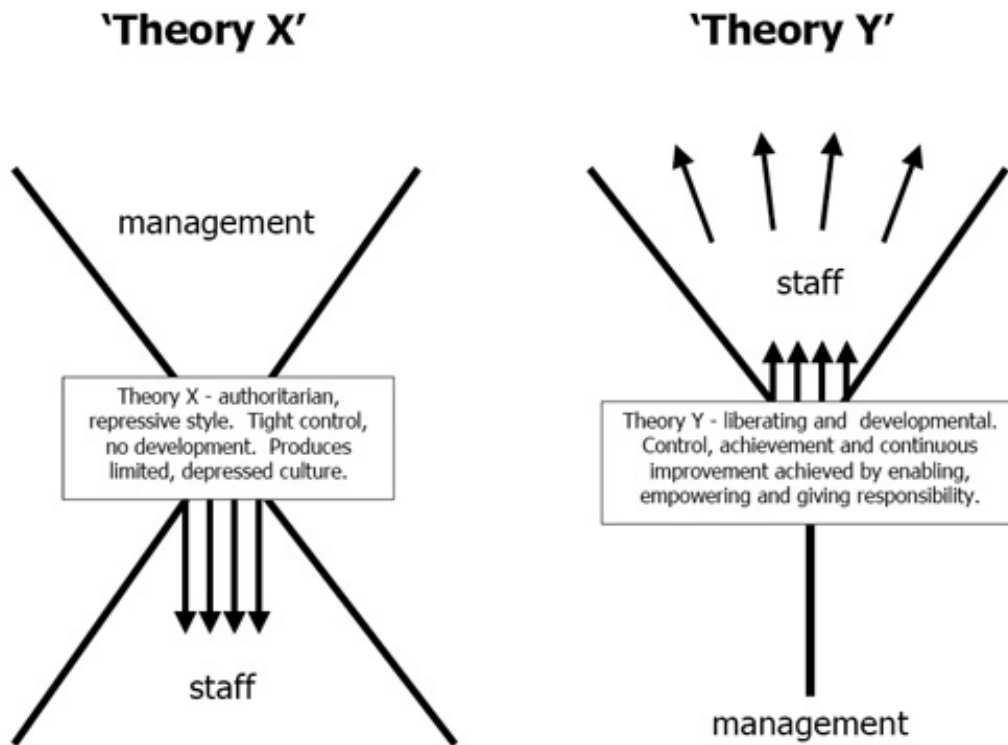
I cannot address the changes in the understanding of art here, or the way its models of teaching changed through the postwar period – a subject of perpetual scrutiny and contestation both within the academy and outside it. A central point, however, is that the numbers of people calling themselves artists has vastly increased since the 1960s as the parameters of this identity have changed.

Florida enters at a pivot point in this process, where what is essential for cities is no longer art, or the people who make it, but the appearance of its being made somewhere nearby. As a policy academic, Florida repeatedly pays lip service to the economic, not lifestyle, grounding of class groupings, as he must, since his definition of “creative class” is based on modes of economically productive activity. Economic data, however, turn out not to be particularly integral to his analyses, while the use to which he puts this category depends heavily on lifestyle and consumer choices, and Florida includes in the creative class the subcategory of gay people as well as categories of “difference,” which are both racial/ethnic and include other identity-related groupings independent of employment or economic activity. This does not contradict the fact that we are talking about class and income. Although the tolerance of “difference” that figures in Florida’s scenario must certainly include of people of color working in low-level service categories who





Maslow chart based on Abraham Maslow's theories of human self-actualization.

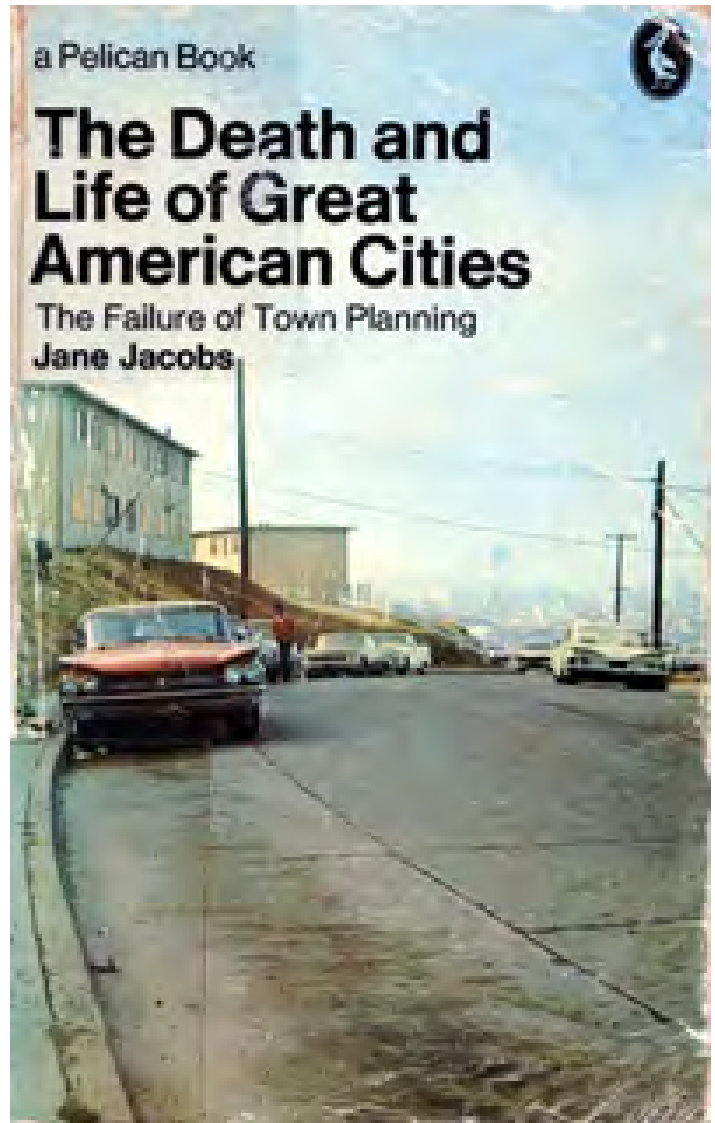


Douglas McGregor's diagrams for Theories X and Y identifying different attitudes in the workplace.

appear in significant concentrations in urban locales (even if they go home to some other locale), the creative class are not low-wage, low-level service-sector employees, and artists, certainly, are still disproportionately white.

Florida's schema is influenced by basic American economic and sociological texts – including Erik Olin Wright's powerful description of the new professional-managerial class (sometimes called the new petite bourgeoisie to differentiate it from the "old petite bourgeoisie," a class of small shopkeepers and the like whose declining fortunes and traditionalist world view have left them disaffected or enraged).<sup>22</sup> But Florida's categories are more directly derived from the US government's Standard Occupational Classification, or SOC, codes. His creative-class grouping includes "a broad group of creative professionals in business and finance, law, health care and related fields," who "engage in complex problem solving that involves a great deal of independent judgment and requires high levels of education or human capital."<sup>23</sup> Within it is a "super-creative core [of] people in science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music, and entertainment ... [whose] job is to create new ideas, new technology and/or new creative content."

Doug Henwood, in a critique from the left, notes that Florida's creative class constitutes about 30 percent of the workforce, and the "super creative core" about 12 percent. Examining one category of super-creatives, "those in all computer and mathematical occupations," Henwood remarks that some of these jobs "can only be tendentiously classed as super creative."<sup>24</sup> SOC categories put both call-center tech-support workers and computer programmers in the IT category, but call-center workers would surely not experience their jobs as creative but "more likely as monotonous and even deskilled." What is striking in Florida's picture is, first, not just the insistence on winners and losers, on the creatives and the uncreatives – recalling the social divisions within Aldous Huxley's dystopian novel *Brave New World* – but on the implicit conviction that job categories finally do provide the only source of real agency regardless of their content. Second, the value of the noncreatives is that they are nature to the creatives' culture, female to their male, operating as backdrop and raw material, and finally as necessary support, as service workers. Stressing the utility of random conversations in the street, à la Jane Jacobs, Florida treats the little people of the streets as a potent source of ideas, a touchingly modern[ist] point of view.



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In an online consideration of Florida's thesis, Harvard Economist Edward Glaeser, a right-leaning mainstream critic, expresses admiration for Florida's book as an engagingly written popularization of the generally accepted urbanist maxim that human capital drives growth, but he fails to find any value added from looking at creative capital as a separate category. Glaeser writes:

[T]he presence of skills in the metropolitan area may increase new idea production and the growth rate of city-specific productivity levels, but if Florida wants to argue that there is an [effect] of bohemian, creative types, over and above the effect of human capital, then presumably that should show up in the data.<sup>25</sup>

Glaeser ran statistical regressions on the population-growth data on four measures: (1) the share of local workers in the "super creative core"; (2) patents per capita in 1990; (3) the Gay Index, or the number of coupled gay people in the

area relative to the total population; and (4) the Bohemian Index – the number of artistic types relative to the overall population.

Glaeser concludes that in all the regressions the primary effects on city growth result from education level rather than any of Florida's measures and that in fact in all but two cities, "the gay population has a negative impact." He concludes:

I would certainly not interpret this as suggesting that gays are bad for growth, but I would be awfully suspicious of suggesting to mayors that the right way to fuel economic development is to attract a larger gay population. There are many good reasons to be tolerant, without spinning an unfounded story about how Bohemianism helps urban development.<sup>26</sup>

Further:

There is no evidence to suggest that there is anything to this diversity or Bohemianism, once you control for human capital. As such, mayors are better served by focusing on the basic commodities desired by those with skills, than by thinking that there is a quick fix involved in creating a funky, hip, Bohemian downtown.<sup>27</sup>

Max Nathan, an English urbanist at the Centre for Cities, an independent research institute in London, observes that "there's not much evidence for a single creative class in the US or the UK. And although knowledge, creativity, and human capital are becoming more important in today's economy, more than 20 years of endogenous growth theory already tells us this." He concludes, "Creativity and cool are the icing, not the cake."<sup>28</sup>

American sociologist Ann Markusen, left-leaning but agreeing with Glaeser, further cautions that "human creativity cannot be conflated with years of schooling."<sup>29</sup> Some of the occupations included in Florida's sample do not call upon creative thinking, while many manual tasks do just that; furthermore, it hardly needs to be noted that human qualities and attributes are not themselves merely produced by schooling.

Florida's use of the US government's SOC categories, lumping together artists and bohemians with all kinds of IT workers and others not remotely interested in art or bohemia, has been identified by many other observers – perhaps especially those involved in the art world – as a glaring fault. Florida fails to note the divergent interests of employees and managers, or younger and older workers, in choices about

where to live: it seems, for example, that the young move into the city while somewhat older workers move out to the suburbs, where managers tend to cluster. But Florida's book found its ready audience not among political economists but in some subset of municipal policy makers and rainmakers for government grants, and in business groups.

As Alan Blum suggests, Florida's work is directed at "second tier" cities pursuing "an 'identity' (as if merchandise) that is to be fashioned from the materials of the present."<sup>30</sup> Second tier cities tend to glorify the accumulation of amenities as a means of salvation from an undistinguished history, a chance to develop and establish flexibility. Blum's critique emphasizes the platitudinous banality of Florida's city vision, its undialectical quality and its erasure of difference in favor of tranquility and predictability as it instantiates as policy the infantile dream of perpetually creating oneself anew. In my estimation, Scandinavian societies seem to have faced the postwar world by effacing history and re-presenting themselves as factories of design; visiting Copenhagen's design museum, I was amazed that a large wall inscription in the exhibition of the great designer Arne Jacobsen emphasized both his complete lack of "interest in Utopia" and his fondness for white tennis flannels. One can think of many cities, regions, and nations that would prefer to transcend an earlier mode of economic organization, whether agricultural or Fordist, in favor of a bright new picture of postindustrial viability. The collective failure of imagination can be extended to entire peoples, through the selective re-creation, or frank erasure, of historical memory. The entire cast of the creative-class thesis is centered on the implicit management of populations, through internalized controls: in essence, Foucault's governmentality.

Florida was teaching at Carnegie Mellon in the Rust Belt city of Pittsburgh when he formulated his thesis, but subsequently moved to the University of Toronto, where he now heads the Martin Prosperity Institute at the Rotman School of Management, and is Professor of Business and Creativity. His website tags him as "author and thought-leader." Florida has developed a robust career as a pundit and as a management consultant to entities more inclusive than individual firms or industries. Management consulting is a highly lucrative field that centers on the identification of structures of work organization and methods of organizing workers in a manner persuasive to management. Management theory, however, even in the industrializing 1920s, has often claimed that creativity and interpersonal relations would

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transform management, leading to an end to top-down hierarchies and a harmonizing of interests of workers and management.

Speaking personally, in the early 1970s I worked in a small, Peter Drucker–advised publishing company in Southern California to which Drucker, the management idol then riding the crest of his fame, made regular visits. We were schooled to regard the management tool called Group Y, widely used by Japanese companies, as the new gospel of employee-management relations. As a concept, Group Y is traceable to Douglas McGregor, a professor at MIT’s school of management. Influenced by the social psychologist Abraham Maslow’s then widely popular theories of human self-actualization, McGregor promoted the idea of employees and workers as human resources. In *The Human Side of Enterprise* (1960), McGregor developed his highly influential paradigm of employee management and motivation in which management is characterized by one of two opposed models, Theory X and Theory Y.<sup>31</sup> In Theory X, people are seen as work-averse and risk-averse, uninterested in organizational goals, and requiring strong leadership and monetary incentives. Theory Y, in contrast, sees work as enjoyable and people as naturally creative and self-directed if committed to work objectives. (McGregor, unrealistically, hoped his book would be used as a self-diagnostic tool for managers rather than as a rigid prescription.) Building on McGregor’s theory, and long after I left my bliss-seeking editorial shop, William G. Ouchi invoked Theory Z to call attention to Japanese management style.<sup>32</sup>

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Deming and J. M. Juran, who recommended inverting the US proportion of responsibility for quality control given to line managers and engineers, which stood at 85 percent for managers and 15 percent for workers.<sup>33</sup> As the *Business Encyclopedia* explains, Japanese quality circles meet weekly, often on the workers’ own time and often led by foremen. “Quality circles provide a means for workers to participate in company affairs and for management to benefit from worker suggestions. ... [E]mployee suggestions reportedly create billions of dollars’ worth of benefits for companies.” Now, however, according to *The New York Times*, Japanese business organization is fast approaching the norms and practices prevailing in the US.<sup>34</sup>

Management is always looking for a new edge; after all, managers’ advancement and compensation depend on the appearance of innovation. A few years ago, in an amusing “exposé” in the *Atlantic* magazine, Matthew Stewart, a former partner in a consulting firm, characterized management theory as a jumped-up and highly profitable philosophy of human society rather than an informed scientific view of the social relations of productive activities, which is how it advertises itself.<sup>35</sup> Stewart compares the dominant theory of production known as Taylorism with that of Elton Mayo.<sup>36</sup> Taylorism, named for the turn-of-the-twentieth-century consultant Frederick Taylor, was a method (that of motion study, which was soon married to the marginally more humanistic time study of Frank and Lillian Gilbreth) for analyzing the labor process so as to get more work out of workers.<sup>37</sup> Mayo’s management theory, formulated somewhat later, is based on fostering workers’ cooperation. Characterizing the first as the rationalist and the second as the humanist strain of management philosophy, Stewart claims that they simply continue in these two age-old camps. Anthropologist David Graeber writes that fields like politics, religion, and art depend not on externally derived values and data but upon group consensus.<sup>38</sup> Like many bold ideas in economics and politics, empirical inadequacy and faulty predictive power are no barriers to success. A new narrative is always a powerful means of stirring things up; as the twentieth-century Austrian psychologist Hans Vaihinger termed it in his book *Philosophie des Als Ob* (“Philosophy of As If”), a person needs a ruling story, regardless of its relationship to reality, and so, it seems, does any other entity or organization, especially when it requires persuasive power to obtain resources from others.<sup>39</sup> Since the advent of neoliberalism in the 1980s, for example, those newly hired corporate heads who immediately fire about 20 percent of

“In the past the man has been first;  
in the future the system must be first.”

Frederick W. Taylor. *The Principles of Scientific Management*. Norton Library, 1911

Quotation from Frederick Taylor's *Principles of Scientific Management*.

Starting in the early 1960s, Japanese management made extensive use of “quality circles,” which were inspired by the postwar lectures of American statisticians W. Edwards

the workforce have been shown to do best for themselves regardless of outcome, despite the fact that this strategy has long been proven to damage a distressed company's profitability, since it destroys corporate knowledge and working culture, if nothing else. Psychological studies are constantly being adduced to prove that many consumers are uninterested in the disproof of claims, whether for miracle cures, better material goods, political nostrums, and so on; sociologists from Merton to Adorno long ago commented in some frustration about people's belief in luck (as in the lottery) or astrology in the face of reason. Ideology offers a powerful sieve through which to strain truth claims.

What matters, then, is not whether Florida's bohemian index is good or bad for urban growth but that the gospel of creativity offers something for mayors and urban planners to hang onto – a new episteme, if you will. But Florida's thesis also finds enthusiastic support in management sectors in the art world that seek support from municipal and foundation sources while pretending that the creative class refers to the arts.

European art critics and theorists, however, were far more likely to be reading Boltanski and Chiapello's *New Spirit of Capitalism*, which

provides an exhaustive analysis of the new knowledge-based classes (or class fractions) and the way in which the language of liberation, as well as the new insistence on less authoritarian and hierarchical working conditions, has been repurposed.<sup>40</sup> Here is a précis, by Chantal Mouffe, addressing an American art audience in the pages of *Artforum*:

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As Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello persuasively demonstrated in *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (1999/2005), the managerial class successfully co-opted the various demands for autonomy of social movements that arose in the 1960s, harnessing them only to secure the conditions required by the new, postindustrial mode of capitalist regulation. Capital was able, they showed, to neutralize the subversive potential of the aesthetic strategies and ethos of the counterculture – the search for authenticity, the ideal of self-management, and the antihierarchical imperative – transforming them from instruments of liberation into new forms of control that would ultimately replace the disciplinary framework of the Fordist period.<sup>41</sup>



Guy Debord, *Naked City*, 1957.



This brings us to the question of authenticity and the creative class.

In the words of the American vaudevillian turned radio personality and actor, George Burns, “The secret of acting is sincerity. If you can fake that, you've got it made.”

In *Loft Living*, Sharon Zukin had already put her finger on an unanswerable paradox, namely, the simulacral effect of neatening everything up, of the desired pacification of the city, which, as I have explained, will conveniently replace difficult, unruly populations with artists, who can generally (though not uniformly) be counted on to be relatively docile.

Zukin writes:

Seeking inspiration in loft living, the new strategy of urban revitalization aims for a less problematic sort of integration than cities have recently known. It aspires to a synthesis of art and industry, or culture and capital, in which diversity is acknowledged, controlled, and even harnessed. [But] first, the apparent reconquest of the urban core for the middle class actually reconquers it for upper-class users. Second, the downtowns become simulacra, through

gussied up preservation venues. ... Third, the revitalization projects that claim distinctiveness – because of specific historic or aesthetic traits – become a parody of the unique.<sup>42</sup>

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The search among artists, creatives, and so forth, for a way of life that does not pave over older neighborhoods but infiltrates them with coffee shops, hipster bars, and clothing shops catering to their tastes, is a sad echo of the tourist paradigm centering on the indigenous authenticity of the place they have colonized. The authenticity of these urban neighborhoods, with their largely working-class populations, is characterized not by bars and bodegas so much as by what the press calls grit, signifying the lack of bourgeois polish, and a kind of remainder of incommensurable nature in the midst of the city's unnatural state. The arrival in numbers of artists, hipsters, and those who follow – no surprise here! – brings about the eradication of this initial appeal. And, as detailed in *Loft Living*, the artists and hipsters are in due course driven out by wealthier folk, by the abundant vacant lofts converted to luxury dwellings or the new construction in the evacuated manufacturing zones. Unfortunately, many artists who see



Installation view of Thomas Hirschhorn exhibition *Stand-alone* at Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, 2008.

themselves evicted in this process fail to see, or persist in ignoring, the role that artists have played in occupying these formerly “alien” precincts.

Zukin’s recent book, *The Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* (2010), is aimed squarely at the lifestyle arguments typified by Florida’s work. It traces the trajectory of the idea and content of urban cool, with their repeated emphasis on those two terms, authenticity and grit.<sup>43</sup> As she has done throughout her career, Zukin addresses the efforts of the powers-that-be to hang onto working-class cachet while simultaneously benefiting from its erasure. Zukin’s book focuses on three New York neighborhoods – the Lower East Side, or East Village; Harlem; and Brooklyn’s Williamsburg, the present epicenter of cool, walking us painfully through regional history and transformation.

Zukin also considers Manhattan’s venerable Union Square, which – with its history of parades, marches, soap-box oratory, and expressions of urban unrest and decay – has been the focus of twenty years of efforts to tame it. Zukin quotes the promotional slogan of the Union Square Partnership, a “public-private partnership”: “Eat. Shop. Visit. Union Square.”<sup>44</sup>

The Square is part of the “archipelago of enclaves” described by Dutch urbanists Maarten Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp<sup>45</sup> as typical of new public spaces, providing, in Zukin’s words,

Special events in pleasant surroundings ... re-creating urban life as a civilized ideal ... [with] both explicit and subtle strategies to encourage docility of a public that by now is used to paying for a quality experience.<sup>46</sup>

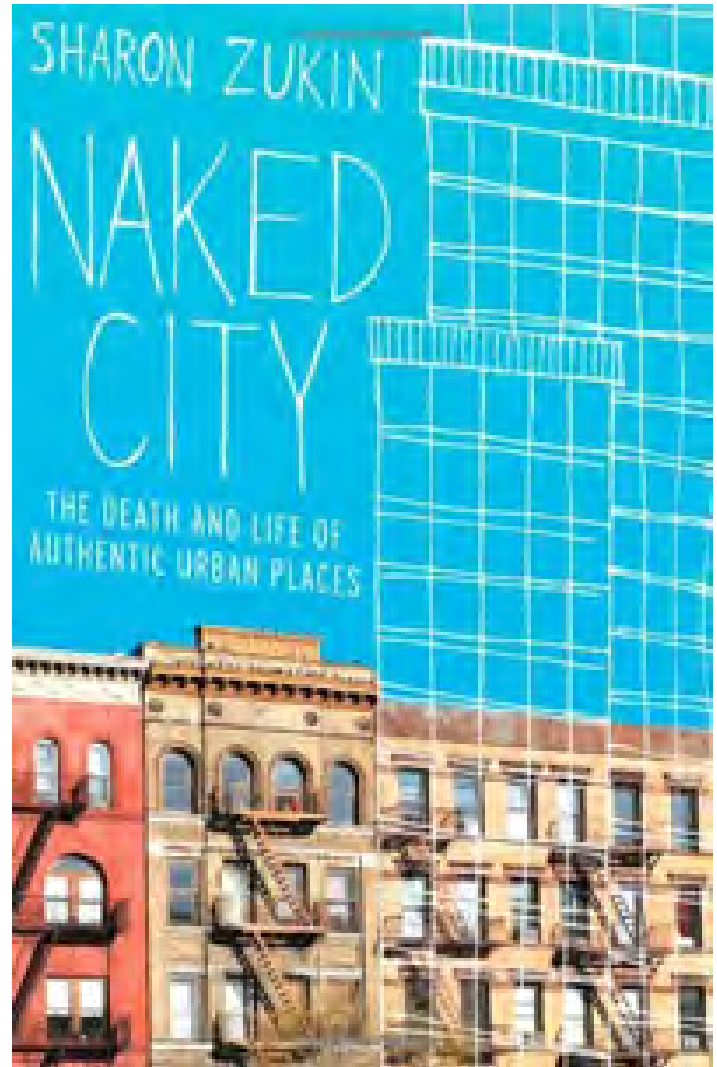
Furthermore,

[T]hese places break with the past not just by passively relying on city dwellers’ civic inattention when they calmly ignore the stranger sitting on the next bench, but by actively enabling them to avoid strangers whom they think of as “aliens”: the homeless, psychologically disoriented, borderline criminal, and merely loud and annoying.<sup>47</sup>

I note in passing that Zukin persistently faults Jane Jacobs, otherwise treated in the field as the Mother Teresa of the Neighborhood, for her own inattention to the needs and preferences of people other than the middle classes.

The disenfranchisement of those outside the groups who benefit from life in the newly renovated city is replicated in the split between the developed and less developed world; just as

the paradigm of urbanism has subsumed all others, so has the globalized knowledge economy done so, and those who are not part of it are nevertheless forced to take a position in relation to it.



The postindustrial shift in Western economies from a welfare-state model to a neoliberal one has resulted in the erosion of the classical working-class base that had provided a political counterpoint during the so-called golden age of capital (1945–1970). The resulting “cultural turn,” in which conflicting claims are played out in the cultural arena – mediated through institutions that include the state, the media, and the market – represents a relocation of political antagonism to the only realm that remains mutually recognizable. In less developed economies, the global reach of aggressive consumer capitalism and the internationalization of (neo-imperialist) corporate control have provided significant challenges to the efforts of grassroots movements to secure first-world rights through political contestation. George Yúdice describes



local organizing efforts of poor youth, such as Rio Funk, begun in Brazil in the 90s, and others; but he cites Brazilian commentator Antonio Muniz Sodr  and Nestor Garc a Canclini in noting that reliance on grassroots self-empowerment movements to bring about change absolves the states of responsibility and puts the burdens on the subordinated themselves.<sup>48</sup>

In considering the social presence of creative-class members in general and artists in particular, I have focused on the tendency toward passivity and complicity in questions of the differential power of others. But a significant number of artists do not fit this categorization. There is a divide, perhaps, between those whose practices are well-recognized by the art world and those whose efforts are treated as beyond the pale. I want to focus my attention here on the former group. Y dice, concerned with the power/wealth divide, assembles an array of critical arguments, drawing on Grant Kester’s critique of the artist as service provider, always positioned from a higher to a lower cultural level, as well as Hal Foster’s 1990s critique of the artist as ethnographer.<sup>49</sup> The problems of artists’ working in poor urban neighborhoods lie partly in the possibility, however undesired, of exploitation, and partly in a divergence in the art world audience’s understanding of the project and that of the local community, as a result of the different life worlds each inhabit. A number of artists he quotes insist that they are not “social workers” but rather seek to expand the frame of art. This suggests that intended readings must occur at least partly in terms of an aesthetic and symbolic dimension. This sits well with commentators such as Claire Bishop, who in a much-noted article winds up favoring the rather vicious projects of Santiago Sierra and those of Thomas Hirschhorn above more benign and perhaps socially useful, “service” efforts.<sup>50</sup> Suspicious of the possible use and meaning of socially invested works, Bishop seems to regard positively the fact that the lack of social effect in Sierra’s heavily symbolic works, and the appeal to philosophical and other models in Hirschhorn’s, make them legible primarily to their “proper” art world observers. As relational aesthetics seems to be carried out on the terrain of service, it is worth noting that these works remove judgment from universal categories or the individually located faculty of taste to the uncertain and presumably unrepeatable reception by a particular audience or group (shades of Allan Kaprow!).

Y dice joins other commentators in pointing out that art-as-service is the end of the avant-garde, removing as it does the artists’ actions from the realm of critique to melioration. In a section that has garnered some comment,

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Y dice outlines how artists, even those who have looked beyond institutions and markets, have been placed in a position to perform as agents of the state. This reinterpretation of the vanguardist desire for “blurring of the boundaries of art and everyday life,” for “reality” over critique, exposes the conversion of art into a funnel or regulator for governmentalized “managed diversity.” Worse, an imperative to *effectiveness* has derived from arts administrators. A 1997 report for the US National Endowment for the Arts titled *American Canvas* insists that for the arts to survive (presumably, after the assaults of the then-newly instigated, now newly revived, right-wing driven assault on US art and culture known as the “culture wars”) they must take a new pragmatic approach, “translating the value of the arts into more general civic, social, and educational terms” that would be convincing to the public and elected officials alike:

...suffused throughout the civic structure – finding a home in a variety of community service and economic development activities – from youth programs and crime prevention to job training and race relations – far afield from the traditional aesthetic functions of the arts. This extended role for culture can also be seen in the many new partners that arts organizations have taken on in recent years, with school districts, parks and recreation departments, convention and visitor bureaus, chambers of commerce, and a host of social welfare agencies all serving to highlight the utilitarian aspects of the arts in contemporary society.<sup>51</sup>

Combine this with the aim of funding museums specifically to end elitism. In the 1990s, the federal funding agency the National Endowment for the Arts increased its commitment to “diversity” while museums, pressed by such powerful funders as the Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Ford foundations and the Reader’s Digest Fund, tried to achieve wider public “access.”<sup>52</sup> The operative term was “community”; art was to serve the interests of “communities” – by which we must understand poor, excluded, and non-elite, non-creative-class communities – rather than promote the universalist values of modernist doctrine, which many thought simply supported the elite-driven status quo. This leaves artists interested in audiences beyond the gallery with something of a dilemma: serve instrumental needs of states and governments or eschew art-world visibility entirely.

To close this section of Culture Class, let me put into play two further quotations. From the

introduction to *American Canvas*:

The closing years of the 20th century present an opportunity ... for speculation on the formation of a new support system [of the nonprofit arts]: *one based less on traditional charitable practices and more on the exchange of goods and services.* American artists and arts organizations can make valuable contributions – from addressing social issues to enhancing education to providing “content” for the new information superhighway – to American society.<sup>53</sup>

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Martha Rosler is an artist who works with multiple media, including photography, sculpture, video, and installation. Her interests are centered on the public sphere and landscapes of everyday life – actual and virtual – especially as they affect women. Related projects focus on housing, on the one hand, and systems of transportation, on the other. She has long produced works on war and the “national security climate,” connecting everyday experiences at home with the conduct of war abroad. Other works, from bus tours to sculptural recreations of architectural details, are excavations of history.

And from Ann Markusen:

Artists may enjoy limited and direct patronage from elites, but as a group, they are far more progressive than most other occupational groups Florida labels as creative. While elites tend to be conservative politically, artists are the polar opposite. Artists vote in high numbers and heavily for left and democratic candidates. They are often active in political campaigns, using their visual, performance, and writing talents to carry the banner. Many sociologists and social theorists argue that artists serve as the conscience of the society, the most likely source of merciless critique and support for unpopular issues like peace, the environment, tolerance and freedom of expression.<sup>54</sup>

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*To be continued in Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism, Part Three: The Urban as Art.*

This essay is an expanded version of a talk given at the third Hermes Lecture at Provinciehuis Den Bosch on November 14, 2010, arising from a suggestion by Camiel van Winkel to consider the work of Richard Florida. I thank Stephen Squibb for his invaluable assistance during the research and editing process. Thanks also to Alexander Alberro and Stephen Wright for their helpful responses.

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1 Markusen had in fact been asked to frame such a question by the university president himself. Markusen's paper is centered on a critique of Florida's creative-class thesis; see Ann Markusen, "Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class: Evidence from the Study of Artists," *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 38, Issue 10, 1922. See [http://www.hhh.umh.edu/projects/prie/pdf/266\\_creativity\\_class\\_politics.pdf](http://www.hhh.umh.edu/projects/prie/pdf/266_creativity_class_politics.pdf).

2 I use this term here to signify ironical posers and lifestyle, particularly sartorial, devotees.

3 Lloyd, *Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City* (New York: Routledge, 2006). Lloyd's estimation of the work role of the creatives is counter to the generally benign role accorded them not only by Ray and Anderson but also by such varied commentators as Markusen and all the centrist and right-wing observers.

4 Zukin, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1982).

5 George Yúdice, *The Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

6 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 48.

7 Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

8 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* (New York: Schocken, 1969), 217 – 252. 9

I am thinking of such US-based companies such as the phone company CREDO, which has increasingly positioned itself as a left-wing, "social justice"-oriented advocacy group that happens to sell you phone services but also of the Fair Trade Coffee "movement" and even mainstream groups as AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) and the nonprofit magazine *Consumer Reports*, which sell services but also run advocacy and lobbying organizations. And then there is the religious sector, which maintains tax exemption while deeply implicated in politics. 10 Peter Drucker, *Landmarks of Tomorrow: A Report on the New*

"Post-Modern" World (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1959); Robert Reich, *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st Century Capitalism* (New York: Vintage, 1991). 11

Clark Kerr, Godkin Lectures, given at Harvard University, 1963. The Free Speech Movement recognized the blueprint for the new technocratic, pragmatic, and politically disciplined and hegemonic nation, for what it was and erupted accordingly. 12 Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), based on his Harvard lectures, 66. 13

Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1976). 14

This note is simply to acknowledge that – no surprise here – not all labor theorists accept the term post-Fordism and its periodization of capitalist production processes, or the notion of "immaterial labor," explored below, although they are much favored in the European art world. 15

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 103–115. 16

Lazzarato, "Strategies of the Political Entrepreneur," *SubStance* 112, vol. 36, no. 1 (2007): 89–90. 17

Andrew Ross, "Nice Work If You Can Get It: The Mercurial Career of Creative Industries Policy," in Geert Lovink and Ned Rossiter, eds., *My Creativity Reader* (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2007), 19. See <http://www.networkcultures.org/uploads/32.pdf>. 18 Paul Fussell, *Class: A Guide Through the American Status System* (New York: Ballantine, 1983); David Brooks, *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000). On his website,

<http://creativeclass.com>, Florida engages in exorciations of Brooks and presents himself as the good observer while Brooks is the bad. 19

Zukin, *Loft Living*, op. cit. See note 4. 20

Ibid., 98. 21 Ibid., citing Ronald Berman, "Art vs. the Arts," *Commentary*, November 1979: 48. 22 See, for example, Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts: Comparative Studies in Class Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). 23 Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure and Everyday Life* (Basic Books, 2002), 8. 24

Doug Henwood, *After the New Economy* (New York: The New Press, 2003). 25 Edward Glaeser, "Review of Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class*," 3. See

[http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/glaeser/files/Rview\\_Florida.pdf](http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/glaeser/files/Rview_Florida.pdf). 26

Ibid., 4. 27 Ibid., 5. 28

Max Nathan, "The Wrong Stuff? Creative Class Theory and Economic Performance in UK Cities." See <http://cjrscsr.org/archive/s/30-3/NATHAN.pdf>. 29

Ann Markusen, "Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class: Evidence from the Study of Artists," op. cit. See [http://www.hhh.umh.edu/projects/prie/pdf/266\\_creativity\\_class\\_politics.pdf](http://www.hhh.umh.edu/projects/prie/pdf/266_creativity_class_politics.pdf). 30

Alan Blum, "The Imaginary of Self-Satisfaction: Reflections on the Platitude of the "Creative City," in Alexandra Boutros and Will Straw, eds., *Circulation and the City: Essays on Urban Culture* (Montreal and Kingston, London, and Ithaca, NY: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010). 31

Douglas McGregor, *The Human Side of Enterprise* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960). 32 William G. Ouchi, *Theory Z* (New York: Avon Books, 1982). 33 W. Edwards Deming and J. M. Juran, *Quality Control Handbook* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951). 34

Hiroko Tabuchi, "Japanese Playing a New Video Game: Catch-Up," *New York Times*, September 20, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/20/technology/20game.html?pagewanted=1&sq=japan%20business%20game%202010&st=cse&scp=1>. 35

Matthew Stewart, "The Management Myth," *The Atlantic*, June 2006. See <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/06/the-management-myth/4883/>. 36 Elton Mayo, *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933). 37 Frederick Taylor, *Principles of Scientific Management* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1911); Frank Gilbreth, *Motion Study* (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1911). 38 David Graeber, *Possibilities: Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion and Desire* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2007). 39

Hans Vaihinger, *The Philosophy of 'As If': A System of the Theoretical, Practical and Religious Fictions of Mankind* (London: Routledge, 1924). 40

Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *New Spirit of Capitalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2006). This book is handy for laying out and following statistically what should be readily apparent to observers. 41

Chantal Mouffe, "The Museum Revisited," *Artforum*, vol. 48, no. 10 (Summer 2010): 326–330. See <http://artforum.com/inprint/id=25710>. 42

Zukin, *Loft Living*, 190. 43 Sharon Zukin, *The Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). 44 Ibid., 142. 45 Maarten Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp, *In Search of New Public Domain* (Rotterdam: NAI,

2001). 46 Zukin, *Naked City*, 142. 47 Ibid., 142–143. 48

Yúdice, *The Expediency of Culture*; Antonio Muniz Sodré, *O social irradiado: Violência urbana, neogrotesco e mídia* (Sao Paulo: Cortez Editora, 1992); Nestor García Canclini, *Consumers and Citizens: Globalization and Multicultural Conflicts* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001). 49

Grant Kester, "Aesthetic Evangelists: Conversion and Empowerment in Contemporary Art," *Afterimage* 22:6 (January 1995), 5–11. Hal Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer?" *The Return of the Real* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995). See [http://www.corner-college.com/udb/cpro2ZgGkArtist\\_As\\_Ethnographer.pdf](http://www.corner-college.com/udb/cpro2ZgGkArtist_As_Ethnographer.pdf). 50

Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October* 110 (Fall 2004), 51–79. 51 Jane Alexander and Gary O. Larson, *American Canvas: An Arts Legacy for Our Communities* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, 1997).

How easily that term "utilitarian" slides into discussions of a dimension that during the Cold War was always explicitly denied. See <http://www.nea.gov/pub/AmCanvas/AmericanCanvas.pdf>. 52

Yúdice, *The Expediency of Culture*, 245. 53

See also Larson, *American Canvas*. Emphasis in the original. 54

Markusen, "Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class," op. cit., 22 – 23. Markusen acknowledges artists' role in gentrification, remarking they are "sometimes caught up in gentrification," but she sees their role in most cities as not different from that of other middle-class people migrating into working-class neighborhoods and directly criticizes both Zukin and Rosalyn Deutsche.

→ Continued from “Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism, Part II: Creativity and Its Discontents” in issue 23 and “Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism, Part I: Art and Urbanism” in issue 21.

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## PART THREE: IN THE SERVICE OF EXPERIENCE(S)

### 1. Jungle into Garden

In the not-so-distant New York past, tenement roofs, and even those of lower-middle-class apartment buildings – ones without doormen, say – were where women went with their washing and their children, in good or just tolerable weather, to hang the damp laundry on the line, thus joining a larger community of women in performing the necessary and normal, good and useful, labor of reproduction and maintenance of family life. (The clothes themselves, and the hanging of the laundry, were signals easily interpretable by other women as to wealth, status, moral character, and even marital harmony.) For men, many an apartment roof held the lofts of racing pigeons, the raising of which is an intergenerational hobby. Before air conditioning, you went to the roof for solitude, and for some prized “fresh air,” and if you were lucky you could catch sight of the nearest body of water. The roofs of loft buildings, of course, served no familial functions. Roofs with gardens were pleasant idylls for luxury penthouse spaces, absent of the gloss of use value attached to urban farming or green roofs.

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Sketch of the proposed new Whitney Museum at the High Line terminus, in the gallery district of Chelsea, New York City.

The new, and newly relaxed, attitude to the (apparently) natural world in New York – in contradistinction to a city like Helsinki, where wildness is not appreciated<sup>1</sup> – is reflected in the resurrection of the city’s High Line, a disused elevated industrial rail line in lower Manhattan’s far-west former industrial zone.<sup>2</sup> Its salvage and





John Sloan, *Sun and Wind on the Roof*, 1915. Oil on canvas.

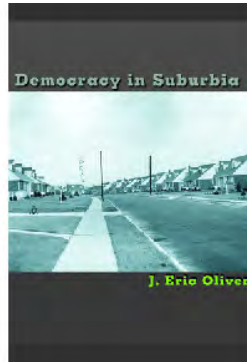


conversion into a Chelsea park, with its (re)importation of frank wild(er)ness into the city, began as a quixotic effort by a couple of architects but soon became a patrician project, and then a municipal one.<sup>3</sup> It marks a further step in the long transformation of urban waterfronts, formerly the filthy and perilous haunts of poor, often transient and foreign-born, workers servicing the ports into recreational and residential zones beckoning the mostly young and decidedly upper middle class. The water's edge, which once figured as the dangerous divide between this-world and underworld, between safety and the unknown, now promises pleasurable adventures in travel or beach-going.

In another register, the city has now decided to embrace neighborhood community gardens, especially in places where the working class has been effectively priced out, a contrast to the 1990s when hard-line suburbanite mayor Rudy Giuliani tried to destroy many of these oases (which he considered "socialistic"), often painstakingly reclaimed from trash-strewn wastelands that had fallen off the city's tax rolls and into public receivership, by selling off the plots to developers at bargain rates. The city now also permits the formerly banned keeping of chickens (but never roosters) and bees anywhere

in the city.<sup>4</sup> In my neighborhood, the still-slightly-gritty-but-on-the-way-to-becoming-hipsterland Greenpoint, in Brooklyn, some enterprising young women have started a well-publicized commercial rooftop "farm."<sup>5</sup> Other incipient hipster neighborhoods are poised to copy. Please try not to think of Marie Antoinette's Petite Hameau, her little farm on the grounds of Versailles, for creatives are not aristocrats, and poor people too are finally allowed to keep such animals and grow cash mini-crops.

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Though they may not be aristocrats, accustomed to hereditary rank and privilege, creatives belong to the first generation to have



Camilo José Vergara, *Detroit Skyline, View South Along Park Avenue*, 1989.

grown up within an almost entirely suburbanized America.<sup>6</sup> US political scientist J. Eric Oliver, in *Democracy in Suburbia*, spells out the links between the suburban retreat to “private life” and the removal of conflict and competition over resources among urban groups:

When municipal zoning authority and other advantages of smaller size are used to create pockets of economic homogeneity and affluence, the civic benefits of smaller size are undermined. The racial bifurcation of cities and suburbs also has civic costs, partly through concentrating the problems of urban areas in racially mixed settings. By taking much of the competition for resources and much of the political conflict that naturally exists among members of an interdependent metropolitan community and separating them with municipal boundaries, suburbanization also eliminates many of the incentives that draw citizens into the public realm.<sup>7</sup>

Thus we should read the “becoming creative” of the post-industrial urban core as the formation of a homogenous space drained of the incentives for political engagement. Philosopher and political scientist Seyla Benhabib has characterized, and criticized, Hannah Arendt for the limitations in considering the public in terms of agonistic and associational spheres. The former, Benhabib maintains, is out of step with the “sociological reality of modernity, as well as with modern political struggles for justice,” through its preference for theatricality, for politics as action undertaken at least partially for its own sake and distinct from considerations of instrumental reason. Even without taking sides, it is possible to read the decline of both models of politics, of association and agonism, in the new “creative sphere” of the upper-middle-class urban elite. The public stage of civic action is increasingly coterminous with the preferences of a specific class, preventing both association and agonism – at least to the extent that either of those would be worthy of the term “politics.” It is in this sense that we must consider the newfound municipal enthusiasm for parks and park-like experiences, and the sanctioning of “neo-hippie” chicken-keeping and urban and rooftop farming, along with many of the examples to follow, as bound up with the shift in the class composition of the urban fabric.

The greenmarkets sited around New York City, the bicycle lanes, and the outdoor patios built in the middle of busy streets, express the conviction that the city is no longer a concrete jungle but a cultivated garden enclosing a well-managed zoo or kindergarten, in which everyone

and his or her neighbor is placed on display, in the act of self-creation, whether you choose to look or not. The gardens, urban and rooftop farms, water slides, and climbable sculptures that have replaced the modernist model of public art works (which had itself displaced the state-sanctioned monumentalism of previous eras) must be understood as of a piece with the increasingly suburban character of creative-class politics.

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If we consider the issue in terms of the role of art sited in public spaces, it would seem indisputable that the “public art” (or “art in public”) sector in the US has turned to a service/experience model. The modernist model of public art, which relied heavily on what we might call abstractionist inspirationalism or on architectural or social critique, had elicited increasing incomprehension and annoyance from the wider public; its ship finally foundered with the removal in 1989 of Richard Serra’s abstract, minimalist, site-specific *Tilted Arc* (1981), describable perhaps as an artful but rusty wall of COR-TEN steel, from its position in front of a lower Manhattan federal courthouse.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, *The Gates*, Christo and Jean Claude’s 2005 project for New York’s Central Park, underlined the role of public art as a frame for narcissistic self-appreciation on the part of bourgeois park-goers and city fathers, who may see themselves perambulating through a proud and cohesive body politic. Further, watching others pace through *The Gates* permitted a grandiose self-recognition, in which participants see each other and acknowledge the (rightful) presence of each on the grand stage with the figure of Nature hovering o’er.<sup>9</sup> This role of forming and framing the New York *polis* was already played by public gardens, like Brooklyn’s Prospect Park and Manhattan’s Central Park, in the nineteenth century; the modern history of the walk through a scenic landscape begins much earlier, in the eighteenth century in Western Europe at least, but the process now

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Aeron Bergman and Alejandra Salinas, *Wildflowers*, projected video loop, Henie Onstad Art Center, Oslo, 2009.

relies more prominently on presenting the civic world as remade, however ephemerally, by art, and *as art* – but with that Kodak smile. Creative adulthood means reimagining ourselves as children looking to have fun in our free time; the city no longer embodies the formal relations of the adult *polis* but is viewed by many as a series of overlapping fantasies of safety and adventure, as Sharon Zukin has suggested.<sup>10</sup>

The appeal to Nature, to that which appears as an “outside” to a society organized so that there is no outside, is part of the simulacral effect that attests to the loss of distinction between public and private spheres, and to the atomization of publics into individuals in Brownian motion, often conveniently invisible to one another, or, more properly, no more consequent than street furniture (which is why Christo and Jean Claude’s project was seized upon as municipally appropriate in allowing, temporarily and symbolically, the polity to come into view, pacing in orderly ranks through the crown-jewel park).<sup>11</sup> This is a step beyond the anonymity long remarked on as a simultaneously liberatory and alienating effect of city life, theorized by Georg Simmel in “Metropolis and Mental Life,” an article of 1903 whose acceptance came only much later.<sup>12</sup> A further sign of a breakdown in urban codes and of urban/suburban boundary policing is represented by the casualization, even infantilization, of middle-class dress within city limits that has gone hand in hand with the computer-creative nerds’ habit, starting in the IT shops and cultivated by management, of dressing as though they were at the gym, at summer camp, or on a hike.<sup>13</sup> If the world of “nature” is fetishized, you can be sure a version of the *Übermensch* is lurking somewhere in the bushes.

As Giorgio Agamben reminds us,

Arendt had already analyzed the process that brings *homo laborans* – and with it, biological life as such – gradually to occupy the very center of the political scene of modernity. ... Arendt attributes the transformation and decadence of the political realm in modern societies to this very primacy of natural life over political action.<sup>14</sup>

We see this substitution at work in the highly evolved politics of contemporary consumer consciousness. The selection of consumer products increasingly demands to be taken seriously as a political act, asking us to produce a political self-portrait as we feed, clothe, and clean ourselves.

There is also something fundamental about

the relation between gardening and this emerging biopolitics, between gardening and metaphors of rootedness and the uncomfortable displacements of modernity, the tearing away of deep, even unconscious connections to community and place. The urban farming movement, a corner of the artisanal fever that periodically grips artists’ communities, potently expresses a desire to return to a mythic, prelapsarian Eden of community and stability, of preindustrial, premediatic life, without the grit of urban disconnection but with the authenticity of *Gemeinschaft* restored. This appealing dream is expressed in the immortal refrain of Joni Mitchell’s song *Woodstock* of 1969, written about a historic event which career demands had prevented her from attending:

We are stardust.  
We are golden.  
And we’ve got to get ourselves back to the garden.

Here the garden is the part of the post-suburban Imaginary that governed the transition of the urban economy from industrial manufacturing to a high-end residential and commercial base. If we can imagine each of the distinctive urban spaces – industrial, residential, commercial – as manifesting a certain politics, we can understand not only the cultural trends that have followed in their wake but also the wider characterization of neoliberal consumer capitalism as an “experience economy.”

As the vibrancy of interclass contention has been quelled by the damping off of working-class politics, a sanitized version of an industrial urban experience (or some image of one) can be marketed to the incoming middle class, who have the means and the willingness to pay for what was formerly a set of indigenous strategies of survival, of a *way of life*. The rooftop evacuated by the laundry lines and the pigeon loft becomes an urban farm, trailing clouds of glory.

The new Imaginary of New York City, like so many others’, is no longer a concrete jungle but a cultivated garden, a place in which a gardener controls the noxious weeds and plants and directs growth in marvelous and pious ways. Lest I be taken for a romantic crank – or just an old bohemian like Samuel Delany memorializing the days when Times Square was simply The Deuce – I want to remind the reader that, if nothing else, as a female city-dweller I appreciate the newfound feeling of probable safety in the streets, especially after dark; but it is important to discern (as Delany would wish us to) the terms of this exchange.

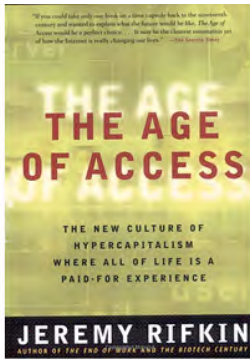
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Image from Paul Elliman & Nicole Macdonald's project on the Detroit Zoo, *Future Park I: Teach me to disappear*, presented at Casco Office for Art, Design and Theory, Utrecht, 2010.

## 2. In the Service of Experiences



George Yúdice cites Jeremy Rifkin's article from 2000, "Age of Access: The New Culture of Hypercapitalism Where All of Life Is a Paid-for Experience," describing the "selling and buying of human experiences" in "themed cities, common-interest developments, entertainment destination centers, shopping malls, global tourism, fashion, cuisine, professional sports and games, film, television, virtual world and [other] simulated experiences."<sup>15</sup> Rifkin observes:

If the industrial era nourished our physical being, the Age of Access feeds our mental, emotional, and spiritual being. While controlling the exchange of goods characterized the age just passing, controlling the exchange of concepts characterizes the new age coming. In the twenty-first century, institutions increasingly trade in ideas, and people, in turn, increasingly buy access to those ideas and the physical embodiments in which they are contained.<sup>16</sup>

One effect of this search for meaningful – or authentic – experience is the highlighting of authenticity as nothing more nor less than the currency of the experience economy. We should not be surprised to find a business/motivational book entitled *Authenticity*, with the subtitle "What Consumers Really Want." Written by Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, consultants living in the small city of Aurora, Ohio, the book is the successor to their previous book, *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre & Every Business a Stage*, of 1999.<sup>17</sup> These and similar books are guides not just to the creation of spectacles but for rethinking all business activity as gerundive, providing those fantastic, perhaps transformative, experiences we all supposedly seek, on the Disneyland model. Urbanism itself becomes fertile ground for precisely these transformations. (Zukin's *Naked City: The Death*

and *Life of Authentic Urban Places* illustrates this thesis through considering three signal New York neighborhoods.)

The fraying of traditional ties evident in the preferences and behaviors of the creative class also points to the tendency to form identifications based on consumerist, often ephemeral, choices. Taste in lifestyle choices with no political commitment has hollowed out the meaningfulness of taste – in art, music, furniture, clothing, food, schools, neighborhoods, vacation spots, leisure activities, friends – as a clear-cut indicator of the individual's moral worth (of the individual's "cultivation," to use an old-fashioned construct, drawn from gardening). (This is one more reason why it is impossible to base a serious contemporary aesthetics on those of Kant, for whom the faculty of taste could not be more clearly separated from the "possessive individualism" that marks contemporary consumer choices. Kant, you may recall, in *The Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*, developed a tripartite system in which taste is clearly demarcated from both reason and the urge to possess, or the "pornographic.") Taste now seems to be a sign of group membership with little resonance as a personal choice beyond a certain compass of selecting which token of the requisite type to acquire; perhaps that is why David Brooks (ever a keen observer of telling details while remaining completely incapable of seeing the big picture), recognized that for the creative class, choices must be understood as *virtuous*. (That individual choices are made on the basis of preferences already exhibited by a group is not completely new, since members of every group and tribe are instantly identifiable from the top of the head to the bottom of the feet, but the present context seems different, centering more on consumer acuity than on quality.) But virtue is not to be exhibited as virtuousness but rather as dictated by some external force other than religion, such as ecological awareness or putative health effects. Public institutions, and even royalty, have tried to become one with the people, exhibiting the same sentimentality through the public display of grief, joy, and family pride. Websites follow the example of Facebook, with portrait photos of even distinguished professors and public officials; smaller art institutions show us their staff members (mostly the women) proudly hugging their offspring or (mostly the men) their dogs.

In general, art institutions, particularly those smaller ones that used to form part of the alternative movement, have furthermore married the provision of experiences to the culture of celebration by turning up their noses at

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One of the houses included in the Heidelberg Project, Detroit. Photo DetroitDerek Photography.



Keith Piacenzny, *Demolished by Neglect*, Detroit, late 1980s.  
Image: Center for Urban Photography.

seriousness and critique, as reviewers, if not critics, have as well.<sup>18</sup> We can see the rhetoric, often vividly expressed, of service, on the one hand, and fun experiences, on the other, among smaller art institutions and initiatives. I offer a few excerpted examples, mostly from email announcements. They span the spectrum of contemporary exhibition venues from small, artist-run spaces, to larger, more established organizations to the self-branding of cities. There are several core concepts that provide the rhetorical touchstones in these self-descriptions. On the fun side, these range from cross-fertilization in disparate “creative” user-friendly fields to an array of anti-puritanical hooks that touch on energetic pleasure in love, dancing, or whatever, and, on the service side, to bringing culture to the lower classes, helping heal the traumas of deindustrialization, and covering over the catastrophes of war.

My first example is an outlier: a public relations and events management company for “cultural projects” in New York and Milan, called Contaminate NYC, announcing a solo cartoon and manga show at a place called ContestaRockHair, described as:

a brand created in 1996 by a group of hairstylists who shared the passion for fashion characterized by a rock soul that links music and art with the creation of hair styles, fostering innovation and experimentation. Today ContestaRockHair counts 11 salons in Rome, Florence, New York, Miami, and Shanghai.<sup>19</sup>

One venerable New York artist-run institution, now positioning itself as a discursive space as well as an exhibition venue, has “partnered” with a boutique hotel in strange ways and touts the “Peace, Love & Room Service Package,” from which it receives a small percentage. Another 1970s New York nonprofit (listing a hotel and six other public and private funders), expresses its “passionate belief in the power of art to create inspiring personal experiences as well as foster social progress.” In the economically depressed 1970s, its earliest programs “invigorated vacant storefronts.” This strategy, in which property developers rely on artists to render the empty less so, has today become formulaic and ubiquitous in the US and beyond, making the connection between art’s appearance on the scene and the revaluing of real estate embarrassingly obvious.

Two further representatives of this trend strike a more sober note. The first is also from New York: this relatively new group’s “core mission is to revitalize ... areas ... by bringing thoughtful, high-caliber art installations ... to the

public....” A recent show in the formerly industrial zone, now “artists’ district,” of Dumbo uses construction materials crafted into “visual oxymorons that shift function and meaning in highly poetic ways.”

The second, a dockside location in southern Europe, listing a dozen corporate and municipal partners and sponsors, “targets the need to rehabilitate and revitalize urban spaces, without losing their identity or altering their nature....” By “taking into consideration the location of the project” in the docks, the art space

aims to expand art into non-traditional spaces and promote the use of places that previously lacked museum-like characteristics. ... Without culture, societies cannot have a true civic consciousness.

Berlin is experienced in the framing discourses of creative-industry gentrification, especially after a 2007 report in *Der Spiegel* rated it as Germany’s top “creative class city,” based on Richard Florida’s “3T” indices: Talent, Technology, and Tolerance.<sup>20</sup> So far, Berlin has been slow to embrace becoming “the hippest down-to-earth booming urban spot for the creative industries,” as described by the Berlin MEA Brand Building, advertising itself as “dedicated to luxury, fashion, art, cosmetics and accessoires [sic].” A Wall Street Journal article of 2010 mocks artists’ and bohemians’ unhappiness over the arrival of Soho House, one of a string of “ultra-hip private social clubs” because many Berliners, “proud and protective of their anarchic, gritty brand of cool,” are “stubbornly wary of gentrification symbols.” Berlin’s Soho House is in a former Jewish-owned department store turned Hitler Youth headquarters turned East German Communist Party building, a history that fuels people’s indignation over the arrival in town of a members-only club.<sup>21</sup>

As it once did in the repurposing of German real estate contaminated by recent world history, the transformation of cities newer to the conquest of urban space can raise the eyebrows of those to whom such things may matter. The *New York Times*, writing of the Podgorze district in Krakow, Poland, an infamous Jewish ghetto under the Nazis that was subsequently commercially orphaned in the postwar years, gushes about new restaurants springing up alongside “an ambitious history museum in the renovated [Oskar] Schindler Factory” and other promised museums nearby. “The award for prettiest real estate goes to Galeria Starmach, one of the most celebrated contemporary art galleries in Poland ... an airy white space in a red brick former synagogue.”<sup>22</sup>



Historical information panel from the Soho House Club.

But keep smiling! Mourning is consigned to new art-like spaces, such as complex architect- or artist-designed sculptural memorials and other secular pilgrimage shrines, such as museums of remembrance. In other words, those who wish to engage in mourning are directed there rather than to actual religious structures or to more general-purpose museums. Meanwhile, *those* established museums wish to make themselves seem less like mausoleums and grand palaces and more like parks and gardens, going beyond the typical decor of the past, of vast floral lobby vases and discreet landscaping, toward pavilions and bamboo structures produced by a host of artists or journeyman architects in museum backyards and on their roofs. This happy-face effort is but a short step beyond their efforts to justify their right to funds from skeptical municipalities and donors by attracting, through various programs administered by education departments, visitors from outside their normal ambit, thereby assuming not only the role of service provider but that of a pedagogical institution (often one pitched to lower grade levels).<sup>23</sup> No longer permitted to take the old-fashioned view and to see themselves as a locus of individualized contemplation of worthy aesthetic objects, museums have increasingly taken responsibility for the entirety of visitors' experiences, shepherding them from the shop to the art works, with their enfolding printed and recorded and virtual texts, to the café, while also

beckoning to those formerly excluded population groups and informing them about the manifold rewards that museum-going might offer them.

### 3. Detroit: I Do Mind Dying

Detroit is a city imagined by some as an urban wasteland reverting back to prairie. Over the past twenty-plus years, many projects have tried to engage with Detroit's long slide from an iconic metropolitan vanguard of the eponymous Fordist assembly-line production to a severely distressed relic. As the fastest-shrinking metropolis in the US (it is at its lowest point in 100 years, having dropped from the fourth largest in 1950 to the eleventh in 2009 and losing a quarter of its population in the interim) and long past hoping for salvation from its Renaissance Center, postindustrial Detroit is presently trying to school its residents on how to grow small gracefully.<sup>24</sup> The city has been shrinking for a long time, as suburban, mostly white, flight took hold from the 1950s onward and as the auto industry ceased to be the mighty backbone of the US economy, dispersing its production to low-wage locales in the US and elsewhere and greatly reducing its employee ranks.<sup>25</sup> Detroit's history as the quintessentially Fordist industrial city (Ford is the carmaker that pioneered the moving assembly line) is worth considering. Not only is its history of worker organizing and union struggles long and distinguished, the city government also had a number of socialists for a good amount of time, until their support base disappeared and city government was beset by corrupt politicians. The infamous Detroit riot (some would say uprising) of 1967, while rooted in the inequalities of race, nevertheless included some racial solidarity.<sup>26</sup>



Lowell Boileau, panorama of part of the ruins of Packard Motors, Detroit, n.d.

Detroit has a long and distinguished cultural history as well, most prominently in music – jazz, classical music performance, R&B, and more recently, the Motown sound, hip-hop, and Detroit Techno.<sup>27</sup> But the elite, publicly supported mainstream institutions, including the venerable Detroit Institute of the Arts, the Detroit Opera House (home of the Michigan Opera Theatre), and the world-famous Detroit Symphony, are struggling for audiences and support; this year, the Symphony's musicians, after a contentious six-month strike and the cancellation of 75 percent of the season, accepted a 23 percent pay



cut, and the Opera House now holds a megachurch service every Sunday.



As the locale of a new television cop show, Detroit is the very image of post-Fordist urban abjection.<sup>28</sup> Written off the register of civilized America, suffering from dreadful crime statistics, inadequate policing, and municipal corruption, the city has recently called forth unbidden an extravaganza of projects attempting to establish the authentic street cred of both parachuting artists and local activists. As in the case of New Orleans, some cool people are presently moving in – people who fit under the rubric “creative class.” Some of the renewed interest in Detroit stems from an analysis of the city as both the model failure of (urban) capitalism and a fertile ground for the seeds of the future. Some other observers seem to revel in the opportunity to pick over the ruins in a kind of extended rubbernecking, but with the sometimes-unspecified hope that the outcome takes place in the vicinity of the art world.<sup>29</sup> Others still seem interested in pedagogical opportunities, whether for themselves or others. As is the case everywhere, many new arrivals are looking for cheap rent, for places to live and work comfortably, as Richard Florida has noticed; as Florida also tells us, where hipsters go, restaurants are sure to follow. The *New York Times* asks, “How much good can a restaurant do?” and reassures us that

in this city, a much-heralded emblem of industrial-age decline, and home to a cripplingly bad economy, a troubled school system, racial segregation and sometimes unheeded crime, there is one place where most everyone – black, white, poor, rich, urban, not – will invariably recommend you eat: Slows Bar B Q.<sup>30</sup>

Opened in 2005, the restaurant has, according to its owner, artist and real estate scion Phillip Coller, “validated the idea that people will come into the city.” The reporter comments, “Anywhere but Detroit, the notion that people will show up

and pay money for barbecue and beer would not be seen as revolutionary.”<sup>31</sup>

Detroit is home to many worthwhile public and community projects off the art world radar, such as the long-standing urban farming movement partly spearheaded by beloved radical activist Grace Lee Boggs, now ninety-six years old.<sup>32</sup> Boggs works with established communities of various income groups, using the collective growing, planting, and harvesting of crops and flowers as a basis for unity and civic mobilization, and as a way to draw in children; planting and harvesting remain a potent metaphor for self-application, communal effort, and the likelihood of a future. In a city like Detroit, neighborhood groups proliferate.



Cadillac Motor & Fleetwood workers' strike, Detroit, 1937.

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People have been making art about Detroit’s troubles for a long time, especially through the media of photography and film: see for example, Newsreel’s *Finally Got the News* (1970) and Michael Moore’s *Roger and Me* (1989).<sup>33</sup> Camilo José Vergara, sociologist, photographer, and cogent chronicler of the ills of US cities from the 1980s on, photographed and wrote about Detroit.<sup>34</sup> In the 1980s, the local group Urban Center for Photography outraged officials and city boosters by turning a grant they had received into a public project called *Demolished by Neglect*, which included posting enlarged photos of burned-out homes and decrepit theaters and other grand spaces on outdoor sites.<sup>35</sup>

Detroit is the site of artist-NGO do-gooder projects in the sphere of urban relations, some worthy, some hardly so. In the past few months I have met artists from around the world who have made the sad precincts of Detroit and environs their subject. Some of the projects rest comfortably within the tradition of salvage anthropology, such as the Canadian artist

Monika Berenyi's project archiving the poetry of the 1960s and 1970s Detroit through the *Detroit City Poetry Project: An Oral History*.<sup>36</sup> Several Detroit projects have taken place in New York or have been instituted by New York-based artists. In 2009 a small nonprofit on New York's Lower East Side held a show called "Art of the Crash: Art Created from the Detritus of Detroit."<sup>37</sup> Another project, *Ice House Detroit*, by an architect and a photographer based in Brooklyn (though the photographer was born in Detroit), consisted of laboriously (and expensively, it turns out) spraying one of Detroit's countless abandoned houses with water in the dead of winter to make it visible and undeniably aesthetic.<sup>38</sup> Back in New York, a young artist having a solo show at the Museum of Modern Art last year showed her symbolic set of photo panels entitled *Detroit*. "The thing you have to understand about Detroit is that ruin is pervasive. It's not like it's relegated to one part of town... It's everywhere." The artist (who has also visited New Orleans) "internalized all that decay, but she also uncovered hopeful signs of reinvention, like a group of artists turning an abandoned auto plant into studio spaces," writes the *New York Times*.

Alejandra Salinas and Aeron Bergman,

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artists based in Oslo, have been doing projects in Detroit (Bergman's home town) for a decade in collaboration with institutions in Detroit and Oslo. They will be running an "artist/poet/scholar" residency called INCA: Institute for Neo-Connotative Action, out of a center-city apartment they own. Salinas and Bergman have made animated-text films based on audio recordings of local community and political activists (including Grace Lee Boggs) and on the history of DRUM, the Detroit chapter of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, centered on the Newsreel film *Finally Got the News*.<sup>39</sup>

The Netherlands also sends art students to Detroit, but in much larger numbers and through regularized institutional channels, under the auspices of the Dutch Art Institute, in collaboration with the University of Michigan, an elite public university.<sup>40</sup> The university has set up a Detroit center, accessible only to Ann Arbor-based students with swipe cards. Back in Ann Arbor, about an hour's drive from Detroit, artist Danielle Abrams teaches a course called "Why Does Everyone in Ann Arbor Want to Make Work in Detroit?" During the 2010 Open Engagement conference sponsored by the Art and Social Practice program at Portland State



Union Square, New York City, 2010.

University in Oregon, Abrams's students explained that they didn't go to Detroit to "fix it" but rather "to get to know the community: its history, its people, and movements": "The city will teach you what you need to know."<sup>41</sup> Abrams's students did not produce art projects but rather "research and community engagement."

A pair of young Australian artists received funding from an Australia Council residency in Chicago to do a month-long project in Gary, Indiana, an industrial satellite of Detroit and similarly in ruins. In conjunction with the neighborhood activist group Central District Organizing Project they planted a community garden and painted an all-but-abandoned house with an absentee owner. They also recorded local interviews for a planned film interspersing the interviews with clips from the 1980s Hollywood movie *The Wiz*.<sup>42</sup>

The imperative toward a manifestation of social concern and respect, if not engagement, pervades most of the projects I have learned about. If some of this sounds like missionary social work in a third world city that is part of a first world nation – much like the Ninth Ward in post-Katrina New Orleans – other projects are, like the MoMA artist's, framed in romantic, and sometimes futuristic terms (and what is futurism if not predicated on loss?). Let me invoke the motif of melancholy. Only through the act of mourning something as having been lost can the melancholic possess that which he or she may never have had; the contours of absence provide a kind of echo or relief of what is imagined lost, allowing it to be held. In this respect, most art-world projects centering on decaying places like Detroit are melancholic monuments to capital, in the sense of depicting both the devastation left in its absence but also the politics it provoked. Detroit was home not only to one of the great triumphs of capitalist manufacturing but also to one of the great compromises between capital and labor. To be upper middle class and melancholic about Detroit is to firmly fix one's political responsibilities to a now absent past; mourning Detroit is a gesture that simultaneously evidences one's social conscience and testifies to its absolute impotence. (Looking at Detroit also helpfully eases the vexed question of one's effect on one's own neighborhood in another city somewhere else.)

Such melancholia has nourished a post-apocalyptic futurism. A recent exhibition at Casco, the public design space in Utrecht, by a London-based graphic designer and a Detroit filmmaker, seeks "to imagine a post-capitalist city," focusing on Detroit's abandoned zoo, "not simply to witness the failure of a civilization in its

state of ruin, but to encounter an abundant ecosystem of flora and fauna that has since evolved there."<sup>43</sup> An associated lecture by a Scottish-born, Detroit-based professor of urban studies argued that Detroit is a place "where a model of open spaces or, to use a term that comes up a lot here in Detroit, the urban prairie, starts to come into play."<sup>44</sup> (The architect of the *Ice House* project had similarly told *Dwell* magazine that "Detroit is a place with a lot of potential at the moment, and there are a lot of individuals there working on innovative projects, such as the re-prairie-ization of inner city Detroit, urban farming, materials reuse and redistribution, densification of certain areas, and widespread architectural reuse."<sup>45</sup>)

The decidedly local Heidelberg Project, Tyree Guyton's 25-year effort of decorating house exteriors in an impoverished neighborhood centering on Detroit's Heidelberg Street, fits into the "outsider art" category. Unlike, say, the initiative of artist-mayor Edi Rama of Tirana to paint the downtown buildings of this destitute city in bright colors, captured by the Albanian-born artist Anri Sala in *Dammi i colori*, Guyton's project has not had a high level of art-world or municipal traction.<sup>46</sup> A group of Detroit-based artists going by the name Object Orange, however, achieved a brief moment of attention in 2006/2007 when they painted abandoned buildings in Disney's "Tiggerific Orange" color, hoping, they finally decided, to have the city tear them down and reduce the blight and danger they posed.<sup>47</sup>

I mention these projects on Detroit not to praise or to criticize them in particular but because they represent a movement within art, and architecture, to institute projects in the larger community, in the built environment or in reference to it, surely as part of the "go social," community-oriented imperative. Is it troublesome that such works stand in contradistinction, implicit or explicit, to "political art," to work directly concerned with access to power? Here it is helpful to invoke New York urban theorist Marshall Berman's phrase, the "collision between abstract capitalist space and concrete human place." Community groups, and community artists, are tied to a concrete locale and thus cannot stand up to those in command of capital, which is defined by its mobility. But even more, community groups are composed of members tied to each other, whereas itinerant artists remain always on the outside, functioning as participant observers, anthropology style. Some, like Harrell Fletcher (or, earlier, filmmakers Nettie Wild and Beni Matias), have found communities where they expected only to do a project and leave, but have instead moved in.<sup>48</sup>

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In other cities, such as Barcelona, generally presented as a model of humanistic redevelopment, driven by the relentless push of municipal “renewal,” but also notable for its “push back” of local housing initiatives, young activist students work on resistance and reformation campaigns within working-class communities under pressure of gentrification, adding some visibility and perhaps organizational strength to local neighborhood groups. Detroit has no such worries.

#### 4. Public Practice, Social Practice

I do not know whether to be more pleased or apprehensive about art-world artists engaging in, as the sign on the door says, “social practice.” Certainly these essays into the world beyond the art world, which can include any of a spate of pedagogical projects in ordinary communities, feed the instincts of a sector of artists, a sector constantly reborn, to do something “real.” It is worth noting, following Mierle Ukeles, the replacement of the term public art by social practice.<sup>49</sup> The emphasis on personal qualities and social networks will most likely give rise to projects that center on the affective. I have rehearsed some of the difficulties of these efforts. I have also alluded, throughout this

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essay, to the relatively easy co-optation of artists as an urban group in cities that simply allow us to live and work in ways we find conducive to our concerns – a pacification made easier by the expansion of the definition of the artist and the advancing professionalization of the field. Baby steps in the formation of community initiatives are treated as deserving of the moral (and professional) equivalent of merit badges, for a generation raised on images and virtual communication and lacking a sufficient grasp of the sustained commitment required for community immersion. These projects can capture the attention of journalists and municipal authorities, all speaking the same language and operating against a backdrop of shared class understandings. (This is precisely the situation Sharon Zukin described in *Loft Living*, which, we should recall, is a case study, using Manhattan’s Soho neighborhood, of the transformation of undervalued urban space into highly valuable real estate, a condition revisited in the more recent *Naked City*, in order to address the process at a far more advanced stage along that course.<sup>50</sup>) But it renders invisible the patient organizing and agitating, often decades long, by members of the local communities (a process I witnessed first-hand in Greenpoint, Brooklyn).



Comptoir des Cotonniers storefront, Soho district, New York.

My concerns start here but extend a bit further, to the desire of young artists, now quite apparent in the US, to “succeed.” Success is measured not especially in terms of the assessments of the communities “served,” though that may be integral to the works, but through the effects within the professional art world to which these projects are reported. Success, to those whom I’ve asked, seems to mean both fame and fortune in the professional ambit. I am not alone in my disquiet over the fact that this particular rabbit seems to be sliding inside the boa, as “public practice” is increasingly smiled upon by the art world, particularly in those demonstration extravaganzas called biennials, which appear to reside in cities but whose globalized projects can in fact be easily disclaimed as one-off experiments.<sup>51</sup>

One problem with my critique of Richard Florida’s thesis stems from the insufficiency of simply pointing out the obfuscatory conflation of the category “artist” with the larger economic group he has called “the creative class,” for artists increasingly have come to adopt the latter’s entrepreneurial strategies. Witness only the increasingly common tactic of raising project money through social media and related sites

such as Kickstarter or PitchEngine, in which the appeal to an audience beyond the professional is often couched in the language of promotion. Like resume writing, now strongly infused with a public-relations mentality, the offerings are larded with inflated claims and the heavy use of superlatives.<sup>52</sup> One should refer here to the manifold and repeated discussions of the artist as flexible personality in the post-Fordist world, forced to “sell” oneself in numerous protean discourses; a literature that encompasses such writers as Brian Holmes and Paolo Virno (I have briefly cited this literature in an earlier essay, in relation to the questions of the political and critical art<sup>53</sup>). Paolo Virno writes:

The pianist and the dancer stand precariously balanced on a watershed that divides two antithetical destinies: on the one hand, they may become examples of “wage-labour that is not at the same time productive labour”; on the other, they have a quality that is suggestive of political action. Their nature is essentially amphibian. So far, however, each of the potential developments inherent in the figure of the performing artist – poiesis or



Work for creatives. Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

praxis, Work or Action – seems to exclude its opposite.<sup>54</sup>

The alienation this creates is so all-pervasive that although the alienation of labor was a much-studied topic in mid twentieth century, the condition has settled like a miasma over all of us and has disappeared as a topic. At the same time, while some artists are once again occupied with the nature of labor and the role of artists in social transformation, Continental theorists have for most of the past century looked at social transformation through the prism of art and culture. The focus on culture itself as a means of critiquing and perhaps superseding class rule has a long lineage. Perry Anderson has pointed out that Marxism on the whole was inhibited from dealing with economic and political problems from the 1920s on, and when questions concerning the surmounting of capitalism turned to superstructural matters, theorists did not, as might be expected, concentrate on questions of the state or on law, but on culture.<sup>55</sup>

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critically, socially, and aesthetically aware,” is announced as follows: “In recent years many artists have begun to work in non-art contexts, pushing the limits of their creative practice to help solve social problems.” Offerings range from presentations on “artists embedded in the government, industries, and electoral politics” to those operating beyond the cash economy. The announcement further elucidates:

[W]e hope to further the possibilities for artists to participate in the development of social policy. Artists, art historians, museum professionals, academics, policy experts and government officials will consider how the art making process can contribute to social change as well as encourage elected officials, community leaders and the general public to think of artists as potential partners in a variety of circumstances.

In direct counterpoint is the Festival of Ideas for the New City, in Manhattan, initiated by the New Museum and sponsored by Goldman Sachs, American Express, Audi, The Rockefeller Foundation, and *New York* magazine, among others, and with thanks to local businesses, socialites, and a clutch of New York City commissioners:

[This festival], a major new collaborative initiative ... involving scores of Downtown organizations, from universities to arts institutions and community groups, working together to effect change ... will harness the power of the creative community to imagine the future city ... . The Festival will serve as a platform for artists, writers, architects, engineers, designers, urban farmers, planners, and thought leaders to exchange ideas, propose solutions, and invite the public to participate.

It comprises a conference, the inevitable street festival, and “over one hundred independent projects and public events.”<sup>56</sup> The conference proper is described (in the inflated vocabulary that we have seen some smaller institutions also adopt) as including:

visionaries and leaders – including exemplary mayors, forecasters, architects, artists, economists, and technology experts – addressing the Festival themes: The Heterogeneous City; The Networked City; The Reconfigured City; and The Sustainable City.



Poster for the Festival of New Ideas found on the New York subway.

While public practices are entered into the roster of practices legible within the art world, they are entered as well into the creative-class thesis, in which they will, along with the much larger group of knowledge-industry workers, transform cities, not by entering into transformative political struggle but rather to serve as unwitting assistants to upper-class rule.

Two near-simultaneous New York City initiatives, occurring as I write, provide insight on the way this plays out, the first from the artists' vantage point, the second from the point of view of the powers-that-be. An ambitious conference, at a not-for-profit Brooklyn gallery describing itself as “committed to organizing shows that are



These two events suggest the two registers of public projects, of the creatives remaking the urban world, which only appear to be following the same script. While artists look for the messianic or the merely helpful moment, aiming for “social change,” the institutional production is centered on various trendy formulas for the “future city.” (Yet the institutional event has secured the participation of most of lower Manhattan and Brooklyn’s project and nonprofit spaces – including some of those whose press releases figured in the present essay – no doubt figuring that they can hardly afford to take a pass.)

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experience.”<sup>57</sup> Mercer notes that the characteristics of urban life that formerly drove people to the suburbs – such as diversity and density, on the one hand, and, on the other, vacant old factories and warehouses considered “negative location factors in the old economy” – are “potentially positive factors in the new economy because they are attractive to those [the “knowledge-based workers of the new economy”] who bring with them the potential for economic growth.”<sup>58</sup>

Mercer’s paper is, of course, a reading of Florida’s thesis; he writes:

This is not an “arts advocate” making the argument. It is an urban and regional economist from Carnegie Mellon University whose work has become very influential for urban and regional policy and planning in North America, Europe and Asia ... because he has recognised something distinctive about the contemporary make up of successful, innovative and creative cities which ... take account of ... what he calls the “creative class.”<sup>59</sup>

Indeed. Florida’s paradigm is useful for cities – especially “second tier” cities, if Alan Blum is correct – looking to create a brand and publicity for the purposes of attracting both capital and labor (the right kind of labor, for service workers will come of their own accord). As I suggested in an earlier installment, it is of little importance whether the theory pans out empirically, since it serves as a ticket of entry to renewed discourses of urban transformation. If and when it has outlived its use, another promotional package, complete with facts and figures, will succeed it, much as Florida’s urban conversation has largely replaced the more ominous “zero tolerance” and “broken windows” theories of the problematics of urban governance – a replacement that has been necessitated by lower crime statistics and perhaps from the success of evacuating or depoliticizing poor and working class residents. I am more concerned with the point of view of the broadly defined creative classes, especially of artists and other “cultural workers,” although I remind myself that immaterial and flexible labor link the creatives and those implicitly deemed uncreatives, which in the US seems to have led to a wholesale standing down from organization and militancy.

But, from a policy point of view, as UK urbanist Max Nathan remarks,

Everywhere, culture and creativity improve the quality of life; iconic buildings and good public spaces can help places reposition and rebrand. But most cities – large and



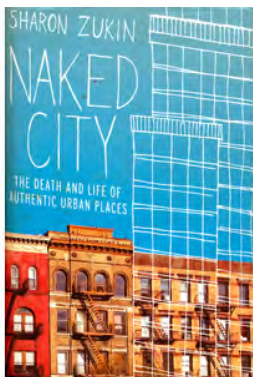
For the business and urban planning communities, culture is not a social good but an instrumentalized “strategic cultural asset.” Consultant and former UK professor of urban policy Colin Mercer writes of the “strategic significance of intellectual property-based cultural and creative (content) industries in urban business communities” that can “work in partnership and synergy with existing/traditional businesses to enhance footfall, offer, branding and opportunity for consumption and diversity of



small – would be better off starting elsewhere: growing the economic base; sharpening skills, connectivity and access to markets; ensuring local people can access new opportunities, and improving key public services...<sup>60</sup>

Let me, briefly, take this discussion back to Henri Lefebvre. Lefebvre, as I noted at the start of this essay, in Part I, had posited that the urban represented a qualitatively new stage in the evolution of society, from agrarian, to industrial, to urban. Thus, he reasoned, future mobilizations against capitalism would have an urban character. This troubled Manuel Castells, who, writing as a structuralist following Althusser, preferred to focus on the *ideological* function of the city – its role in securing the reproduction of relations of production – rather than approaching the city as an essentially new space, one, moreover, that might be construed as endowed with quasi-metaphysical features for the production of both alienation and emancipation. As urban theorist Andy Merrifield writes:

While the city, in Lefebvre’s dialectic, functioned for capitalism, it actually threatened capitalism more; now, in Castells’s dialectic, while the city threatened capitalism, it somehow had become more functional for capitalism. Indeed, the city, Castells writes, had become the “spatial specificity of the processes of reproduction of labor-power and of the processes of reproduction of the means of production.”<sup>61</sup>



The relative clarity of European class politics could allow Castells to write that Gaullist attempts at urban renewal were

aimed at left-wing and in particular Communist sectors of the electorate. ... Changing this population means changing the political tendency of the sector ... .

Urban renewal is strong where the electoral tradition of the parliamentary “majority” is weak.<sup>62</sup>

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Zukin’s interpretation of urban events is similar but tailored to American conditions. The weak and often antagonistic relation of the US student movement, through the 1960s and 70s, to working class life and culture helped produce a politics of cultural resistance in the newly developing “creative class” that was cut off, culturally, physically, and existentially, from traditional forms of urban working class organization. Although artists, flexible service workers, and “creatives” more generally may not be the source of capital accumulation, it is inarguable that the rising value of the built environment depends on their pacification of the city, while the severing of relations to class history – even of one’s own family in many instances – has produced at best a blindness, and at worst an objectively antagonistic relation, to the actual character of urban traditions of life and of struggle. What often remains is a nostalgic and romanticized version of city life in which labor is misperceived as little more than a covert service function, for the production of “artisanal” goods, for example, and the creation of spaces of production and consumption alike (manufacturing lofts, workshops, bars, taverns, greasy spoons, barbershops) obscured by a nostalgic haze.

### 5. Artists Seeking Inspiration – Or Consolation

Anthropologist David Graeber writes with some bemusement on a conference of several central figures in Italian “post-workerist” theory – Maurizio Lazzarato, Toni Negri, Bifo Berardi, and Judith Revel – held at the Tate Modern in London in January 2008. Graeber professes to be astonished that neither the speakers nor the organizers have any relation to art, or even much to say about it (except for a few historical references), although the event was sponsored by a museum and the hall was packed. He calls his review “The Sadness of Post-Workerism, or Art and Immaterial Labour Conference,” because of what he describes as a general feeling of gloom on the part of speakers, traceable primarily to Bifo, who at that moment had decided that “all was lost.”<sup>63</sup> Graeber seems to find a certain congruence with the perpetual crisis of the art world and the difficulties of post-Fordist theorizing, especially since he finds Lazzarato’s concept of immaterial labor to be risible. He decides that the artists present have invited the speakers to perform as prophets, to tell them where they are in this undoubted historical rupture – which Graeber finds to be the

perpetual state of the art world. However, he diagnoses the speakers as having, for that moment at least, decided that they too have lost the future.

I am far from prepared to take this to mean that artists have lost the future. It is not of minor consequence that this sort of conference is a staple of the art world (Graeber probably knows this too). Philosophy fills in for previous sources of inspiration, from theology and patrons' preferences to the varieties of scientific theorization or political revolution. A recent Swedish conference asks, "Is the artist a role-model for the contemporary, 'post-Fordian' worker – flexible, creative, adaptable and cheap – a creative entrepreneur? Or the other way around – a professionalized function within an advanced service economy?"<sup>64</sup> A question perhaps worth asking, and which many, particularly European, critics and theorists, along with some artists, are inclined to ask. Here is something to consider: the cultural sphere, despite relentless co-optation by marketing, is a perpetual site of resistance and critique. Bohemian/romantic rejectionism, withdrawal into exile, utopianism, and ideals of reform are endemic to middle-class students, forming the basis of anti-bourgeois commitments – and not everyone grows out of it, despite the rise of fashion-driven (i.e. taste-driven) hipsterism. Sociologist Ann Markusen, in a kind of balance of Lloyd's critique of the docile utility of bohemians as workers, reminds us that artists are overwhelmingly to the left on the political spectrum and engage at least sporadically in political agitation and participation.<sup>65</sup>

I am also not inclined to follow Debord or Duchamp and give up the terrain of art and culture. Certainly, celebration and lifestyle mania forestall critique; a primary emphasis on enjoyment, fun, or experience precludes the formation of a robust and exigent public discourse. But even ruckuses have their place as disruption and intervention; some may see them as being less self-interested than social projects but as full collective projects, while fun remains a term that refers to private experience. There is no reasonable prescription for how, and in what register, to engage with the present conditions of servitude and freedom.

Brian Holmes has likened the dance between institutions and artists to a game of Liar's Poker.<sup>66</sup> If the art world thinks the artist might be holding aces, they let him or her in, but if she turns out actually to have them – that is, to have living political content in the work – the artist is ejected. Although Chantal Mouffe exhorts artists (rightly, I suppose) not to abandon the museum – which I take to mean the art world proper – there is nothing to suggest we should

not simultaneously occupy the terrain of the urban.

X

This essay is an expanded version of a talk given at the third Hermes Lecture at Provinciehuis Den Bosch on November 14, 2010, arising from a suggestion by Camiel van Winkel to consider the work of Richard Florida. I thank Stephen Squibb for his invaluable and edifying assistance during the research and editing process and Brian Kuan Wood for his editing help and infinite patience. Thanks also to Alexander Alberro and Stephen Wright for their helpful responses to earlier drafts.

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e-flux journal #25 — may 2011 Martha Rosler  
Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism, Part III

Martha Rosler is an artist who works with multiple media, including photography, sculpture, video, and installation. Her interests are centered on the public sphere and landscapes of everyday life – actual and virtual – especially as they affect women. Related projects focus on housing, on the one hand, and systems of transportation, on the other. She has long produced works on war and the “national security climate,” connecting everyday experiences at home with the conduct of war abroad. Other works, from bus tours to sculptural recreations of architectural details, are excavations of history.

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Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism, Part III

1  
In the course of designing a city garden in Helsinki, I learned that city planners worried I would fail to distinguish the urban from the rural via the forms and types of planting. Finland has too much countryside for their liking, it appears.

2  
Advanced societies in the twentieth century saw the apparent conquest of diseases associated with dirt and soil through improved sanitation and germ-fighting technologies. Fresh air movements against disease were important elements of urban reform, opening the way for renewed efforts to enlarge the playground already provided to the middle class and extended to the working class in the early part of the century.

3  
Paris already had such a repurposed industrial rail line, the Promenade Plantée, whose transformation into a park began in the late 1980s.

4  
Poultry keeping was banned in New York City in an effort to extirpate the remnants of the farms and farm-like practices that survived in far-flung corners of the city, such as Gravesend, Brooklyn, or Staten Island. New York City, like virtually every municipality, has detailed laws on the keeping of animals, whether classed as pets, companions, or livestock, including those held for slaughter. Pets were a matter of contention, banned from middle- and working-class apartment buildings, until the 1960s. Animals classified as wild are banned – the category “wild animals” defines the uncivilized zoosphere; ergo, people who keep them are not “virtuous” but decadent or “sick.” New Yorkers may recall the incident a decade ago in which Mayor Giuliani, a suburbanite longing to join the ranks of the cosmopolitan, hurled personal insults (prominently and repeatedly, mentioning “an excessive concern with little weasels”) at a caller to his weekly radio program who wanted ferrets to be legalized as household pets. The call, from David Guthartz of the New York Ferrets’ Rights Advocacy, prompted a famous three-minute tirade in which Giuliani opined, “There’s something deranged about you. The excessive concern that you have for ferrets is something you should examine with a therapist, not with me.” See <http://www.concordmonitor.com/article/from-giuliani-come-s-revealing-rant> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqmbbPRDY&feature=related>.

5  
See <http://rooftopfarms.org/>.

6

Here one is tempted to offer a footnote to Lefebvre’s mid-century observations on the urban frame (see Martha Rosler, “Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism, Part I: Art and Urbanism, e-flux journal, Issue 21, <http://e-flux.com/journal/vi-ew/190>), to take account of the blowback onto the urban paradigm of the neoliberal attributes of exurbia that we have classed under the rubric of suburbanization. As neoliberalism takes hold, even long-standing democratic processes of public decision-making, such as town meetings that obtained in small towns, succumb. As to the question of aristocracy, the figure of the aristocrat – especially the one in ratty old furs and drafty mansions – has haunted discussions of the art world, for artists are still disproportionately influential for the culture at large, while some reap handsome financial gain from this excursion and others simply stand around.

7  
J. Eric Oliver, *Democracy in Suburbia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). Rather than town meetings, one more typically finds the retreat to the backyard and the country club.

8  
The work was installed in 1981, having been commissioned by the Art-in-Architecture Percent for Art Program, under the auspices of the federal General Services Administration, which also oversaw its removal. The event is interesting because it called upon a probably manufactured split between “the ordinary public” (the victims of the art) and the pitiless elite sectors of the art world – manufactured because the campaign for the removal of the work was in fact spurred by an aggrieved judge, Edward Re, of the arcane United States Customs Court. The following literature on *Tilted Arc* may be useful: Janet Zweig, Notes and Comments column, *New Yorker* (Mar. 27, 1989); Harriet F. Senie, *Tilted Arc Controversy: Dangerous Precedent?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001); Gregg M. Horowitz, “Public Art/Public Space: The Spectacle of the *Tilted Arc* Controversy,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 54, 1 (Winter 1996) (“an early version of the strategy of censorship-as-liberation used by regressive political forces in other antidemocratic projects,” 8); and, by Serra’s wife, *The Destruction of Tilted Arc: Documents*, eds. Martha Buskirk and Clara Weyergraf-Serra, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1990). For an immediate, partisan view, see the film *The Trial of Tilted Arc* (1986), centering on the hearings relating to the removal of the sculpture.

9

“The Gates is the largest artwork

since the Sphinx," begins a promo site's appreciative article, see [http://wirednewyork.com/park\\_s/central\\_park/christo\\_gates/](http://wirednewyork.com/park_s/central_park/christo_gates/). Mayor Bloomberg, a man known to tout the arts for their economic potential, inaugurated the work by dropping the first curtain. The artists call the fabric color "saffron," a colorful and exotic food spice but not the orange of the work. A lovely article on children's responses to the work – upper-middle class, upper class, and working class – includes the following: "Subsequent visits have somewhat altered her view. 'I don't like the look of them but I like the way everybody is at the park and happy,' she said, making her the ideal experiencer of the work." Julie Salomon, "Young Critics See 'The Gates' and Offer Their Reviews: Mixed," *New York Times*, February 17, 2005. See <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/17/arts/design/17kids.htm>.

10 See Sharon Zukin, *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), discussed in part II of this essay.

11 A further consideration of this project and its municipally sanctioned follow-up, Olafur Eliasson's *Waterfalls* (2008), would have to point to the insistence of these projects on the power of the artist, and his grant-getting, fund-raising, and bureaucracy-busting prowess, with urbanized nature as the ground. In other words, the intellectual labor of the artist is disclosed to cognoscenti but the spectacle suffices for the masses. This problem was partly addressed by Eliasson in a radio interview describing the scaffolding of the *Waterfalls* as an homage to (manual) labor, a theme not otherwise much noted in his work.

12 Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* ed. Kurt Wolff (Glencoe, IL: Free Press of Glencoe, 1950). Originally published as *Die Großstadt und das Geistesleben* (Dresden: Petermann, 1903).

13 Here consider the relationship between street fashion, working class attire, and middle-class envy of these. In addition, before youth-culture demands in the 1960s loosened most dress codes (prompting outraged businesses to post notices announcing "No Shoes, No Shirt, No Service"), it was illegal to wear "short shorts" and other forms of skimpy dress on New York City streets.

14 Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 3–4.

15 Quoted in Yúdice, *The Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 196. (See Part II of the present article.) Jeremy Rifkin subsequently published a book with the same title as his article. See Jeremy Rifkin, *Age of Access: The New Culture of Hypercapitalism Where All of Life Is a Paid-for Experience* (New York: Tarcher, 2000).

16 Rifkin, *Age of Access*, 54.

17 Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2007) and *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre & Every Business a Stage* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999). Aurora is a tiny town of about 13,000 residents, in Northeastern Ohio, near Akron. Do visit Pine and Gilmore's fun-loving website, <http://www.strategichorizons.com/index.html>. Rifkin cites their first book: "Management consultants B. Joseph Pine and James Gilmore advise their corporate clients that 'in the emerging Experience Economy, companies must realize they make memories, not goods,'" *Age of Access*, 145.

18 Two reviews, by two women reviewers, from one day's *New York Times* Arts section make this point. They sharply contrast the old, "culture is serious business," mode and the new, "culture ought to be fun" mode. A senior, front-page reviewer in "Cuddling with Little Girls, Dogs and Music," writes skeptically about crowd-pleaser Yoshitomo Nara's show, at the formerly staid Asia Society, that it "adds new wrinkles to the continuing attempts by today's museums to attract wider, younger audiences, and the growing emphasis on viewer participation." A few pages on, in "A Raucous Reflection on Identity: Jewish and Feminine," a junior reviewer writes, "Don't be put off by the yawn-inducing title of the Jewish Museum's 'Shifting the Gaze: Painting and Feminism.' The show is a puckish, punchy look at the women's art movement [that draws] inspiration from Marcia Tucker's 'Bad Girls' survey of 1994." There is nothing particularly raucous in the works she describes. See <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/10/arts/design/10nara.html> and <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/10/arts/design/10shifting.html>. The art journalist Jerry Saltz, based at a local publication, earlier demonstrated his lack of recognition of the atmosphere of exclusivity, high seriousness, and sobriety typically projected by high-art institutions

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(definitively analyzed by Pierre Bourdieu) by wondering in print why people do not visit galleries even though they do not charge admission. The need to abrogate this forbidding atmosphere is not what is at issue here, but the emphasis upon "the museum experience," or experiences, represents a new management imperative.

19 See <http://www.contaminatenyc.com/?tag=contesta-rockhair>.

20 See <http://www.spiegel.de/international/business/0,1518,510609,00.html>.

21 Vanessa Fuhrmans, "Berlin Broods over a Glitz Invasion," *Wall Street Journal*, August 20, 2010. See <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703467304575383312394581850.html>.

22 Rachel B. Doyle, "Kracow: Add Art, Stir in Cachet," *New York Times*, August, 29, 2010. See <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C05EED81E31F93AA1575BC0A9669D8B63>.

23 See part II of this essay.

24 Or not very gracefully. In February of this year, the state of Michigan ordered the Detroit school superintendent to close half of Detroit's schools, swelling class size to sixty in some cases. See Jennifer Chambers, "Michigan Orders DPS to Make Huge Cuts," *Detroit News*, February 21, 2011. See [http://www.amren.com/mtnews/archives/2011/02/michigan\\_or ders.php](http://www.amren.com/mtnews/archives/2011/02/michigan_or ders.php). The library system may also be forced to close almost all its branches; see Christine MacDonald and RoNeisha Mullen, "Detroit Library Could Close Most of Its Branches," *Detroit News*, April 15, 2011. See <http://detnews.com/article/20110415/METRO/104150371/Detroit-library-could-close-most-of-its-branches#ixzz1JcLctBfD>.

25 The auto industry began siting some of its factories in the suburbs and small towns surrounding Detroit, and auto workers followed them there; however, black auto workers complained they were kept in Detroit at the dirtiest, least desirable jobs, while the union bosses were complicit with the industry.

26 See Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying: A Study in Urban Revolution* (London and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975; Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1998).

27

Berry Gordy's Motown Records itself departed long ago; the Belleville Three had moved on by the 1990s, although the Detroit Electronic Music Festival continues.

28 See <http://abc.go.com/shows/detroit-1-8-7>.

29 Fascination with ruins is a long standing and deeply romantic facet of mourning and melancholy; current manifestations include well-established tourist pilgrimages to sites like New York's former World Trade Center but also an interest, no longer disavowed, in images of accidents, death, and destruction, and sometimes up-close, well-supervised, and preferably well-funded short-term visits to the safer ends of war zones of various sorts.

30 Melena Ryzik, "Detroit's Renewal, Slow-Cooked," *New York Times*, October 19, 2010. The article opens, "How much good can a restaurant do?" and later comments, "To make sure the positive change takes hold, Mr. Cooley has parlayed the good will of his barbecue joint into a restless pursuit of community-building." See <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/20/dining/20Detroit.html>.

31 Ibid.

32 Boggs's most recent book, written with Scott Kurashige, is *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011). Among her other books are *Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century* (1976) and *Living for Change: An Autobiography* (1998). In 1992, she co-founded the Detroit Summer youth program; having moved with her husband James to Detroit, where she expected the working class to "rise up and reconstruct the city," she adapted instead to a city in a very different phase. "I think it's very difficult for someone who doesn't live in Detroit to say you can look at a vacant lot and, instead of seeing devastation, see hope, see the opportunity to grow your own food, see an opportunity to give young people a sense of process ... that the vacant lot represents the possibilities for a cultural revolution.... I think filmmakers and writers are coming to the city and trying to spread the word." Democracy Now! radio program (April 14, 2011), archived at [http://www.democracynow.org/2011/4/14/roundtable\\_assessing\\_obamas\\_budget\\_plan\\_state](http://www.democracynow.org/2011/4/14/roundtable_assessing_obamas_budget_plan_state).

33 Moore is from Flint, Michigan, the site of the historic sit-down strike of 1936–37 that led to the

empowerment of the United Auto Workers as the sole bargaining representative of General Motors workers; the Roger of the title was Roger Smith, the head of GM at the time and the executive responsible for huge worker layoffs that led to the near-total devastation of Flint. Credits for the film *Finally Got the News* are "A Film by Stewart Bird, Rene Lichtman, and Peter Gessner, Produced in Association with the League of Revolutionary Black Workers."

34  
See Camilo José Vergara, *The New American Ghetto* (Newark: Rutgers University Press, 1995).

35  
Parts of this project were included in the exhibition "Home Front," the first exhibition of the cycle "If You Lived Here" that I organized at the Dia Art Foundation in New York in 1989.

36  
This project, two years in the making (2008-2010), will continue through the auspices of Wayne State University with some further collaboration with Berenyi and with Eastern Michigan University. See <http://monikaberenyi.wordpress.com/2010/12/06/detroit-city-poetry-oral-history-project-2010-2011>.

37  
See [http://www.fusionartsmuseum.org/ex\\_crash.htm](http://www.fusionartsmuseum.org/ex_crash.htm).

38  
See Donna Terek (columnist), "Detroit Ice House Is Really All About Art," *Detroit News* (Feb. 7, 2010); and <http://detnews.com/article/20100207/OPINION03/2070309/Detroit-Ice-House-is-really-all-about-art>, which includes a video of the project. Funding was sought via Kickstarter. The creators describe the project as "An Architectural Installation and Social Change Project" on their blog, <http://icehousedetroit.blogspot.com/> (now seemingly inactive), detailing their Detroit activities, a forthcoming film and photo book, and the many media sites that have featured their project.

39  
Personal communications. Bergman supplied these links: [http://www.ubu.com/film/aa\\_wildflowers.html](http://www.ubu.com/film/aa_wildflowers.html) and [http://www.alejandra-aeron.com/new\\_center.html](http://www.alejandra-aeron.com/new_center.html). See also <http://www.alejandra-aeron.com/wildflowers.html>.

40  
According to its website, <http://detroitunrealestateagency.blogspot.com/2009/12/speaking-for-detroit.html>, "the Detroit Unreal Estate Agency ... is aimed at new types of urban practices (architecturally, artistically, institutional, everyday life, and so forth) that

came into existence, creating a new value system in Detroit. The project is an initiative by architects Andrew Herscher and Mireille Roddier, curator Femke Lutgerink, and Partizan Publik's Christian Ernten and Joost Janmaat. In collaboration with the Dutch Art Institute and the University of Michigan, generously funded by the Mondriaan Foundation and Fonds BKVB." I note that, by chance, Andrew Herscher is the architect who provided a very workable partnership on plans for the building my students and collaborators and I developed at *Utopia Station* at the Venice Biennale of 2003. Another Dutch residency in pilot phase is the Utrecht-based Expodium International Artists Residency Program: European Partnership, with Detroit. "The goal ... is to enter into a long-term collaboration with Detroit by creating an expanding network ... to exchange knowledge about urban models, shrinkage and social, political and artistic developments in urban transition areas. Detroit based cultural initiatives respond creatively to the city's current situation and set to play a vital role in the redevelopment of Detroit. It is this condition that has our special interest. Information gained through this platform provides vital input for the Expodium program here in the Netherlands." See <http://www.newstrategie.sdmc.blogspot.com>. Recently, fifteen students from the Netherlands participated in the Detroit City Poetry Project presentation at the Detroit Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCAD); see <http://detroitlife313.com/headlines/radio/detroit-life-radio-w-john-sinclair>. Why does the Netherlands send its art, architecture, and students to study cities, towns, and neighborhoods – including Dutch ones – considered to pose intractable problems? One may surmise that the Dutch, who seem fully engaged with the creative-class-rescue hypothesis, are hoping that artists and architects will assist in urban research and melioration and further help them found a new consultative industry: a Dutch urban advisory corps (this last solution – urban consultation – was proposed to me as an answer to my question "Why?" by Salomon Frausto, Head of Architectural Broadcasting at the Berlage Institute in Rotterdam).

41  
See <http://historyofartandsocialpractice.tumblr.com/post/633884270/shotgun-review-the-role-of-the-art-institution-in>.

42  
*The Wiz* is a version of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), journalist L. Frank Baum's important putatively allegorical children's book about rural farm-dwellers translocating to up-to-date metropolises and of a still-

fascinating mid-century musical film *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), based on the Oz tales; this later version of 1978 has a largely African American cast and features Detroit-born Michael Jackson.

43  
See <http://www.cascoprojects.org/?entryid=376>.

44  
Ibid.

45  
See <http://www.dwell.com/article/s/ice-house-detroit.html>. While vacillating between claiming it as an "architectural installation" and as a social change endeavor, the project's authors suggest that the house will be, virtuously, disassembled and the land donated perhaps to a community garden.

46  
Guyton has had some degree of success as a local, indigenous, non-elite artist of choice and was included in the 2008 Venice Architecture Biennale as well as garnering other attention. For Sala's project, see <http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ViewWork?cgroupid=99999961&workid=80261&searchid=14785>. Rama's project, as part of his mayoral endeavors, has had a different trajectory. According to the UK's Architecture foundation, Rama's actions constituted "an aesthetic and political act, which prompted social transformation, and much debate, through its visualization of signs of change." During the 2003 edition of the Tirana Biennial, Sala and Hans Ulrich Obrist invited Olafur Eliasson, Liam Gillick, and Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, among other artists, to "turn residential blocks into unique works of art"; see <http://vimeo.com/8254763>. The project continued, and in the 2009 iteration included façade contributions from Tala Madani, Adrian Paci, Tomma Abts, and others. However, the Tirana Biennial 2009 website notes that the exhibition would critically address the city's moment of development "through 'wild' urbanization, fast capital investments and within the horizon of a neoliberal context, [expanding] into the domain of architecture and processes of urbanization." See <http://www.tica-albania.org/TICAB/>.

47  
Although the mayor derided the group as vandals, a number of the buildings were subsequently torn down. See Celeste Headlee, "Detroit Artists Paint Town Orange to Force Change," *National Public Radio* radio broadcast, December 7, 2006. *Good* magazine uploaded a video of the project to YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wQwKk1bggY>. One of the group comments: "This didn't start out as this social crusade;

it started as an artistic endeavor." (That's what they all say, if they have any art-world sense; see Part II of the present article.)

48  
For Fletcher's testimony, see *Between Artists: Harrell Fletcher and Michael Rakowitz* (New York: A.R.T. Press, 2008).

49  
The term "interventionism" streaked like a comet across the art world firmament but seems to have been largely extinguished.

50  
Zukin, *Naked City*.

51  
I attempted to draw attention to both this trend's promises and its perils with the work entitled *Proposed Helsinki Garden in Singapore* at the latter city's biennale earlier this year. The project attempted simultaneously to articulate a commitment to public practice and a serious, not to say critical, examination of it. Too often, in discussing art, one finds the equation of criticism with refusal, allowing the absence of one to indict the reality of the other.

52  
Facebook itself takes the form in which shouting into the wind small self-promotional messages to an appreciative imaginary public is encouraged, and in which the occasional openings for the genuine exchange of ideas seem to snap shut in an instant. At the other pole from the particular language of promotion are the grant-writing discourses, Orwellian in their Byzantine inapplicability to most artists or projects you might know, but whose categorical imperatives have only escalated over the years. In the UK, the categories for art institutions and academic departments are mind-boggling, but everywhere this instrumentalized language framing instrumentalized projects is infecting the terms in which art exhibitions are laid out.

53  
See <http://e-flux.com/journal/view/107>.

54  
Paolo Virno, "Virtuosity and Revolution: The Political Theory of Exodus," trans. Ed Emory, in *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 188–209.

55  
Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism* (London: Verso, 1979), 75.

56  
See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVRHAWJieY> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch>

57

Colin Mercer, "Cultural Planning for Urban Development and Creative Cities" (2006), 2–3. See [http://www.culturalplanning-oresund.net/PDF\\_activities/maj06/Shanghai\\_cultural\\_planning\\_paper.pdf](http://www.culturalplanning-oresund.net/PDF_activities/maj06/Shanghai_cultural_planning_paper.pdf).

58

Here, Mercer is quoting a 2004 report put out by Partners for Livable Communities, which advises many Business Improvement Districts, or BIDs, with cultural elements. (A BID is a public-private partnership, a step along the path to privatization of urban public amenities and spaces. In New York they saw their genesis during the fiscal crisis of the 1970s.) Mercer also points out that "knowledge based workers" make up half the work force of the European Union.

59

Ibid., 2. Mercer's enthusiasm presumably factored into his own decision to leave academia for consulting work.

60

Max Nathan, "The Wrong Stuff? Creative Class Theory and Economic Performance in UK Cities." See <http://cjrs-rcsr.org/archive/s/30-3/NATHAN.pdf>.

61

Andy Merrifield, *Metromarxism: A Marxist Tale of the City* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 125.

62

Manuel Castells, *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach* (Boston: The MIT Press, 1979), 317.

63

David Graeber, "The Sadness of Post-Workerism, or 'Art And Immaterial Labour' Conference A Sort of Review (Tate Britain, Saturday 19 January 2008)." Available at [http://www.commoner.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2008/04/graeber\\_sadness.pdf](http://www.commoner.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2008/04/graeber_sadness.pdf), <http://www.scribd.com/doc/38093582/The-Sadness-of-Post-Workerism-David-Graeber>, and <http://news.infoshop.org/article.php?story=20080713130247120>.

64

See <http://www.konstnarsnamnden.se/default.aspx?id=13909> and <http://www.konstnarsnamnden.se/%20default.aspx?id=13914>.

65

Ann Markusen, "Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class: Evidence from the Study of Artists," *Environment and Planning A* 38, no. 10 (2006): 1921–1940; Richard Lloyd, *Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City* (New York: Routledge, 2006). See part II of the present article for a further discussion of these authors'

66  
Brian Holmes, "Liar's Poker," in *Unleashing the Collective Phantoms: Essays in Reverse Imagineering* (New York: Autonomedia, 2008). First published as "Liar's Poker: Representation of Politics/Politics of Representation" in *Springer* (January 2003). See [http://www.springer.at/dyn/heft\\_text.php?textid=1276&lang=en](http://www.springer.at/dyn/heft_text.php?textid=1276&lang=en).

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e-flux journal #25 — may 2011 Martha Rosler  
**Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism, Part III**

## Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance

KENNETH FRAMPTON

*The phenomenon of universalization, while being an advancement of mankind, at the same time constitutes a sort of subtle destruction, not only of traditional cultures, which might not be an irreparable wrong, but also of what I shall call for the time being the creative nucleus of great cultures, that nucleus on the basis of which we interpret life, what I shall call in advance the ethical and mythical nucleus of mankind. The conflict springs up from there. We have the feeling that this single world civilization at the same time exerts a sort of attrition or wearing away at the expense of the cultural resources which have made the great civilizations of the past. This threat is expressed, among other disturbing effects, by the spreading before our eyes of a mediocre civilization which is the absurd counterpart of what I was just calling elementary culture. Everywhere throughout the world, one finds the same bad movie, the same slot machines, the same plastic or aluminum atrocities, the same twisting of language by propaganda, etc. It seems as if mankind, by approaching en masse a basic consumer culture, were also stopped en masse at a subcultural level. Thus we come to the crucial problem confronting nations just rising from underdevelopment. In order to get on to the road toward modernization, is it necessary to jettison the old cultural past which has been the raison d'être of a nation? . . . Whence the paradox: on the one hand, it has to root itself in the soil of its past, forge a national spirit, and unfurl this spiritual and cultural revindication before the colonialist's personality. But in order to take part in modern civilization, it is necessary at the same time to take part in scientific, technical, and political rationality, something which very often requires the pure and simple abandon of a whole cultural past. It is a fact: every culture cannot sustain and absorb the shock of modern civilization. There is the paradox: how to become modern and to return to sources; how to revive an old, dormant civilization and take part in universal civilization.<sup>1</sup>*

— Paul Ricoeur, *History and Truth*

Modern building is now so universally conditioned by optimized technology that the possibility of creating significant urban form has become extremely limited. The restrictions jointly imposed by automotive distribution and the volatile play of land speculation serve to limit the scope of urban design to such a degree that any intervention tends to be reduced either to the manipulation of elements predetermined by the imperatives of production, or to a kind of superficial masking which modern development requires for the facilitation of marketing and the maintenance of social control. Today the practice of architecture seems to be increasingly polarized between, on the one hand, a so-called “high-tech” approach predicated exclusively upon production and, on the other, the provision of a “compensatory façade” to cover up the harsh realities of this universal system.<sup>2</sup>

Twenty years ago the dialectical interplay between civilization and culture still afforded the possibility of maintaining some general control over the shape and significance of the urban fabric. The last two decades, however, have radically transformed the metropolitan centers of the developed world. What were still essentially 19th-century city fabrics in the early 1960s have since become progressively overlaid by the two symbiotic instruments of Megalopolitan development—the freestanding high-rise and the serpentine freeway. The former has finally come into its own as the prime device for realizing the increased land value brought into being by the latter. The typical downtown which, up to twenty years ago, still presented a mixture of residential stock with tertiary and secondary industry has now become little more than a *burolandschaft* city-scape: the victory of universal civilization over locally inflected culture. The predicament posed by Ricoeur—namely, “how to become modern and to return to sources”<sup>3</sup>—now seems to be circumvented by the apocalyptic thrust of modernization, while the ground in which the mytho-ethical nucleus of a society might take root has become eroded by the rapacity of development.<sup>4</sup>

Ever since the beginning of the Enlightenment, *civilization* has been primarily concerned with instrumental reason, while *culture* has addressed itself to the specifics of expression—to the realization of the being and the evolution of its *collective* psycho-social reality. Today civilization tends to be increasingly embroiled in a never-ending chain of “means and ends” wherein, according to Hannah Arendt, “The ‘in order to’ has become the content of the ‘for the sake of;’ utility established as meaning generates meaninglessness.”<sup>5</sup>



## 2. The Rise and Fall of the Avant-Garde

The emergence of the avant-garde is inseparable from the modernization of both society and architecture. Over the past century-and-a-half avant-garde culture has assumed different roles, at times facilitating the process of modernization and thereby acting, in part, as a progressive, liberative form, at times being virulently opposed to the positivism of bourgeois culture. By and large, avant-garde architecture has played a positive role with regard to the progressive trajectory of the Enlightenment. Exemplary of this is the role played by Neoclassicism: from the mid-18th century onwards it serves as both a symbol of and an instrument for the propagation of universal civilization. The mid-19th century, however, saw the historical avant-garde assume an adversary stance towards both industrial process and Neoclassical form. This is the first concerted reaction on the part of "tradition" to the process of modernization as the Gothic Revival and the Arts-and-Crafts movements take up a categorically negative attitude towards both utilitarianism and the division of labor. Despite this critique, modernization continues unabated, and throughout the last half of the 19th century bourgeois art distances itself progressively from the harsh realities of colonialism and paleo-technological exploitation. Thus at the end of the century the avant-gardist Art Nouveau takes refuge in the compensatory thesis of "art for art's sake," retreating to nostalgic or phantasmagoric dream-worlds inspired by the cathartic hermeticism of Wagner's music-drama.

The progressive avant-garde emerges in full force, however, soon after the turn of the century with the advent of Futurism. This unequivocal critique of the *ancien régime* gives rise to the primary positive cultural formations of the 1920s: to Purism, Neoplasticism and Constructivism. These movements are the last occasion on which radical avant-gardism is able to identify itself wholeheartedly with the process of modernization. In the immediate aftermath of World War I—"the war to end all wars"—the triumphs of science, medicine and industry seemed to confirm the liberative promise of the modern project. In the 1930s, however, the prevailing backwardness and chronic insecurity of the newly urbanized masses, the upheavals caused by war, revolution and economic depression, followed by a sudden and crucial need for psycho-social stability in the face of global political and economic crises, all induce a state of affairs in which the interests of both monopoly and state capitalism are, for the first time in modern history, divorced from the liberative drives of cultural modernization. Universal civilization and world culture cannot be drawn upon to sustain "the myth of the State," and one reaction-formation succeeds another as the historical avant-garde founders on the rocks of the Spanish Civil War.

Not least among these reactions is the reassertion of Neo-Kantian aesthetics as a substitute for the culturally liberative modern project. Confused by the political and cultural politics of Stalinism, former left-wing protagonists of socio-cultural modernization now recommend a strategic withdrawal from the project of totally transforming the existing reality. This renunciation is predicated on the belief that as long as the struggle between socialism and capitalism persists (with the manipulative mass-culture politics that this conflict necessarily entails), the modern world cannot continue to entertain the prospect of evolving a marginal, liberative, avant-gardist culture which would break (or speak of the break) with the history of bourgeois repression. Close to *l'art pour l'art*, this position was first advanced as a "holding pattern" in Clement Greenberg's "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" of 1939; this essay concludes somewhat ambiguously with the words: "Today we look to socialism *simply* for the preservation of whatever living culture we have right now."<sup>6</sup> Greenberg reformulated this position in specifically formalist terms in his essay "Modernist Painting" of 1965, wherein he wrote:

Having been denied by the Enlightenment of all tasks they could take seriously, they [the arts] looked as though they were going to be assimilated to entertainment pure and simple, and entertainment looked as though it was going to be assimilated, like religion, to therapy. The arts could save themselves from this leveling down only by demonstrating that the kind of experience they provided was valuable in its own right and not to be obtained from any other kind of activity.<sup>7</sup>

Despite this defensive intellectual stance, the arts have nonetheless continued to gravitate, if not towards entertainment, then certainly towards commodity and—in the case of that which Charles Jencks has since classified as Post-Modern Architecture<sup>8</sup>—towards pure technique or pure scenography. In the latter case, the so-called postmodern architects are merely feeding the media-society with gratuitous, quietistic images rather than proffering, as they claim, a creative *rappel à l'ordre* after the supposedly proven bankruptcy of the liberative modern project. In this regard, as Andreas Huyssens has written, "The American postmodernist avant-garde, therefore, is not only the end game of avant-gardism. It also represents the fragmentation and decline of critical adversary culture."<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, it is true that modernization can no longer be simplistically identified as liberative *in se*, in part because of the domination of mass culture by the media-industry (above all television which, as Jerry Mander reminds us, expanded its persuasive power a thousandfold between 1945 and 1975<sup>10</sup>) and in part because the trajectory of modernization has brought us to the threshold of nuclear war and the annihilation of the entire species. So too, avant-gardism can no longer be sustained as a liberative moment, in part

because its initial utopian promise has been overrun by the internal rationality of instrumental reason. This “closure” was perhaps best formulated by Herbert Marcuse when he wrote:

The technological *apriori* is a political *apriori* inasmuch as the transformation of nature involves that of man, and inasmuch as the “man-made creations” issue from and re-enter the societal ensemble. One may still insist that the machinery of the technological universe is “as such” indifferent towards political ends—it can revolutionize or retard society.... However, when technics becomes the universal form of material production, it circumscribes an entire culture, it projects a historical totality—a “world.”<sup>11</sup>

### 3. Critical Regionalism and World Culture

Architecture can only be sustained today as a critical practice if it assumes an *arrière-garde* position, that is to say, one which distances itself equally from the Enlightenment myth of progress and from a reactionary, unrealistic impulse to return to the architectonic forms of the preindustrial past. A critical *arrière-garde* has to remove itself from both the optimization of advanced technology and the ever-present tendency to regress into nostalgic historicism or the glibly decorative. It is my contention that only an *arrière-garde* has the capacity to cultivate a resistant, identity-giving culture while at the same time having discreet recourse to universal technique.

It is necessary to qualify the term *arrière-garde* so as to diminish its critical scope from such conservative policies as Populism or sentimental Regionalism with which it has often been associated. In order to ground *arrière-gardism* in a rooted yet critical strategy, it is helpful to appropriate the term Critical Regionalism as coined by Alex Tzonis and Lilliane Lefaivre in “The Grid and the Pathway” (1981); in this essay they caution against the ambiguity of regional reformism, as this has become occasionally manifest since the last quarter of the 19th century:

Regionalism has dominated architecture in almost all countries at some time during the past two centuries and a half. By way of general definition we can say that it upholds the individual and local architectonic features against more universal and abstract ones. In addition, however, regionalism bears the hallmark of ambiguity. On the one hand, it has been associated with movements of reform and liberation;... on the other, it has proved a powerful tool of repression and chauvinism.... Certainly, critical regionalism has its limitations. The upheaval of the populist movement—a more developed form of regionalism—has brought to light these weak points. No new architecture can emerge without a new kind of relations between designer and user, with-

out new kinds of programs.... Despite these limitations critical regionalism is a bridge over which any humanistic architecture of the future must pass.<sup>12</sup>

The fundamental strategy of Critical Regionalism is to mediate the impact of universal civilization with elements derived *indirectly* from the peculiarities of a particular place. It is clear from the above that Critical Regionalism depends upon maintaining a high level of critical self-consciousness. It may find its governing inspiration in such things as the range and quality of the local light, or in a *tectonic* derived from a peculiar structural mode, or in the topography of a given site.

But it is necessary, as I have already suggested, to distinguish between Critical Regionalism and simple-minded attempts to revive the hypothetical forms of a lost vernacular. In contradistinction to Critical Regionalism, the primary vehicle of Populism is the *communicative* or *instrumental* sign. Such a sign seeks to evoke not a critical perception of reality, but rather the sublimation of a desire for direct experience through the provision of information. Its tactical aim is to attain, as economically as possible, a preconceived level of gratification in behavioristic terms. In this respect, the strong affinity of Populism for the rhetorical techniques and imagery of advertising is hardly accidental. Unless one guards against such a convergence, one will confuse the resistant capacity of a critical practice with the demagogic tendencies of Populism.

The case can be made that Critical Regionalism as a cultural strategy is as much a bearer of *world culture* as it is a vehicle of *universal civilization*. And while it is obviously misleading to conceive of our inheriting world culture to the same degree as we are all heirs to universal civilization, it is nonetheless evident that since we are, in principle, subject to the impact of both, we have no choice but to take cognizance today of their interaction. In this regard the practice of Critical Regionalism is contingent upon a process of double mediation. In the first place, it has to “deconstruct” the overall spectrum of world culture which it inevitably inherits; in the second place, it has to achieve, through synthetic contradiction, a manifest critique of universal civilization. To deconstruct world culture is to remove oneself from that eclecticism of the *fin de siècle* which appropriated alien, exotic forms in order to revitalize the expressivity of an enervated society. (One thinks of the “form-force” aesthetics of Henri van de Velde or the “whiplash-Arabesques” of Victor Horta.) On the other hand, the mediation of universal technique involves imposing limits on the optimization of industrial and postindustrial technology. The future necessity for re-synthesizing principles and elements drawn from diverse origins and quite different ideological sets seems to be alluded to by Ricoeur when he writes:

No one can say what will become of our civilization when it has really met different civilizations by means other than the shock of conquest and

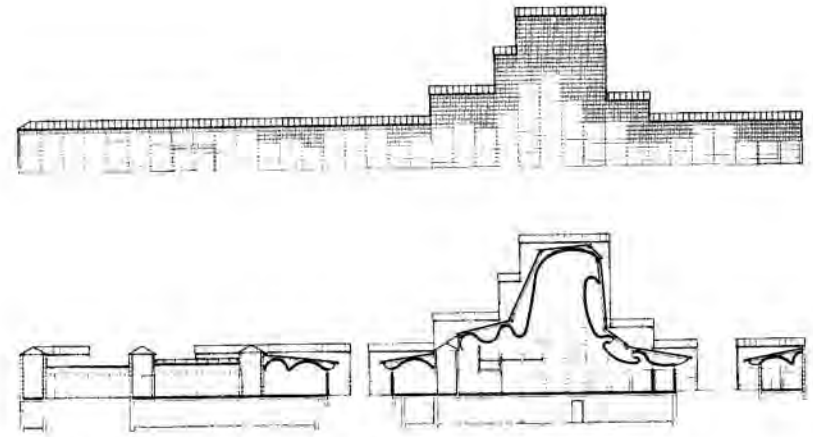
domination. But we have to admit that this encounter has not yet taken place at the level of an authentic dialogue. That is why we are in a kind of lull or interregnum in which we can no longer practice the dogmatism of a single truth and in which we are not yet capable of conquering the skepticism into which we have stepped.<sup>13</sup>

A parallel and complementary sentiment was expressed by the Dutch architect Aldo Van Eyck who, quite coincidentally, wrote at the same time: "Western civilization habitually identifies itself with civilization as such on the pontifical assumption that what is not like it is a deviation, less advanced, primitive, or, at best, exotically interesting at a safe distance."<sup>14</sup>

That Critical Regionalism cannot be simply based on the autochthonous forms of a specific region alone was well put by the Californian architect Hamilton Harwell Harris when he wrote, now nearly thirty years ago:

Opposed to the Regionalism of Restriction is another type of regionalism, the Regionalism of Liberation. This is the manifestation of a region that is especially in tune with the emerging thought of the time. We call such a manifestation "regional" only because it has not yet emerged elsewhere. . . . A region may develop ideas. A region may accept ideas. Imagination and intelligence are necessary for both. In California in the late Twenties and Thirties modern European ideas met a still-developing regionalism. In New England, on the other hand, European Modernism met a rigid and restrictive regionalism that at first resisted and then surrendered. New England accepted European Modernism whole because its own regionalism had been reduced to a collection of restrictions.<sup>15</sup>

The scope for achieving a self-conscious synthesis between universal civilization and world culture may be specifically illustrated by Jørn Utzon's Bagsvaerd Church, built near Copenhagen in 1976, a work whose complex meaning stems directly from a revealed conjunction between, on the one hand, the *rationality* of normative technique and, on the other, the *arationality* of idiosyncratic form. Inasmuch as this building is organized around a regular grid and is comprised of repetitive, in-fill modules—concrete blocks in the first instance and precast concrete wall units in the second—we may justly regard it as the outcome of universal civilization. Such a building system, comprising an *in situ* concrete frame with prefabricated concrete in-fill elements, has indeed been applied countless times all over the developed world. However, the universality of this productive method—which includes, in this instance, patent glazing on the roof—is abruptly mediated when one passes from the optimal modular skin of the exterior to the far less optimal reinforced concrete shell vault spanning the nave. This last is obviously a relatively uneconomic mode of construction, selected and manipulated first for its direct associative capacity—that is to say, the vault signifies sacred space—and second for its



Jørn Utzon, *Bagsvaerd Church*, 1973-76.  
North elevation and section.

multiple cross-cultural references. While the reinforced concrete shell vault has long since held an established place within the received tectonic canon of Western modern architecture, the highly configurated section adopted in this instance is hardly familiar, and the only precedent for such a form, in a sacred context, is Eastern rather than Western—namely, the Chinese pagoda roof, cited by Utzon in his seminal essay of 1963, "Platforms and Plateaus."<sup>16</sup> Although the main Bagsvaerd vault spontaneously signifies its religious nature, it does so in such a way as to preclude an exclusively Occidental or Oriental reading of the code by which the public and sacred space is constituted. The intent of this expression is, of course, to secularize the sacred form by precluding the usual set of semantic religious references and thereby the corresponding range of automatic responses that usually accompany them. This is arguably a more appropriate way of rendering a church in a highly secular age, where any symbolic allusion to the ecclesiastic usually degenerates immediately into the vagaries of kitsch. And yet paradoxically, this desacralization at Bagsvaerd subtly reconstitutes a renewed basis for the spiritual, one founded, I would argue, in a regional reaffirmation—grounds, at least, for some form of collective spirituality.



#### 4. The Resistance of the Place-Form

The Megalopolis recognized as such in 1961 by the geographer Jean Gottman<sup>17</sup> continues to proliferate throughout the developed world to such an extent that, with the exception of cities which were laid in place before the turn of the century, we are no longer able to maintain defined urban forms. The last quarter of a century has seen the so-called field of urban design degenerate into a theoretical subject whose discourse bears little relation to the processual realities of modern development. Today even the super-managerial discipline of urban planning has entered into a state of crisis. The ultimate fate of the plan which was officially promulgated for the rebuilding of Rotterdam after World War II is symptomatic in this regard, since it testifies, in terms of its own recently changed status, to the current tendency to reduce all planning to little more than the allocation of land use and the logistics of distribution. Until relatively recently, the Rotterdam master plan was revised and upgraded every decade in the light of buildings which had been realized in the interim. In 1975, however, this progressive urban cultural procedure was unexpectedly abandoned in favor of publishing a nonphysical, infrastructure plan conceived at a regional scale. Such a plan concerns itself almost exclusively with the logistical projection of changes in land use and with the augmentation of existing distribution systems.

In his essay of 1954, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," Martin Heidegger provides us with a critical vantage point from which to behold this phenomenon of universal placelessness. Against the Latin or, rather, the antique *abstract* concept of space as a more or less endless continuum of evenly subdivided spatial components or integers—what he terms *spatium* and *extensio*—Heidegger opposes the German word for space (or, rather, place), which is the term *Raum*. Heidegger argues that the phenomenological essence of such a space/place depends upon the *concrete*, clearly defined nature of its boundary, for, as he puts it, "A boundary is not that at which something stops, but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing."<sup>18</sup> Apart from confirming that Western abstract reason has its origins in the antique culture of the Mediterranean, Heidegger shows that etymologically the German gerund *building* is closely linked with the archaic forms of *being*, *cultivating* and *dwelling*, and goes on to state that the condition of "dwelling" and hence ultimately of "being" can only take place in a domain that is clearly bounded.

While we may well remain skeptical as to the merit of grounding critical practice in a concept so hermetically metaphysical as Being, we are, when confronted with the ubiquitous placelessness of our modern environment, nonetheless brought to posit, after Heidegger, the absolute precondition of a

bounded domain in order to create an architecture of resistance. Only such a defined boundary will permit the built form to stand against—and hence literally to withstand in an institutional sense—the endless processual flux of the Megalopolis.

The bounded place-form, in its public mode, is also essential to what Hannah Arendt has termed "the space of human appearance," since the evolution of legitimate power has always been predicated upon the existence of the "polis" and upon comparable units of institutional and physical form. While the political life of the Greek polis did not stem directly from the physical presence and representation of the city-state, it displayed in contrast to the Megalopolis the cantonal attributes of urban density. Thus Arendt writes in *The Human Condition*:

The only indispensable material factor in the generation of power is the living together of people. Only where men live so close together that the potentialities for action are always present will power remain with them and the foundation of cities, which as city states have remained paradigmatic for all Western political organization, is therefore the most important material prerequisite for power.<sup>19</sup>

Nothing could be more removed from the political essence of the city-state than the rationalizations of positivistic urban planners such as Melvin Webber, whose ideological concepts of *community without propinquity* and the *non-place urban realm* are nothing if not slogans devised to rationalize the absence of any true public realm in the modern motopia.<sup>20</sup> The manipulative bias of such ideologies has never been more openly expressed than in Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966) wherein the author asserts that Americans do not need piazzas, since they should be at home watching television.<sup>21</sup> Such reactionary attitudes emphasize the impotence of an urbanized populace which has paradoxically lost the object of its urbanization.

While the strategy of Critical Regionalism as outlined above addresses itself mainly to the maintenance of an *expressive density and resonance* in an architecture of resistance (a cultural density which under today's conditions could be said to be potentially liberative in and of itself since it opens the user to manifold *experiences*), the provision of a place-form is equally essential to critical practice, inasmuch as a resistant architecture, in an institutional sense, is necessarily dependent on a clearly defined domain. Perhaps the most generic example of such an urban form is the perimeter block, although other related, introspective types may be evoked, such as the galleria, the atrium, the forecourt and the labyrinth. And while these types have in many instances today simply become the vehicles for accommodating pseudo-public realms (one thinks of recent megastructures in housing, hotels, shopping centers, etc.), one cannot even in these

instances entirely discount the latent political and resistant potential of the place-form.

### 5. Culture Versus Nature: Topography, Context, Climate, Light and Tectonic Form

Critical Regionalism necessarily involves a more directly dialectical relation with nature than the more abstract, formal traditions of modern avant-garde architecture allow. It is self-evident that the *tabula rasa* tendency of modernization favors the optimum use of earth-moving equipment inasmuch as a totally flat datum is regarded as the most economic matrix upon which to predicate the rationalization of construction. Here again, one touches in concrete terms this fundamental opposition between universal civilization and autochthonous culture. The bulldozing of an irregular topography into a flat site is clearly a technocratic gesture which aspires to a condition of absolute *placelessness*, whereas the terracing of the same site to receive the stepped form of a building is an engagement in the act of "cultivating" the site.

Clearly such a mode of beholding and acting brings one close once again to Heidegger's etymology; at the same time, it evokes the method alluded to by the Swiss architect Mario Botta as "building the site." It is possible to argue that in this last instance the specific culture of the region—that is to say, its history in both a geological and agricultural sense—becomes inscribed into the form and realization of the work. This inscription, which arises out of "in-laying" the building into the site, has many levels of significance, for it has a capacity to embody, in built form, the prehistory of the place, its archeological past and its subsequent cultivation and transformation across time. Through this layering into the site the idiosyncrasies of place find their expression without falling into sentimentality.

What is evident in the case of topography applies to a similar degree in the case of an existing urban fabric, and the same can be claimed for the contingencies of climate and the temporally inflected qualities of local light. Once again, the sensitive modulation and incorporation of such factors must almost by definition be fundamentally opposed to the optimum use of universal technique. This is perhaps most clear in the case of light and climate control. The generic window is obviously the most delicate point at which these two natural forces impinge upon the outer membrane of the building, fenestration having an innate capacity to inscribe architecture with the character of a region and hence to express the place in which the work is situated.

Until recently, the received precepts of modern curatorial practice favored the exclusive use of artificial light in all art galleries. It has perhaps been insufficiently recognized how this encapsulation tends to reduce the artwork to a commodity, since such an environment must conspire to render the work placeless. This is because the local light spectrum is never permitted to play across its surface: here, then, we see how the loss of aura, attributed by Walter Benjamin to the processes of mechanical reproduction, also arises from a relatively static application of universal technology. The converse of this "placeless" practice would be to provide that art galleries be top-lit through carefully contrived monitors so that, while the injurious effects of direct sunlight are avoided, the ambient light of the exhibition volume changes under the impact of time, season, humidity, etc. Such conditions guarantee the appearance of a place-conscious poetic—a form of filtration compounded out of an interaction between culture and nature, between art and light. Clearly this principle applies to all fenestration, irrespective of size and location. A constant "regional inflection" of the form arises directly from the fact that in certain climates the glazed aperture is advanced, while in others it is recessed behind the masonry facade (or, alternatively, shielded by adjustable sun breakers).

The way in which such openings provide for appropriate ventilation also constitutes an unsentimental element reflecting the nature of local culture. Here, clearly, the main antagonist of rooted culture is the ubiquitous air-conditioner, applied in all times and in all places, irrespective of the local climatic conditions which have a capacity to express the specific place and the seasonal variations of its climate. Wherever they occur, the fixed window and the remote-controlled air-conditioning system are mutually indicative of domination by universal technique.

Despite the critical importance of topography and light, the primary principle of architectural autonomy resides in the *tectonic* rather than the *scenographic*: that is to say, this autonomy is embodied in the revealed ligaments of the construction and in the way in which the syntactical form of the structure explicitly resists the action of gravity. It is obvious that this discourse of the load borne (the beam) and the load-bearing (the column) cannot be brought into being where the structure is masked or otherwise concealed. On the other hand, the tectonic is not to be confused with the purely technical, for it is more than the simple revelation of stereotomy or the expression of skeletal framework. Its essence was first defined by the German aesthetician Karl Bötticher in his book *Die Tektonik der Hellenen* (1852); and it was perhaps best summarized by the architectural historian Stanford Anderson when he wrote:

"Tektonik" referred not just to the activity of making the materially requisite construction . . . but rather to the activity that raises this construction to an art

form... The functionally adequate form must be adapted so as to give expression to its function. The sense of bearing provided by the entasis of Greek columns became the touchstone of this concept of *Tektonik*.<sup>22</sup>

The tectonic remains to us today as a potential means for distilling play between material, craftwork and gravity, so as to yield a component which is in fact a condensation of the entire structure. We may speak here of the presentation of a structural poetic rather than the re-presentation of a facade.

## 6. The Visual Versus the Tactile

The tactile resilience of the place-form and the capacity of the body to read the environment in terms other than those of sight alone suggest a potential strategy for resisting the domination of universal technology. It is symptomatic of the priority given to sight that we find it necessary to remind ourselves that the tactile is an important dimension in the perception of built form. One has in mind a whole range of complementary sensory perceptions which are registered by the labile body: the intensity of light, darkness, heat and cold; the feeling of humidity; the aroma of material; the almost palpable presence of masonry as the body senses its own confinement; the momentum of an induced gait and the relative inertia of the body as it traverses the floor; the echoing resonance of our own footfall. Luchino Visconti was well aware of these factors when making the film *The Damned*, for he insisted that the main set of the Altona mansion should be paved in real wooden parquet. It was his belief that without a solid floor underfoot the actors would be incapable of assuming appropriate and convincing postures.

A similar tactile sensitivity is evident in the finishing of the public circulation in Alvar Aalto's Säynätsalo Town Hall of 1952. The main route leading to the second-floor council chamber is ultimately orchestrated in terms which are as much tactile as they are visual. Not only is the principal access stair lined in raked brickwork, but the treads and risers are also finished in brick. The kinetic impetus of the body in climbing the stair is thus checked by the friction of the steps, which are "read" soon after in contrast to the timber floor of the council chamber itself. This chamber asserts its honorific status through sound, smell and texture, not to mention the springy deflection of the floor underfoot (and a noticeable tendency to lose one's balance on its polished surface). From this example it is clear that the liberative importance of the tactile resides in the fact that it can only be decoded in terms of *experience* itself: it cannot be reduced to mere information, to representation or to the simple evocation of a simulacrum substituting for absent presences.



Alvar Aalto, *Säynätsalo Town Hall*, 1952.

In this way, Critical Regionalism seeks to complement our normative visual experience by readdressing the tactile range of human perceptions. In so doing, it endeavors to balance the priority accorded to the image and to counter the Western tendency to interpret the environment in exclusively perspectival terms. According to its etymology, perspective means rationalized sight or clear seeing, and as such it presupposes a conscious suppression of the senses of smell, hearing and taste, and a consequent distancing from a more direct experience of the environment. This self-imposed limitation relates to that which Heidegger has called a "loss of nearness." In attempting to counter this loss, the tactile opposes itself to the scenographic and the drawing of veils over the surface of reality. Its capacity to arouse the impulse to touch returns the architect to the poetics of construction and to the erection of works in which the tectonic value of each component depends upon the density of its objecthood. The tactile and the tectonic jointly have the capacity to transcend the mere appearance of the technical in much the same way as the place-form has the potential to withstand the relentless onslaught of global modernization.



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2. That these are but two sides of the same coin has perhaps been most dramatically demonstrated in the Portland City Annex completed in Portland, Oregon in 1982 to the designs of Michael Graves. The constructional fabric of this building bears no relation whatsoever to the "representative" scenography that is applied to the building both inside and out.
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22. Stanford Anderson, "Modern Architecture and Industry: Peter Behrens, the AEG, and Industrial Design," *Oppositions* 21 (Summer 1980), p. 83.



# Back to the Future of the Creative City: Amsterdam's Creative Redevelopment and the Art of Deception

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Sometimes it is necessary to dig into the past in order to illuminate the present. In this case, contrasting Amsterdam's ongoing Creative City hype with a utopian precursor will hopefully shed some light on the contradictions inherent in the fusion between creativity and industry. For being a hype, the Creative City policy has shown remarkable vigour and life span. Not unlike well known ageing rock bands, even at old age it has been able to maintain its spell on groupies and adherents at local city governments around the western world.[\(1\)](#) However, I do not intend to argue that when it was still young and fresh, Richard Florida's Creative Class Rock rang any truer; only that all along the line, a different tune is being played than the lyrics imply. I will argue that Amsterdam's Creative City policy - far from intending to make the city's entire population more creative - is predominantly a branding exercise, an expression of a much more general shift towards entrepreneurial modes of city government; a shift that is presently being played out in an impressive urban redevelopment of Amsterdam.

The comparison between sociologist Richard Florida - author of two books on the rise and flight of the Creative Class - and a rock star is not unusual. Google 'rock star' and 'Richard Florida' and you will find dozens of descriptions of performances by the 'rock star academic' responsible for introducing pop sociology into regional economics. Amongst the urban policy do's and don'ts he prescribes, 'lacking rock bands' even figures prominently amongst the reasons why a city could lose out on the economic development race[\(2\)](#). But this article is not about the interesting fusion between pop culture and social science, rather about the utopian claims that are being made for the creative economy. Florida has pronounced creativity to be a 'great equaliser', pleading for a 'New Deal' of the creative economy. Likewise, Cohen - the mayor of Amsterdam - has pronounced Amsterdam to be a Creative City that will 'foster the creativity of all its inhabitants'[\(3\)](#).

In retrospect, these claims can be seen as somewhat distorted echoes of an earlier utopian project that alluded to the revolutionary rise of creativity. Let's take a short leap back in history, back to the future as imagined by the Dutch avant-garde, and more specifically the Dutch artist Constant Nieuwenhuys. Constant was one of the founders of the Dutch experimental art group Reflex, which later became part of the international COBRA current. Discontented with the limitations of the world of art and 'the individualistic nature' of painting, he abandoned painting in 1953 to focus on the more promising use and of metal and architectural techniques. In 1957 he became a co-founder of the Situationist International (SI), writing with Guy Debord the now well known tract on Unitary Urbanism. Till his resignation in 1961, he would play a essential role in the formulation of a Situationist perspective on the city and a critique on modernist urbanism.

In 1956 Constant started what would become a visionary architectural project that would stretch out over 20 years. An utopian city that went by the name of *New Babylon*; it consisted of an almost endless series of scale models, sketches, etchings, collages, further elaborated by manifestoes, lectures, essays and films. The project was a provocation, an explicit metaphor for the Creative City:

The modern city is dead; it has been sacrificed to the cult of utility. New Babylon is the project for a city in which people will be able to live. For to live means to be creative. New Babylon is the product of the creativity of the masses, based on the activation of the enormous creative potential which at the moment lies dormant and unexploited in the people. New Babylon assumes that as a result of automation non-creative work will disappear, that there will be a metamorphosis in morals and thinking, that a new form of society will emerge.<sup>(4)</sup>

Constant envisaged a society where automation had realised the liberation of man from the toils of industrial work, and its replacement by a nomadic life of creative play, outside of the economic domain and in disregard of any considerations of functionality: 'Contrary to what the functionalists think, culture is situated at the point where usefulness ends', was one of Constant's more provocative statements<sup>(5)</sup>. Homo Faber, the working man of industrial society was to be succeeded by Homo Ludens, the playful man or as Constant stated, creative man. This was the inhabitant of New Babylon that thanks to modern architectural techniques would be able to spontaneously control and reconfigure every aspect of the urban environment. Constant took the surrealist slogan 'poetry should be made by all' and translated it to the urban environment, 'tomorrow, life will reside in poetry'<sup>(6)</sup>. The work of Constant Nieuwenhuys thus combined a distaste for modernist functionalism with an intense appreciation of the liberatory potentials of new technology. Mechanisation would result in the arrival of a 'mass culture of creativity' that would revolt against the superstructure of bourgeois society, in order to destroy it completely and take the privileged position of the artist down with it. A society would be created where, in accord with Marx' vision on art in a communist society, 'there are no painters but only people who engage in painting among other activities'<sup>(7)</sup>. The work of Constant would have a direct and major influence on the rise of youth movement Provo. The Dutch Yippies proved to be an almost perfect incarnation of the Homo Ludens; through relentless provocation, happenings and playful actions, Provo would bring the authoritarianism of the Dutch 50's down to its knees.

### **Life is put to Work**

However, developments took an unexpected turn. Automation and consequent deindustrialisation, the outsourcing of manufacturing to Newly Industrialising Countries, did not lead to the liberation of the Homo Ludens (or maybe we should grant Homo Ludens a short and partial victory - a short interlude located somewhere in the youth culture of the 60's - before being sent back to work). As is well known, since the sixties the total amount of working hours has grown steeply. Together with the consolidation of consumption as a leisure activity, it has led to an unprecedented amount of human activity being directly or indirectly incorporated into the sphere of economic transactions. A development Marx would have called

'real subsumption', the extension of capitalism onto the field of the ontological, of lived social practice.

Whereas Constant envisioned the liberation of the creative domain from the economic, right now we are witnessing - en sync with the Creative City discourse - the extension of the economic into the creative domain. This is exemplified by the transformation of the artist into a cultural entrepreneur, the marketing of (sub)cultural expressions, the subservience of culture to tourist flows and the triumph of functionalism over *bildungsideal* at the university. An interesting spatial illustration is that what was before a fringe economy of the arts occupied also a fringe position in the Amsterdam housing market, most notably in the squatted dockland warehouses. Now that the art economy has been incorporated and elevated towards a seemingly pivotal position in the urban economy, it has been accommodated into the city through mechanisms such as the *broedplaatsenbeleid*[\(8\)](#) or temporary housing contracts. The majority of non-functional space in the city, derelict or squatted territories, have now been redeveloped or are in process towards development. There is no longer an outside position.

What distinguishes the earlier utopian Creative City from the one referred to by Florida and the Amsterdam City Council? To start with, what's important to note is that in the post-Fordist economy, where the Fordist factory has been decentralised and socialised, the rise to prominence of the creative sector in advanced economies is predicated upon displacement of industrial functions to low wage localities and the exploitation of cheap manual labour. This new functional divide in the global economy - and its polarised wage structure - is referred to as the New International Division of Labour[\(9\)](#). As part of this development, we have seen the rise of global cities whose economic success depends on the presence of high tech innovation and global control functions. These economic nodes coordinate the international flows of goods, finance outsourced production, market and design its products and maintain a monopolist control over client relations[\(10\)](#). The claims of the new creative city as being a 'great equalizer' turns, in a global perspective, into the opposite; it is based on functional inequality. Now let's take a closer look at the city.

### **Amsterdam™**

To properly understand the arrival of the Creative City policy and what sets it aside from its utopian predecessor, we have to place it in a larger context. The Creative City is part and parcel of a bigger shift hitting the city, causing the Keynesian management of bygone era's to be replaced by an entrepreneurial approach. The rise in importance of footloose productive sectors for cities' economic well being has led to increased interurban competition. Amsterdam is pitted against urban centres such as Barcelona, London, Paris and Frankfurt, in a struggle to attract economic success in the form of investments, a talented workforce and tourists flocking to the city. The ever present threat of interurban competition is continuously being rhetorically invoked and inflated. To illustrate my point, recently even the discussion on whether to discontinue a prohibition of gas heaters on the terraces of Amsterdam cafés were framed in these terms: "It's a serious disadvantage in comparison with cities like Berlin and Paris", according to the leader of the local social democrat party. The opinion of the city's population itself wasn't even mentioned in the newspaper article.[\(11\)](#)

The dominance of entrepreneurial approaches to city politics is the feature of a new urban regime, labelled by scholars as the 'Entrepreneurial City' (12). With its origins in the US reality of neo-liberal state withdrawal from urban plight, it has taken some time to arrive in the corporatist Netherlands and filter through the minds of its policy makers.

In this new urban regime, independent from the colour of the party in power, the public sector displays behaviour that was once characteristic for the private sector: risk taking, innovation, marketing and profit motivated thinking. Public money is invested into private economic development through Public Private Partnerships, to outflank the urban competition. Hence the rise of urban mega developments and marketing projects such as the Docklands in London, the Guggenheim in Bilbao or the Zuid As in Amsterdam. A concern voiced by critics is that although costs are public, profit will be allocated to the urban elite, hypothetically to 'trickle down' to the rest of the population. To face up to this new market reality, where cities are seen as products, and the city council as a business unit, Amsterdam inc. has launched the branding projects *I Amsterdam* and *Amsterdam Creative City*. One of the first steps of the new progressive city council, once installed in the spring of 2006, was to launch a 'Top City Programme', aimed at consolidating the city's 'flagging' position in the top ten of preferred urban business climates:

Viewed from an outsider's vantage point, Amsterdam is clearly ready to reposition itself. This is why we've launched the Amsterdam Top City programme. In order to keep ahead of the global competition, Amsterdam needs to renew itself. In other words, in order to enjoy a great future worthy of its great past, what Amsterdam needs now is great thinking. (13)

Of course, 'creativity will be the central focus point' of this programme, since 'creativity is the motor that gives the city its magnetism and dynamism'. However when one looks beyond the rhetoric, at the practicalities of the programme, it is surprisingly modest: sponsored expat welcome centres in Schiphol Airport, coaching for creative entrepreneurs by mayor Dutch banks and MTV, 'hospitality training' for caterers, 'Amsterdam Top City' publications in KLM flights, and the annual Picnic Cross Media week, a conference aspiring to be the Dutch Davos of creative entrepreneurs.

In arguably one of the best analysis of the Creative City theory yet, geographer Jamie Peck (14) asked himself why it is that Florida's work proved to have such an impressive influence on policy makers around the world. He came to the sobering conclusion that it wasn't because Florida's creative city thesis was so groundbreaking - various authors had published on the knowledge economy before - but mostly because it provided a cheap, non-controversial and do-able marketing script that fitted well with the existing entrepreneurial schemes of urban economic development. Something city authorities could afford to do on the side, a low budget PR scheme complemented by a reorientation of already existing cultural funding. In Amsterdam, however creative branding is maybe modest in its budget but extensive in its effects, it is the immaterial glazing on the cake of an impressive physical redevelopment of the city.

For Amsterdam abounds with building works; it is facing what I have called an 'Extreme Makeover' (15). The city's old harbours are being redeveloped into

luxurious living and working environments; in its southern belly a new skyline is being realised, the Zuid As, a high rise business district that is supposed to function as a portal to the world economy. In the post war popular neighbourhoods more houses are being demolished than ever before in the history of the city, and a significant part of the social housing will make way for more expensive owner occupant apartments. The trajectory of the new metro line – a straight line of sand, cement and continuous construction works – crosses the city from North to South and thus connects the new city with the old.

Not only is one of Europe's largest urban renewal operations underway and has demolition reached a historical high, the image of the city itself is also being reworked. In both the re-branding and redevelopment of Amsterdam, the creative sector plays an important role. Creative industry is supposed to function as catalyst for urban redevelopment, changing the image of a neighbourhood from backward to hip. Schemes have been put into place to temporarily or permanently house artist in neighbourhoods to be upgraded. Although modest in its budget the *I Amsterdam* and *Creative City* marketing campaigns are conceptually highly advanced (and extensively present in the public's consciousness), for city marketing is the apex of *consumer generated content*, the dominant trend in marketing techniques. Creative hipsters serve as a communicative vessel for branding projects; in between concept stores, galleries, fashion- and street art magazines, the cultural economy expands itself over the urban domain and in the public realm.

The new marketing function of the creative sector is maybe best illustrated by the recent project of Sandberg, called '*Artvertising*'. It involves the facade of the Sandberg fine arts and design faculty being turned into a huge billboard filled with logo's of predominantly major companies and also some smaller cultural projects. The sixteen thousand tiles of the facade (35x29cm each) were sold for 20 euros a piece, with the mentioning of all the business savvy people of the office park Zuid As passing on the adjacent ring road. A small blurb from the website of *Artvertising*: Every self considered art or design intellectual ends up twisting his or her nose to the so-called 'commercial world'. Art, culture, criticism is what it matters. But we don't think so. We believe that now, more than always, the world is ruled by commercial and economical relationships. Culture defines, and most important, is defined these days by market dynamics.[\(16\)](#)

The Sandberg project is a beautiful illustration of the state of art in the Entrepreneurial City. Perfectly vacuous, it's like a bubble that's bound to burst. The genius of the project - note also its grammatical bluntness - is that it becomes at once the tool of critique and its object; the embodiment of post critical art, stretched beyond the cynical dystopias of Rem Koolhaas. It did not fail in sparking some resistance, during its one month's existence, it was modestly vandalised by a group calling itself the 'Pollock commando', wanting to reclaim the facade as a 'public canvas' by throwing paint bombs on it.[\(17\)](#) Besides its uncritical embrace of the new commercial role of the artist as entrepreneur, the '*Artvertising*' project is also reflective of another tendency in Amsterdam's creative economy. With the borders between culture and economy fading away, the assessment of the value of art and cultural practice has risen in significance.



## The Artificial Organic of Real Estate

In a recent article in Real Estate Magazine(18) we can read more about the strange collusion between the arts and real estate. It reads: 'The concept of the Creative City is on the rise. Sometimes planned, sometimes organic, but up till now always thanks to real estate developers'. The article describes a round table discussion by real estate entrepreneurs on the Creative City, organised by René Hoogendoorn. She is the director of 'Strategic Projects' at ING Real Estate, the real estate branch of one of the biggest banking conglomerates of the Netherlands. 'Strategic Projects' means according to Hoogendoorn that she initiates the development of projects that need 'soul', in this case de Zuid As and the new development in the Northern docklands, Overhoeks. She combines this function with the advisory board of the Rietveld Art Academy, the spatial planning department of the employers federation and being one of the driving members of the Amsterdam Creativity Exchange, a club subsidised by the Creative City policy that according to its own words 'provides an environment in which business and creativity meet'(19). Thus it is no coincidence that the last meeting of the Creativity Exchange took place in the old Shell offices of the strategic Overhoeks terrain, in that way providing already a taste of the much needed 'soul'(20). Hoogendoorn explains that ING Real Estate invests in art and culture up to the point that it increases the value of real estate surrounding it. Interesting examples are ING Real Estate funding Platform 21, the Design museum at the Zuid As, and the sponsoring of the post squatter performance festival Robodock on the northern docklands. Hoogendoorn and other real estate developers are still struggling with the question 'how to assess up-front the net cash value of the future added value of culture'. Which shows there is still some way to go for the colonisation of culture.

Another interesting announcement in the article is that real estate developers have now come to realise the importance of 'software' for the successful realisation of real estate 'hardware'. Cultural institutions and temporary art projects create 'traffic', and allow developers to slowly bring property 'up to flavour': 'It's about creating space! The thing not to do is to publicly announce you're going to haul in artists; instead, give them the feeling they've thought of it themselves. If it arises organically, levels will rise organically'(21).

The distinction between urban 'software' and 'hardware' was initially coined as an architectural term by the pop-art architecture group Archigram, to champion the use of soft and flexible materials like the inflatable bubble in stead of modernist 'hardware' realised with steel and cement. Together with contemporaries such as the Italian group Archizoom and publications such as Raban's Soft City(22), Archigram levelled a critique against deadpan modernism, putting forward a more organic conception of the city as a living organism. Urban software thus acquired its present day computer analogy, where software is the 'programming' of the city and hardware its 'infrastructure'. Much like the SI - experimenting with the bottom up software approach through psycho-geography and the *dérive* - subjective, organic and bottom-up approaches became a focus point for utopian urbanism(23).

The recuperation of the utopian language of the sixties into neo-functionalism by real estate entrepreneurs is tragically appropriate. In the SI's 'Formulary for a New Urbanism', Ivan Chitchevlov argues for a city where everyone could live in their

'personal cathedral'. He proposed a city with districts corresponding to their inhabitants' emotional life: Bizarre Quarter, Happy Quarter, Noble and Tragic Quarter, Historical Quarter, Useful Quarter, Sinister Quarter etc.(24) In a similar but very different vein, the present restructuring of the Dutch housing market has seen the arrival of a 'differentiated living milieus' fashion where planners partition existing neighbourhoods into theme areas, accompanied by a discourse of 'consumer choice'. In the Westelijke Tuinsteden, the biggest redevelopment of social housing in Amsterdam, planners 're-imagined' the entire neighbourhood into different consumer identities such as 'dreamer', 'doer', 'urbanite', 'networker', 'villager' etc. When consumer demand from outside of the neighbourhood failed to materialise, however, the planners had to readapt their visions, reluctantly returning to a half-hearted focus on the needs of the local population.(25) Thus the hardware-software dialectic has become an intrinsic part of the current urban development approach. To turn to an example of entrepreneurial city hardware, we could look at the new mega development, the business district Zuid-As, and the North South metro line that will connect it to the city (together good for a few billions of public investment). A good example of software would be the new media conference Picnic '06, that was granted almost half a million by both the city council and the national government and still managed to ask an entrance fee of 750 euros for a three day conference. Creative City schemes thus become an attempt to build competitive 'urban software packages'; or to 'program' space, an expression of French urbanist Lefebvre to denote the top down organisation of space.(26) To continue with the computer analogy, the first problem with these top down approaches is that their 'source code' is undisclosed. Public planning and citizen participation in as well the Zuid As, the North South metro line and the redevelopment of the Westelijke Tuinsteden has been problematic, with most of the decisions being taken behind closed doors, to later be publicly legitimised by false arguments or financial 'miscalculations'. Only when we can break that code, we can truly assess additional problems, such as the curtailment of the public sphere or social polarisation.

### **Multiple Personality (Dis)order**

The subject of the Creative City is not Homo Ludens as imagined by Constant, but the entrepreneur in all its guises, for the creative city is an entrepreneurial city. Accordingly, in the cultural field the artist is being converted into a cultural entrepreneur. An illustrative example is the conversion of the Artist Allowance, a state scheme that before its current transformation was just a monthly allowance, but has now been made conditional on a yearly growing profit. Each year, artists have to earn more to be able to apply to the WWIK. The new Art Plan and other Creative City initiatives attempt to infuse a entrepreneurial mindset into the artist by giving them courses on administration and entrepreneurial strategies. Cultural Funding is increasingly geared to cross-over projects between the arts and the economy. Of course the great threat of competition is again invoked: "Despite big investments of the council and the national government, the cultural significance of Amsterdam, and accordingly the international position of Dutch culture, is under pressure".(27)



A battlefield is staged in Negri & Hardt's Empire between a creative, communicative and productive multitude and parasitic capital. In the Entrepreneurial City this opposition becomes a permanent psychological state, a multiple personality disorder. The Creative Class is at once Homo Ludens and Homo Economicus, it incorporates the drive to create, produce and socialise with the drive to appropriate those powers and passions. If we use Marx's words, if capital is a social relation; then the entrepreneurial mindset is the interface of that relation.

Paradoxically, the consequence of Amsterdam conversion into cultural knowledge economy is that we are more and more economical with creativity. Universities await the introduction of a voucher system, a ticket system comparable to the food stamps in crisis times. Popular but not economically successful educations on the polytechnic schools will have to lower their student nr's. An entire bureaucracy has been set up that forces teachers and students into streamlined submission to quota's and efficiency concerns. (Dutch students, unconsciously, have already grasped that studying is now nothing more than unpaid labour, by working as little as possible).

What does it mean the Amsterdam Creative City is predominantly a branding project, a thin layer of varnish, under which resides banal economic strive? There is a Dutch expression, '*de wens is de moeder van de gedachte*', which literally means 'the wish is the mother of the thought', a pseudo Freudian folk wisdom that relates well to the reality of the Creative City.

According to the marketing experts at city hall, Amsterdam is engaged in 'a form of communicative warfare' [\(28\)](#) in an international competitive field of Creative Cities. As Sun Tzu stated in the Art of War: 'All warfare is based on deception'. So here it is, Amsterdam, a city where 70% of the young population can only complete the lowest level of education, the VMBO, which is on top of that suffering from record amounts of drop outs, labelling itself as a Creative City for all.

Maybe Paolo Virno's take on post-Fordism is better at identifying creativity beyond the Creative Class, even if it proves to be not as rewarding for everyone:

Post-Fordism certainly cannot be reduced to a set of particular professional figures characterized by intellectual refinement or 'creative' gifts. It is obvious that workers in the media, researchers, engineers, ecological operators, and so on, are and will be only a minority. By 'post-Fordism,' I mean instead a set of characteristics that are related to the entire contemporary workforce, including fruit pickers and the poorest of immigrants. Here are some of them: the ability to react in a timely manner to the continual innovations in techniques and organizational models, a remarkable 'opportunism' in negotiating among the different possibilities offered by the job market, familiarity with what is possible and unforeseeable, that minimal entrepreneurial attitude that makes it possible to decide what is the 'right thing' to do within a nonlinear productive fluctuation, a certain familiarity with the web of communications and information. [\(29\)](#)

Not far removed - albeit from a different political perspective - is an interesting statement from Florida that creativity according to his theory 'is a fundamental and intrinsic human capacity'. According to Florida, in the end all human beings are creative, and all are potentially part of the creative class, but just a small part is so lucky to get paid for it [\(30\)](#). Here is where the precarity comes in, since the

entrepreneur is precarious by definition. The investments made are speculative and risk taking is the central requirement. Thus not only the artist but the entire city turns precarious, its income dependent on the flows of de-territorialised creativity. Social nets of old, like social housing and unemployment subsidies are being slowly deconstructed. For the free lance entrepreneur social protection is market distortion, and unionisation is infringement on cartel legislation. Amsterdam's metamorphosis towards an entrepreneurial city has worrying social consequences, while the city looks outside for investments and talent, the local population that is not productive or cannot market its creativity sufficiently becomes redundant. This surplus population is slowly displaced by the urban renewal offensive towards the region. The 'urban facelift' revolves around the removal of social tissue just as the physical one removes fatty tissue. The environment of the Creative City becomes a highly segregated one.

According to the French urbanist Lefebvre 'the right of the city signifies the right of citizens and city dwellers, (...), to appear on all the networks and circuits of communication, information and exchange.' We need to re-imagine what a real Creative City would look like. Let the first condition be that its 'software' runs on programming that is 'open source'.

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#### Footnotes

1. <http://www.radicalurbantheory.com/misc/amsterdam2.html> - [ftnref1](#) Even though according to a recent investigation the creative economy in Amsterdam is experiencing decline in stead of growth, the City Council still expresses its confidence in the strategic importance of the creative sector. "It's beyond numbers", according to alderman Asscher of Economic Affairs. 'Creatieve Industrie Slinkt', *Het Parool*, 25 January, 2007, <http://www.parool.nl/nieuws/2007/JAN/25/eco2.html>
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3. <http://www.radicalurbantheory.com/misc/amsterdam2.html> - [ftnref3](#) Speech delivered by Cohen at the Creative Capital Conference, 17-18 March 2005, Amsterdam. See: <http://www.creativecapital.nl/>
4. <http://www.radicalurbantheory.com/misc/amsterdam2.html> - [ftnref4](#) Constant Nieuwenhuys and Simon Vinkenoog, *New Babylon : Ten Lithographs*, Amsterdam: Galerie d'Eendt 1963: 10.

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6. <http://www.radicalurbantheory.com/misc/amsterdam2.html> - [ftnref6](#)Not Bored, <http://www.notbored.org/tomorrow.html>
7. <http://www.radicalurbantheory.com/misc/amsterdam2.html> - [ftnref7](#)Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, 1845-46, New York, International Publishers edition, 1970: p 109.
8. <http://www.radicalurbantheory.com/misc/amsterdam2.html> - [ftnref8](#)Het *broedplaatsenbeleid* (lit. incubator policy) is a city policy whereby subsidies are allocated to house artists below the going market rates in especially redeveloped buildings (a significant part of the policy has been targeted at legalising squats) . Like the baby chickens, the idea behind the policy is that cultural activity needs to be sheltered from the market in its initial phase; when chick finally turns into chicken, it should support itself. It is a controversial policy, also because the artists benefiting from it complain about the strict bureaucratic requirements.  
Justus Uitermark, 'De omarming van subversiviteit'. *Agora* 24.3, (2004): pp 32-35. Also available from: <http://squat.net/studenten/kraken-is-terug.pdf>.
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13. <http://www.radicalurbantheory.com/misc/amsterdam2.html> - [ftnref13](#)Gemeente Amsterdam, Amsterdam Topstad: Metropool. Economische Zaken Amsterdam (14 July 2006), Amsterdam, <http://www.amsterdam.nl/ondernemen?ActItnltdt=12153>.
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  19. <http://www.radicalurbantheory.com/misc/amsterdam2.html> - [ftnref19](#) Amsterdam Creativity Exchange, <http://www.acx.nu>.
  20. <http://www.radicalurbantheory.com/misc/amsterdam2.html> - [ftnref20](#) Website Overhoeks Development, <http://www.overhoeks.nl/template4.php?c=209>
  21. <http://www.radicalurbantheory.com/misc/amsterdam2.html> - [ftnref21](#) Ratingen, 'Ik Zie Ik Zie Wat Jij Niet Ziet' *Real Estate Magazine*, May 2006, my translation.
  22. <http://www.radicalurbantheory.com/misc/amsterdam2.html> - [ftnref22](#) Jonathan Raban, *Soft City*, London: Hamilton, 1974.  
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Valentijn Byvanck (ed.) *Superstudio: The Middelburg Lectures*, Middelburg: Zeeuws Museum, 2005.
  23. <http://www.radicalurbantheory.com/misc/amsterdam2.html> - [ftnref23](#) See also the World-Information.org IP City Edition, for a relation between the utopian urbanism of the sixties and the present struggle against copyrights: Wolfgang Sützl and Christine Mayer (eds), *World-Information.org IP City Edition*, Vienna: Institute for New Culture Technologies, 2005, [http://static.world-information.org/infopaper/wi\\_ipcityedition.pdf](http://static.world-information.org/infopaper/wi_ipcityedition.pdf)
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  26. <http://www.radicalurbantheory.com/misc/amsterdam2.html> - [ftnref26](#) Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson Smith, Oxford, Blackwell, 1991.
  27. <http://www.radicalurbantheory.com/misc/amsterdam2.html> - [ftnref27](#) Gemeente Amsterdam, Amsterdam Creatieve Stad, Kunstenplan 2005 – 2008, (2004), Amsterdam, <http://www.amsterdam.nl/gemeente/documenten?ActItnIdt=4750>
  28. <http://www.radicalurbantheory.com/misc/amsterdam2.html> - [ftnref28](#) 'What should brand carriers comply with? An intrinsic descriptive

name is recognisable yet less distinctive and specific for the brand it refers to: there are several artistic cities in the world so “Amsterdam city of art” or “Amsterdam the metropolis” is not quite unique and distinctive when it comes to the communication war between cities.’

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[http://www.amsterdam.nl/.../d69\\_citymarket\\_samen.pdf](http://www.amsterdam.nl/.../d69_citymarket_samen.pdf)

Another interesting detail is that the present alderman of culture, Caroline Gherels has come from the ‘*I Amsterdam*’ marketing team.

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# Extreme Makeover

By Merijn Oudenampsen

Amsterdam is undergoing a historic process of regeneration. Much of the city's reserve of social housing is being transformed into luxury accommodation for the growing numbers of creative economy employees. Meanwhile, waiting lists for the remaining social housing are flooded by former occupants forced out of their homes and neighbourhoods by renovation programmes. Merijn Oudenampsen describes a process of urban rebirth through place branding and social cleansing

*Do not start with the good old things; start with the bad new ones*  
— Bertolt Brecht

According to a recent report by the Amsterdam city council, in coming years more houses are going to be demolished than ever before in the turbulent history of this town. It is the so-called restructuring neighbourhoods, poor areas such as Westelijke Tuinsteden, Noord en de Bijlmermeer, where most of the houses will have a close encounter with the wrecking ball. The pre-war neighbourhoods, such as the Staatsliedenbuurt, the Oosterparkbuurt, the Indische Buurt or the Kinkerbuurt are the subject of thorough renovations.[1] Overall, tens of thousands of social housing apartments will disappear to make way for the sand blasted facades that distinguish the homes of the new middle class.

Demolition of social housing, Amsterdam

This development isn't restricted to Amsterdam. Minister Dekker's national housing policy underlines the need to differentiate and to socially mix, or, in other words, move higher earners into the poor neighbourhoods where social housing predominates. Although sociological research has yet been unable to prove any of its alleged social mobility-boosting effects, social mixing is according to Dekker's urban planners a potent means to deal with the social problems of backward neighbourhoods. The perverse logic of the urban renewal plans is that the less well-off inhabitants of the backward neighbourhoods, who are supposed to be the beneficiaries of the policy, are also its main victims. Large proportions of neighbourhood residents are being forced to leave when their houses are renovated as luxury apartments. The Turkish grocery stores and their patrons are being forced to make way for the beauty salons, art galleries and boutiques servicing a very different demographic.

Underneath the inflated rhetoric of social mixing, where terms such as social integration, upward mobility and cultural diversity predominate, there is another agenda. It's an agenda filled with the sober calculation of economic interests. Since its partial privatisation in 1994, social housing corporations are themselves solely responsible for balancing their budgets, and are allowed to compensate for the loss of state subsidies by selling off social housing stock. In the current urban renewal process they do so with enthusiasm.[2]

However, to be able to sell or rent the houses for the appropriate price, the area has to be made attractive for new arrivals. Publicity campaigns are set up, PR agencies too, cultural festivals and poetry readings take place, artists are offered temporary residence; everything is done to change the image of the area from that of a loose cohabitation of immigrants, unemployed, elderly, and other economic losers to the image of a dynamic and cultural hot spot, pervaded by the buzz of renewal. This is the place to be.



I Amsterdam branding, near Central Station

### **The I Amsterdam Model**

The urban renewal plans are part and parcel of a bigger metamorphosis of the city, preparing it for the 'creative era'. In an age in which the creative knowledge economy has allegedly become the most important economic sector, it is the creative, highly educated and talented workforce – the creative class – that decides the economic destiny of cities. Allegedly, this new class is also extremely mobile and savvy about its choice of city. Amsterdam is thus competing with other international metropolises – London, Barcelona, Berlin – to lure creatives with culturally interesting surroundings and the quality of its urban habitat. Amsterdam, not wanting to fall behind, brands itself as a 'Creative Knowledge City' and starts the marketing campaign 'I Amsterdam'. [3] While art and culture never rated high on the aldermen's priority list, they have suddenly gained central importance in the marketing offensive.

The urban planners have no reason to complain. The amount of Amsterdammers earning double the mean income has risen in the short period from 1999 to 2003 from 10.8% to 18%. Amsterdam gentrifies. As a result, space is becoming more and more expensive in the city, which means that it is now more attractive to sell some of the social housing in the popular neighbourhoods. Another consequence of the city's economic success is that the city edge, previously the territory of a frivolously experimental group of artists and squatters, is being replaced with a sterile environment of high priced houses and architecturally unimaginative glass-surfaced shoebox offices. The eviction of the squatted warehouse Pakhuis Afrika for the docklands spectacle, Sail 2005, marked the completion of this transition. [4]

The influential ideologue of Amsterdam Creative City, social geographer Sako Musterd, states in his research that one of the shortcomings of Amsterdam is a lack of proper housing for the creative class. The Amsterdam business community – represented through the chamber of commerce – goes one step further, stating in their press communiqué that the less educated have to leave town to make space for creativity to move in. Politicians and bureaucrats have meanwhile reinvented themselves as true entrepreneurs. Mayor Cohen speaks about the Amsterdam brand, the city is being run as a business, and branding has grown to become the new *maakbaarheid*. [5]

This new urban management, which I have called the 'I Amsterdam model', has also reached the neighbourhood level. City regions are competing for the attention of the more highly educated middle class in the attempt to secure their own economic success. Every neighbourhood organises cultural events, Westerpark has the Westergasfabriek, the Kinkerbuurt has de Hallen, Noord the former NDSM warf, the Indische Buurt the Timor-school and even in the notoriously boring suburban area of the Kolenkitbuurt in Bos en Lommer, apartments are being sold with the mention of new cultural establishments in the vicinity.

I Amsterdam city branding

### **Housing Shortage**

Under the I Amsterdam banner a radically different form of urban management and renewal has arrived. Old architecture is being upgraded or completely demolished and, in parallel, accounts are being settled with the ideas and ideals present at the foundation of the previous architectural regime. From the red-brick-socialism of architect Berlage, Le Corbusier's dys-functional utopia of reinforced concrete as embodied in the flats of the Bijlmermeer and the Parisian banlieux, to the 'bouwen voor de buurt' of alderman Schaeferi, the history of urban renewal is filled with the hope of achieving the elevation of the people, of emancipation through the drawing board. [6] In the '70s a new set of ideals saw integration, upward mobility and emancipation taking place at neighbourhood level,

with the assistance of an entire infrastructure of neighbourhood centres and social workers.

In Amsterdam's current regime of urban rebirth has abandoned these concepts. Poverty can be moved but not remedied. While hitherto urban renewal targeted the lower classes, the new urban renewal is directed towards the middle class, that is, it functions as a Trojan horse to reconquer the poor neighbourhoods and expropriate property from their inhabitants. The ex-occupants are offered financial compensation; for most, the direct personal impact is a rent increase or the obligation to relocate. Nonetheless, displacement of a whole stratum of the population is the result. What makes the Dutch gentrification process so subtle, is that the effect is indirect: due to the many displaced residents being conferred priority status for rehousing, those without it have to wait even longer for social housing. Hence, the worst effects are displaced onto others, especially younger generations and newcomers to the city. For students in Amsterdam, large temporary container housing projects have been built.

### Indische Buurt Plan

The developments in the Indische Buurt in Amsterdam are a good example. The neighbourhood is one of the areas that will be given a thorough facelift in the coming years. About 20 percent of social housing (2,000 apartments) will disappear through demolition, conversion and renovation. Change in the composition of the neighbourhood's predominantly immigrant population is officially the most important goal, and urban renewal thus becomes a form of social and racial engineering through state-led gentrification.[7]

Planners from the local council state that the new neighbourhood policy is no longer about 'fighting problems', but 'the creation of opportunities'. It is this kind of vague language that legitimises large amounts of money earmarked for backward neighbourhoods being spent on marketing campaigns and subsidised business locations for creative entrepreneurs. The local council has enlisted the services of a PR agency which distributes a colourful glossy. Leafing through its pages, you will see images only of white people in an area where 70 out of every 100 inhabitants are first or second generation immigrants - telling you how beautiful their new houses are and praising the cultural activities in the neighbourhood. The real perversity starts when it becomes clear that the renewal plans openly state the intention of removing immigrant entrepreneurs from the neighbourhood. The plan literally reads 'the appearance of most of the shops leaves much to be desired. The number of migrant shop owners has grown drastically in the last couple of years.'[8]

### Exclusive Inclusion

The local council wants more luxury shops and has started a 'discouragement policy' to remove Turkish grocery stores, coffeeshops and call shops from the main shopping street. While some policy makers mention growing immigrant entrepreneurship as a great success in the integration process, others perceive it as a problem to be solved by removal.

This is the new logic of inclusion and exclusion in urban renewal. In the Amsterdam model talent is sought after and social problems kept at bay. But again, the model is not restricted to Amsterdam: also Rotterdam is part of the avant-garde. With less marketing and more fanaticism, immigrants and lower income residents are slowly being removed from the inner city. It is becoming less and less clear where all these 'problems' can eventually go. The Amsterdam city council's estimates show that by 2008 so many people will have had to leave their houses as a result of the regeneration process that the entire Amsterdam area does not have enough replacement social housing to re-accommodate them.

At the same time fewer houses are being developed than promised. In July 2005 the local newspaper carried a claim by a real estate broker that the council has consciously fostered a housing shortage. Now that the upward course of the housing market is slowly abating, the strange consequence is that the council has an interest in keeping a housing shortage in place to guarantee a good price for the new houses produced by the city's redevelopment.[9] The policy is creating a situation where council statistics themselves show that the official primary target group of the housing policy – those on lower incomes – are the people with the smallest chance of actually finding social housing. The main victims of the continuing housing shortage are predominantly immigrant families and youth. For them I Amsterdam is a highly exclusive brand.

I Amsterdam city branding rebranded

### **Postscript**

In the west of the city, where one of the biggest redevelopment projects in Europe is being realised, the process has stalled. In this area, which due to its size serves as a role model for other developments, it turns out the market has its limitations after all. Middle class interest in the poor neighbourhood and its newly constructed owner-occupant apartments is lower than expected, most turn out to prefer single family dwellings. The new challenge for the scheme's designers is to concentrate as many of the original occupants as possible in high density constructions, while leaving lush green space for the more private and expensive housing. What will assist the process is that the city council, in financial distress, has outsourced neighbourhood participation schemes and decision making to the housing corporations. In general, statistics show that most of the people staying behind in the neighbourhood's residual social housing have not benefited from renewal as promised. The continuing social-economic problems in depressed neighbourhoods limit the marketability of space, forcing the city council to reconsider commencing social investment programmes. The renewal in west Amsterdam so far has turned out to be an economic and social failure.

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[1] Rapport Woonvisie Amsterdam, <http://www.dienstwonen.nl>

[2] The Netherlands is blessed with a very big social housing sector. Here's some essential info: in Amsterdam roughly 70 percent of housing is rented and 50 percent of this is social housing. To apply for social housing you have to wait in line. The queue in Amsterdam has grown to a mean waiting period of 7.5 years. This is partly because a large quantity of middle income people live in social housing. Outside of social housing there is almost no genuinely affordable rental housing. Those that are forced to leave their homes due to urban renewal are given general priority on the waiting list, and specific priority to get a home in their original neighbourhood. However, due to the fact that the amount of social housing in any given redevelopment area is decreasing, there is not that much choice. A lot of the ex-inhabitants end up on the periphery of the city, where housing is still relatively cheap and often also more spacious. Usually they have to face an increase in rents.

[3] For examples of the approaches to urban regeneration Amsterdam is taking, borrowing extensively from UK ideologues, see the conference Creative Capital: Culture, Innovation and the Public Domain in the Knowledge Economy, Amsterdam, March 17 and 18 2005, <http://www.creativecapital.nl>

[4] Sail is a big maritime event, basically a parade of large sailing boats old and new through the city harbour. Most of the boats are hired by the Amsterdam business community to hold receptions.

[5] *Maakbaarheid* is not an easily translated concept: âthe ability to shape, form and control every aspect of the social and physical environment; the belief that a country can be planned or madeâ. A modernist and progressive notion that in common Dutch understanding is believed to have died somewhere shortly after the â70s.

[6] Schaefer was a famous Amsterdam alderman who vigorously coordinated the urban renewal wave in the late â70s and â80s. âBouwen voor de buurtâ literally âbuilding for the neighbourhoodâ was a policy whereby urban renewal was specifically tailored to the needs of the original inhabitants of the neighbourhood and allowed them to return after the construction works.

[7] Until recently gentrification was only a very limited phenomenon in the Dutch housing market. Most poor neighbourhoods consisted mainly of social housing and were thus protected by law. With the privatisation of housing corporations and minister Dekkerâs social mixing agenda, gentrification has now become part of the official housing policy.

[8] See page 32 of the Stedelijk Vernieuwingsplan Indische Buurt.

[9] The mean price of a house in the Netherlands has grown from â61,000 in 1985 to â224,000 in 2005; a rise of 367 percent.

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He has been involved in organising political projects and debates around flexibility and precarity. Currently he is writing a thesis on âcreativeâ city branding, entrepreneurialism and gentrification in Amsterdam

First, understand that we are talking about a secret world, a world outside of ours. Our workaday world as artists and art historians, that is, as members of institutions (actually or wannabe) which interlock to form a system, does not include occupied social centers. They are not "real," in the sense that they are (mostly) disconnected from state and market economies. It follows from this that OSCs remain largely unmediated – unreported and unstudied – except when their presence causes exciting and expensive disruptions. "If it bleeds it leads." Also if it burns, it gets televised.

But we need to re-examine this unflexive segregation. As the structure of work in all its forms changes due to comprehensive changes in the flows of information and its primary derivative money, these spheres are beginning to converge, to intersect, to overlap, to flow together through ruptures in one and the other.

Not to get all Deleuzean on you, but cultural and academic work has become (and it has in part always been) ever-more contingent, temporary, and precarious. So to speak of a "real economy" of cultural production is to speak only of a certain part or sector of that world. Many of us in the artworld work for nothing, and even pay to work.

At the same time as all pretense of a wage or salary vanishes from our world of labor, many of us are being inexorably priced out of the central districts of the world's cities as they turn from proletarian to bourgeois.

To occupy a building in that center – always an empty one – is to say that together, as creative, politically engaged workers, we will remain where most of the city's people are. We will speak to crowds. And amongst the crowds we will build our own free zone of work and play, to do together what we will, to turn shoppers into citizens.

Now for a brief note on the historical roots of the movement of occupied social centers (although it is inadequate to my sense of what is required from a disciplined historian for reasons I will perhaps later be able to describe). The OSC may be said to have arisen from the movement to provide spaces for workers' education undertaken by labor unions in the early 20th century, crossed with the experiences of late 20th century squatting for housing.

In Spain, the libertarian athenaeums (ateneos libertario) were centers of learning and culture created by the labor unions, especially the largest, the anarcho-syndicalist CNT. Targeting large-scale illiteracy in Spain, they set up libraries and pioneered progressive teaching methods for the children of workers. These libertarian popular universities ran independent of grants or institutional financial support. Of course this was an activity of the left, those whom Ronald Reagan famously called "premature anti-fascists," and they lost the Civil War. Ergo, los ateneos son finito. The tradition of the libertarian athenaeums has been very specifically recalled by the occupation movement in Spain.



## House Magic

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Monster Institutions: Occupied Social Centers in Europe

This text was read at the College Art Association meeting in NYC, February 2011 as part of the "Dark Matter" session 2, organized by Susan Ryan and Gregory Sholette..

"Monster Institutions": Occupied Social Centers in Europe  
by Alan W. Moore

Squatting.

From a squatting position we rise up.

We rise up to remake the city, the city from below.  
GRAPHIC: Baltimore city from below

This talk concerns "Monster Institutions," the movement of Occupied Social Centers in Europe. The occupied social center (OSC) in European cities is an outgrowth of direct action squatting. According to the analysts of the Universidad Nómada, this tactic has emerged as a distinctive "second wave" of the squatting movement in the 21st century. It has evolved together with the global justice movement. While squatting is mainly associated with the unmet needs of poor and working class folk for housing, these occupations have created social, cultural and political space for action in the city. OSCs are a response to gentrifying development in the city, an instance of "bottom up planning and architecture," undertaken without money, only with labor. European social centers are usually well integrated in the neighborhoods in which they are found, and many work closely with immigrant groups. The social centers represent a new wave of activism, often highly theorized, with participation by both radical intellectuals and grassroots activists.

The key question that drives my recent investigations is, how are these OSCs part of the artworld, or the field of cultural production?

OSCs are important bases for various cultural practices: street artists (doing graffiti and graphic work), performing artists (music and theater), media artists (hacklabs), and self-education through discussion groups and skillshares (pirate universities). Many OSCs have been formalized over the years as government-funded cultural centers. This presentation will introduce the phenomenon with a pinch of theory, discuss some instances of "crossover" and cultural utility, and hint at how OSCs have dealt with the processes of normalization.

The OSCs are often called CSOAs by the Italians and Spanish, or Centro Sociale Occupado Autogestione, for occupied self-organized social center. Let's just say OSCs.



Did Matta-Clark visit Leoncavallo OSC and become inspired to change the direction of his work? He was definitely in the neighborhood. Then he died.

Well, my time is growing short, and so I can't tell you why I'm such a bad historian. You can take a look at the webliographic handouts I have prepared for this talk which will maybe explain that.

I'd like to return to the original question – which is really, what does all this possibly exciting possibly boring but indisputably political activity have to do with us as artists and art historians?

On the simplest level, squatting can preserve buildings. We owe to a group of Zurich squatters the preservation of the site of the Cabaret Voltaire, original seedbed of resistant modernist culture. In 2002(?), the building was slated to be demolished. A very loud and public short term occupation forestalled the city's plans, and the building today is a museum dedicated to Dada.

Squatters discharged the same functions in other cities, particularly Amsterdam, when the city had planned to fill in many canals to modernize the city in the 1970s. Also in Hamburg, where squatting along the Haffenstrasse, or “harbor street” prevented the construction of the massive high-rises that have mostly usurped the harbor view in the central city. A group of artists and architects aligned with Haffenstrasse squatters produced the long-term defense of public space there which culminated in the well-known Park Fiction participatory design project. Park Fiction is now a reality, developed in a defended community open and green space that instead would have been a luxury condo.

I can say nothing more than list the contributions of urban spaces opened by political squatting to the development of mural painting, graphic production (especially silkscreen), theater, popular and experimental music, public sculpture, public festival, film, video and online media production and exhibition, libraries and learning of all kinds, fashion and computer programming.

Nor am I discussing the political initiatives social centers tend to be involved in, all of them with profound cultural consequences, like organizing campaigns and demonstrations, advocating for immigrant rights, local language instruction, community defense against gentrification, open source information, bicycle advocacy and construction, gardening, recycling and composting, free stores, communal food preparation, low-cost cafe bars and radical democratic administration.

Today the European social center movement is dealing with a new wave of what the Dutch analyst Hans Pruijt called “flexible institutionalization,” its opportunities and attendant problems. In Hamburg the artists' occupation of buildings in a remnant of an old workers' district in the central city called the Gängeviertel was almost immediately sanctioned by city officials. This left the older radically resistant OSC Rote Flora out in



In Russia as well, similar initiatives sprang up, and for similar reasons. Much of this activism was driven by anarchist and independent trade unions which were wiped out not long after the Bolsheviks took control of the central government and beat back the White counter-revolution. The Soviet government continued an energetic campaign to educate workers, however, of which Alexander Rodchhenko's famous (albeit never-built) exposition design for a Workers' Club is a canonical modernist example.

During the worldwide wave of social movements which culminated in the spectacular revolutions of 1968, occupation was regularly used as a temporary tactic to pressure institutions to give a hearing and accede to a variety of demands. We see this again in the contemporary wave of university protests which rely on occupation not only to press demands – or not even – but to mobilize, educate and radicalize their constituency. (Witness the manifesto “Occupy Everything, Demand Nothing.”)

Some activists moved on from temporary to more long-term occupations of vacant buildings and property in the de-industrializing cities of the first world. In New York City, the Puerto Rican political gang Young Lords Party famously took over the First Spanish Methodist Church in East Harlem, and later the Lincoln Hospital in 1969-70. They emulated the Black Panthers in advocating for services in their communities, and contesting police repression. In the 1970s, the Lower East Side Puerto Rican group CHARAS used vacant lots in their arson-plagued neighborhood to build geodesic domes in consultation the architects of Buckminster Fuller's group. In 1978, CHARAS took over a vacant city-owned school building and initiated the 20-year run of the El Bohio cultural center.

CHARAS had been planning a project to build an ecology and architecture education center with Gordon Matta-Clark. The multi-lingual artist intended with this to begin a new phase in his career, a socially-engaged phase. He had been inspired by an encounter with radical Communist youths in Milan, who were resisting real estate developers by occupying an abandoned factory for a community services center. This led Matta-Clark to what he called an “awakening” that he might do his work “not in artistic isolation, but through an active exchange with peoples’ concern for their neighborhood.”  
Matta-Clark, drawing for Milan project

I don't know much yet about this meeting. It is probable that these young people were part of the emergent renegade left strain of Italian Autonomia called Lotta Continua (Continuous Struggle). It was in the city of Milan that Leoncavallo, arguably the most influential European social center occupation, took place in the mid-1970s.

Andrea Membretti writes of it, “from the start there was room in this building for a women's counseling office, a kindergarten, a space for concerts and exhibitions, in addition to the various rooms for communal use and informal meetings. The declared goal was to create a public space for the quarter and the city, that was to be located outside the control of the state and the capitalist logic of the market.”



the cold and looking expendable. Rote Flora is committed to immigrant rights, and you can see it when you visit. Gängeviertel, as charming as it is, is all white.

In Madrid the long-derelict state-owned Tabacalera (or tobacco factory) has been partially converted to a self-organized social center – but official this time, not an occupation. The federal Ministry of Culture leapfrogged the rightwing city government and gave a home to a group which had conducted several occupations in the multi-cultural district called Lavapies. I've been down to the place a few times, and it's always buzzing with a mixed crowd. I intend to hang out.

# ALTERNATIVE ARTECONOMIES

**NEW  
ECONOMIES (?)  
NEW  
MODELS**



## **A Call for an Equitable and Sustainable Economy**

**To:** White House Offices: The Office of Public Liaison/Dept. of Energy, Environment and Natural Resources; The Office of Social Innovation and Civic Engagement; and The Council on Environmental Quality

**From:** American Sustainable Business Council

**Subject:** A Call for an Equitable and Sustainable Economy

**Date:** March 31, 2009

This document was written by business executives and social entrepreneurs who are working to create a more equitable and sustainable economy. The undersigned individuals are the chief executives of mission-driven businesses, social enterprises, and sustainable business networks representing hundreds of thousands of employees, members and leaders, and hundreds of billions in economic activity.

We have been very pleased with the leadership and transparency of the Obama Administration to revitalize the U.S. economy. Our council and partners are working to build on this momentum with new thinking on a critical but often overlooked segment of the economy: mission-driven enterprises.

We believe it is time to create the foundation and framework for a transition to a new, 21st century American economy grounded in principles of sustainability and equity. We need to move beyond the politics and business of the past to create the innovative solutions—enterprises, collaborations, and ideas—necessary for accelerating such a transformation.

While our recommendations come from a variety of sources, this community is unified in the conviction that the current economic, social and environmental crises we are facing are rooted in inequitable and unsustainable practices and structures that must be transformed if there is to be a renewal of hope and prosperity. As Einstein famously stated, “we can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.”

An overarching strategy behind our recommendations is for government to empower the engines of our economy—businesses and social enterprises—to be the agents of recovery and revitalization. By removing obstacles, creating incentives, providing support, and partnering, government can help create an enabling environment in which restorative, equitable and sustainable economic models can thrive. These recommendations will unleash the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation across all sectors and disciplines to confront and solve the economic, social and environmental problems we are now facing.

In this document, we share high level perspectives and recommendations in major policy categories and offer examples of changes we consider to be effective and feasible in the current political climate. As a companion to this proposal, this council will be working in collaboration with others to launch an ongoing, comprehensive multi-stakeholder initiative to aggregate, synthesize and prioritize the most effective policy recommendations that promote equitable and sustainable economic reform.

Among our coalition are experts with considerable breadth and depth in each of these areas, and we would welcome the opportunity to organize discussions, or provide more detailed information, on our recommendations and proposals. We look forward to being in dialogue with you about these ideas over the long-term.

## About Us

The American Sustainable Business Council is a collaboration of mission-driven businesses, social enterprises and sustainable business networks working to create a just and sustainable economy.

## Our Principles

We hold a shared point of view about the positive role that business should play in our society, the proper role of government in structuring the market, and the way public resources are invested. We believe that not only is sustainable economic development compatible with shared prosperity, environmental protection and regeneration, and social justice – it is essential from both a moral and pragmatic standpoint that we restructure our economy to achieve this balance.

We believe that a competitive market-based economy is the most powerful engine of prosperity yet devised – and we also believe that the market must be structured far differently than it is today for the good of all Americans, and for the 6+ billion other people who share this planet. Five core principles must be held in balance:

- **Market competition:** A competitive market-based business system must remain the heart of our economy. In most cases, it spurs innovation and efficiency and allocates resources far better than any alternative devised. Market based approaches should be part of the solution wherever possible.
- **Sustainability:** We must manage our economy to meet the needs of the current generation without impairing the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

This means stewardship, reinvestment, attention to sustainability through the full lifecycle and judicious use of resources – not taking from tomorrow to boost output today.

- **Broad prosperity:** It is both a moral imperative and a matter of national self-interest to run the economy in a way that offers full opportunity to participate and prosper to all Americans, regardless of their economic standing, race, religion, or gender, and fully develops and taps the capabilities, creativity, and industriousness of all Americans.
- **Public protection:** Without eliminating a strong market incentive to innovate, and to operate efficiently and safely, it is the proper role of government to be vigilant in protecting consumers, through stronger consumer protection legislation, and tough penalties for companies who violate consumer, worker, and environmental protection laws.
- **Democratic control:** Any market is nothing more and nothing less than a set of rules and conventions negotiated by people through a contentious political process. The market should be structured and managed to be fair, transparent, well regulated, and accountable to all participants.

## How We Can Help

The sustainable business and social enterprise community leadership stands ready to support the Administration in the following key areas:

### Public and Private Mobilization

- Align powerful business and community support for high priority legislation introduced by the Administration, with capacities to focus in key geographic areas.
- Coordinate multi-stakeholder coalitions that bring together business, social enterprise, social investment, labor, social justice, NGO's, environment, community groups, schools and universities and religious organizations and provide a united and positive voice.
- Generate and facilitate public dialogue reaching targeted constituencies.
- Help convene a White House Summit on a Sustainable Economy, bringing together a range of experts and stakeholders from diverse disciplines, sectors and perspectives to discuss ideas, develop consensus-based strategies, and accelerate progress toward equitable and sustainable economic reform.

### Expertise

- Provide expertise from business executives and social enterprise leaders to ensure success pathways and cost effective solutions to critical concern areas.
- Provide intellectual resources and objective feedback on potential programs, appointments, executive orders, or legislation proposed by the Administration.

# **Priorities and Policy Recommendations**

The recommendations listed below include initial ideas and policy proposals developed by leading business executives and social entrepreneurs who are working to create a more equitable and sustainable economy. This document is only a beginning, and several key issues are not addressed in this document including healthcare, labor and the banking system. This memo is intended as an initial communication that will expand to include a number of other areas that are crucial to our overall goals.

## **I. Corporate Responsibility and Governance**

The market can only do its job in promoting productivity, efficiency, sustainability, and other goals when the rewards offered to management encourage the long-term interests of investors, other stakeholders, and the interest of society as a whole. With misaligned incentives, weak or un-enforced regulations, and limited protection for workers and customers, even executives who want to do the right thing risk conflicts with boards and short-term investors. Broad reform is needed to make it easier and more profitable to do the right thing – and no longer profitable to do the wrong thing. We must increase accountability and transparency, and bring incentives and sanctions into alignment with the goals of all stakeholders involved.

Tangible programs include:

- Support the development of a standards infrastructure that allows investors and policy makers to measure the social and environmental impact of businesses and social enterprises, and as much as is practical, require accounting recognition of externalized costs.
- Reform domestic regulations and trade policies so that socially responsible, sustainable businesses are not driven into a “race to the bottom” by providers (both U.S. and non-U.S.) that don’t adopt responsible, sustainable practices.
- Provide incentives for federal purchasing programs that prioritize: a) materials and products that are sustainable throughout their lifecycle and minimize the use of virgin materials, b) local purchasing programs that offset the subsidies for long-haul transportation, and c) socially responsible companies that create jobs in underserved communities.

## **II. Federal Budget Priorities & Spending**

As the government seeks the right balance of reallocation, spending cuts, and revenue increases, we would like to emphasize two principles that are under-represented in the current debate over federal spending: (1) Funds that we invest in increasing the productivity of our economy are fundamentally more important than federal spending to bolster current consumption – and we need to give priority to the former. (2) Funds that prop up the economics of outmoded and polluting industries and technologies are wasted, whereas funds that promote U.S. comparative advantage in the efficient and clean industries and technologies of the future, are wise investments.



Tangible programs include:

- End the explicit and implicit subsidies to fossil fuels that make these fuels appear to be much cheaper than they really are, and end subsidies that reward large companies at the expense of small businesses, and remotely located operations at the expense of local businesses.
- Use incentives to accelerate the development of new, green industries and green jobs, without picking winners among technologies, and promote job development, education and training incentives to help disadvantaged communities.
- Put the federal budget back on track to long-term sustainability by reducing expenditures on social security, Medicare/Medicaid and the military to a reasonable percentage of GDP.

### **III. Energy and Climate Change**

The threat of climate change and the risks related to our dependence on petroleum are among the greatest threats we face as a nation and as a species. We believe that the shift to a clean, renewable energy and sustainable materials economy and sufficiently reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions can be accomplished in ways that create substantial growth opportunities for the economy – in addition to forestalling grave damage. We need to create an energy pricing policy that shifts away from carbon-based fuels and spurs the adoption of renewable energy solutions.

The following areas merit particular emphasis:

- Commit to the level of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction that the current science says is required, and invest in an objective and verifiable reporting system to track progress. Establish a price on carbon, and make it steep enough to motivate the necessary reduction.
- Impose efficiency standards and labeling to reinforce the move to more efficient buildings, cars, and appliances, and reduce the use of carbon-based materials in feedstocks.
- Enact a strong carbon emissions reduction policy that is fair, sustainable and equitable, especially for disadvantaged communities. Use the revenues from tax and auctions to provide transition assistance to those most disadvantaged by the rise in energy costs – particularly those least able to mitigate in the short run. Subsidize investments by companies and consumers to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> output, to reduce the payback period involved, and speed the transition.

## **IV. New Organizational Forms & Social Innovation**

Over the past few decades, a vibrant landscape of new, hybrid enterprises have been emerging that are structured for the benefit of society as a whole – not just a narrow group of shareholders. Sustainable businesses, social enterprises, community development corporations and a range of other hybrid approaches are harnessing the power of business to address pressing needs in housing, health, environment, agriculture, energy, education, workforce development and other fields. Rather than being lost in the void between the business, government and non-profit sectors, there is a need to recognize and empower these organizations through targeted policies and support infrastructure.

Specific programs include:

- Through seed money, direct investment, tax credits, credit enhancement, SBA loans and guarantees, and similar means, incentivize private investment to provide patient capital and financing for sustainable business and social enterprises.
- Promote creation of new legal forms tailored to the needs of mission-driven businesses and social enterprises, with accountability and standards for social and environmental performance, including new state corporate forms, IRS designations, and SEC regulations.
- Provide funding to various agencies and departments to test and rigorously evaluate innovative enterprise approaches in a broad range of fields, notably health and wellness, renewable energy, community capital, green transit, sustainable agriculture, community owned utilities and zero waste manufacturing, the essential components of building a sustainable local economy.
- Support the creation of national, state and local public-private Commissions to bring together experts from government, civil society, business, faith communities, academia and other sectors to facilitate dialogue and collaboration on the development of alternative, equitable and sustainable economic models.

## **V. Food, Water and Product Safety**

Demand for products made from safer and greener chemicals is growing rapidly. Consumers, investors and governments want chemicals that have low to no toxicity and degrade into innocuous substances in the environment. Leading businesses are capturing these emerging market opportunities by redesigning their products and catalyzing change in their supply chains. We encourage you to support public policies and industry standards that know and disclose product chemistry; assess and avoid hazards; and commit to continuous improvement, also supporting research and development for green chemistry and engineering solutions.

We recommend the following measures to advance an economy where chemicals, materials and products are healthy for humans, as well as for our global environment:

- Overhaul the Toxic Substance Control Act and strengthen U.S. chemical regulatory policy to remedy the injustice that has exposed communities of color to significantly higher levels of toxic pollution and promote and fund a chemical database for hazardous chemicals.
- Promote sustainable and organic agriculture as well as sustainable biobased materials development in agricultural policy.
- Strengthen regulation and increase inspections to ensure the safety of our food and water supply, and of manufactured products, and end the use of antibiotics in meat and poultry production.

Thank you for considering our recommendations.

### **American Sustainable Business Coalition – Founding Partners**

David Brodwin, New Voice of Business  
 Doug Hammond, Business Alliance for Local Living Economies  
 Alisa Gravitz, Green America  
 Andrew Kassoy, B Lab  
 David Levine, Green Harvest Technologies  
 Deborah Nelson, Social Venture Network  
 Kris Prendergrast, Social Enterprise Alliance  
 Heerad Sabeti, Fourth Sector Network

### **Signers of this Letter**

This call for an equitable and sustainable economy has been signed by over 1,300 business executives, social entrepreneurs and others committed to building an equitable and sustainable economy including:

Sandy Cabot, Dansko  
 Amy Domini, Domini Social Investments  
 Edward Dugger, III, UNC Partners, Inc.  
 Jed Emerson  
 Margot Fraser, Birkenstock  
 Jim Fruchterman, Benetech  
 Seth Goldman, Honest Tea  
 Hazel Henderson, Ethical Markets Media  
 Jeffrey Hollander, Seventh Generation  
 Barbara Krumsiek, Calvert  
 Mike Lapham, Responsible Wealth  
 Adam Lowry, Method Products  
 Hunter Lovins, NatcapSolutions  
 Woody Tasch, Slow Money  
 Judy Wicks, White Dog Café  
 Beth Williams, Roxbury Technology Corp.

## And in addition...

Ethan Rosch, 19d, Inc.  
Ron Willia, 3rdWhale Media  
Richard Parker, 450 Architects  
Rick Dubrow, A-1 Builders, Inc.  
Jack Finn, A2Z Science and Learning Store  
Ranee Goodstadt, A-B Tech  
Carl Rohacek, Abode Home Furnishings  
Rachel Hynes, ACCION USA  
Shivon Robinsong, Across Borders Media  
Ted Bayer, Ad Valorem Solutions LLC  
Mike Nellor, Ada's Place  
Valerie Nellor, Ada's Place  
Leslie Sheridan, Added Edge, Inc., The  
Rucita Perlambang, ADDINARA  
Robert Townsend, ADIO Family Chiropractor  
Susan Kulstad, Adroit Solutions  
Ben Powell, Agora Partnerships  
Patricia Carrillo, Agriculture & Land-Based Training Association (ALBA)  
Monica Rodriguez, ALBA  
Bern Warman, Alchemy Studios  
Anne Pearson, Alliance for Sustainable Communities  
Paula Escudero, Allstate Financial Services  
Carol Rose, Amanda's Flowers  
Tracy Howard, American Flatbread Burlington Hearth  
Jane Hileman, American Reading Company  
Andrew Rock, AndrewRock.COM  
Paul Bohac, Angel Oak Eye Center  
Scott Tillitt, Antidote Collective  
Bruce Klafter, Applied Materials, Inc. (signing as an individual)  
James Mattioda, Arcana Pharmacy  
Matthew Snyder, ArchAngel Global Services LLC  
Lawrence Lunt, Armonia  
Chuck Johnson, Artisan Builders  
Sarah Bellos, ASK Apparel  
Jeremy Litchfield, Atayne  
Rebecca Melancon, Austin Independent Business Alliance  
Anne O'Loughlin, Autonomie Project, Inc.  
Stephen Kosacz, Autoworks, Inc.  
Julianne Maurseth, Awake at Work  
Deborah Hirsh, B Lab  
Elisabeth Richardson, B Lab  
Stephanie Ryan, B Lab  
Hardik Savalia, B Lab  
Heather Van Dusen, B Lab  
Shahid Ansari, Babson College  
Leonard Schlesinger, Babson College  
Isabel Vinueza, Babson College  
Miah Olted, Back to Books  
Stefanie Siegel, Bailey's Cafe Inc.  
Julie Mihalisin, Bainbridge Graduate Institute  
Elizabeth PInchot, Bainbridge Graduate Institute  
Maryanne Perrin, Balancing Professionals, LLC  
Alissa Barron, BALLE  
Todd Mills, BALLE  
Mary Rick, BALLE  
Lauren Sockler, BALLE  
Andrew Michler, Baosol Sustainable Building  
Renee Johnson, Barkwheats Dog Biscuits  
Chris Roberts, Barkwheats Dog Products, LLC  
Donald White, Barn Foundation, The  
Gary Schaefer, Bart's Homemade/Snow's Nice Cream  
Aaron Lehmer, Bay Localize  
Raphael Bemporad, BBMG  
Lisa Clapper, BBMG  
Eve Smith, BBMG  
Rich Gentile, Be Local Northern Colorado  
Gailmarie Kimmel, Be Local Northern Colorado  
Susan Grunin, Beacon Associates  
Kirsten Kuhlmann, BEAM  
Gail Horvath, Beam Inc.  
Mal Stearns, Bean Capers Inc.  
Barry Beauchamp, Beauchamp & O'Rourke Inc.  
Rebecca Fricke, Bedscape Designs  
Ben Bingham, Benchmark Asset Managers LLC  
David Hopkins, BeRewarding (BeRewarding.com)  
Peter Wells, Berkshire Design Group  
Dave Feldman, Bethesda Green  
Mark Bachman, Better The World  
Eddie Porrello, Better World Books  
Matthew Bauer, BetterWorld Telecom  
Jacob Griscom, BetterWorld Telecom  
Karen Masterson, Big Fresh Cafe/Nourish  
J-M Toriel, Big Green Island  
James Lockridge, Big Heavy World Foundation, Inc.  
James Fournier, Biochar Engineering Corp  
SaraHope Smith, BioFuel Oasis  
Joanne Gere, BioScience Collaborative  
Brian Hill, BioVerde  
Ruth Brennan, Bits of Lace fine Lingerie  
Dave Krick, Bittercreek/Red Feather Restaurants  
Alexis Miesen, Blue Marble Ice Cream  
Lori De La Cruz, Blue Marble Media, LLC  
Treena Tutor, Body Complete, The  
Sally Freeman, Boise Weekly  
Christopher Ellinger, Bolder Giving in Extraordinary Times  
Susan Taylor, Book House of Stuyvesant Plaza  
Brian Butler, Boston Green Building  
HeatherLeigh Navarre, Boston Tea Room  
Brian Stewart, BP Stewart & Co., Contracting  
Dorisse Neale, BreathDance International  
Leila Khatapoush, Breathing Room Organizing and Sustainability Consulting  
Brian Webster, Brian Webster and Associates  
Prakash Laufer, Brick House Community Resource Center, The  
Carl Frankel, Bridge Group, The  
Brendan Cooney, BroadReach Research & Consulting  
Nancy Felton, Broadside Bookshop  
Ken Ax, Brook Valley Appliance  
Natacha Liuzzi, Brown Dog Books & Gifts  
David McConville, Buckminster Fuller Institute  
Amy Kedron, Buffalo First  
Lisa Muscato, Buffalo First!  
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 Harvy Simkovits, Business Wisdom  
 Bentley Brookes, Buy Local Clark County  
 Annie Hamnett, ByrdHouse Public Relations  
 Kate Lancaster, Cal Poly State University  
 Karen Hutchinson, Caledon Countryside Alliance  
 Barbara Krueik, Calvert  
 Timothy Freundlich, Calvert Foundation; Good Capital  
 Wayne Silby, Calvert Fund  
 Michael Kanter, Cambridge Naturals  
 Glenn Campbell, Campbell Plaster & Iron  
 Jackie Kirkman, Campbell Plaster and Iron  
 Joy Pierson, Candle Cafe  
 Karisa Centanni, Capital District Local First  
 Susan Davis, Capital Missions Company  
 Brendan Lange, Cappa & Graham, Inc.  
 Gregg Moyer, Car City  
 R Shawn Burns, Carbon Credit Corp  
 Kevin Jones, Cardinal Resources LLC  
 Joshua Swiss, Carnegie Mellon University  
 Patrick Clark, Carolina Morning Designs  
 Victor Bradshaw, Castle Keepers of Charleston  
 Suzanne Biegel, Catalyst at Large Consulting  
 Anita M Burke, Catalyst Institute, The  
 Timothy Yee, Cathedral Financial Group, Inc.  
 Bujar "Jari" Mema, Catholic Charties, Diocese of  
 Ft. Worth, Inc.  
 Boaz Soifer, Cedar Mountain Solar, LLC  
 Sean Sheehan, Center for a New American Dream  
 Andrea McGrath, Center for Applied Philanthropy  
 Marilyn Wrenn, Center for Economic Options  
 Christopher Bedford, Center for Economic Security  
 Nancy Gottovi, Central Park NC  
 Jim Levey, Chambers Advisory Group  
 Ronald Kingsbury Jr., Champlain Valley Hardscapes  
 James Hanusa, Change SF  
 Stephanie Swafford, Chareston Friend Society  
 Blair Barna, Charleston City Paper  
 Genevieve Cox, Charleston Green Home  
 Mark Goldes, Chava Energy  
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 Charlene Orszag, Cho & Associates  
 Deborah G Frangquist, Chosen Futures  
 Mark Loranger, Chrysalis  
 Noah Shitama, Citizens Co-op  
 Robert V. Gallant, CitizensMatch/Highland Valley  
 Elder Services, Inc.  
 Glynn Lloyd, City Fresh Foods Inc.  
 Africa Willia, City of Oakland  
 Alan Falleri, City of Willits  
 Timothy o'Shea, CleanFish  
 Rusty Schmit, CleanSwitch Inc.  
 Hanah Ehrenreich, CNY Works, Inc.  
 Bettina Jetter, Coaching Sanctuary LLC  
 Jessica Rios, Co-Lab, The  
 Anne Merrill, Collaborative Community Design  
 Peter Huhtala, Columbia River Business Alliance  
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 Jason Mogus, Communicopia Internet Inc.  
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 Thomas Tenorio, Community Action Agency of Butte  
 County, Inc.  
 Wade Horne, Community Developers of Beaufort-Hyde,  
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 Jim Gould, Community Funding Partners  
 Eugene Aleci, Community Heritage Partners  
 David Powell, Community Promotions LLC  
 Heather Peeler, Community Wealth Ventures  
 Brittany Vasseur, Community Wealth Ventures  
 Peter Carson, CompuClaim  
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 Jenny Rieke, Confluence Community Center  
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 Dale Biron, Core Action Assoc., Inc.  
 Matthew Costello, Corporate Conservation  
 Peg Botto, Cosmic Catering  
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 Tambra Stevenson, Creative Cause  
 Scott Badenoch, Creative Citizen LLC  
 Allison Quaid, Creative Eco-Catalysts  
 Herb Kaufman, Creative Energy Options  
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 Paul Needham, Critical Marketing Services  
 Mark Powell, CRS Electronics  
 Desmond Garrity, Crushed Fine Wine LLC  
 Wayne Dunn, CSR Developments  
 Jerry Gorde, CSRwire  
 Erwin Rakoczy, CUFF  
 Betsy Power, Culinary Collective  
 Richard Smith, Cuzin Richard Entertainment  
 Antonio Aguilera, CVE, Inc  
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 Paul Dewey, CyberTran International  
 Neil Sinclair, CyberTran Intl.  
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 Peter Kjellerup, Dansko LLC.  
 Charlotte Stewart, Datacare Inc.  
 Dean Cycon, Dean's Beans Organic Coffee Company  
 Denise Biondo, Denise Biondo Studio  
 Karim Pakravan, DePaul University  
 Julie Parker, Design & Source  
 John Evans, Diesel, A Bookstore - Malibu  
 David Horwitz, DigitalAcuity.tv  
 Douglas Thompson, Dignity Care LLC  
 Carrie Ousley, Dimond Chiropractic Center  
 Mike Englert, District Hotel, The  
 Martin Dukler, D'lish Brands, LLC  
 George McDonald, Doe Fund, The  
 Alan Reder, Dowling & Dennis PR  
 Thomas Reed, DPM LLC

Eileen Burke-Trent, Dragon's Lea Farm  
 Holly Munoz, Draw Fire Records  
 John Perkins, Dream Change, Org.  
 Mitch Albert, Dry Creek Resources, Inc.  
 Steve Wenger, Duvall Catering & Event Design  
 Danielle Venokur, dvGreen  
 Carroll Webber, E.C.U.  
 Frank Baldassarre, e3bank  
 Sandy Wiggins, e3bank  
 Paul Hanson, Eagle Harbor Book Co.  
 Sean Penrith, Earth Advantage Institute  
 David Aznavorian, Earth, Inc.  
 Kathryn Gillett, Ease Enterprises Inc  
 Hal Brody, East Bay Express  
 D'Arcy Reynolds, Eco-Conscious Consulting  
 Yair Marcoschamer, Ecoist  
 Margaret Hansen, Ecolibrio  
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 Brandi Clark, EcoNetworking  
 Leslie Hubbard, Economic Restructuring, Downtown  
 Development Assoc, Clayton, NC  
 Karen Janowski, EcoStrategy Group  
 Stephen Blessman, EDB Organization  
 Monica Wilks, Edible Arrangements of Wyandotte  
 Lincoln Pain, Effective Assets  
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 Ellen Honigstock, Ellen Honigstock Architect PC  
 Ethan Rosch, Energy Collective  
 Gregory Wendt, CFP, Enright Premier Wealth  
 Advisors, Inc.  
 Christopher Zurcher, Environmental Headlines  
 Joseph Madden, EOS Climate  
 Rink Dickinson, Equal Exchange  
 Rob Everts, Equal Exchange  
 Erin Hunt, Erin Hunt Communications  
 Sherry Parker, Everglades University  
 Daniel Gutierrez, Everywun  
 Michelle Grandy, EVL Enterprises  
 Scott Kiere, eVolve Ventures, LLC  
 Jeffrey Honerkamp, F.W. Honerkamp. Co. Inc.  
 Rose Roberts, Farm Stewards  
 Michael Krajovic, Fay-Penn Economic  
 Development Council  
 Stephanie Spencer, Feather's Edge Finery, The  
 Haynes Turkle, Financial Planning Assoc.  
 Steve Schueth, First Affirmative Financial Network  
 Elizabeth Fisher, Fisher Recycling, Inc.  
 Doug Flack, Flack Family Farm  
 Susan Copeland, Flour Garden Bakery  
 Chip Edson, Flying Cow Signs  
 JJ Kern, Food Is Love, Inc.  
 Donna Storm, Food Works for Middle Way House  
 Fred Geiger, Fred Geiger Photography  
 Louis Fox, Free Range Studios  
 Jonah Sachs, Free Range Studios  
 Harvey Chess, FTF Group, The  
 Amber Cote, FutureSelf  
 Linda Radell, Galaxy Bookshop, The  
 Philip Brett, Gardeners Supply  
 Jason Graham-Nye, gDiapers  
 Corey Beals, George Fox University  
 George Koster, George Koster Consulting  
 Steven Yoder, Get The Word Out Communications  
 Shana McCracken, Gigantic Idea Studio, Inc.  
 Michael Hannigan, Give Something Back, Inc.  
 Gabriel Ni, GKN & Assoc  
 Eva Anderson, Glasswing Design  
 Kevin Danaher, Global Exchange  
 Shana Dressler, Global Giving Circle  
 Lori Hanau, Global Round Table Leadership  
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 Tammy Sigman, Glow Spa, LLC  
 Nathan Harkrader, GO TELL IT, INC  
 Landon Heimbach, GO TELL IT, INC  
 Vanessa Rule, GoGreen Somerville  
 Liane Salgado, Golden Egg Permaculture Design  
 Debra Sikanas, Good Egg  
 John Parker, Good Work  
 Steve Wohlrab, Goodraven Alliance  
 Michelle Mosser, Grace Communications, inc.  
 Jim Lannigan, Graco Inc.  
 Shea Onofrey, Grassroots Call To Action Group  
 Amy Lyman, Great Place to Work® Institute, Inc.  
 Pete Mulvihill, Green Apple Books  
 David Kistner, Green Apple Cleaners  
 Les Judd, Green Boroughs  
 Barbara Parks, Green Career Tracks  
 Peter Shepherd, Green City Construction  
 Beverly Alkire, Green Consultants  
 Alan Page, Green Diamond Systems  
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 Ian Kelly, Green Event Co  
 David Baum, Green Exchange  
 Nick Flores, Green For All  
 Robert Flynn, Green Ride Colorado  
 Garth Shaneyfelt, Green River Ambrosia LLC  
 Casey Carlson, Green Society  
 Joe Vassallo, Green Thumb Holdings  
 Sheryl Cohen, Green Zebra  
 Cynthia McGregor, Greenbaby Gifts  
 Joel Makower, Greener World Media, Inc.  
 Valerie Franklin, Greenfeet.com  
 Steve Wilton, Greening Innovations  
 Kristena Cox, GREENLANE  
 Cliff Feigenbaum, GreenMoney Journal  
 Amanda Converse, greenover  
 Paul Smith, GreenSmith Consulting  
 Marie Ambrosia, Greenwise Directory  
 Greg Otero, GreenWorks Idaho  
 Julie Beall, Greenworks Real Estate and Development  
 Suzanne Dailey, Grounds for Coffee, Inc.  
 Penny Brown-Huber, Grow Your Small Market  
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 Chris Mann, Guayaki Sustainable Rainforest  
 Products, Inc.  
 Garth Neil, Habanero Ventures  
 Sarah Bell Haberman, Haberman  
 Mike Able, Haddrells Point Tackle and Supply  
 Jim Hand, Hand Motors  
 John Plunkett, Harborquest, Inc.  
 Forrest Hill, Harrington Investments Inc  
 May L. Henderson, Hat Library, The

Tom Kersten, Hayward Democratic Club  
 James Spar, Health Strategies Grp, Inc.  
 Patricia Neal, Heartland Inc.  
 Blake Spalding, Hell's Backbone  
 Michael Arkes, Helping Hand Rewards  
 Susan Schmidt, Henry Ford, The  
 Jeff Siegler, Heritage Ohio  
 Tom Attar, Highland Holdings  
 Heather Hiles, Hiles Group, LLC, The  
 Jacques Vis, Hogeschool van Aterdam  
 Nicole de la Cretaz, Holy City Hospitality  
 Melissa Boyer, Home Body, Eco-Luxe Living  
 Terry Winkelmann, Home Eco LLC  
 David Bangs, Home Performance Washington  
 Gorman Horne, Horne Consulting  
 Maureen Abram, I Am Designs  
 MaryAnne Howland, Ibis Communications  
 Laurie Kramer, ICCB, Inc.  
 Miranda Magagnini, IceStone LLC  
 Peter Strugatz, IceStone LLC  
 Mark Ickes, Ickopotamus Enterprises, LLC  
 Daniell Walters, Idaho's Bounty Co-op  
 Carol Fabretti, Ideas 4 Elements  
 Christopher Johnson, ifPeople  
 Vincent Casalaina, Image Integration  
 Leigh Melander, Ph.D., Imaginal Institute, The  
 Michael Pirron, Impact Makers  
 Stuart Zimmerman, In Joy Media, Inc.  
 Silvia Leahu-Aluas, Independent Consultant -  
     Sustainable Manufacturing  
 Ernest Lowe, Indigo Development  
 Drummond Reed, Information Card Foundation  
 Karl Tur, Ink & Toner Solutions  
 Bill McKenney, InkTec Zone  
 Ken Eskenazi, Innovation To Industry (i2i)  
 Cary Zakon, Innovations for Learning  
 Lisa Chacon, Innovive  
 Don Sayre, Inside ISO  
 Laura Stuntz, In-Situ Inc  
 Jerr Boschee, Institute for Social Entrepreneurs, The  
 Kimberly Maria Newton-Klootwyk, Instituto  
     Conexiones - Connections Institute  
 Dixon de Lena, Integral Partnerships LLC  
 Paul Ray, Integral Partnerships, LLC  
 Daniel O'Connor, Integral Ventures, LLC  
 Caryn Capriccioso, interSector Partners, L3C  
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 Julie Lewis, Jade Planet, Inc  
 Jan Cohen, Janet S Cohen, Consulting & Training for  
     Nonprofit Organizations  
 Diane Strand, JDS Video & Media Productions, Inc.  
 Justi Hansen, Jefferson Economic Development Institute  
 Jeffrey Schwartz, Jeffrey E. Schwartz Family  
     Limited Partnership  
 Jennifer Paris, Jennifer Paris Insurance Agency, Inc.  
 Jesse Wiley, John Wiley & Sons  
 Rob Johnson, Johnson Design, Inc.  
 Raj Aggarwal, Joint Concepts, Inc.  
 Amanda Baird, Jonas White Catering  
 L Mariah Wheeler, Joyful Jewel, The  
 Alfred L. Scheps, Julep Corp  
 Julie Tennant, Julie Tennant Design, inc.  
 Jim Jungwirth, Jungwirth, Blackburn and Associates  
 Jonathan Rosenthal, Just Works Consulting  
 Judith Katz, Kaleel Jamison Consulting Group, The  
 Bonnie Wallace, Kandahar Trading Company  
 Karen Colville, Karen Colville.com  
 John Katovich, Katovich Law Group  
 Don Heacock, Kauai Sustainable AgroecoSysts  
 James Mitchell, Keller Williams Realty  
 Jeff Kletter, KINeSYS Inc.  
 Dale Collier, Kings Counsel & Trust, LLC  
 Dave Levenson, Kohala Foundation  
 Peter Dernier, Kokopelli Traders, Inc.  
 Candice Kollar, Kollar Design | EcoCreative  
 Christina "Tina Tamale" Ramos, La Borinquena Inc.  
 Stan Dodson, La Farine Bakery  
 Charlotte Jones, Lantana Life, The  
 JoAnn Rosebrock, Larkspur Fine Jewelry  
 Santiago Masferrer, Latin American Cultural Asoc./EL  
     BUEN AMIGO  
 Lara Pearson, Law Office of Lara Pearson, Ltd.  
 Marc J. Lane, Law Offices of Marc J. Lane, The  
 Steve Levin, Leading Change  
 Rani Saijo, Leaves of Grass Books  
 Mark Albion, Lewis Initiative at Babson College  
 Chid Liberty, Liberian Women's Sewing Project  
 Keith Liddell, Liddell's M.S.E. & Referral Agency  
 Nikol Schwab, Little Italian Kitchen, The  
 Tony Littmann, Littmann Remodeling  
 Robert Stang, Living Earth Realty Corp.  
 Sharon Lutz, Living Environments in Color  
 Terry Phelan, Living Shelter Design  
 Hilary Brown, Local Burger  
 Alison Einerson, Local First Utah  
 Elissa Hillary, Local First West Michigan  
 Erika Block, Local Orbit  
 Mike Paunovich, LocalBizBlogs.com  
 Karen Loida, Loida Consulting  
 Meredith Gossland, Long Beach Green Business  
     Association  
 Myke Farricker, Longfellow Clubs, The  
 Laurence Hammel, Longfellow Clubs, The  
 Ellen Clarke, Low Country Harley-Davidson  
 W. Andrew Gowder, Jr., Lowcountry Local First  
 Jamee Haley, Lowcountry Local First  
 Charles Dougherty, lower Cloumbia Alliance for  
     Living Sustainably  
 Jason Stern, Luminary Publishing / Chronogram  
 Jason Stern, Luminary Publishing, Inc.  
 Joseph DeLoss, Lutheran Social Services of  
     Central Ohio  
 Matthew Smith, M. K. Smith Builders  
 Maria E. Morales, M. Realty  
 Cheryl Schneider, Mac Works, Inc., The  
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 Daniel Doyle, Mal Warwick | Donordigital  
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 Keone Kealoha, Malama Kauai  
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 Julie Pokela, Market Street Research, Inc.  
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Carolyn Wills, Mavenjoy Media, LLC  
Amy Alcorn, McWhinney  
KC Mares, MegaWatt Consulting, Inc.  
Jed Diamond, MenAlive  
John Menke, Menke & Associates, Inc.  
Robert Howe, Meridian Associates  
Sarita Chawla, metalens  
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Wenzday Jane, Metro Pedal Power  
Annie Myers, MEX Rooftop Farm  
Barbara Meyer, Meyer Family Enterprises  
Anne Paradis, MicroTek, Inc.  
Monica Ralston, Middlebury College  
Andrea Wheeler, Miko Wheeler + Co  
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John La Grou, Millennia Media  
Tony Caplan, Mink Hills Center for Sustainable  
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Bruce Poe, Modus Architecture  
Vicki Robin, MoneyLife Network  
Melissa Graham, Monogramme Events & Catering  
Julia Delrieu, Montreal Urban Community Sustainment  
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Rha Goddess, Move The Crowd, LLC  
Mark Ehrhardt, Movers, Not Shakers!, Inc.  
Tom Willits, MRW Connected LLC  
Michele Hoban, Muddy Waters Coffee  
Michael Martin, MusicMatters  
Shana LaPointe, My Muse Health & Wellness Coaching  
Renata Dos Santos, My Personal Chef, LLC  
Chela Ananda, My Rainbow Vision  
Antonia Neubauer, Myths and Mountains  
Steven King, Napo Pharmaceuticals  
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Chuck Slotkin, Nature's Equity LLC  
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Tara Bloyd, NearSea Naturals  
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Robert Leaver, New Commons  
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Charles Ewald, New Island Capital

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Nasim G. Memon, NGM Enterprise  
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Nicole Alexander, nkalexander  
Barbara Scofidio, noa jewelry, fine handcrafts & gifts  
Jim Augustin, Noisette Company  
Jim Haley, Noisette Company  
Anne Lawless, Noisette Company, The  
Gerald Sweitzer, Non-Profit Success  
Kate Barr, Nonprofits Assistance Fund  
Heather Hensley, North Shattuck Assoc.  
Kurt Waldenberg, North Sound Energy & Remodel  
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Hill Grimmert, Northern Colorado Food Incubator  
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Terry Garrett, Oasis Web Logistics  
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Jaclyn Morton, Om Gardens  
Sean Holt, Om Ventures  
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Steve Hackman, One Village Coffee  
Andrew Heinrich, Open Roads Institute  
Daniel Parolek, Opticos Design, Inc.  
Eric Corey Freed, organicARCHITECT  
Rebecca Stone, Orton Family Foundation  
Samuel B. Moore, Ouroboros Holdings, LLC  
Bruce Webber, OwlPoint  
Margaret Andrews, Pacific Properties  
Tripp Baird, Partnership Capital Growth  
Paul Trahan, PayData  
Kat Gjovik, PCDForum  
Devon Jeremy, Peace Mine, The  
Carl Etnier, Peak Oil Awareness  
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Wesley Caddell, People's Fuel Cooperative  
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Kevin Hansen, Pierre Terre Productions  
Kevin Casey, Piggly Wiggly Carolina Co.  
Anne Wunderli, Pine Street Inn  
Janice DeGoosh, Pink Shutter, The

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 Marla George, Pit Boys  
 Shannon Downey, Pivotal Production  
 Betsy Morris, Planning for Sustainable Communities  
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 Paul Pitkin, Portfolio 21 Investments  
 Doug Roberts, PortsmouthNH.com  
 Dean Schaecher, Pour House, The  
 Jesse Singerman, Prairie Ventures  
 Richard Gray, Presidio School of Management  
 Brendan Meagher, Pride of Baltimore II  
 Cheri Hegi, Primal Media  
 Dan McKenna, Principle Profits, Inc.  
 Jeffrey Ada, Priority Express  
 Ann Fujii, Pro/MA dba The Village Green Gallery  
 Richard Eidlin, Progress Group, The  
 Hunter Brownlie, Progressive Asset Management  
 Eric Leenson, Progressive Asset Management, Inc.  
 Stephen Suau, Progressive Water Resources  
 rezwan Sharif, Project Water  
 Bilal Yasin El-Amin, Propagation Congregation, The  
 Tracy Kellner, Provenance Food & Wine  
 Alexa Williaon, Purecurrent Therapeutics and  
 Lifestyle Alignment  
 Henry Weed, Queen Street Grocery  
 Mary Wutz, Queen Street Grocery  
 Tad Hargrave, radical business  
 Amy P. Goldman, Rare For, Inc.  
 Glenn Bachman, Raven Business Group, LLC  
 Robin Moyer, RAWphoriaLIVE  
 Raymond Katz, Raymond H Katz, DMD  
 Mauri Tamborra, RE/MAX  
 Gail Larsen, Real Speaking  
 Christian Forthomme, RealChange Network, Inc.  
 Kevin Lynch, Rebuild Resources, Inc.  
 Michael Bunnell, Record Exchange  
 Amanda Castillo, Recovery Center of Hamilton County  
 Elaine X. Fuller, Red Door Pottery Studio and  
 Gallery Shop, The  
 Anne Chambers, Red212  
 Dan Redmond, Redmond Construction  
 Terri Reece, Reece Computer Syste  
 Jesse Levine, Reel Motion Media  
 Robert Mang, Regenesi, LLC  
 Meg Siddheshwari Sullivan, Reiki Center of the  
 East Bay  
 Jim Kelly, Rejuvenation Inc.  
 Justin Gehmland, Relevance, Inc.  
 Ben Delaney, ReliaTech  
 Sharon Miller, Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center  
 Pele Rouge Chadima, Resonance  
 Responsible Endowments Coalition  
 Cheyenna Weber, Responsible Endowments Coalition  
 Chris O'Brien, Responsible Purchasing Network  
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 Karalee Nielsen, REV, LLC  
 Elaine Wells, Ride Connection, Inc.  
 Maria Gastelumendi, Rising Loafer Cafe & Bakery, The  
 Rebekah Greenwald, RiverzEdge Arts Project  
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 Diane Keefe, Robert Brooke Zevin Associates  
 Ben Lovell, Robert Brooke Zevin Associates  
 Robin Buck, Robin Buck Eco-Design & Feng Shui  
 Taylor Rock, Rock Pacific  
 Kristina Cash, Rocky Mtn Sustainable Living  
 Association  
 Fred E Brown, Rocsil's / McB's Shoes  
 Brian Rodgers, Rodgers & Reichle, Inc.  
 Christa Carlman, Rolling Spokes Bike Tours  
 Robert Henrikson, Ronore Enterprises  
 Mike Kappus, Rosebud Agency, The  
 Michael Burgmaier, Royal River Associates LLC  
 Gary Sprague, RSF Social Finance  
 Stephen Dalton, RSV Consulting Group, Inc.  
 Mae Chan Frey, Ruby's Garden Kidwear & Flower Shop  
 Bob Matsuoka, RunTime Technologies  
 Robert Hudson, Safer Foundation  
 Adam Goetz, Sample Restaurant  
 Kevin Drew, San Francisco Department of Environment  
 Tim Wheeler, San Juan Coffee Company  
 Colin Cabot, Sanborn Mills Farm  
 Elizabeth Sanders, Sanders Partnership, The  
 Vicki Pozzebon, Santa Fe Independent  
 Business Alliance  
 Tristan Nathe, Saturn Cafe  
 Saul Brown, Saul Good Gift Co.  
 Jes Rooks, SBNYC  
 Suzanne Webster, SC Green Fair  
 Maxwell Gail Jr, SEE LAP  
 Wilson Riles, Seven Generations Consulting  
 Georgia Malki, Seven-Star, Inc.  
 Jeffrey Hollender, Seventh Generation  
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# **Solidarity Economy: Key Concepts and Issues**

*Ethan Miller*

## **Introduction**

People across the United States and throughout the world are experiencing the devastating effects of an economy that places the profit of a few above the well-being of everyone else. Yet while the political and business leaders who benefit from this arrangement consistently proclaim that there are no real alternatives, citizens and grassroots organizations around the world are boldly demonstrating otherwise.

Indeed, a compelling array of grassroots economic initiatives already exist, often hidden or marginalized, in the “nooks and crannies” of the dominant economy—worker cooperatives; consumer cooperatives and neighborhood buying clubs; grassroots producer cooperatives; international and domestic fair trade initiatives; housing co-ops, collectives and intentional communities; alternative currencies, barter clubs and informal neighbor-to-neighbor exchanges; micro-credit lending circles; community-run resource libraries; community development credit unions; community gardens; open source and free software initiatives; cooperative community health insurance groups; grassroots media production and distribution projects; community supported agriculture (CSA) programs; community land trusts and more.

While incredibly diverse, these initiatives share a broad set of common values that stand in stark contrast to the values of the dominant economy. Instead of enforcing a culture of cut-throat competition, they build cultures and communities of cooperation. Rather than isolating us from one another, they foster relationships of mutual support and solidarity. In place of centralized structures of control, they move us towards shared responsibility and directly democratic decision-making. Instead of imposing a single global monoculture, they strengthen the diversity of local cultures and environments. Instead of prioritizing profit over all else, they encourage commitment to broader work for social, economic, and environmental justice.

These are the already-planted seeds of another kind of economy, what many organizers and activists around the world are calling a "solidarity economy." Our task as people working for more just, democratic and sustainable futures is not to invent a new economic blueprint from scratch and then convince the world to adopt it, but rather to participate together in ongoing work to strengthen, connect and build upon the many economic practices of cooperation and solidarity that already exist in our communities and regions. We do not need to wait for a revolution, or for "capitalism to hit the fan" (though that may, in fact, already be happening). We can begin here and now, in our communities and regions, connected with others around the world, to construct the relationships and linkages that will form the basis for new cultures and economies of solidarity.

Though it has animated movements from South America to Southeast Asia over the course of the past twenty years, the concept of "solidarity economy" is far from being a "complete theory" or a "strong ideology." It does not have a single theorist, or draw from a single political tradition or body of ideas.



It's geographical origins are contested, perhaps multiple, and it's very nature and definition are continually being imagined, developed, discussed and debated among its advocates. And while some might see this lack of closure as a weakness, many would suggest that it is, instead, a profound source of strength. Rather than pushing a closed ideology that must be either accepted or rejected, or presenting a closed category that one is either "in" or "out" of, solidarity economy remains open and inviting, a "movement of movements" continually seeking connections and possibilities while holding on to the transformative commitment of shared values.

Perhaps appropriately, then, this chapter will present neither a complete nor an "objective" view of solidarity economy. I write as an activist and a scholar in the U.S. context, seeking to contribute towards a concept and practice of solidarity economy that might be useful and appropriate to making change here in the "belly of the beast." While I draw on some writing--and much inspiration--from the work of those in other parts of the world, I also recognize and honor the responsibility that we have to forge our own ideas about solidarity economy. I hope that this chapter can contribute to that conversation.

### **A Brief History of the Concept**

For nearly twenty years, organizations, social movements and researchers in Latin America, Quebec and Europe have been using and developing the terms *economía solidaria* (Spanish), *economia solidária* (Portuguese) and *économie solidaire* (French). Until recently, however, the translation of these terms--"solidarity economy"--was virtually unknown in the U.S.

The first uses of "solidarity economy" as a concept for creating solidarity-based economic relationships were as early as 1937, when Felipe Alaiz advocated for the construction of an *economía solidaria* between worker collectives in urban and rural areas during the Spanish Civil War (Alaiz 1937). Contemporary uses of the term appear to have emerged out of South America--specifically Colombia and Chile--in the early 1980s.<sup>1</sup>

In Colombia, *economia solidária* was directly associated with the country's cooperative movement and understood as a concept that could place *cooperativismo* (cooperativism) into a broader, and more political, context of a vision for building a different economy (Arias et al 2006). In Chile, the concept was developed more broadly and theoretically by economist Luis Razeto (1984). Solidarity economy, said Razeto, is a cross-cutting "sector" of the broader economy that consists of diverse enterprises, from many realms of society, that share a common "economic rationality": they are built on relationships of cooperation and solidarity rather than individualism and competition. The task of those seeking economic transformation is to connect and strengthen these already-existing alternatives (Razeto, 1984; 1993).

By the early and mid 1990s, *economia solidária* was developing as a social movement, a research focus and a network of economic activity in countries throughout Latin America. In Brasil, work on solidarity economy was particularly strong and included the development of university research

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<sup>1</sup> Jorge Schoster (1981) in Colombia and Luis Razeto in Chile (1984) were two of the first writers to use the term in South America. Pope John Paul II was also noted, during his visit to the Economic Conference for Latin America in 1987, to have called for "the construction of an economy of solidarity" (Guerra 2004). By the late 1980s, the term was also in use in France, and some question remains regarding the relationship between its early usages in Spanish and French and where the term's "true" origins lie (Poirier 2009).

programs, support "incubators" for cooperatives and other solidarity-based enterprises, and the growth of extensive local, regional and national networks linking solidarity economy initiatives and practitioners. Significant solidarity economy efforts were also growing in Peru, Argentina, and Mexico.

Solidarity economy was emerging by the late 1980s in Europe as well, where it was connected both to initiatives addressing rising unemployment and with a long tradition of "social economy" activism and policy. The social economy tradition, like Razeto's *economía solidaria*, identified another "sector" of the economy--in this case, the social economy. This "third sector" was often viewed more as a supplement or compliment to the existing market and state sectors than as a source of revolutionary transformation of the economy.<sup>2</sup> European solidarity economy advocates have sometimes, however, constructively worked with (and within) this tradition to encourage a more transformative approach. Solidarity economy in Europe and Quebec is often referred to as "social and solidarity economy," a kind of reconciliation between the two approaches.

Solidarity economy organizers from around the world began to make connections in the late 1990s. The International Solidarity Economy Group (*Grupo Internacional de Economía Solidaria*, or GES) convened a meeting in Lima, Peru in 1997 that brought together, for the first time, representatives from solidarity economy efforts around the world. Organizers, practitioners and academics from 32 countries declared, as this meeting:

We are committed to a process of building a solidarity-based development that questions the concept which reduces and determines the satisfaction of human needs to cut-throat competition on the market and the so-called "natural laws". The solidarity economy incorporates cooperation, collective sharing and action, while putting the human being at the center of the economic and social development (First International Meeting on the Social and Solidarity Economy 1997).

It was the birth of an international movement and the beginning of what later became (in 2001) the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of the Social Solidarity Economy (*Red Intercontinental de Promoción de la Economía Social Solidaria*, or RIPESS).

Growth continued on local, national and international levels. A Latin American network of solidarity economy advocates was created in 1998 at a gathering in Porto Alegre, Brasil. Also in 1998, The European Solidarity Economy Institute (*L'Institut Européen de l'Economie Solidaire*, or IELS) was developed by Luxembourg's national trade union confederation to bring together scholars and professionals from Luxembourg, Belgium, France, Germany and Switzerland exploring new pathways for economic development. Solidarity economy as a development strategy was institutionalized in France, Colombia and Brasil (to name a few places) with the creation of government departments dedicated to its promotion. The Brazilian Solidarity Economy Forum, composed of twelve national networks and twenty-one regional Forums, collaborated with the Brazilian government to produce a comprehensive mapping of over 20,000 solidarity economy initiatives throughout the country. A second international gathering, building on the Lima conference, was held in Quebec (2001) and large gatherings have continued annually at the World Social Forums from 2002 until the present.

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<sup>2</sup> This is certainly an oversimplification of a long and complex tradition of social thought and action. Social economy advocates have, indeed, sought to transform larger economic structures (and to eventually abolish capitalism). A dominant trend, however (especially since the divisive debates of the Second Socialist International in 1907) has been to shift from advocating the replacement of capitalist economy with social economy to advocating the use of social economy as a strategy to ameliorate the problems created by capitalist development (poverty, unemployment, social exclusion, etc.) (see MacPherson 2008).

By the late 2000s, thanks in large part to RIPESS and to the amplifying role of the World Social Forums, the solidarity economy movement was beginning to gather strength in parts of the world that had not previously been involved. The third international conference, organized by RIPESS, was held in Dakar, Senegal in 2005. The first Asian Forum on the Solidarity Economy was held in 2007 in Manila, the Philippines, and marked the birth of the Asian Alliance for Solidarity Economy. The year 2007 also marked the birth of the U.S. Solidarity Economy Network at the first U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta, Georgia. With a fourth international meeting held by RIPESS in Luxembourg in 2009 and a fifth planned for 2013 in Asia, the movement continues to deepen and develop.

What is clear is that solidarity economy, in numerous languages and with many variations, has become truly global. In the face of a dominant international economy centered on the growth of profits for a small elite, an emerging network of initiatives around the world is asserting that another economy--an economy for people and planet--is not only possible, but is already being born. "We are building," writes Paul Singer from Brasil, "in the midst of contradictions, in the cracks of capitalism, a new type of society and economy" (quoted in Guerra 2004).

### **Solidarity Economy as a Process**

One of the great strengths and innovations of the solidarity economy movement is its ability to move beyond the factionalism that has so often weakened historical efforts to imagine and build other economies. Indeed, when faced with the question of economic alternatives, many activists have often been tempted to build or to seek a blueprint, a Big Plan, for how "the economy" should operate.

While big visions and "blueprints" for alternative economic structures can be very useful as tools for clarifying and motivating our work, they can be problematic as core social change strategies for at least two reasons. First, blueprints often miss the richness of what could emerge from a *collective* process of imagination and creation; no one person or group is capable of figuring out an economic structure for millions of others to live in. Second, they can lead to a very unfortunate choice of political paths: blueprint in hand, we either convince everyone that we're right (unlikely) or take over the government and impose our plan on everyone (unethical). Either way, we've failed to build a substantially different kind of economy and society, and we've failed to live the values of solidarity.

A solidarity economy approach to imagining and building economic alternatives takes a very different path. Beginning from a core belief that people are deeply creative and capable of developing their own diverse and workable solutions to economic problems, and that *these solutions will look different in different places and contexts*, a solidarity economy approach seeks to make existing and emerging alternatives visible and to link them in mutually-supportive ways. The core idea is simple: *alternatives are everywhere and our task is to identify them and connect them in ways that build a coherent and powerful social movement for another economy*. Allard and Matthaai summarize this perspective clearly:

[Solidarity economy] is a framework of practices held together by values, in contrast to the abstract theoretical models of socialist alternatives to capitalism that describe egalitarian, oppression-free utopias. These utopias always seem disappointingly out of reach, but the solidarity economy framework has evolved to describe and make visible the plethora of actually existing economic alternatives that are growing up all around us, in the midst of neoliberal capitalism" (Allard and Matthaai 2008, 7).

We might say, then, that solidarity economy is not so much a *model of economic organization* as it is a *process of economic organizing and transformation*; it is not a *vision*, but an active process of collective *visioning*. Solidarity economy beckons toward shared economic possibilities which might emerge out of the process of working and imagining together.

## **Core Elements of a Solidarity Economy Approach**

It may be useful to think of a solidarity economy approach as having five distinct, but interconnected, core elements: *seeing, naming, connecting, strengthening* and *creating*. While these may appear to be "phases" or "steps" in a process, they do not necessarily follow one another and nor are they, in practice, fully distinct. Framing solidarity economy in terms of these elements is meant simply to help clarify some of the strategies and concepts associated with it and which may be useful to consider in developing solidarity economy organizing projects.

### ***Seeing With New Eyes***

"The universe is made of stories," wrote Muriel Rukeyser, "not of atoms" (1968). How we view the world and how we act in the world is profoundly influenced by the stories that we tell about reality. These stories help to determine what we see, what is invisible, and what we believe to be possible or impossible. This is not to say that it's "all made up" or that there is no "real world," but rather that reality is too complex for us to accurately represent. We try to grasp it imperfectly by telling stories and something is always left out of the picture. Who decides what gets left out and why? These are political decisions, infused with power: some stories serve the status quo better than others, and economic stories are no exception. The dominant stories that economists and many others tell about the nature of "economy" deeply shape our collective sense of possibility and imagination regarding economics and economic transformation.

A crucial element of a solidarity economy approach is to recognize the ways that conventional economics has described reality so as to *make invisible* a whole host of practices, initiatives, human relationships and motivations, and thus to limit our abilities to imagine economic alternatives. Acknowledging this, and working to make these other forms of economic life *visible and valued*, opens up the terrain upon which solidarity economy organizing does its work.

The simplest version of the dominant economic story suggests that we live inside of a single economic system (The Economy), called "capitalism" or the "market system" (or any number of other names) that is regulated by the law of supply and demand. The basic building-blocks of this economy are the rational, self-interested individuals and groups who seek to satisfy their supposedly-endless needs for growth and accumulation (profit-making) in a world of scarce resources. Competition is the name of the game. Economics is about understanding this competition and all that it entails.<sup>3</sup>

To make the story a bit more complex, we add the state to the picture. Economic space that is not occupied by capitalist markets, we are told, is occupied by the state. The state acts as both an

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<sup>3</sup> The story I refer to here is not meant as an attempt to reflect a consensus within the discipline of economics. Indeed, few economists would accept such a simple depiction. Rather, it is meant to describe the general outlines of a story that circulates throughout our wider society, reproduced in popular media and in dominant public discourses about business and economy.

accomplice to the economy's power and growth and as a fail-safe mechanism for when the economy falters. It creates and upholds the legal frameworks that allow capitalist markets to thrive and it also "fills in the gaps" by supplying the essential goods and services that this economy cannot (or will not) provide. The tension plays out endlessly in public conversation about economic alternatives: how much, or how little, regulation should the state impose on the market? We are trapped, then, on a "spectrum" between two poles: the very tension that plays out more dramatically in the old struggle between the big systems of Capitalism and Communism.

### *Diverse Economies*

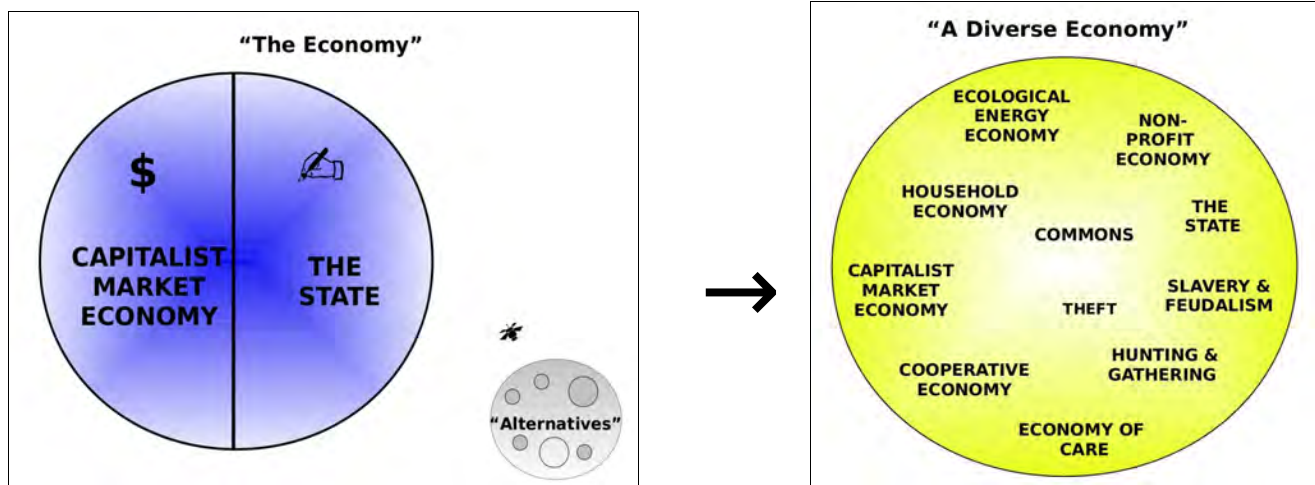
This story obscures more than it clarifies. Behind the veil of the market/state vision of economy are a whole host of other kinds of economic activities, behaviors and motivations. These are forms of economy--many of them built on relationships and ethics of care, cooperation and solidarity instead of cooperation and individualism--that do not fit easily within the frameworks of conventional economics. Instead of telling a narrow story about economies as mixtures of market and state, a solidarity economy approach suggests that we define economics much more broadly: *all of the diverse ways that human communities meet their needs and create livelihoods together*. In addition to the state and the conventional capitalist market economy, economic life also includes:

- **Offerings of ecological energy** (solar, geological, aquatic, chemical, etc.) and the vast amounts of **nonhuman labor** that transform these flows into energy that can be used by humans and others. The largest population of such workers are the photosynthetic primary producers (plants, algae, etc.) who convert sunlight into energy forms such as food and petroleum.
- **Collective economic initiatives** such as worker, consumer and housing cooperatives in which members own the enterprises, share the benefits and risks and make decisions together democratically.
- **Household economies** through which people (often disproportionately women) work to maintain their homes, cook, clean, raise families, and in which children learn to walk, use language and function in society (all outside of the market!).
- **Care economies**, interrelated with households, through which people care--often without financial compensation--for children, elders and others who need special assistance.
- **Gift economies** through which goods and services are exchanged without the expectation of a direct return; such exchanges are often as much about maintaining social relationships as they are about specific exchanges.
- **Barter economies** and alternative currencies through which people and communities exchange goods and services without the use of conventional money.
- **Scavenging and gathering** activities, such as gleanings, hunting, fishing, and trash-sorting are still significant ways that people (voluntarily or involuntarily) meet basic needs around the world.
- **Commons** are pools of shared resources, such as fisheries, irrigation systems, air, cultural story or song traditions, and open-source information technologies, that are cooperatively shared and

maintained by communities through common rules and traditions.

- **Theft** (or, depending on the context, *re-appropriation*) is also a substantial economic activity, and might even be considered morally legitimate in cases where something stolen is being reclaimed. Many would argue that the recuperated factories in Argentina, taken over by workers after their abandonment by capitalist owners, are a good example of rightful re-appropriation.
- **Slavery and feudalism**, as much as we might wish otherwise, are still alive and well in numerous regions throughout the world. Bonded labor, worker coercion in sweatshops, indentured servitude, and other forms of human trafficking are all examples, many of which support capitalist business but are nonetheless distinct from market economy relationships.

With such a list in hand, we can begin asking new kinds of questions about our economies that open up new possibilities and reveal strategic points of intervention for solidarity economy organizing. Where, in the diverse economy, are people engaging in activities and relationships that embody values of solidarity, cooperation, equity, sustainability, democracy and pluralism? What kinds of economic relationships might open up space for recognizing and deepening these values in our communities and in our societies? What kinds of connections might we make between different forms of solidarity-based economic activity? How can public policy and grassroots organizing support those economic forms that foster solidarity?



In the context of uncovering the diversity of our economic relationships, we can also begin to re-frame our understanding of capitalism itself. Instead of viewing capitalism as The Economy, we can view it as an ongoing project to *colonize economic space*. Capitalism, with its drive for accumulation and hence its need for endless expansion into "new markets," would like to *become* the economy. Fortunately for us, capitalists have not succeeded in turning every relationship into an opportunity to make profit. Capitalism can be understood as an ongoing, *but never fully successful*, project of colonization.

The "dominant" (market) economy would, in fact, *fall apart* if many of the basic forms of cooperation and solidarity identified above did not exist "below the surface." These are the threads that weave the very fabric of society together, the building blocks of *sociality*. It is these relationships and institutions that keep us alive when the factories close down, when the floods come, when our houses burn down,

or when the paycheck is just not enough. It is these economic activities that sustain us in our most vulnerable moments, these relationships that make us human and that meet our most basic needs of love, care, and mutual support. It is these relationships that solidarity economy movements must seek to recognize, support, cultivate and connect.

In terms of concrete *strategy*, a diverse economy perspective gives us the tools we need to begin charting out paths for solidarity economy education and organizing. In many regions around the world, solidarity economy organizers have initiated mapping projects to identify and make visible potential or existing actors in solidarity economy movements. As noted earlier, the Brazilian government, in collaboration with the Brazilian Solidarity Economy Forum (FBSES), has supported a substantial national mapping project that identifies and maps democratically-run enterprises across the nation. An initiative in Italy called *Zoes* has developed software that facilitates the mapping of diverse social and solidarity economy initiatives including ethical banks, fair trade buying clubs, housing cooperatives and more. In the U.S., a number of local groups have begun to produce "maps" of their local solidarity economy initiatives and the U.S. Solidarity Economy Network is exploring ways to support and connect such efforts. On a local level, solidarity economy mapping can also be combined with techniques of Asset-Based Community Development to implement participatory community inventories of activities, practices and initiatives in a community which can for a basis for alternative economic visioning and organizing.

### ***Naming Our Practices***

Identifying elements of a *potential* solidarity economy is a crucial starting point. Just as important is the work of building relationships between these diverse groups and actors. Indeed, the recognition that numerous practices and institutions of solidarity and cooperation already exist in our midst is a call to action: how do we move from a situation in which these initiatives are invisible, unsupported and disconnected from one another to one in which they constitute diverse elements of a cohesive and coherent *movement for another economy*? This is where a strategy of naming can be powerful. It is one thing to *identify* solidarity-based initiatives; it is another thing altogether to *name them as such* and to encourage their collective recognition of each other through that naming.

The solidarity economy approach makes the assertion that one important way to connect diverse initiatives and build a movement is through the creation of shared identity, and that this shared identity can be facilitated through the language of "solidarity economy." The notion that many different economic practices and institutions are part of a solidarity economy can help to bind groups together in a common recognition, as different parts of a single project. This is not an identity that forces everyone to be "the same"; rather, it is more like a point of connection where groups traveling many paths can meet and coordinate. Because solidarity economy is not a closed or singular ideology that requires everyone to agree to the same kinds of structures, strategies, and political theories or to implement orders handed down from a central authority, this shared identity is able to be more flexible--and perhaps more unifying--than many Left political projects of the past. It is not an *imposition*, but an *invitation*. Solidarity economy is a strategy that allows us to create strong unity in the context of strong diversity: as the Zapatistas say, "a world where many worlds fit."

### ***Shared Values***

But what is the content of this naming? What does it mean to say that a diversity of groups are part of a shared project of building a solidarity economy? On what basis is this connection made? For many



solidarity economy projects around the world, the core elements that bind it all together are *values*. As Jean-Louis Laville writes, "Despite their differences, these practices share characteristics that allow for parallels: they all attempt to introduce the notion of solidarity into economic activities, thus advocating a solidarity economy" (quoted in Guerra 2004).

Defining a notion of "solidarity" is important here. While all economic relationships are social relationships in one form or another, solidarity names a specific *mode* of relationship that a solidarity economy movement is seeking to actively cultivate. Solidarity begins with a recognition that at the core of being alive on this earth together is the fact of our interdependency. In so many different ways, we as humans-- along with all of the other beings with whom we share the world--are *bound together*. In relationships animated by many different dynamics of power, privilege, inclusion, exclusion, cooperation and exploitation, our lives and fates are interconnected with myriad others. This is what economics, at bottom, is about. Solidarity is enacted when we recognize these connections, take active responsibility for our own participation in them, and work to simultaneously *transform* those relationships which are destructive or exploitative of others and to *cultivate* those relationships that embody care and mutual respect for those with whom we are connected.

Solidarity economy is about recognizing and naming those forms of economic relationship (already-existing within a "diverse economy") that embody and encourage solidarity and its associated values. It is about imagining and creating new relationships that further deepen and expand solidarity. And it is about wielding these tools of solidarity in support of struggles seeking to challenge and transform relationships of oppression and exploitation.

The kinds of specific values that arise from and animate this solidarity have been elaborated by numerous networks. They are subjective, articulated often with different words and nuances, and are informed and transformed by the particular struggles and contexts from which they arise. Yet for all their different forms, they share much in common. **Cooperation** and **mutuality** are emphasized above unfettered competition. **Individual and collective well-being**--defined by people and communities rather than distant "experts"--are prioritized over profit and financial accumulation. **Economic and social justice** (or **equity**)--struggles to end social and economic oppression in its many forms--are seen as key priorities. The responsibility to work towards **ecological health**--developing respectful and sustainable relationships with our ecosystems and their other inhabitants--is a core focus. Robust **democracy** at all levels of society and of organizations, placing people and communities as the active agents of their own lives and development, runs like a thread weaving other values together. And finally, these values are articulated with a strong emphasis on **diversity and pluralism**--the belief that there can be no "one way"; that people, working together, must forge their own unique paths toward freedom. As the U.S. Solidarity Economy Network describes, this is a pluralism that encourages "different forms in different contexts, open to continual change and driven from the bottom-up" (USSEN website 2010).

Seen in light of these values, solidarity economy can be viewed as a strategy to connect, to expand and to constructively challenge (in the sense of inviting more connections) multiple economic efforts that highlight one or more of these values: efforts that work under banners such as cooperative economy, just economy, ecological economy or sustainable economy, democratic economy, local economy, alternative economy and others might all be potential dimensions of a broader and more coordinated solidarity economy movement.

## *Living the Questions, Transforming Together*

A number of substantial questions may be raised at this point. The values of solidarity economy are vague; how do we determine if a given initiative is living up to them? Isn't the "devil in the details" in terms of how well any given group achieves these lofty ethical goals? And isn't it the case that no one initiative or project, given the complex and compromise-ridden world that we live in, will ever fully embody these values? What to do then? And how do we avoid co-optation? What happens if a group pays lip-service to these values but does not, in fact, demonstrate an active commitment to following through? Who decides what "following through" really means? Indeed: how can such a loose framework, so full of big questions, form the basis for a substantial political movement?

These are essential questions, and debate around them lies at the heart of the solidarity economy movement. The answer, if there can be one, is that there are not clear-cut answers and this very openness is an essential strength. In the context of general agreement regarding shared values, openness to such debate and discussion--collective ethical deliberation--is part of what sustains the possibility for connection between diverse people, groups and efforts. The task is not to decide on a final answer to difficult questions about precisely defining and enacting these values; rather, *the questions and struggles themselves are part of the dynamics that animate the movement.*

The shared values of solidarity economy, as articulated by various movement organizations and networks, are not meant to function as a set of fixed, schematic criteria that can be objectively measured and evaluated or applied evenly and universally across multiple contexts. A useful way to think of these values, instead, are as "coordinates" for shared ethical debate and learning. Rather than dictating the details of our actions or enforcing an impossible purity, they act as guides on a journey, helping to orient our processes of ethical transformation.<sup>4</sup> These value coordinates create a metaphorical gathering space: solidarity economy practitioners are invited in to a room called "cooperation, justice, people and planet before profit, robust democracy and diversity" (to summarize the core values described above) and there, together, in an ongoing process of experimentation, constructive debate, mutual challenge and collective learning, they create provisional, working definitions of these shared values.

This approach does not only uphold the open, bottom-up approach that solidarity economy seeks to embody, it is also *strategically* important. It recognizes that while many people, groups and movements *agree* with the general values articulated by a solidarity economy approach, many fewer (if any) are actually able to claim success at *fully achieving* them all. Indeed, most of us would agree that it is not even clear what such an achievement would look like in concrete practice. This is precisely the collective project we're engaged in: to work together to imagine and build a world where enacting these shared values is more and more possible. A movement that both embraced such broad and holistic values, and required everyone to live up to them all, would be a small movement, indeed. The key, instead, is to convene those who--while far from pure--share a *committed aspiration toward* enacting these values. In this sense, a commitment to both self-transformation and to the transformation of the world in the service of these shared values is a fundamental binding element of a solidarity economy approach. It is not enough, in other words, to pay lip-service to these values or to aspire to some and not others; at the same time, no one is excluded for failing to live up to their honest aspirations and ethical commitments. Solidarity economy is a space to work together, to hold each other accountable, and to learn how we might more effectively live our values.

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<sup>4</sup> This concept of "coordinates" for collective ethical debate and learning was proposed by Massimo De Angelis (xxxx) and further developed by J.K. Gibson-Graham (2006).

## *Making Connections*

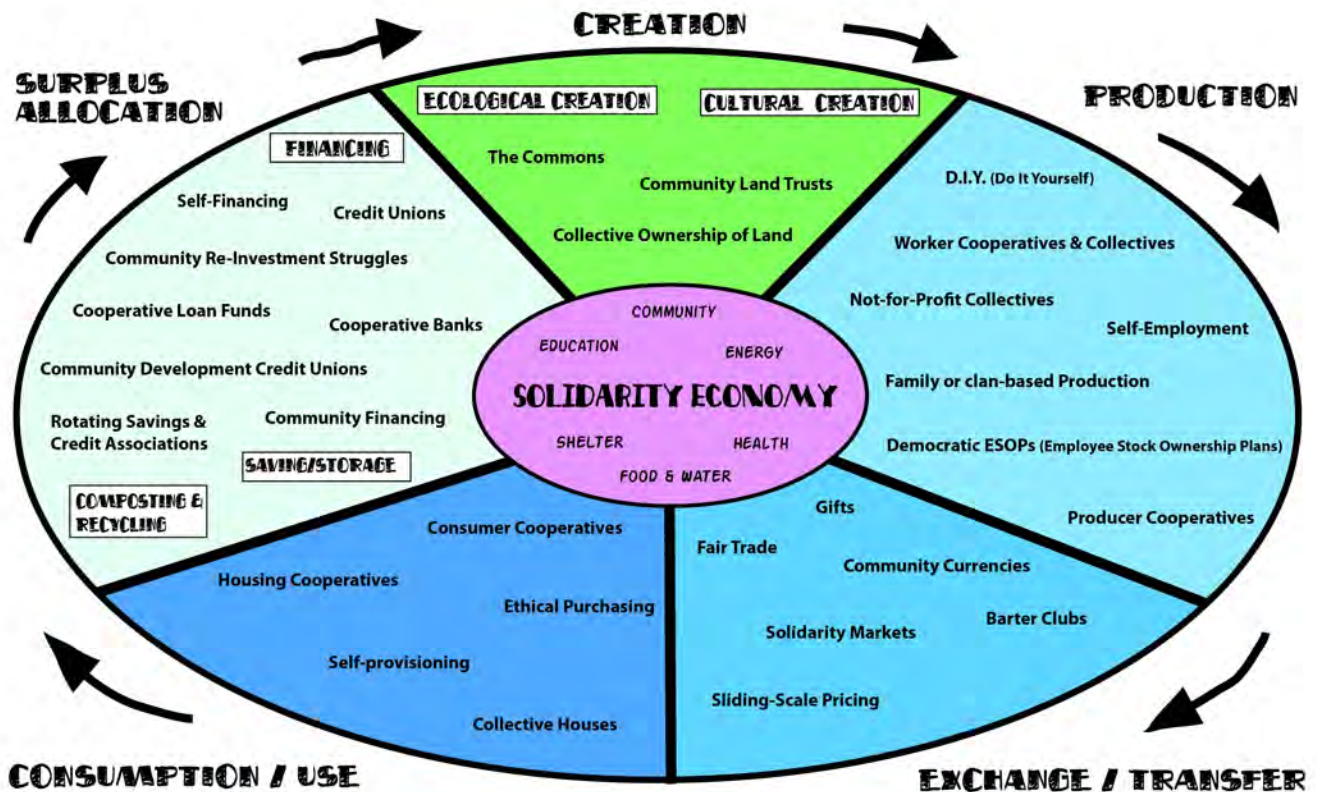
Developing identities and mutual recognition around shared values is one important starting point for making connections and building economies and movements, but it is only that: a beginning. What remains is the substantial work of building concrete relationships, both social and economic, between and among solidarity economy initiatives that embody these values and increase the conditions of possibility for these values to flourish more broadly. This is not simply a matter of debating and envisioning, or of facilitating knowledge of each others' activities and innovations, though such work is crucial. It is, most importantly, the work of *building actual economies*-- developing real and substantial relationships of economic support and exchange throughout networks of solidarity economy actors. In Brasil and elsewhere, this work is called "economic integration" (citation), or the construction of "circuits of solidarity exchange" (Guerra 2004). What in mainstream economic development is called a "value chain" becomes here a *values chain*. It is through these interconnections that solidarity economy activity is mutually-supported and amplified.

## *Economic Integration*

To think strategically about these interconnections, it can be helpful to visualize economies as interconnected flows made up of different "moments," or spheres of activity. Recognizing these economic moments and their relationships, and identifying solidarity economy activities that are active in each realm, can help us to imagine linkages that might be possible or to see relationships that may already exist in their larger context. Figure 2 below highlights examples of potential solidarity economy initiatives in key economic spheres:

- **Creation.** Where do the basic "raw materials" come from? We can call the two primary sources "ecological creation" and "cultural creation". Ecological creation involves earth processes—birth, growth, photosynthesis, respiration, geological and chemical transformation, etc.—that are the “original points of production” and sustain and generate all life and culture. The moral responsibility to honor and share these collective “gifts from the world” is a key starting point for a solidarity economy perspective. Cultural creation offers resources such as language, stories, music, ideas, and skills. Generated and transformed over millions of years by collective creativity, imagination, intuition, observation and experimentation, they are gifts passed down from our ancestors and should be shared and held in common trust.
- **Production.** How are goods and services produced? Through what kinds of institutional structures do we organize production? What kinds of processes do we use to produce goods or provide services? What kinds of social and ecological relationships do these forms of organization generate and sustain?
- **Transfer.** How do goods and services move from production to use? This might be about exchange, which implies a movement of goods, services or currency in two directions, or it might involve one-directional movement as in the case of gifting or re-appropriation.
- **Consumption or Use.** How is the consumption and use of goods and services organized? Through what kinds of institutions are people and communities organized as consumers? How are the demand sides of markets organized socially and institutionally? What kinds of values structure these relationships?

- **Surplus Allocation.** How is surplus, generated in the economic cycle, used? How does surplus re-enter and re-invigorate the cycle? In this realm, we can identify a few elements. Under a broad heading of "investment," using surplus to secure future returns, we have activities of **financing** that involve using monetary or material surplus to grow or to generate and/or develop other initiatives. We also have activities of **composting and recycling** (yes, also forms of investment) that involve the return of material surplus back into the human productive system and the larger life system. Under another broad heading we can identify activities of **storage and savings** which involve "putting up" resources for future use (consumption or investment).
- **Waste.** Though not pictured in Figure 2, this is a crucial element. This is either dissipated energy that is lost at all points along the economic chain (also called "entropy") or it is surplus that cannot be recycled or re-invested back into the productive system, or into the life system within a few generations or less. How we deal with the production and disposal of waste is a crucial issue of both ecological and economic justice.



The circle shown in Figure 2 above is not meant to be a "map" of a specific economic structure. It is, rather, a tool for imagining and strategizing possible connections. How can we build stronger linkages between worker cooperatives and (for example) housing cooperatives, which might provide organized markets of "solidarity consumption"? If we seek to make such connections, can we do this in ways that cultivate solidarity forms of exchange? Perhaps a connection emerges between worker cooperatives, community currency and an organized coalition of housing cooperatives and intentional communities. Can this organized "values chain" then mobilize its surplus to help finance other production cooperatives? These are the kinds of questions that a solidarity economy approach encourages, and the kinds of organizing that might emerge.

There is a strong need, in this realm of solidarity economy organizing, for activists and researchers to collaborate and develop better understandings that can inform our strategy. First, what kinds of links already exist? How might we strengthen them or add new dimensions to them? Second, what new kinds of linkages are possible and viable? Where are there strong needs for such connections? And finally, how do we better understand the potential effectiveness and the plausible impacts of new linkages so that we might mobilize our limited resources most strategically? It is also important in all of this work that these economic linkages are envisioned in terms of both *geography*--connecting initiatives in a given locality or region, or even across international borders--and *sector or industry*, connecting initiatives along value chains within a given industry or industry cluster.

### Social Movement Integration

The linkages necessary to build strong dynamics of solidarity economy development cannot be reserved to "economic spheres" alone, however. Social movements, broadly defined as organized efforts to challenge structures of economic, social and ecological injustice and to build popular power, are essential expressions of solidarity values in society and key potential bases of support for solidarity economy initiatives. The connections, in the United States at least, are not always strong. A core goal of a solidarity economy approach must be to further *integrate economic alternatives into social movements* and *social movements into economic alternatives*. The work of defending our lives and communities from colonization and injustice, the work of actively opposing systems and structures of oppression, the work of healing together from trauma and hurt, and the work of imagining and building alternative ways to live together and meet our needs must all be connected as integral parts of a holistic movement for transformation.





Social movements have the potential to act as bases of accountability for solidarity values. Living in a social context that often pressures us to conform to "market values" or to make compromises that do not embody our core values, *communities of mutual accountability* are crucial resources. We need to be reminded by others who share our values--but are not, perhaps, facing precisely the same form of temptation to compromise or give in to dominant value systems--that such struggles are both important and shared. We need to be continually engaged in diverse relationships that both challenge and support our work to enact solidarity values. In this way, alternative economic institutions embedded in a social movement context may be more likely to sustain an active commitment to self- and collective transformation.

Reciprocally, solidarity economy initiatives and networks can infuse social movements with concrete examples of their values in action on the economic level. Oppositional work can be deeply strengthened when linked with visions and demonstrations of alternatives. In this way, solidarity economy offers ways for social movements to shift beyond critique and challenge towards an increasing commitment to demonstrating that it is possible to *build real livelihoods* while also building another paradigm of social values.

Solidarity economy initiatives and social movement can also provide concrete bases of economic support for each other. Social movements can constitute, in a sense, committed "solidarity markets" for solidarity economy producers and they can animate the social and organizational networks through which economic linkages described above are forged and sustained. Solidarity economy initiatives have the potential to offer substantial material support for the social movements of which they are a part as well, both through providing employment, goods or services to movement activists and through sharing portions of their surplus in support of social movement work.

Finally, we can see that these potential interconnections between multiple economic spheres and social movement networks can build political power necessary to engage the state, seeking to propose and enact transformative policy and "solidarity governance" structures. In Quebec, this kind of work has been accomplished in some significant ways by the *Chantier de l'économie sociale* (literally, the "construction site for the social economy"). In the context of the simultaneous employment crisis in the mid-1990s and the rise of increasingly connected partnerships between grassroots social movements and community economic development efforts, the Quebec government convened a meeting to bring key "social economy" actors together from across the province.<sup>5</sup> From this 1996 meeting, the *Chantier* was born with the mandate to engage communities and social movements in envisioning strategies for democratic development. Their subsequent plan of action was significantly adopted by the provincial government and numerous elements have been implemented over the past twelve years. Between 2003 and 2008, the Quebec government has invested an estimated 8.4 billion dollars into social economy development, including significant support for the development of community and worker-owned business and social service provision enterprises. The *Chantier* itself is government funded to the tune of \$650,000 annually (Elson 2008).

This was not an easy process. As Nancy Neamtan, president of the *Chantier* points out, efforts to bridge the gap between movements and alternatives were not easy: "It was a major cultural shift... The role of social movements was to protest not to become involved in job creation and certainly not to work with other economic

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<sup>5</sup> The term "social economy" is often used in Quebec in a way that is very similar to how "solidarity economy" is used in other parts of the world. It is not clear, however, that the terms are truly synonyms. There is enough overlap and connection, however, to make this example relevant to solidarity economy movements as well as efforts utilizing the term "social economy."

actors" (Neamtan 2004, 3). Yet decades of dedicated organizing have done much to overcome these barriers. The breadth and depth of the Chantier's current membership is significant:

The membership and Board of Directors of the Chantier de l'économie sociale includes representatives of networks of co-operative and non-profit enterprise, of local and community economic development networks and representatives of the large social movements which share the values and vision of the social economy. The social movements involved are the community movement, the women's movement, the social housing movement, the labour movement, the environmental movement, the co-operative movement, the recreational movements in the non-profit sector and a new and growing movement in Quebec and internationally, the movement for cultural democracy (Neamtan 2004, 6).

It is these connections, constituting a powerful political and economic force, that have been key to cultivating and sustaining a policy climate in which solidarity economy initiatives are supported and encouraged at both grassroots and governmental levels. It is also these connections which are necessary in order to remain vigilant in the face of ongoing challenges around co-optation of grassroots power by government initiative, the development of problematic relationships of dependency on government support, and shifting policies in the face of changing political regimes. With collective power, the possibility is opened, as well, of working to actively transform not only policy, but the *very structures of governance themselves* through democratizing changes such as participatory budgeting, increased information transparency, delegated authority and participatory planning processes.

### ***Strengthening Our Efforts***

As the example of Quebec demonstrates, connections based on shared values and strong collaborative relationships can build collective capacity. We are stronger together. The integration of solidarity economy initiatives with each other and with broader social movements offers possibilities for collective action and institution-building that no single initiative could imagine on its own. This is, in a sense, the construction of "political economies of scale." Groups link together and scale up capacity to provide collective support in a number of forms, including education, knowledge and skill-sharing, the provision of services, financing, and policy advocacy and governance change.

#### *Education, knowledge and skill-sharing*

In a culture in which solidarity and cooperation in the realm of economics is not part of a "mainstream" education, the importance of building movement spaces for knowledge and skill sharing cannot be underestimated. A crucial function of networks built from economic integration and social movement integration is to cultivate spaces for such cooperative education: gatherings and conferences, workshops and classes, skill-sharing sessions, and widespread public media outreach. Additionally, networks can develop the capacity to partner with academic institutions and assist in the development of solidarity economy curricula and programs within existing educational structures. In Brasil, a number of universities have created solidarity economy programs through such collaboration.

#### *Financing*

Access to financing is one of the most significant logistical challenges to solidarity economy initiatives. Groups structured as non-profits may have access to foundations, government grants and individual



private philanthropists, but this is often either extremely limited or comes at great costs. Such groups often become dependent on unstable external funding sources and find that their work is shifted from being mission-driven to being funder-driven. Groups structured informally, in "unconventional" ways (such as worker-owned cooperatives or collectives), or even as conventional businesses with unorthodox missions and methods often find sources of funding even harder to secure. This is the case particularly where such enterprises either limit, by their activities, potential returns for investors or have structures which make external profit-driven investment impossible.

To address these issues, alliances and networks of solidarity economy enterprises can pool resources to create cooperative financing options for other projects. In the Emilia Romagna region of Italy, for example, an area with a population similar to that of northeast Ohio and boasting over 15,000 diverse worker, producer, consumer, housing and service cooperatives, every cooperative is required to distribute 3% of its annual profits to cooperative development funds administered by regional networks. These funds provide substantial capital for creating new cooperatively-owned enterprises in the region (Logue). The Mondragon Cooperative in the Basque region of Spain provides another example. Mondragon's network of \_\_\_ cooperatives collectively own and support a bank called the Caja Laboral which, in addition to offering diverse banking services to its members also administers a significant fund and technical support division for the creation of new cooperative enterprises [amount & source]. These examples offer a glimpse into the kinds of financing that might be possible with the cross-sector collaboration of diverse solidarity economy enterprises.

#### *Provision of shared services*

The potential of large networks of solidarity economy initiatives to utilize their collective resources in the service of network members is tremendous. In realms such as insurance, financial services, legal services, communications and facilitation, technical support, and research and development, networks can create what economists call "external economies": aggregations of the financial power of many small enterprises into networks that can leverage economic power at scales of efficiency similar to that of larger companies. Examples of such resource collaboration exist in some realms of the cooperative movement. Both of the cooperative networks mentioned above in Emilia Romagna and in Mondragon, Spain have developed a number of "second tier" service cooperatives that provide insurance, research and development, marketing and other products to their members. Solidarity economy movements have not yet made such progress and are just beginning to explore these possibilities.

#### *Policy advocacy and governance change*

Clearly, the role of public policy in shaping the economic and political context in which solidarity economy initiatives struggle, survive or thrive is important. While engagement with the state as a strategy to support solidarity economy development involves many dangers and deserves vigilant caution and careful strategy, it can also be a powerful tool for mobilizing supportive resources and cultivating a "friendly solidarity environment" (as opposed to the "friendly business environment" so often used as a euphemism for prioritizing private profit over community well-being). In this vein, as discussed earlier, solidarity economy networks can--and (many would argue) *should*--become powerful players in shaping supportive policy. Such policy might include the creation or improvement of enabling legislation for various types of cooperative and collective enterprise structures, the development of tax policy that favors solidarity-based initiatives, the investment of public pension funds into solidarity economy development efforts, public support for solidarity economy education and technical assistance efforts, and policy mandating that any privatization of public services be done through the creation of community-run social cooperatives (rather than for-profit private businesses).

Also crucial, as mentioned above, is the work of *reimagining the state itself* and working to transform governance structures so that supportive policy becomes easier to implement and sustain. Participatory budgeting, in which government spending priorities are decided in directly-democratic processes by citizens, is an excellent example of such an effort. Since the launch of the Brazilian city Porto Alegre's participatory budgeting program in 1989, hundreds of such programs have emerged throughout Latin America and, increasingly, in other parts of the world (Lerner 2006). Other examples of alternative, democratizing governance structures include Venezuela's "communal councils," neighborhood-scale units for participatory democracy (Lerner 2007), public deliberation workshops (Lerner 2003), citizen's juries (NEF 1998, 16) and participatory planning processes (NEF 1998, 32). All of these innovations, and many others, have the potential to open up space in which organized solidarity economy networks and movements can increase public support for solidarity-based development.

### ***Creation and Innovation for Transformation***

Creativity, mobilized in the service of collective benefit, is at the heart of the solidarity economy approach. In this sense, solidarity economy recognizes and mobilizes the energies and impulses that are associated with the "entrepreneurial spirit." In a capitalist framework, the human impulse for creativity and innovation is often captured and directed toward individual accomplishment and accumulation: the "self-made man" who imagines, takes risks and then reaps the personal benefits of success in the form of exclusive wealth and power. Yet this is clearly not the only way in which such human energies can be directed; activists and organizers, working in the service of their movements and communities, mobilize this very energy but for the benefit, instead, of the broader collective. Solidarity economy, then, can be said to support and cultivate entrepreneurship, but in a new and different form: collective entrepreneurship, *solidarity entrepreneurship*.

This bubbling of creativity occurs, of course, in the absence of solidarity economy movements. It is always present in social life, as groups of people imagine and create new ways of cooperatively solving problems, meeting needs and generating ways-of-life together. The power of a solidarity economy movement, then, lies not in generating such solidarity entrepreneurship, but in strengthening and connecting it. Many important innovations arise through the combination of already-existing ideas or objects, through linking fields that had not previously been linked and, in so doing, generating new and powerful combinations (Spinosa and Dreyfuss 2001).

The connecting space of solidarity economy has the potential to foster such creativity: what kinds of new economic innovations might arise from long-term cross-fertilization between initiatives as diverse as worker cooperatives, community currencies, land trusts, community supported agriculture programs and neighborhood mutual-aid networks? And how do we develop collective capacity to support and--perhaps most importantly--*circulate* these new innovations as they arise? It is from this kind of work, building on the work of seeing, naming, connecting and strengthening, that solidarity economy *as an actual economy* might emerge from a long-term process of struggle, creativity and connection.

### **Some Key Questions and Debates Within Solidarity Economy Movements**

Solidarity economy, however used and defined, is clearly an open and contested world of ideas and practices. As Allard and Matthaei write, "this desire not to squelch diversity in order to achieve a comfortable and homogenous uniformity, but rather to pursue a bottom-up approach, is part of the very

ethic of the solidarity economy" (2007, x). Within the context of a "space of shared values" (as described earlier), debate and difference within solidarity economy networks are alive and well. It might, in fact, be the case that the greatest tension within solidarity economy is this: how to negotiate the complex lines between, on one hand, keeping a robust scope of debate and difference *within* the movement and, on the other, recognizing that some differences may, indeed, lead to real and important divisions in terms of tactics, strategy and vision. Inclusiveness may have limits when it comes to work aiming at the transformation of dominant economic relations; where *are* these limits?

There are no easy answers, and nor will I attempt to suggest any here. I want to conclude this chapter, instead, by raising even more questions. These are a few--though by far not all--of the key questions and debates that animate many contemporary solidarity economy networks and organizing efforts:

- Who, really, should be included in "the solidarity economy"? While inclusivity and openness are priorities, don't lines need to be drawn somewhere? In making a "map" of solidarity economy initiatives, for example, how should we decide "who's in and who's out"? How do we create such exclusions without creating divisions that weaken a potential movement?
- How should solidarity economy efforts relate with initiatives that share similar values but identify with different terms (such as "cooperative economy" or "living economy," for example)? Should solidarity economy advocates seek to convince everyone to adopt their term? Can we have a solidarity economy movement with many names that is still connected and strong?
- Should solidarity economy movements take overt, public stances in opposition to capitalism? Should all solidarity economy efforts be "anti-capitalist" or should there be room in the movement for those who do not identify "capitalism" as a necessary enemy?
- What should be the role of structural economic models and visions in a solidarity economy movement? Are we engaged in a process of *moving towards agreement* about some shared vision, or is the *open, create process of emergence itself* the vision that we should share?
- What is the relationship of solidarity economy movements to "markets"? Are markets inherently problematic, or are "solidarity markets" possible and desirable? What might these look like?
- What about the state? Is engaging the state--tempting as it is--ultimately fatal to movement seeking to build real, grassroots power and agency? Is the state inherently in the service of dominant elites, or is it possible through political struggle to transform it into a more democratic form? Is "solidarity governance" and a "solidarity state" possible? What would this look like?

## Conclusion

In summary, we can say that solidarity economy is a ***way of thinking about the economy*** that opens up spaces of hope and possibility for building a more just, sustainable and democratic economy. It is an ***emerging language*** for building a movement to transform economic life. It is a ***framework for strategizing*** about how to create this other economy, building on our strengths and connecting our practices from the ground-up. And finally, solidarity economy is ***a space in which to imagine, debate and create*** visions for another economy based on shared values.

As a political and economic project, solidarity economy is both humble and ambitious. It is humble in the sense that solidarity economy movements recognize that we do not have all of the answers and that our strength lies primarily in our coming together with creativity, courage and multiple perspectives and experiences to "make the road by walking." Its ambition, on the other hand, lies in the aspiration to build strong linkages across multiple sectors of society and economy, to build coordinated social movements in which opposition to injustice is intimately bound up with the creation of practical and inspiring alternatives, and to ultimately transform the current socioeconomic order.

Solidarity economy is far from being a magic bullet proposal for the achievement of such change. For all the promise of its concepts and approaches, it is up to us to bring these potentials into being. Unlike many radical social change theories of the past in which economic transformation was supposedly built into the logic of the structure itself, unfolding out of some "historical necessity," or from the "contradictions within the system," the solidarity economy approach comes with no such theories or guarantees. If solidarity economy is to succeed, it will be a product of courage, struggle and collective creation. As Jose Luis Corragio writes, "the viability of social transformation is rarely a fact; it is, rather, something that must be constructed" (xxxx).

Is it possible to build a solidarity economy? The only way for us to know is to try, believing together that because solidarity and cooperation are already integral parts of our world, they can be even more so. Let's roll up our sleeves and, together, get to work!

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quotes

*Feminizing the economy: metaphors, strategies, politics*

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## ABSTRACT

Within contemporary feminism, common approaches to feminizing the economy involve adding a sphere or sector or attributing a monetary value to women's unpaid labor. Each of these approaches is interested in creating an accurate representation of the real or 'whole' economy. But these representations are in the same lineage as mainstream economic conceptions; the economy remains a bounded entity that can be known by enumerating its parts. The 'adding on' and 'counting in' strategies employed by feminists complete the picture of what is needed to produce social wellbeing but do not necessarily help us think differently about how goods and services are or might be produced.

In this paper, we ask how feminist economic theory might contribute to envisioning or enacting alternative economies. We find answers to this question through reading feminist interventions for glimmers of a deconstructive project that opens 'the economy' to difference. Pursuing these glimmers we attempt to insert the possibility of noncapitalist forms of economy including economies of generosity, nonprofit businesses, worker collectives and alternative capitalist enterprises impelled by a social or environmental ethic. In place of the view of the economy as a whole comprised of a pre-established number of parts or sectors, we begin to see the economy as a discursive construct that can be reconstructed to contribute to social transformation.

Keywords: feminist theory, economic geography, diversity



*Feminizing the economy: metaphors, strategies, politics*

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**Introduction**

Feminists have long seen ‘the economy’ as a gendered site. In the nineteenth century writers like Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Harriet Taylor Mill focused on the exclusion of many women from paid economic activity and women’s consequent economic dependence on men. In the twentieth century the emphasis shifted somewhat to the exclusion of women’s unpaid economic activities, like housework and childrearing from understandings of economy. In this paper we bring together the work of a range of contemporary feminists examining the approaches used to redress the exclusion of women, the different metaphors and strategies drawn upon to feminize the economy, the political concerns that set the context for each approach and their effects.

In terms of our own political location, this paper is part of a larger project in which feminist theorizing and empirical research has been an inspiration and guide to help us make visible and promote non-capitalist forms of economy. Our interest is in developing alternative ways of thinking economy outside of dominant capitalocentric conceptions. Such conceptions position non-capitalist economic activities with respect to capitalist economic activities in the same way that woman is positioned with respect to man in a phallogocentric symbolic order—as the *same as, a complement of, subordinated to* (and we

have added *contained within*) the dominant term (Gibson-Graham, 1996:35).<sup>i</sup> A concern to liberate the subordinate term from the inevitable structure of valuation associated with phallo/capitalo-centric logic motivates our interest in the ways other feminists have gone about rethinking economy.

Within contemporary feminism we can identify a number of different but related strategies of feminizing the economy. All seek to bring about some sort of change in policy or economic practices. All employ a discursive politics, producing the 'whole economy' in terms of new metaphors of representation along with techniques of enumeration that will bring into view something which has been previously hidden. In this paper we problematize this strategic quest for completeness by setting it along side a deconstructive strategy, comparing the different politics that emerge from each.

### **Metaphors of Economy**

Feminist rethinkings have responded to the exclusion of feminized activities from the economy by challenging and shifting the boundary between what is considered economic and non-economic. In doing so they have worked within a discursive terrain that sees the economy as a bounded whole that is transparent and knowable. Mary Poovey (1996) traces the emergence in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries of an economic domain separate from politics and theology. Writing in 1623, Edward Misselden, a prominent English merchant, conceived "an abstracted economy . . . literally realized in the form of a giant glass globe that the king can enter and consult at will" (p. 4). He proposed that merchants, with their newly developed double-entry bookkeeping system of accounting, were able to keep track of the ebb and flow of goods and bills of exchange

and provide accurate economic advice to the king as he contemplated the management of trade and commerce from within his giant glass sphere.

With the formal academic definition of political economy as “the study of any activity relating to the production and distribution of wealth”, Gillian Hewitson notes that the political economist Nassau Senior, writing in 1836, included the “study of female labour market activity ..[as].. within the scope of political economy” but “excluded female activity within the home”, “since the former and not the latter result in transferable objects for an explicit exchange price” (2001:6). If the activity of women in the household was not considered wealth-generating, it was not completely ignored by political economy. Drawing on organicist metaphors prevalent in the field of nineteenth century evolutionary biology, Marx, for example, saw household activities as important forms of social *reproduction* that supported and sustained capitalist economic *production* but did not quantitatively contribute to capital accumulation (Gibson-Graham, 1996:100).

Timothy Mitchell (1998) drawing on Mirowski (1987) attributes the contemporary idea of ‘the economy’ as a separate, closed and self-regulating system with distinct physical dynamics like equilibrium, stability, elasticity and inflation to the emergence of physics as a coherent scientific discipline in the late nineteenth century (p. 85). Importantly, he identifies two processes through which this self-contained sphere of the economy has today become fixed and self-evident (p. 92). One involves what we saw Senior doing in the nineteenth century, that is, *excluding* what does not belong to the economy, for example, the household or the state, thereby defining certain areas of social life as “non-economic” (p. 92). The other involves what Poovey saw the merchants of the seventeenth century doing, *counting and measuring* everything within the ‘economic’ sphere. In the

twentieth century measures such as Gross Domestic Product and Gross National Product powerfully reinforced the idea of a distinct and measurable economic space.

Feminist thinkers interested in enlarging the scope of the economic have challenged these processes of exclusion and measurement head on by proposing strategies for **adding on** and **counting in** activities that have been ignored or hidden. We turn now to examine some of the strategies they have used to re-present and re-enumerate the economy.

### **Expanding the ‘Whole Economy’**

#### *Adding On*

Feminizing the economy has firstly involved adding a new sphere to market production and exchange, or what is formally recognized as ‘the economy’. The economy is thus expanded by conceptualizing it as a dualistic whole comprised of a masculinized realm of paid work and a feminized realm of unpaid domestic, child-based, nurture-oriented, voluntary and community work. These two realms have been named and conceptualized in different ways.

#### **Production and reproduction**

Drawing on socialist feminist analysis, economic geographers such as Suzanne McKenzie and Damaris Rose proposed that what is usually thought of as the economy, the *sphere of production*, is only half the picture (1983). Missing is the *sphere of reproduction* which consists of women’s unpaid domestic and community work as well as home work for the market, associated with the social reproduction of labour power. Feminist geographers argue that the sphere of reproduction is necessary for a more complete understanding of the capitalist economy because without the reproduction of labour power on a daily and

generational basis productive activities would grind to a halt.<sup>ii</sup> Given its Marxist lineage, this expansion of the economy reinforces an organicist image of a capitalist economic system with life-like capacities for reproduction and death.

### **Hand and heart**

In *The Invisible Heart: Economics and Family Values* (2001) Nancy Folbre argues that market economies are sustained by caring and nurturing activities that she associates with the heart. She writes “We must stop assuming that norms and preferences of caring” for others come from “ ‘outside’ our economic system and can therefore be taken as given” (p. 210). While Adam Smith wrote in *The Wealth of Nations* of the invisible hand of the market that ensured the supply and demand of goods and services through competition he also believed in the moderating effects of human benevolence, which he elaborated in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Since Smith’s time, however, the unbridled pursuit of self-interest through the market has eroded values of care, obligation and reciprocity. Folbre’s remedy is to include within the economy both the monetized values exchanged by the invisible hand of the market and non-monetized values generated and distributed by the invisible heart of care (p. 231).

### **Exchange and gift**

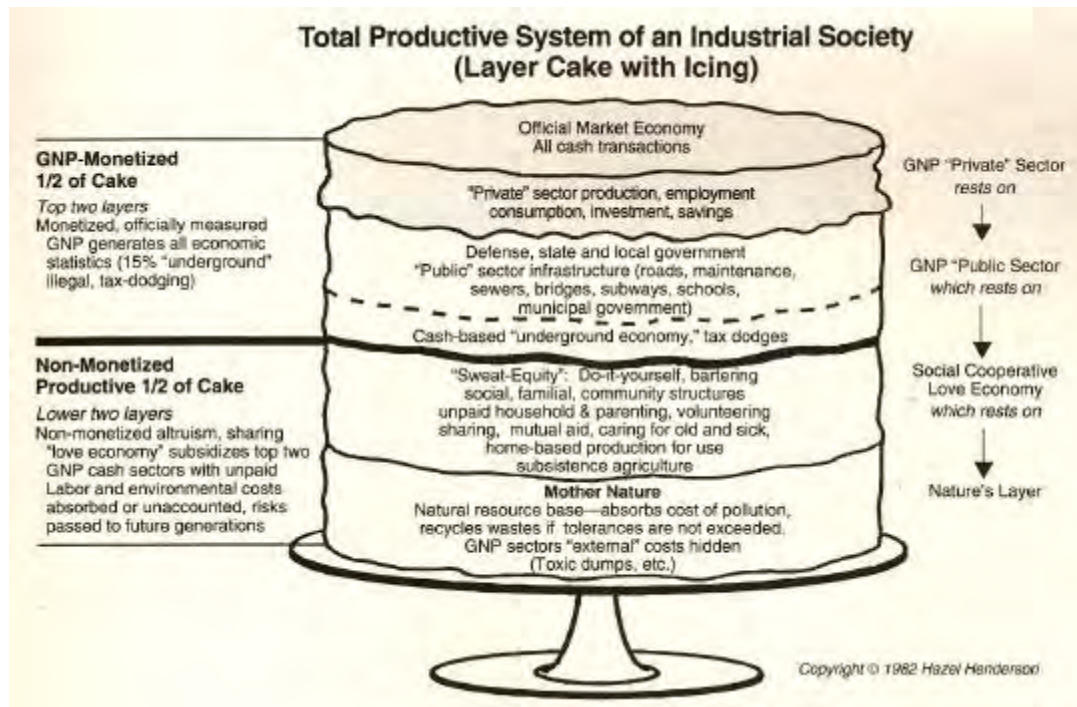
In *For-Giving: A Feminist Criticism of Exchange* (1997) Genevieve Vaughan talks of the gift paradigm that “emphasizes the importance of giving to satisfy needs”, that is “need-oriented rather than profit-oriented” (p.30) and that coexists alongside the exchange paradigm where “calculation and measurement are necessary” and transactions are “ego-oriented rather than other-oriented” (p.31). For Vaughan gift giving is an extension of mothering and nurturing and is a practice that resists measurement and calculations of commensurability. The relationship she sketches out between the two paradigms is one of plunder, rather than prolonged sustenance, as relations of exchange and commodification

invade realms where the emotional and nurturing labour of mothering /gift-giving once prevailed.<sup>iii</sup>

### **Icing and layer cake**

Feminist environmental and community activists such as Hazel Henderson (1991) and Barbara Brandt (1995) also add to the economy demonstrating how so-called productive economic activities depend on a set of currently invisible processes. Henderson's representation of the 'total productive system of an industrial society' as a triple layer cake with icing has been taken up by many (e.g. Brandt, 1995). The bottom non-monetized layer of the economic cake is mother nature whose gifts are shared and largely unaccounted. The second layer of non-monetized economic activities is the "social cooperative" (variously subtitled the counter, love or informal economy) in which unpaid labour is given, shared and volunteered. Upon these two layers rests a third layer with icing—the whole cash economy, divided into an underground economy, the public sector and finally the private sector, the "official market economy" that is merely the icing on the cake. The argument goes that traditional economics focuses on the icing and what is immediately under it (the public sector) while ignoring the bottom two layers, yet it is these two layers that make possible and sustain the public and private sectors. While Henderson's image represents the economy as having multiple sectors, the monetized/non-monetized (or in Brandt's terms visible/invisible) dualism remains a major conceptual division.<sup>iv</sup>

Figure 1 Hazel Henderson's Layer Cake With Icing



### *Counting In*

As we have seen, from the seventeenth century on instruments of measuring economic activity have been developed. Today, the United Nations System of National Accounts measures national production and growth by accounting for national expenditure (on items like consumption, investment, government purchases) and income (derived from items like wages, rent and dividends) (Waring 1988). So too feminist approaches to economy propose that the 'whole economy' can be understood through accounting for the full range of economic activities in different sectors.

In *Counting for nothing: what men value and what women are worth* (1988) Marilyn

Waring proposes that women's unpaid work be counted by giving it a monetary value and



including this valuation as part of Gross Domestic Product. Economists such as Duncan Ironmonger have taken up this challenge and have estimated that, for example, in Australia the value of goods and services produced in households by unpaid workers is almost equivalent to the value of the goods and services produced by paid workers for the market (Ironmonger 1996).<sup>v</sup> This type of imputed value accounting involves reconceptualizing the economy to include a new sphere of activity. Ironmonger argues (and here it is interesting to note how imagery drawn from physics persists):

Our present statistical telescopes with which we view work, employment and economic value are faulty. Their design does not allow light to be reflected off the household . . . This defect in our measuring instruments means that we see only the market part of the economy. In reality the economy has two parts, a market section and a household section; both are essential for the economy to function effectively. (p. 59)

Ironmonger proposes that the value of unpaid household work be called Gross Household Product (GHP). And he argues that the System of National Accounts should be revised so that the total measure of economic performance, Gross Economic Product, be “comprised of Gross Household Product and Gross Market Product” (p.38-9).

Nancy Folbre also makes a strong case for including, counting and giving economic value to what are currently seen as non-economic activities. She proposes indicators of ‘economic health’ to supplement the Dow Jones Index such as the Dolly Jones Index that tracks changes in the imputed value of time people work in their homes and communities. At the same time, she is wary of reducing “the value of everything we do to a dollar estimate, particularly where care-giving is concerned” (p. 66).

Taken together all of the feminist approaches of **adding on** and **counting in** aim to demonstrate the importance of what were once thought of as non-economic activities – housework and other unpaid work, caring and nurturing activities, the building of social relationships and networks, and even ‘mother nature’. They argue that the economy, as it now stands, is not the self-contained and autonomous sphere that is usually assumed but is lacking and incomplete. The overarching feminist strategy has been to make this concept complete and whole, to add to it all the missing parts.<sup>vi</sup> As such, the feminist approaches discussed thus far are located within the same lineage or genealogy as traditional conceptions of the economy that have constructed it as a bounded entity that can be known by enumerating the various parts that make up the whole.

### **Politics of the Whole**

Feminism has produced a representation that aligns the feminine with domestic production/the sphere of reproduction/the gift economy/the economy of care, but that separates this and opposes it in some way to the market or the sphere of production that is aligned with the masculine. Each part of the whole tends to be seen as distinct and arranged in opposition to the other. The strategy of ‘completing’ the economy has implications for emancipatory and transformative projects like feminism and left politics.

For those who adopt a conservative feminist politics, the feminized economic domain is understood as equal to the masculinized domain. The task is to explain the dynamics of the hitherto unrecognized economic sphere and bring about a shift in policies to eliminate the disadvantages that women face because of their association with one particular sphere of economy.<sup>vii</sup>

For those who adopt a liberal or leftist stance the association of the feminine with the domestic realm has been seen as a key source of women's oppression that might be overcome by ensuring that women have the same access as men to the market sphere or sphere of production. From this political vantage it is difficult to imagine that domesticity might contain emancipatory potential, for women's liberation is to be secured largely by renouncing that part of the economy associated with the feminine. The growing divisions between women who work in well-paid jobs outside the home and women (who in the US are frequently illegal migrants) employed as their domestic workers can be seen as one "unintended side-effect" of feminism's focus on getting women "out of the home" (Mattingly 1998, 1999).

For others more attracted to a radical feminist reversal of masculinist valuations the invisible layer, the feminine realm, or the gift paradigm is seen as holding the key to salvation, while the visible layer, the masculine realm, the exchange paradigm, contains the seeds of societal devastation. In the layer cake model, for example, the icing and top layer are seen as masculinized, money-making and exploitative, while the bottom two layers are seen as feminized, governed by need and non-exploitative relationships. This compartmentalizing of the economy makes it difficult to imagine that market-based production might contain any features of worth, and that the social cooperation sector might, for example, produce inequitable relationships. In these dualist models of economy one side of the binary is privileged as the source of emancipation while the other side is renounced. If you like, one of the legacies of the double-entry bookkeeping system is the desire to account for the world in terms of a ledger with credits on one side, debits on the other.

Underlying all these stances is the view that a more complete representation of the economy will inform a political transformation. In the epilogue to her book, Marilyn Waring takes it further asserting that ‘the system could not stand the pressure [of fully enumerating women’s economic contribution] and would be transformed by the additions’ (p. 256). She suspects that the strategy of counting in will bring about the sort of economic revolution advocated by radical feminists; in Audre Lorde’s terms, Waring hopes to use the tools of the master to dismantle the master’s house.

But can the feminist political project be this simple?

We are concerned with some of the consequences of the realist project of analytic al completion and empirical measurement that characterizes much feminizing of the economy. And we are wary of expecting that by producing a more complete understanding of what is included in the economy a transformative feminist politics will be enacted.

In our view a representational politics is not necessarily strengthened by recourse to an empiricist argument about inclusion and accuracy. Indeed the attempts by mainstream economics to redress the invisibility of women’s work through, for example, Gary Becker’s ‘new home economics’,<sup>viii</sup> or the World Bank’s advocacy of social capital, point to entirely acceptable and depoliticized (in feminist terms) efforts to enlarge the scope of the economy. It seems that the strategies of adding on and counting in might fall short of generating a feminist politics of transformation. They add to the picture of what contributes to the production of goods and services but they do not necessarily help us think differently about the economy. Furthermore, by staying within a binary framing of

economic activities (masculinized/market and feminized/household, etc) the ‘added in’ sectors, though recognized and counted, remain locked in the subordinate, under/devalued position vis a vis the ‘core’ economy. It is hard to extrapolate from this vision a positive politics of transformation that really shakes up what we think of as economy and helps us to enact economy according to feminist economic ethics (whatever they might be).

### **Deconstructing the Economy**

Hazel Henderson’s promotion of an alternative economics that might enable ‘a saner, more equitable, gender-balanced, ecologically-conscious future’ (1995, p.9) comes closest to the kind of project that interests us—of imagining and enacting alternative or noncapitalist economies. Both Henderson and Brandt offer examples that open up ‘the economy’ to difference. Consistent with her interest in renewable energy sources Henderson uses the environment as an axis of differentiation within the monetized economy to distinguish between green and brown capitalist enterprises. For example, she distinguishes between traditional businesses that have no interest in environmental values, and the ‘contrarians’: ‘mostly smaller, younger, innovative enterprises, investment funds, venture capitalists and investors already positioned in the cleaner “greener” social markets of the 21st century. (1998, p. 8).

Brandt on the other hand identifies what she calls ‘empowering businesses’—those enterprises that empower people as an integral part of their economic activities. As she points out these businesses may be small or large, privately or cooperatively owned, profit-making or not-for-profit, organized by private individuals, community groups, religious organizations, government agencies or a combination of any of these (1995, p. 113). Through her interest in community activism and empowerment, Brandt opens up

the economy to multiple axes of differentiation that include a variety of styles of decision-making, forms of ownership and organization, and emphases on profit or other core values. In so doing she provides a picture of a diverse economic landscape made up of all sorts of capitalist and non-capitalist enterprises.

In all these moves a rigid and oppositional dichotomy is dissolved. It is possible to see greater diversity within the layers of the economic cake and, importantly, we think, connections across what were previously thought of as separate and opposed layers. The multiple axes of differentiation that Brandt identifies suggests that economic practices and enterprises can be conceived as having multiple identities, rather than a singular and essential identity that places them on one or the other side of the ledger.<sup>ix</sup>

The work of Henderson and Brandt provides an example of deconstructing ‘the economy’, as well as adding to it. They take characteristics more readily associated with the non-monetized part of the economy, ‘mother nature’ and ‘social cooperation’, and find these within the monetized part of the economy. In so doing they provide insights into the variety of ways goods and services might be produced in the market sector outside of mainstream capitalist firms—through nonprofit initiatives, cooperatives, alternative capitalist enterprises that operate according to a social or environmental ethic. This strategy resonates with our own efforts to represent a diverse economy in which multiple and unfixed economic identities can be conceived (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 A Diverse Economy

<i>Transactions</i>	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Organizational Form</i>
<b>MARKET</b>	<b>WAGE</b>	<b>CAPITALIST</b>
<b><i>ALTERNATIVE MARKET</i></b>  <i>Local trading systems</i> <i>Alternative currencies</i> <i>Underground market</i> <i>Co-op exchange</i> <i>Barter</i>	<b><i>ALTERNATIVE PAID</i></b>  <i>Cooperative</i> <i>Self-employed</i> <i>Indentured</i> <i>In kind</i>	<b><i>ALTERNATIVE CAPITALIST</i></b>  <i>Environmental ethic</i> <i>Social ethic</i> <i>State enterprise</i>
<b><i>NON-MARKET</i></b>  <i>Household flows</i> <i>Gifts</i> <i>Indigenous exchange</i> <i>Theft</i>	<b><i>UNPAID</i></b>  <i>Volunteer</i> <i>Housework</i> <i>Family care</i>	<b><i>NON- CAPITALIST</i></b>  <i>Communal</i> <i>Independent</i> <i>Feudal/Peasant</i> <i>Slave</i>



In our representation, the economy is emptied of any essential identity, logic, organizing principle or determinant. In place of the view that the economy is a whole comprised of a pre-established number of parts or sectors, we see the economy as an open-ended discursive construct made up of multiple constituents. Our first stab at conceptualizing the radical diversity of economic relations has been in terms of the coexistence of

- different kinds of transaction with their multiple calculations of commensurability
- different ways of performing and remunerating labour
- different modes of economic organization or enterprise with their multiple ways of producing, appropriating and distributing surplus labour

In the diverse economy we cannot easily read off credits and debits but are forced to inquire into the specific conditions of any economic activity before we can advocate or oppose it. While this renders the project of political transformation more complex, it does not preclude proposing interventions inspired by feminism.

To illustrate this point consider the many ways and contexts in which the caring labour of childcare is practiced in the diverse economy. Figure 3 describes a range of possible situations in which the ‘work’ of childcare is done.<sup>x</sup> Many of these locations outside of the traditional household where mothers care for children (unpaid, unregulated and traditionally undervalued) have arisen as a result of feminist struggles. Certainly in Australia the community cooperative childcare movement, successful agitation for government-funded childcare and community trade networks and baby-sitting clubs are directly attributable to a variety of different kinds of feminist politics. That the corporate sector has responded with capitalist childcare and domestic service agencies is likewise a by-product of the feminization of the paid workforce. The diversity of economic relations that currently characterize child care-giving reflects the unparalleled success of a

Figure 3 The Diverse Economy of Childcare

<i>Transactions</i>	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Organizational Form</i>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MARKET</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic service market</li> <li>• Childcare market</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>WAGE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hired housekeeper</li> <li>• Worker in corporate childcare centre</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CAPITALIST</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Body-hire agency eg Dial an Angel Inc.</li> <li>• Work-based childcare center</li> <li>• Capitalist childcare centre</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ALTERNATIVE MARKET</b></p> <p><i>Local trading systems</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childcare offered on LETS network</li> </ul> <p><i>Alternative currencies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baby-sitting club (hours calculated)</li> </ul> <p><i>Underground market</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash-in-hand to neighbourhood teens</li> </ul> <p><i>Barter</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct and equivalent exchange of childcare hours</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ALTERNATIVE PAID</b></p> <p><i>Cooperative</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childcare cooperative worker</li> </ul> <p><i>Self-employed</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family day care mother</li> </ul> <p><i>Indentured</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic servant who is an overseas contract worker (paid in cash and kind)</li> </ul> <p><i>In kind</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live-in student who does childcare in return for room and board</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ALTERNATIVE CAPITALIST</b></p> <p><i>Environmental ethic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steiner kindergarten</li> </ul> <p><i>Social ethic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious kindergarten</li> </ul> <p><i>State enterprise</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community based (government funded) childcare centre</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NON-MARKET</b></p> <p><i>Household flows</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents sharing childcare</li> </ul> <p><i>Gifts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family and friends offer to baby sit</li> </ul> <p><i>Indigenous exchange</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child 'given' to kin to raise</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>UNPAID</b></p> <p><i>Family care</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care at home by parents</li> </ul> <p><i>Volunteer</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childcare by friends and neighbours</li> <li>• Volunteer-provided care at church, meetings</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NON-CAPITALIST</b></p> <p><i>Communal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childcare cooperative</li> </ul> <p><i>Independent</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family day care</li> </ul> <p><i>Feudal/Peasant</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended family with obligatory childcare</li> </ul>

transformative feminist economic project which has multiplied the options for how women and men raise children in our society as well as achieving other interests and objectives.<sup>xi</sup> Within this diverse economy on both sides of the market/non-market, paid/unpaid, capitalist/non-capitalist divides there are opportunities for economically exploitative and emotionally oppressive conditions as well as fair and emotionally creative ones. It seems to us that a feminist economic politics would champion the latter in all locations of the diverse economy in which childcare is performed.

To take this point one step further we join with Henderson, Brandt and Matthaei (2001) in suggesting that a transformative feminist economic politics might advocate the proliferation of diverse economic forms that promote in *all* sectors of goods and services provision what Brandt calls the “positive social values and self-directed structure” of the invisible economy (1995, p.55). In all economic activities across the board we could promote the valuing and strengthening of traditionally coded ‘feminine’ qualities such as nurture, cooperation, sharing, giving, concern for the other, attentiveness to nature, and so on, *as well as* traditionally coded ‘masculine’ qualities such as independence, experimentation, leadership and adventurousness. We are particularly committed to strengthening the viability of non-capitalist activities in which social surplus is communally produced and distributed on the basis of ethical principles to collectively decided upon ends.<sup>xiii</sup> Our interest is in fostering an economy in which the interdependence of all who produce, appropriate, distribute and consume in society is acknowledged and built upon.

There can be no doubt that feminists have produced a truly inspirational figure/ground shift in how we see the economy. Our emerging feminist economic politics takes

sustenance from the incredible insights of feminist interventions that have, in so many different ways, forced a recognition of the creativity, productivity, resilience and solidarity of that half of the economy that has traditionally not been seen or accounted for. Feminizing the economy via the deconstructive move extends this powerful representational politics in a different direction, opening up a myriad of ethical debates in all nooks and crannies of the diverse economy about the kinds of worlds we as feminists would like to build.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ENDNOTES

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<sup>i</sup> See Grosz, 1990 for the concise elaboration of phallogentrism upon which our conception of capitalocentrism was modeled.

<sup>ii</sup> Early analyses saw the sphere of reproduction as a dependent creation of capitalist development that changed in response to changes in the nature of capitalist production (e.g. Mackenzie and Rose, 1983). Later analyses emphasized a more open set of determining relations between the two spheres (Mackenzie, 1989; Parr, 1990). Outside of geography other socialist feminists had theorized the dualism in terms of different modes of production—the capitalist and the domestic (or patriarchal) modes of production (Delphy, 1984; Folbre, 1987). This allowed for more independent dynamics of articulation (rather than dependence) to be posited between the two spheres/modes.

<sup>iii</sup> Of course there is a much more extensive literature on the gift within mainstream anthropology in which the dualism between gift and exchange is not necessarily mapped onto gender difference, nor is the study of gift-giving used to rethink notions of economy. Recent 'non-feminist' attempts to do the latter by focusing on the gift include Gudeman (2001) and Godbout (1998).

<sup>iv</sup> For Henderson it seems that almost everything is part of 'the economy'. The same could be said of the recent 'non-feminist' conceptualizations of social capital. Along with economic capital, human capital and natural capital there is now social capital—that network of social relationships based on trust and reciprocity on which effective economic development and growth are seen to depend. Building social capital, it is argued, builds economic capital (Woolcock, 1998). Use of the term capital shifts the boundary between the economic and the non-economic in such a way that social relations are included as part of 'the economy'.

<sup>v</sup> See Luxton, 1997 for some international comparisons.

<sup>vi</sup> It is interesting to note how the metaphor of wholeness reoccurs in this literature. Barbara Brandt's book is entitled 'Whole Life Economics' and includes a chapter on 'Discovering the whole economy', and sections on 'Men reaching for wholeness', 'Women reaching for wholeness'. Likewise one of Hazel Henderson's chapters is subtitled 'Re-membering wholeness'; and Marilyn Waring has a chapter on 'Glimpsing the whole'.

<sup>vii</sup> This leads to a range of interventions from supporting 'women who want to be mothers' to assisting women to become entrepreneurs.

<sup>viii</sup> The argument is that women's work has been included in economic theory since the 1960s when the neo-classical paradigm was extended "to add time to the resource constraint faced by the household, permitting the integration of labor economics and home economics through a unified theory of economic decision making". Hence "decisions such as those to have children and the allocation of market and non-market work within the family could be theorized as the utility-maximizing choices of families" (Hewitson, 2001, p.7).

<sup>ix</sup> In Vaughan's work we can see a similar deconstructive move when she identifies the many forms of gift-giving that take place in the mainstream exchange economy. While it might be a stretch of the imagination to construe the extraction of surplus value by capitalists from workers as a gift, it is less so in the context of worker cooperatives when, for example, decisions are taken to distribute part of the surplus generated by the business to the community or to members who are building houses, rather than to plough it back into business expansion. Similarly we could take Folbre's work and inquire into the ways in which the

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characteristics of the invisible heart—care, obligation and reciprocity—inform transactions otherwise governed by the invisible hand of market.

<sup>x</sup> It should not go unremarked that feminist geographers have produced some of the most insightful empirical analyses of many of these sites in which caring labour is performed. See, for example, Gregson and Lowe (1994); Hansen and Pratt (1995); England (1997).

<sup>xi</sup> This is not to ignore the significant threats currently posed by so-called family-friendly governments to the viability of this diversity, especially where community-based and cooperative child care is concerned.

<sup>xii</sup> Our recent paper on the Mondragon Cooperatives has begun to flesh out one guiding framework for enabling ethical economies (Gibson-Graham, 2003).

# SOLIDARITY

## as a **Business Model**

### A Multi-Stakeholder Cooperatives Manual

Published by



A program of the Ohio Employee Ownership Center

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# I N T R O D U C T I O N

Co-ops reflect the triumph and struggle of democracy. . . . Disagreement and conflict are as much a part of democracy as the power of collective action. Managing disagreement and resolving conflict in a productive fashion are part of crafting an effective democracy.

While everyone knows the consequences of destructive conflict, the advantages of constructively managed conflict include greater understanding, enlightenment, and consensus.

*—Bob Greene and Heather Berthoud, Berthoud/Greene Consultants*

## PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL

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**M**ulti-stakeholder cooperatives (MSCs) are co-ops that formally allow for governance by representatives of two or more “stakeholder” groups within the same organization, including consumers, producers, workers, volunteers or general community supporters. Rather than being organized around a single class of members the way that most cooperatives are, multi-stakeholder cooperatives enjoy a heterogeneous membership base. The common mission that is the central organizing principle of a multi-stakeholder cooperative is also often more broad than the kind of mission statement needed to capture the interests of only a single stakeholder group, and will generally reflect the interdependence of interests of the multiple partners.

Multi-stakeholder cooperatives are the fastest growing type of co-op in Quebec, which itself is home to one of the most productive and vibrant cooperative development sectors in the world. There is also evidence of the increased use of this model in many European countries and growing interest in this form of co-op in the United States as well. While it is only in the last 20 years that this model has had formal legal recognition in various national or regional laws, the idea of involving a broader community in a cooperative venture is of course much older than that. Italy



## INTRODUCTION

was the first country to adopt a multi-stakeholder statute in 1991 after two decades of experimentation on a local level.

In Europe and Canada, multi-stakeholder co-ops are typically formed to pursue primarily social objectives and are particularly (although by no means exclusively) strong in the areas of healthcare and social services. In the U.S., sustainable food systems has been a particular area of interest for multi-stakeholder cooperative activity. This kind of multi-member cooperative venture can also be found in childcare, healthcare and brewing. Most multi-stakeholder cooperatives that have been formed in the U.S. are quite small, but in Quebec some are larger enterprises and in the U.S. one nonprofit corporation governed by multi-stakeholder model has revenues of several billion dollars.

The simplicity of the definition—members of two or more parties joining together to travel a common path—belies the complexity of the practice. Consciously choosing to focus on commonalities rather than differences does not necessarily come naturally to people, and there are few accessible role models for this approach in the business sector. Replacing animosity or indifference with understanding and common purpose requires a set of communication and interpersonal skills that many of us may be unsure we possess. Because of this, some co-op observers have fretted about the potential for high transaction costs in a multi-stakeholder approach and have predicted failure. Interestingly, however, recent research from Canada suggests that such conclusions are not supported by empirical evidence, and in many diverse situations, multi-stakeholder cooperatives are thriving.<sup>1</sup>

What we do know is that despite a considerable lack of information and support, interest in this model is unabated and the number of multi-stakeholder co-ops actually formed continues to grow. The purpose of this guide is to provide some basic information about a range of issues for those considering a multi-stakeholder approach to their enterprise, while welcoming the development of additional resources in the future as the practice of multi-stakeholder cooperatives becomes more widespread.

## THE BASICS

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**A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.**

*—International Cooperative Alliance*

### **What Is a Cooperative?**

Throughout this guide, we assume a basic knowledge of the cooperative business structure. For those who are new to this kind of enterprise, the cooperative principles are included as Appendix A to this manual, while a basic primer on “What is a Cooperative?” is included as Appendix B.

### **The Unique Place of Multi-Stakeholder Cooperatives**

The standard way to differentiate a cooperative from alternate forms of business enterprises is to ask the fundamental questions of: “who owns it, who controls it, who benefits from it?” With a

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<sup>1</sup> See Leviten-Reid, C. and Fairbairn, B. “Multistakeholder Governance in the Social Economy: Towards a New Framework for Research,” working paper.

cooperative, the answer to all three of these questions is the same—the cooperative is owned and controlled by the members who benefits from its services. Typically, cooperatives have drawn their membership from a single class of stakeholders—producer cooperatives are owned by producers, worker cooperatives by workers, consumer cooperatives by consumers etc. In fact, in the U.S. some state statutes even limit the ability of cooperatives to be structured in any way but to the benefit of a single class of constituents. Even in the absence of legal constraints, some observers have questioned whether it is ever possible to reconcile the inherent conflict of interest between actors representing different ends of the supply and demand continuum—to unite producers, for example, who it could be assumed would want the highest prices to be paid for their product and consumers who would want the lowest price.

Such a simplistic analysis forgets, however, that even a single constituency cooperative model masks what may well be a lively set of differences between members of a common class. Large and small producers, for example, often have very different needs of their cooperative, and the services demanded by one set of members may be useless at best for another. And credit unions, one of the largest and strongest of cooperative sectors worldwide, necessarily embrace on a daily basis the conflicting interests of borrower-members who desire low interest rates and depositor-members who favor high interest rates.

A multi-stakeholder cooperative is one where such differences of perspective and experience are not only tolerated, but embraced. Multi-stakeholder or multi-membership cooperatives consciously chose to draw membership from two or more classes of constituents, be they producers, consumers, workers, or simply community supporters who may have little or no direct role in daily operations of the enterprise. Such cooperatives represent a diversity of interests, but a commonality of need or aspiration on the part of the stakeholders, capturing a range of types of interests and impacts that an organization has, while recognizing the interdependency between them. In Quebec, such cooperatives are called “Solidarity” cooperatives specifically to recognize their organizational basis to bolster commonalities rather than solidify differences. In fact, all multi-stakeholder cooperatives everywhere could be said to be practicing “Solidarity as a business model.”

And indeed, choosing to focus on common interests rather than divergent ones is as rational a choice as any. While it may be easier to characterize each stakeholder class as a single interest group,

**“Solidarity (multi-stakeholder) cooperatives represent a rearticulation of the linkages between economic and social spheres in an environment where the global economy and new technologies call for a potentially unlimited mobility of capital, labour and knowledge. The local roots of solidarity cooperatives, which are owned and operated by local actors for the benefit of their members, represent an obstacle to this de-localization and maintain the balance between local socio-economic needs and the challenges and opportunities presented by the local economic system.”**

*Jean-Pierre Girard, Canadian expert on multi-stakeholder cooperatives*

## INTRODUCTION

reality is much more complex. In most situations, members or their families can claim allegiance to more than one stakeholder category—they are workers, but also consumers or they are producers but also community members. Different groups also may share important objectives, even if it seems their direct interests seem to be opposed. Parents may have an immediate interest in the lowest cost daycare possible for example, while daycare workers may want the highest wages possible, but there is no denying that both groups have a much larger common interest and stake in the effective and nurturing

**“Society as a whole benefits enormously from the social ties forged by those who chose connective strategies in pursuit of their particular goals”**

—*R. Putnam, Better Together, p. 269.*

care of children. And in fact, if one looks beyond the simple transactional level, the evidence is quite clear from a systemic point of view that good wages draw better quality caregivers for children and results in less turnover. This benefits parents both in their social objective of the nurturing of children and in their economic objective of pursuing employment with stable and dependable child care in place, so the economic interests of the two parties may not in reality be as much opposed as first seems.

While such talk may sound like so much “kumbaya,” it has a sound basis in economic practice. Producers and consumers, for example, may be assumed to have completely different economic needs in terms of price, but they have a very compelling common interest in a rational and sustainable overall system of supply and demand. After all, if there is no reliable supply of the product you want in the marketplace, it doesn’t very much matter what the price point is.

Similarly, it may seem like the town librarian has no particularly compelling interest in whether the local sawmill shuts down—the librarian has no direct role in the that particular economic micro-system and no apparent basis for interest. Yet in fact in a small community with few employers, it may make a tremendous difference to every community member whether a major employer in town stays or goes. No jobs, no tax basis, no library, no librarian. In such an instance, everyone in town is a “stakeholder,” whether that role is formally recognized or not.

The Boisaco case study on page 27 provides a compelling example of such a situation with a successful cooperative solution. In this case, the people of the town of Sacré-Coeur, Quebec joined together with foresters and millworkers to save a failing lumber mill which had already gone through bankruptcy three times. Ownership of the new co-op was divided equally amongst the three groups. Now, 25 years later, what has happened is that the community was not only able to save this single production facility, but the co-op has since gone on to create several more successful subsidiaries, securing over 600 new jobs for this remote village of 2,100 people. Even in the worst of economic times, there is full employment in the town of Sacré-Coeur because of the direct and indirect jobs created by the cooperative and the full-employment philosophy under which it operates.

The Boisaco co-op not only reversed the decline and secured the future of an existing economic enterprise, it actually helped to create new business opportunities and new markets that had not been envisioned before. What a multi-stakeholder co-op did in this case was to give outside supporters a formal way to contribute to the success of an important enterprise, and thus to the economic health and vitality of their community. What it also did is provide a means to bring together all the best thinking from a wide range of interested parties, in this case with amazingly positive results.

## “Transaction” vs. “Transformation”

Another way to understand the multi-stakeholder cooperative model is to consider the different time horizon inherent in the solidarity approach. While a traditional price-driven business model (whether cooperative or not) may be seen as primarily transactional, the multi-stakeholder cooperative enterprise is often focused on being more transformational. Early cooperatives focused on correcting blatant market failures—bringing electricity to rural America in the 1930’s is one primary example in this country. Even bringing to market something as basic as safe, unadulterated food—the need that spurred the formation of the original Rochdale Pioneers cooperative in 1849 and birthed the modern cooperative movement—can essentially be seen as correcting market failure. Multi-stakeholder cooperatives represent a more nuanced development. They have emerged recently not so much in response to the complete lack of availability of a particular good or service in the marketplace, but rather a rejection of the quality of an important good or service as it is presented in a conventional investor-driven or government-controlled marketplace. When the perception of the absence of certain desirable qualities is coupled with the confidence that it is possible for constituents to build a better way themselves, a fruitful ground for multi-stakeholder cooperatives is born.

Multi-stakeholder cooperators are not interested in single transaction or even season of transactions, but rather in building a long term relationship based upon on a stable foundation of fair pricing, fair wages and fair treatment for all parties. It requires all members to look beyond their immediate short-term interests and join with their business partners to envision a system where everyone’s interests will be met in different ways over the short-term and the long.

The difficulties inherent in creating such a new system should not be underestimated. Broader, systems-based thinking is challenging in and of itself. Particularly in the face of a dominant economic system which values short-term results and elevates the importance of price and profit at the expense of all other variables, it takes courage and stamina to “buck the system” in favor of a different, more holistic set of principles and approach. When the original Group Health doctors first aligned with consumers in the 1950’s to create a new kind of “patient-centered” healthcare system that would eventually become

HealthPartners (see profile on page 37) they were ostracized by their peers for challenging the fee-for-service medical model and called the “Commies on Como” for the street that housed their original clinic. While Gandhi was undoubtedly wise when he said “you must be the change you wish to see in the world” he did not say it would be easy. For that reason, it is vital that organizers of multi-stakeholder cooperatives are cognizant of the financial and/or social pressures that operate on their members, and do their best to minimize these.

Sympathy or abstract ideas of a more cooperative economy may be enough to incent community stakeholders, but it is rarely sufficient to engage constituents such as workers or producers whose livelihood depends on the success of the co-op. Like any other successful co-op, the multi-stakeholder cooperative must be able to provide tangible, meaningful benefits to members in the short-term to be effective, even as it is trying to change overall market structures in the long term.

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## DIFFERENT CLASSES OF MEMBERSHIP

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**M**ulti-stakeholder cooperatives can allow for as many different classifications of membership as seems necessary, in practice as few as two or as many as eight. Different classes of members will certainly have some similar interests, but likely not exclusively so. Yet they will all share the same overall mission of the cooperative, which itself should be an articulation of the benefit that the co-op intends to provide to members. Unlike in many traditional cooperatives, differences will not only be tolerated but expected in the area of member contribution, with different classes of members bringing their own unique set of knowledge, perspectives and resources to the table. Members may also have a varying stake in the outcome of the enterprise and so governance rights and/or economic returns may be parceled out in a manner that—while equitable in the context of the cooperative and its objectives—may not be equal to one another.

The varying membership classes possible in a multi-stakeholder cooperative may be grouped into three major categories—that of Cooperative User, Cooperative Worker, and Cooperative Supporter:

### User Membership Classes

**Consumers:** Consumer cooperatives are perhaps the most common kind of cooperative in the world, reaching millions of members worldwide. Cooperatives that are typically organized along consumer lines include grocery stores, credit unions, healthcare and housing cooperatives. Consumer-focused cooperatives have the advantage of a potentially very broad reach (all of us are consumers to one degree or another) but the attendant disadvantage of an interest level or knowledge base among members that is potentially quite shallow (we can all belong to lots of different consumer co-ops operating in lots of different industries without actually knowing very much about how any of these businesses are run). Since the role of consumer is inherent in any supply chain, from a market perspective consumers bring a vital piece of knowledge and commitment to the cooperative, that of the eventual purchaser of goods and services.

**Clients:** Clients represent an important sub-set of consumers, that of recipients of vital services such as daycare, home health care or other (primarily) health or social services. Clients' relationship to the cooperative is generally much more intense than that of ordinary consumers and their reliance on its services more marked. A shopper can buy carrots anywhere, but the person who comes into a home to provide home health care services is going to have a profound effect on the clients' quality of life. The PACE cooperative profiled on page 35, provides jobs for clients of its mental health services and representatives of this client class have a majority voice on the board.

**Families of Clients:** Given their need for social services, some direct clients are not able because of age (daycare) or ability to take on a direct governance role in a cooperative. In these cases, the viewpoint of the client is often represented by their family members. While families have an important perspective to bring to the table, it is important to understand that the point of view of clients and families of clients are not necessarily identical. In certain instances, for example youth cooperatives or social service cooperatives benefiting adults living with disabilities, it may be important to structure specific governance roles—however limited—for the cooperative beneficiaries themselves that are separate from their families, as a means to gain insights and build capacity.

**Institutional Purchasers:** Another important sub-set of consumers is that of institutional purchasers. In some cases, such as hospitals, nursing homes, or even restaurants, the purchaser of food products is different from the person who will be ultimately consuming it. In these instances, it may be important to craft a membership category to represent the interests and perspective of institutional buyers because of the profound effect they may have on the chain of supply and demand. In the Producers & Buyers Co-op profiled on page 32, for example, a local hospital played a pivotal role in helping to rebuild the local food system by putting its substantial buying power to work through a cooperative organized with local producers. Not only were the hospital's purchasing dollars important, but the clout of having such a well-regarded local institution as a founding member of the cooperative helped to raise their profile in the local community and convince other healthcare and educational institutions to get involved—something that producers on their own would have had a much more difficult time achieving.

**Producers:** Another major class of traditional cooperative user-members is producers. Most often, producers' cooperatives have referred to agricultural producers, who band together to process and/or market their goods. Producer cooperatives can also be formed by groups of artisans, however, or anyone one else for that matter bringing a particular good to market. Similarly to the way consumers bring the perspective of the “demand” side of the market equation to the table, producers bring the “supply” perspective, including their intimate knowledge of sub-markets, supply channels, production parameters and the actual cost of taking something from idea to reality. Producers' commitment and investment in the cooperative can vary from intensive to fairly superficial, depending upon the number and ease of their alternative distribution and sales channels.

**Groups of Producers:** Depending on the industry, some multi-stakeholder cooperatives create a different membership classification for groups of producers or aggregators of product as opposed to individual producers themselves. Pictoretank, for example, a French multi-stakeholder photography cooperative profiled on page 30, has membership classifications both for individual photographers, and for collectives of photographers who work together.

**Intermediaries: Processors, Distributors etc.:** Another group of players that may warrant a seat at the cooperative table are those individuals and businesses which help bring consumers and producers together by processing, distributing, or otherwise handling product in important intermediary stages. Some cooperatives would simply hire such functions out, as they would many other tasks in their production process. In other cooperatives however, these intermediary functions are viewed as vital elements of local infrastructure necessary to build producer capacity and enhance the entire supply chain. In such cases, having representatives from each element of the supply chain at the same table would be deemed critical to the cooperatives success. Fifth Season Cooperative profiled on page 40 is an example of a co-op where processors and distributors are each a separate membership class.

## Worker Membership Classes

**Workers:** In places like Quebec which has specific enabling legislation for multi-stakeholder cooperatives, workers are singled out as a special class of Stakeholder because of the central role they play in the execution of the co-op's vision and implementation of its strategy. Some practitioners find that having workers (particularly non-management workers) serve on the board is difficult because it



## INTRODUCTION

“ In a multi-stake holder model the decision is more informed because it is all encompassing. Worker members can bring their experiences from the sales floor and a retail store, so having multiple members brings more perspectives to the board room . . . it gives me connection to Weaver Street as a whole. Not just a job or a place of employment, but more connected to what we do for the community, consumers and workers.”

*Curt Brinkmeyer, worker-owner and board member,  
Weaver Street Market*

puts them in a potentially conflictual role when it comes time to evaluate the chief executive. Other cooperatives find that it is quite possible to structure around these potential difficulties by, for example, having an employee-director recuse him or herself from sensitive personnel discussions. Many find that the industry information and perspective that can be provided by a director who spends 40 plus hours a week in pursuit of the cooperative’s mission as opposed to a few hours a month is invaluable. Some CEOs would be very uncomfortable having an employee serve as a cooperative director, and certainly it would take

a special kind of CEO to see the value of this arrangement and put it to use to the benefit of the co-op. Many would argue, however, that it takes a special kind of CEO to manage a multi-stakeholder cooperative overall, and that a leader with the communication and interpersonal skills to manage an organization with many competing perspectives at the table would also be the kind of leader who could productively handle having employees as directors as well. Eroski, the distribution arm of the famous Mondragon cooperatives in Spain (page 35) is probably the largest multi-stakeholder cooperatives in the world with half a million members and a board evenly divided between workers and consumers. Weaver Street Market (page 29), one of the oldest multi-stakeholder cooperatives in the U.S., has made use of a joint worker-consumer model for over 20 years.

**Professional Employees:** Certainly many conventional corporations have the CEO serve on the board of directors, and some companies, particularly smaller, privately held ones, might also have other executive employees like the CFO or COO serve as well. This arrangement is not generally practiced by cooperatives, however, which do not tend to favor such a concentration of power even if it were permissible in the bylaws. Some multi-stakeholder cooperatives, however, were founded by a class of professional employees such as doctors or social workers, and may well have representatives of that professional class of worker serve in a governance role in addition to other stakeholders. HealthPartners, for example, a nonprofit healthcare organization was first founded in the 1950’s as a collaboration between local doctors and consumers to find a better way to organize and pay for healthcare. It is still governed under a multi-stakeholder model which includes both doctors and consumers. Their story is on page 37.

### Supporter Member Classes

**Community Members:** Many multi-stakeholder cooperatives make a place in their structure for supportive community members to participate. While these individuals do not play a specific role in the day-to-day life of the cooperative the way that employees, consumers or producers do, they are often willing and able to invest money, volunteer time and/or specific expertise to help the co-op succeed. The ability to attract additional start-up funds is the main reason that many multi-stakeholder



cooperatives chose to add a community supporter category to their membership classification. Another oft-cited reason for including community members is the “political capital” they can bring. Well-regarded local players can bring their existing networks and relationships to bear for the benefit of the cooperative, helping to raise the co-op’s profile in a positive way and giving immediate credibility to the enterprise. Bringing business or industry expertise to a new or struggling co-op is another advantage of a community membership class. Particularly if the other members of the co-op have limited business or governance experience, the addition to the board of one or two local community members with business acumen and discipline can add a dose of perspective, balance and reflection to a board that would otherwise be made up of a single class of members. Solidarity multi-stakeholder cooperatives in Quebec are the fastest growing kind of new cooperatives and many organizers specifically chose this structure in order to take advantage of the supporter membership classification.

Supporter members, as the name implies, are involved in the cooperative in order to support the primary membership base. As such, they often take a back seat to the other member classes in terms of governance seats and surplus distribution rights etc. At the same time, members of the supporter class are seen to be an important element in the success of the co-op, vital enough not to be treated as silent partners, but given a real role in the business. The PACE cooperative profiled on page 35 uses its supporter member category to provide a role for individuals who have graduated from its employment services to keep an active connection to the co-op. Black Star Co-op Pub and Brewery in Austin, Texas (p. 44) added this category to both raise capital and solidify its relationship to the local community.

**Investor Members:** In the last 10 years, several U.S. states have adopted special “limited cooperative association” (LCA) statutes that allow for the creation of an investor class of cooperative member in addition to the primary class of producers or consumers. However, these statutes differ substantially from the multi-stakeholder cooperative statutes that exist in other countries in several key respects. While they do allow for one or perhaps more additional membership classes, LCA statutes have a very different orientation from the European or Quebecois solidarity co-op statutes in that the sole purpose for the addition of membership classes under LCAs is to attract investment capital. Thus the acknowledged “stake” of additional classes of members in the LCA-type co-op is limited to a financial one. In addition, most multi-stakeholder cooperatives elsewhere severely limit the ability of outside “supporter” members to participate in the economic gains from the co-op, and some even forbid it entirely. LCA cooperatives

on the other hand, specifically allow for the distribution of net earnings based upon investment contribution as well as patronage and place no limits on investor returns. LCA statutes continue to be controversial in the U.S. co-op community because of their apparent legitimization of a speculative investment motivation within the cooperative structure and for whatever the reason, they have not

**“Joining workers and user in the same organization allows mutual balance of supply and demand. This structure is also a new way to use volunteer and activist resources, which reinforce the values of altruism and reciprocity... solidarity cooperatives are an original means of reconstructing the link between the economic and the social spheres”**

*Jean-Pierre Girard, Canadian expert on cooperative development*

## INTRODUCTION

been widely used.

It is possible, however, to make use of these special U.S. statutes to introduce a kind of “investor” member which is, in fact, at heart a supporter member. Affordable housing cooperatives, for example, often have difficulty attracting public subsidies in the U.S. because they are not structured as charitable nonprofits. A nonprofit housing organization could use a multi-stakeholder approach to this problem by using their nonprofit status to be the recipient of subsidy funds from a grantor, and then use the limited cooperative association model to join a housing cooperative as an investor member. The housing nonprofit would invest the subsidy funds as an investor member, and then use its governance powers within the cooperative to assure the grantor that the subsidy funds would be used for their intended purpose. More information about Limited Cooperative Association statutes can be found in Appendix C.

TABLE 1

### Variations in Potential Multi-Stakeholder Membership Classes

	<b>Short Term Need</b>	<b>Long Term Objective</b>	<b>Non-financial Contribution</b>	<b>Equity Contribution</b>	<b>Stake in Outcome</b>
<b>Consumers</b>	Accessible location and price	Access to specialized good or services; predictable pricing, supply	Purchasing power	Generally low	Low-high, depending on alternative supply sources
<b>Producers</b>	Production costs covered	Reduced risk; sustainable source of income; market development	Industry knowledge; specialized product	Medium-high	Low-high, depending on alternate distribution channels
<b>Workers</b>	Reliable work; fair wage	Safe, respectful, gainful employment	Industry knowledge; firm-specific knowledge	Low-medium	High
<b>Community Members</b>	Existence of resource in community	Healthy and vibrant local economy	Possible special expertise	Low-sometimes quite high	Low-medium

# BALANCING INTERESTS

## ALLOCATION OF GOVERNANCE RIGHTS

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**O**ne of the most fundamental decisions that members of a multi-stakeholder cooperative will make in writing their bylaws is the allocation of governance rights between different classes of members. Traditional cooperatives abide by the “one member, one vote” rule, and with the exception of some secondary cooperatives (co-ops of co-ops) which may use proportional voting, generally all board seats are elected based upon the individual votes of all of the co-op members.

Multi-stakeholder cooperatives also follow the “one member, one vote” rule, but they often do so within the confines of the number of board seats allocated to each class of members. So, for example, all producers will vote for the producer board seats and all consumers will vote for the consumer board seats, but the number of board seats allocated between those two classes of members will not necessarily be proportional to the number of members in each.

This structuring of voting rights can be a delicate question, but it is an important one and centers around the issue of what, exactly is the “stake” of each stakeholder in the cooperative. While it is important that all classes of members in the co-op be represented in some way, it is also necessary to acknowledge that the some classes of members may have more to contribute and/or may have a more compelling interest in the success of the cooperative, and should therefore perhaps have a proportionately larger number of board seats. For example, community supporter members may be happy to be represented by a small number of board seats even if they represent a relatively large number of members because their stake in the success of the cooperative is less direct than, say, the stake of workers or producers. In Quebec, supporter members are limited to a maximum of one-third of board seats, no matter their number. Individual consumer members may also be content to be

**A successful multi-stakeholder cooperative has inherent in its board structure the “checks and balances” that characterize any successful democracy.**

represented by a smaller number of board seats than their numbers might dictate because they understand that while consumers play a vital role in the food system, their stake in any one retail outlet is perhaps less than that of the workers who make a full-time job of pursuing the success of that single enterprise.

On the other hand, it may benefit a multi-stakeholder food production cooperative to allocate a board seat for institutional buyers such as hospitals or schools even if there are relatively few of those members because the buy-in of this class of members may be so important to the success of the overall co-op. Allocating board seats by virtue of funds invested as traditional corporations do is generally seen to be antithetical to the cooperative ideal, but allocating seats based upon conducting significant business with the cooperative may not be. As in all such things, there is no single correct answer; it is all a question of contribution and balance.

Allocating a set number of board seats for each class of members is the typical way that a multi-stakeholder cooperative works to achieve a balance of interests. It might also be wise, however, to inject a little flexibility in the process. Having an overly rigid classification of board seats might have the unintended consequence of inhibiting rather than encouraging participation by key local leaders whose numbers may not fit neatly into specific categories at all times. Some co-ops have instilled this flexibility for themselves by allowing one or two board seats to come from any class of members, to be elected by the rest of the board. That way, the board can decide if a certain perspective would be useful at one point in its history, but a different perspective at a different time.

As the case studies starting on page 27 as well as the sections describing practice in other countries demonstrate, the procedures in this area varies widely, and there is no single formula for success. A successful multi-stakeholder cooperative has inherent in its board structure the “checks and balances” that characterize any successful democracy. Balancing the interests of different members while encouraging understanding and making sure no one voice is allowed to dominate is the job of the co-op board.

**“A cooperative should not be totalitarian . . . what the co-op members understand is if they work together they are stronger, so the legal framework can adapt to the activity and the vision.”**

*—Philippe Deblauwe, founder and Managing Director, Picturetank*

through our work today?’ a practice that helps to keep disparate parties focusing on a single strategic aim.

Shaping an equitable board structure is thus only the first step in the process of effective multi-stakeholder governing. Just as it is often true when bringing groups with disparate interests together that “good fences make good neighbors”—clear rules and boundaries help people feel secure—these are really only a proxy for a trusting relationship that has not yet been established. Devising a balanced suite of board seats is just the first step in building a trusting relationship between different parties—it cannot be the only one. The balance and trust will be enhanced by the daily actions of the cooperative

The multi-stakeholder cooperative model has been accused of being too complex, but it is also true that life is often complex. Keeping the notion of a single unifying mission of the cooperative at the forefront may help co-op organizers keep from getting bogged down in structural complexities. One multi-stakeholder organization we studied ends each board and committee meeting with the query “have we forwarded our mission

board in sharing information, treating each other with respect, and working diligently to craft solutions that defy a “zero sum game” mentality (if consumer win, then producers must necessarily lose), and instead meet the interests of all stakeholders. A specific commitment to ongoing learning and the hearing different perspectives from both inside and outside the cooperative can also

contribute much to making a healthy cooperative. Hijacking the cooperative in the interests of one’s membership class is never okay. If each class of members does not feel that the other classes of members understand their situation and have “got their back” in some way, then a successful multi-stakeholder venture will be hard to pull off.

Building trust between the members and the board and between different members of the board will be enhanced by sound overall governance practice including adherence to a written board code of conduct. A discussion of cooperative governance is beyond the scope of this text, but a brief guide to effective board members, effective meetings and a sample code of conduct are included in appendices D, E and F.

**The balance and trust will be enhanced by the daily actions of the cooperative board in sharing information, treating each other with respect, and working diligently to craft solutions that defy a “zero sum game” mentality, and instead meet the interests of all stakeholders.**

## DISTRIBUTION OF SURPLUS

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**A** related question to the allocation of governance rights is the distribution of surplus. In traditional cooperatives, distribution of any surplus is generally a function of patronage. Consumers who buy more from the cooperative or producers who sell more to the cooperatives will be allocated proportionate shares of any surplus. For multi-stakeholder cooperatives, this issue again is more complex. Participation and patronage happen differently for different classes of members, and rights to the distribution of any surplus in a multi-stakeholder cooperative may or may not correspond to the allocation of governance rights. A co-op may decide, for example, to pay community members who make a large financial contribution something akin to a preferred dividend (thus paying their share of surplus before everyone else’s) but give them only limited governance rights. Alternately, a cooperative may decide that the bulk of any available surplus belongs first and foremost to those whose livelihood depends on the financial success of the cooperative, a class that would generally include the workers in an industrial or service enterprise and producers in a marketing or value-added production cooperative. The co-op also must decide what portion of surplus is paid to members in stock and what in cash, and also whether some portion will be kept within the organization as surplus that belongs to the co-op itself and is not allocated to any membership class.

As with governance rights, there are many possibilities with no single practice being “right.” What is important is that distribution of surplus happens fairly and equitably between participants within each class of membership, and that the interests of different membership classes are balanced in a way that promotes the overall health of the cooperative. Distribution of surplus is a key decision made by the cooperative board at the end of every fiscal year, and it is not an automatic process—each year the board must analyze annual financial performance and weight the financial desires of the members vs.

the needs of the co-op itself, and make an appropriate decision. The results of this decision may differ from year to year, depending upon circumstances.

## DISSOLUTION AND TRANSFER RIGHTS

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**W**hile no founding board member wants to talk about the dissolution of their cooperative, it is a fact that not every cooperative succeeds. One of the most important decisions that a founding board will make is to decide under what conditions membership shares may be transferred during the life of the co-op, and how assets will be distributed in the event of dissolution. This is particularly important in the case of multi-stakeholder cooperatives that embrace different classes of members whose financial interests—like consumers’ interest in lower prices and producers’ interest in higher ones—do not always coincide in the short term. Limiting the ability of members to transfer their membership rights without the explicit approval of the board will help the co-op ensure that all stock holders are also all stakeholders.

Co-op founders might also consider incorporating a specific commitment to community solidarity within their co-op’s organizing documents by mandating that in the event of a sale or dissolution, the bulk of any surplus value beyond member’s capital contributions and perhaps a reasonable return be donated to an appropriate organization with a similar mission rather than being distributed to the members individually. In a multi-stakeholder cooperative, this could be done by providing a special membership classification for an appropriate designated nonprofit or cooperative development entity at the outset, with the provision that while this nonprofit member could never be allowed to force dissolution on the other membership classes, it would receive the bulk of assets in the event the co-op were broken up or sold. Such a structure would remove any incentive that one class of members may have to sell a financially successful cooperative for the divided value of the assets rather than keeping it intact and working to provide jobs and services for the other membership classes in perpetuity.

This notion of “indivisible reserves,” that is, reserves that remain forever intact and directed toward community benefit rather than divided for individual return, is one of the hallmarks of the immensely successful Italian cooperative movement, and one of the major reasons that cooperatives in that country continue to grow and prosper year and after year. It is also an element of the equally impressive cooperative movement in Quebec (see page 20). In both these cases, the cooperative movements in those countries have managed to acquire important tax breaks to incent such community-minded behavior. Similar tax provisions are significantly lacking in the U.S. where the tax code actually does the opposite and provides an incentive for the distribution of surplus to individual co-op members rather than keeping it working for the co-op as a whole. It is important to note, however, that in all three of the most successful cooperative development systems in the world—Northern Italy, Mondragon, Spain and Quebec—the practice of foregoing the distribution of some portion of surplus to individual members in favor of retaining it within the co-op to foster long term job creation notably predates any tax incentives to do so. That is, the co-ops in these regions proved that their system of balancing the economic needs of current and future generations created better results for members, the co-op and the surrounding community, and only later did the government recognize this and create tax provisions to encourage more such behavior.



Multi-stakeholder cooperatives are an area of considerable and creative experimentation in the U.S. with a number of new co-ops emerging with the specific aim of reformulating economic relations in ways that are more supportive of a more stable and healthy local economy. Providing a living example of a more considered and rational method for the long-term application and distribution of assets may be another way that these co-ops could lead the rest of the cooperative movement in fruitful new directions.

## THE SOLIDARITY DIFFERENCE

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**C**omparing the Multi-stakeholder Model to others common business structures, the multi-stakeholder cooperative model differs in a number of important respects from other commonly used business forms:

### Conventional Corporations

Conventional stock corporations allocate both governance rights and profits based upon the amount of capital invested in the business—the more capital, the more control. While any stakeholder group including workers, consumers or community members may become stock holders by purchasing shares of stock in a publicly traded enterprise, their standing in the corporation in that case stems solely from their financial participation and not from their standing as members of any other group.

Conventional corporations do not have a structural commitment to the well-being of any particular geographic community or group of people and in fact will often cite their commitment to “maximize shareholder return” as the reason for disinvestment in a particular plant or locality, transferring capital to other operations or ventures deemed more profitable.

A small but growing minority of conventional corporations today however, are re-evaluating the Profit At All Costs stance and embracing some kind of commitment to ethical business behavior, however that is defined. While this generally does not involve any change to conventional governance or distribution rights which are still capital-based, it does begin to acknowledge the potential importance of maintaining good relationships with other stakeholder groups. In the aftermath of the global financial crisis of 2008 sparked in large part by the overly aggressive pursuit of profits by large financial corporations, a group of students at Harvard Business School proposed that newly minted MBAs adopt a new “MBA Oath” committing themselves to ethical actions in business. Interestingly, the first version of this oath penned in 2009 contained a multi-stakeholder commitment to “safeguard the interests of my shareholders, co-workers, customers and the society in which we operate.” By the following year however, a new version of the oath had dropped the commitment

**“For systems that are as precious and complex as local foods, the metaphor of the invisible hand of the market has too many flaws. When rebuilding local food systems, you need to have diverse interests at the table and in an ongoing relationship of equals (as fellow members). This is an ongoing learning relationship, and what better way to foster that than to have a co-equal ownership stake.”**

*—Margaret Bau,  
USDA Cooperative Development Specialist*



to both co-workers and society at large<sup>2</sup> suggesting that the idea of taking a multi-stakeholder perspective and making an affirmative commitment to the welfare of employees and the community is still a stretch for many conventional business practitioners.

### Nonprofit Organizations

Charitable nonprofit organizations may share many of the values and objectives of an emerging multi-stakeholder cooperative, including job creation, community development, environmental stewardship, and improved care and facilities for children, the elderly, and those living with disabilities. While the mission of some nonprofits and cooperatives may be similar, however, their activities and the way they carry out that mission will likely differ significantly.

One of the most important differences between cooperatives and nonprofits is that a cooperative board is bound to pursue the interests of the general welfare with its activities, while a cooperative board is bound to pursue the interests of its own particular membership. Nonprofit organizations do not have mandated voting rights for different classes of stakeholders, and in fact, in the U.S. it is relatively rare for a nonprofit to be controlled by a board made up of service beneficiaries. Many nonprofits involve no beneficiaries in governance at all. Cooperatives, on the other hand, will always have cooperative beneficiaries or patrons not only on their board, but with a controlling interest. Nonprofits are also not permitted to distribute surplus or profits to beneficiaries directly, and in the event of dissolution, all remaining assets go to another nonprofit corporation. Cooperatives may choose to retain certain assets collectively, but that is a choice they make, and most cooperatives distribute at least some annual surplus to members directly. Finally, cooperatives are generally seen by their members as economic engines, business ventures that work for the economic benefit of their membership. Nonprofits generally rely on charitable contributions and grants from outside organizations and individuals rather than market-based business revenue to sustain their activities.

While these differences in governance and market orientation between a nonprofit organization and a social service cooperative may not be apparent to a casual observer, they are often very important to cooperative members as the PACE case study on page 35 illustrates. That said, nonprofits that do embrace a multi-stakeholder governance approach have more similarities than differences compared with true multi-stakeholder cooperatives. Group Health, the founding organization cited in the example on page 37, was originally started by a group of credit union, cooperative and labor leaders who had the cooperative model in mind for their new venture. When state law changed to mandate that all healthcare plans operating in the state must be nonprofits however, Group Health changed its legal status to comply. It retained its consumer-doctor governance model however, and functions very effectively in a multi-stakeholder manner.

A good portion of the growing number of solidarity cooperatives in Quebec (see page 20) are the result of the conversion of nonprofit organizations to solidarity cooperatives.<sup>3</sup> And in Italy, a large number of social service cooperatives involved groups of volunteers and other stakeholders in various

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<sup>2</sup> See Skapinker, M. "Should MBAs do the perp walk?", *Financial Times*, September 20, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> See Girard, J-P (2004) "Solidarity Cooperatives in Quebec (Canada): an Overview" in: C. Borzaga and R. Spear (Eds.), *Trends and Challenges for Co-operatives and Social Enterprises in Developed and Transition Countries*, Edizioni 31, Trento, Italy.

ways even before the introduction of special enabling legislation<sup>4</sup> formally creating a multi-stakeholder cooperative status.

## Other Kinds of Cooperatives

Much has already been said about the differences between a single-perspective or single-purpose cooperative and one that embraces two or more competing or complimentary groups of members. An additional point might be made however about the differences between a multi-stakeholder co-op model with a community membership category and one organized under one of the new state Limited Cooperative Associations (LCAs) statutes which allow newly formed cooperatives to add a category of “investor members” to the traditional category of patron members. The primary difference to keep in mind here is that under LCA statutes, the relationship that investors members have with the cooperative is purely financial and the benefit that they are seen to be able to bring is limited to investment capital. The poverty of this view is apparent when compared to the multi-stakeholder perspective of community membership where these supporter members are expected to bring a wealth of resources including their good will, expertise, information and relationships to bear for the benefit of the cooperative in addition to any capital investment, however large or small.<sup>5</sup> While other members of a multi-stakeholder cooperative, particularly those with a direct stake in the day-to-day operations of the business (producers in a marketing cooperative or workers in a manufacturing enterprise for example) may have financial return as a motivating factor for joining up with others in the co-op, community supporter members in a multi-stakeholder co-op will rarely, if ever, cite financial return as a primary motivating factor for their involvement.

LCA’s also do not embody the idea of systemic change that is so important to many multi-stakeholder cooperatives. LCA statutes, in fact, have the stated objective of allowing cooperatives to behave more like conventional corporations at least in terms of their capital structure, rather than less. Multi-stakeholder cooperatives, in contrast, are often formed to create a viable alternative to the way that economic transactions are structured in an investor-dominant or government-driven model.

## Limited Liability Companies (LLCs)

Since the advent of limited liability company statutes (LLC), many producer groups in the United States that might previously have organized as cooperatives have formed instead as LLCs. LLC statutes differ by state, but in general they allow for the same beneficial taxation status as cooperatives (avoidance of the “double taxation” on dividends taxed at the corporate level and then once again at the individual investor level) while offering a great deal of flexibility in terms of the allocation of governance rights and distribution of surplus. What the LLC does not allow for, however, is the retention of any capital for the ongoing use of the enterprise as opposed to its members. In an LLC, all profits are fully distributed to members every year. While this works effectively for a group of

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<sup>4</sup> Borzaga, C. and Santuarie, A. (2004) Italy: From “Traditional Co-operatives in Innovative Social Enterprises,” in C. Borzaga and J. Defourny (Eds.) *The Emergence of Social Enterprise*, Routledge, New York, New York: 166-181.

<sup>5</sup> For a scathing review of LCAs, see Lushin, L. (2010) “A Trojan Horse in our Midst,” *Cooperative Grocer* (November-December 2010).

individuals or organizations whose motivation to band together is essentially transactional, it does not work as well for a group with a more overarching long term aim, such as the retention of community jobs, transformation of patient care practices or re-building of the local food system. These kinds of objectives take patient capital, which is not something the LLC model is designed to accommodate.

## OTHER WAYS TO SHARE INFORMATION, INVITE PARTICIPATION

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**F**ormally sharing governance rights in a multi-stakeholder cooperative is not the only way to engage a broader community in the pursuit of a common goal. Sometimes, after fruitful initial discussions, members of different stakeholder groups find that while there is some common ground between them, there is not sufficient common interest to contemplate going into business together. One group of stakeholders, for example, may be afraid of the risks involved in sharing enterprise control with members outside of their own group; others may have a benign interest in the success of the co-op, but not enough to interest them in the responsibilities of being part of the governance structure. In these situations it is not necessary to give up on the idea of a shared vision just because a common enterprise seems unworkable. Some other ways of involving a variety of willing constituents include:

### Preferred Stock

Many U.S. cooperatives already involve outside community members in the success of their co-op by offering the sale of preferred shares. These shares offer no voting rights and pay below-market rates of interest, but offer a way for the co-op to raise flexible capital while giving community members a tangible way to literally “buy into” the co-op’s articulated vision of fair trade, a sustainable local economy or whatever other community-minded mission they have chosen to pursue. Offering preferred shares is not a simple process. Offerings are usually limited to residents of a particular state, are more restricted for non-producer as opposed to producer cooperatives, and should never be attempted without the advice of sound local legal counsel with expertise in securities issues. That said, for a single-class cooperative just looking for a way to raise more funds from a sympathetic local community, preferred stock may be the easiest way to go.

### Advisory Boards

Even if they are not allotted any formal governance rights, many organizations find it fruitful to convene regular meetings of key stakeholders to share information, gather input and build support for their activities. Many nonprofits in healthcare or social services for example, make use of an advisory board made up of patients, clients, and/or the family members of such to advise them on care issues. The benefit of an advisory board is, of course, that it allows for a relatively wide variety of input with very little risk. The downsides are the same—advisory board agendas are general limited to only certain issues so members never get a full understanding of the business, nor does the organization’s board gain the advantage of hearing the perspective of patients or clients on a wider variety of issues. Participation on an advisory board may also be anemic since members have no real power to effect change.

## Labor-Management Committees/Works Councils

Companies that are reluctant for whatever reason to grant employees full ownership or governance rights might make use of a special internal committee which is given responsibility for dealing with certain shop floor issues. This is sometimes seen in unionized settings, but could be successfully implemented anywhere.

## Partnerships

Sometimes two or more groups of stakeholders find they have some common interests, but that those interests are limited to a certain set of activities. In such cases, it may be wise for the parties to structure a way to come together in a partnership around a specific opportunity, but not to merge their business interests entirely.

At La Montanita consumer food cooperative in Albuquerque, New Mexico, for example, “buying local” was a key value of the consumer membership and an important differentiator for the co-op in their local marketplace. The Co-op’s commitment to buy more local produce, however, was stymied by frustrating bottlenecks in the existing distribution network of small producers. In answer to this problem, the Co-op set up a new distribution center where they now work in partnership with local producers to stimulate the production of regionally produced goods in general within a 300 mile radius of their store. The distribution center not only serves La Montanita’s needs, but also helps small growers to more effectively brand their wares and develop relationships with other retail outlets in addition to the food co-op. The distribution center was not formed as a multi-stakeholder cooperative, but has the affect of assisting players throughout the distribution chain.

Weaver Street Market (page 29) a multi-stakeholder cooperative itself, also played a key role in the creation of Eastern Carolina Organics (page 36), a multi-stakeholder co-op of organic farmers and co-op employees. In some cases, a key customer like La Montanita or Weaver Street may become a member of a new multi-stakeholder cooperative, in other cases they may be just an important outside supporter and guide.

## Limited Use of LLCs

If the membership of a cooperative is interested in a more formal partnership with an outside party, but only under a limited set of circumstances or for a limited set of activities, an LLC can also be useful. Rather than converting or forming the entire venture as a multi-member LLC however, in this case the single-member stakeholder group might opt instead to only form an LLC with other parties for that certain limited purpose. This strategy has been used by single-membership cooperatives, for example, when the members have wanted to bring an investor into partial ownership of a building or other expensive facility, yet not allow that investor influence over the members’ core business. Other co-ops have also used this model to gain critical expertise in sophisticated business activities such as the marketing of a lucrative brand, while preserving the ultimate control of that brand for the producer-members alone. One limitation of this strategy for a co-op is that the LLC would not be permitted to market itself as a cooperative, although the original LLC member cooperative of course could continue to do so for its core activities.

# M S C s I N P R A C T I C E

## THE CASE OF QUEBEC

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In a world with many exemplary cooperative stories, the Canadian province of Quebec deserves special mention as a place where provincial government, local citizens, and the established cooperative movement have worked together in a most effective way to build a true cooperative economy. The soil of Quebec is truly fertile ground for cooperative development. Not surprisingly, Quebec is also a place where multi-stakeholder cooperatives have flourished, especially those that actively involve community members as stakeholders.<sup>6</sup>

Quebec boasts some 3,300 cooperatives and mutual with a total of 8.8 million members, which is more than the total population of the province for of course many people belong to more than one co-op. Co-ops in Quebec employ nearly 90,000 people and the Desjardin credit union and the Coopérative fédérée de Québec respectively are the first and fifth largest employers in the province. Cooperatives have a strong presence in rural Quebec, where nearly 70% of jobs with non-financial (that is, all cooperatives except for credit unions and insurance) are located outside the large urban centers of Montréal, Laval and Quebec City. Many of these jobs are in food processing or forestry.

Cooperative entrepreneurship has been a targeted economic development strategy in Quebec for more than a century, and the provincial government has actively sought to encourage cooperative development in a variety of ways. The government and co-op movement cooperate to provide “one stop” help for technical assistance and financing, and since 1985 co-op members in certain sectors can receive special tax deductions or investing

**“Cooperative entrepreneurship rests on the involvement and commitment of people in the community. Cooperatives are created by and for the community, and are also very rooted in the community, which helps maximize local economic benefits”**

*–Quebec Ministry of Economic Development, Innovation and Exportation*

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<sup>6</sup> Statistical data from Ministère de Développement Économique de l’Innovation et de l’Exportation du Québec, (June 2010) Support for Cooperative Development (Orientation and Results).

in their cooperatives. In 2009-2010 this provision channeled over \$31.5 million (Canadian) in new shareholder equity into eligible cooperatives. Co-op members are also allowed to defer tax on their patronage dividends if the dividends are reinvested in the cooperative. Both of these provisions have resulted in significant member investment into cooperative ventures.

Beginning in 2003, government assistance to the cooperative movement was further strengthened and refocused and the results have been impressive. Since 2006 over 50% of new cooperatives in Canada have been founded in Quebec, even though the province represents less than 24% of the population. Over the period of 1997 to 2007 the number of jobs in non-financial cooperatives in in Quebec rose by an average annual rate of 5.4% per year. During this same period, job growth in the overall economy in Quebec was less than half that rate, at an average of 2.1% per year. A 2008 study by the Quebec Ministry of Economic Development, Innovation and Exportation also found that the business survival rate for cooperatives was also approximately double that for other businesses. The ten year survival rate for co-ops was over 44% compared with only 19.5% for other kinds of businesses. Local experts attribute this high rate of survival to high level of support in the areas of both planning and operations that new co-ops receive during the critical start-up phase.

The Quebecois Cooperative Act allows for the formation of five different kinds of non-financial cooperatives including:

- Consumer cooperatives
- Producer cooperatives
- Worker cooperatives
- Worker shareholder cooperatives
- Solidarity, or multi-stakeholder cooperatives

Solidarity co-ops can include three basic classifications of membership: users of the service provided by the co-op; co-op employees, and increasingly individuals and organizations that share the cooperative's economic and social objectives who join as supporting members. Each of these categories of members can have sub-categories within it. Solidarity co-ops in Quebec are particularly active in the fields of home care, social services, arts and culture, and recreation as well as other services. Today, close to 95% of healthcare co-ops in Quebec are organized as solidarity cooperatives.<sup>7</sup> Over 70% of solidarity co-ops in Quebec in general are in enterprises related to providing direct services of some

T A B L E 2

### Number of Solidarity Cooperatives in Quebec by Sector (July 2007)

Leisure	45
Personal Services	37
Social Services	37
Other Services	24
Business Services	22
Arts and Entertainment	21
Accommodations/Food Services	18
Commerce	16
Housing	13
Food Stores	13
Farming	10
Recycling	9
Printing/Editing	8
Consulting	7
Education	7
Computing	6
Forestry	6
Economic Development	6
Daycare Centers	5
Arts and Crafts	3
Manufacturing	3
Utilities	3
All Other	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>327</b>

Source: Ministère de Développement économique de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation du Québec, Direction des coopératives (Cooperative Department).



kind to people, bringing together users (or their families) and providers together in the interest of providing a sustainable, high quality benefit to members.

Solidarity co-ops have become particularly prominent in rural Quebec. In addition to rural healthcare where solidarity co-ops have a very strong presence, interest in using the solidarity cooperative model for providing “proximity services” (that is, gas stations, grocery stores, cafes and other necessary services everyone wants to have in close proximity) is also growing as residents see the need to draw upon community members broadly in the interest of maintaining a minimum basic level of services.

Originally the 1997 enabling legislation for solidarity co-ops required that they involve all three groups of users, workers and supporters. Many potential cooperators found this requirement cumbersome however and in 2005 the law was changed to allow for solidarity co-ops to be made up of only two of the three groups. Since then, solidarity co-ops have become the fastest growing kind of cooperative in Quebec.

Board seats are elected from within the membership of each group where each class elects the number of board seats allocated to it in the co-op’s bylaws. Supporter members are not permitted to hold more than one-third of board seats however, no matter how large their numbers. Outside board members are permitted as well, but their numbers are counted against the supporter class one-third limitation, so two-thirds of the board must always be made up of either user or worker members or a combination of the two. Surpluses are distributed among user members according to patronage (sales to or purchases from the co-op) and worker members according to hours worked or salary. Supporter members in Quebec do not get a distribution of surplus, but they are permitted to purchase preferred shares which pay a dividend rate. Until recently, Quebec law required that the entire membership of a cooperative vote to approve the board’s recommended plan for distribution of annual surplus; now the board is permitted to make that decision on their own, but in practice many solidarity cooperatives continue the practice of presenting the plan for surplus distribution to the entire membership for approval.

While the experience with solidarity co-ops in Quebec has been impressive, they are not without their difficulties. One experienced developer observed that the mission or “raison d’être” of the solidarity co-op is absolutely critical for the maintenance of the cooperative—otherwise, the interests of a single class of membership can become too strong. In fact, the difficulty of balancing the interests of three different interest groups was one of the things that led to the 2005 change in provincial law allowing solidarity cooperatives to be formed by representatives of only two rather than all three categories of membership groups.

Co-op practitioners in Quebec also noted that solidarity co-ops require both senior management and boards of directors to be particularly adept at managing diverse interests and perspectives, something that many of them have not had the training to do. Early data indicate, however, that solidarity cooperatives in Quebec seem to be handling these challenges. They do not, for example, appear to be accessing mediation services any more often than board members of other kinds of cooperatives. Thus it may well be that, whatever the additional responsibilities intrinsic in a multi-

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<sup>7</sup> Girard, J-P. (2009) “Solidarity Co-operatives (Quebec, Canada):How Social Enterprises can Combine Social and Economic Goals” in Noya, A. (Ed.), *The Changing Boundaries of Social Enterprises*: 261.



stakeholder board, members of these boards have been able to rise to meet them, at least to the same degree as their peers in other kinds of co-ops.<sup>8</sup> There is still, however, very little data on this topic.

Despite the apparent challenges, more and more people in Quebec are choosing the flexibility of a solidarity or multi-stakeholder approach when organizing a new cooperative venture. And while solidarity co-ops are most prominent in the Quebec economy as a vehicle for providing healthcare and other social services, the table on page 21 demonstrates the wide variety of industries in which these co-ops currently operate, from recycling to food stores to farming, while the case study on page 27 of Boisaco also illustrates that the model can work very successfully for forestry and manufacturing as well as social services.

### **SCICs—the French Multi-Stakeholder Option**

Across the Atlantic, the French cooperative movement is venturing into the multi-stakeholder model as well. While France has long had a robust cooperative infrastructure of their own, in 2001 they looked across the border to the success of their Italian neighbors and their new “social co-ops” and created a French version of this innovation called Société coopérative d’intérêt collectif or SCICs. French entrepreneurs with a social agenda are exploring this new structure as a way to embrace the interest of all members in a given community.

Like the social cooperatives in Italy, the mission of SCIC’s are aimed at serving the community at large rather than one classified group or membership. Their activities to date range from social services to tourism to the arts. Examples include a company called Websourd, which creates software that provides online translation in sign language for the deaf, to a PictureTank, photo agency in Paris profiled on page 30. SCICs have the option of bringing together users, workers, investors, supporters and volunteers into local initiatives, or only some of the above. All SCICs however, must incorporate at least worker and user membership classifications at a minimum. By law, all SCICs are required to abide by the common cooperative rule of one member, one vote. There is flexibility, however, in the distribution of votes among the groups of members, referred to in France as member “colleges.” No college can have more than 50% of the vote nor less than 10% in any given co-op.

In order to maintain the social mission of these cooperatives, return on investment is capped to parallel the average interest paid on private bonds. Financial contributors also receive handsome tax breaks designed to encourage such local investment. France’s cooperative law requires that SCICs reinvest at least 57.7 % of their surplus back into their indivisible reserves in order to safeguard the longevity of the enterprise. Similar to Italian law, there is protection from demutualization for these particular kinds of social enterprises by requiring that all liquidated assets be distributed among organizations or businesses with comparable social objectives.

Since 2001, there have only been a handful of SCIC incorporations, so the idea is still being tested. Supporters are hopeful that as the idea becomes better known, SCICs will become a more widely-used tool for community development and social entrepreneurship, giving people a tool for nurturing local enterprises and, as one SCIC member put it, “making milk for their communities.”

<sup>8</sup> See Girard (2004): 8.

## Italian “Social Cooperatives”

The Italian cooperative movement has prospered since the 1940s, but it was not until the 1970s that Italian cooperators began to explore the idea of multi-member cooperatives, particularly for the provision of social services. The first law governing such co-ops was proposed in 1981, but the final version was not passed until ten years later, following a great deal of debate and experimentation.

Like the governments of many other Western European nations, the late 20th century saw the Italian government in retreat from its past practice of providing a broad degree of social services directly, and looking anxiously for alternatives to stem the growing cost of its social welfare system. Italians were understandably nervous about turning over such vital services to a purely profit-based private market. Volunteers emerged to fill some of the gap, but a long term solution only arose with the formal development of a third way, a cooperative approach through their new social solidarity or “social co-op” model. The 1991 law outlines specific rights and benefits that accrued to the cooperative and its different membership classes, formalizes its connection to the local community and creates a framework for positive government support.

Social co-ops in Italy come in two varieties—Type A and Type B. Type A social co-ops are those co-ops which provide services in the health sector, social and cultural industries, as well as education. Type A co-ops are the majority of social cooperatives, representing about 59% of the total. Type B cooperatives’ objectives are employing segments in society that are often marginalized or difficult to integrate into traditional job markets. These co-ops must have at least 30% of their workforce coming from disadvantaged groups, including the handicapped, ex-offenders, troubled youth, recovering addicts and the elderly. About a third of social co-ops are Type B, while the remainder are a combination of the two types.

In all social cooperatives, membership can consist of classes of workers, users, investors, supporters such as public institutions, and volunteers. All cooperatives abide by the one member, one vote rule. Cooperatives that include volunteers are restricted from having that class exceed 50% of the total membership, and volunteers’ work can only be complementary to paid employees. While volunteer members played a crucial role in the launch of the social cooperative sector, lately their numbers have been dwindling. However, the role of non-volunteer, non-worker community “supporter” members has remained strong, and are a consistent source of both capital and important links to the local community.

Like other types of cooperatives born from the Italy experience, social cooperatives are supported by various sector federations and consortia, operating as second tier cooperatives at the provincial, regional and national levels. These apex organizations provide everything from technical assistance and training to shared resources. For social co-ops, which are generally small, averaging less than 50 workers each, they also provide a means for these co-ops to achieve economies of scale through joint bidding. Since the majority of projects undertaken by these enterprises are contracts with local municipalities, if a cooperative wants to bid on a larger contract, they can do so by joining with their peers through the aggregated support structure.

In addition to the enjoying the advantage of a sophisticated cooperative support network, social cooperatives in Italy also benefit from various tax advantages. Type B social cooperatives, for example, do not pay payroll taxes if they hire certain percentage of disadvantaged groups. In addition, all social

cooperatives receive a 25% reduction on land and mortgage taxes.

A perceived weakness of the model as practiced thus far is the reliance of social co-ops on the state, as the majority of them have government contracts as their major, although not only, source of revenue. On the other hand, the existence of such a reliable and supportive customer base has spurred the growth of social cooperatives which now number several thousand. The shift in focus from the pure “member benefit” orientation of traditional cooperatives to one with a broader community focus was also not without its critics in the Italian cooperative community. Others, however, see Italy’s social co-ops not as a deviation from historical cooperative practice, but rather a return to its roots in the postwar period when cooperatives were seen as a vital tool of economic growth and self-determination for war-weary and impoverished communities across Northern Italy.

Whatever its strengths and limitations, other countries across the world are taking notice of the Italian model, as the social coops continue to pioneer a new frame work for effective multi-stake holder engagement.

## SPECIAL POPULATIONS, NEW MARKETS

**O**ne of the inescapable conclusions one comes to when researching the multi-stakeholder model is that there really is no one multi-stakeholder model. If there were ever a development within the cooperative movement characterized by the diversity of its application, this would be it. Multi-stakeholder cooperatives can be found in a wide range of countries and settings, in large markets and small, in manufacturing, retail, tourism and social services, and boasting stakeholder groups representing anywhere from two constituency groups, to eight or ten or more.

That said, there are some interesting commonalities that appear to be shared by many, although by no means all multi-stakeholder co-ops. Multi-stakeholder co-ops in North America, for example, are far more common in rural areas than urban ones, underscoring their potential as an important new tool in rural cooperative development. Multi-stakeholder co-ops are most common in the social and health service sectors in Quebec, but in the U.S. the model has generated the most amount of experimentation in the area of local and organic food systems, demonstrating a clear applicability in any area where local control and high quality are of principal concern.

Lots of multi-stakeholder co-ops have actively embraced the “supporter” class of membership (as these supporters have actively embraced their cooperatives), indicative of what is perhaps a more widespread willingness among the general population than previously thought to become involved in some way in the creation or perpetuation of certain important economic institutions in their communities, rather than leaving that role exclusively to “the market.” Finally, multi-stakeholder cooperatives may have a special applicability for involving youth, social service clients, low income workers, or other marginalized populations in the oversight and governance of institutions that have an

**Being able to combine the perspective and experience of marginalized populations with the complementary perspective and experience of other community members is a strategy for the development of a uniquely responsive and empowering local enterprise.**

important impact on their lives. Being able to combine the perspective and experience of these constituencies with the complementary perspective and experience of other community members is a strategy for the development of a uniquely responsive and empowering local enterprise.

Multi-stakeholder cooperatives also appear to be surprisingly good at defining and establishing new markets. The members of the Boisaco cooperative profiled on page 27 not only saved their own local lumber mill, but have subsequently organized several more enterprises besides. Some personal and home

services co-ops in Quebec have now started to own and run residential care centers so that aging members who can no longer live at home can still remain in the community.<sup>9</sup> And the direct linking of local supply with local demand as seen in the Producers & Buyers Co-op, page 32, has opened up market opportunities for producers that simply did not exist before the advent of the co-op. Perhaps it should not be so surprising that new market development is a strength of the multi-stakeholder approach. Giving up the comfortable confines of your own perspective is often the key to being able to envision something completely new and different.

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<sup>9</sup> Girard (2004): 10.

# CASE STUDIES

Following are a series of case studies of existing multi-stakeholder cooperatives in practice. Examples come from both English-speaking and French-speaking Canada, as well as France and several regions of the United States. Industries represented include healthcare, social services, forestry, local food production and sales, beer making and photography:

## BOISACO, Quebec, Canada

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Quebec's forestry industry has seen regular, predictable slumps (recent downturns happened in 1974, 1982-3, and 1991-4), each accompanied by a round of layoffs in the province's mill towns and forestry sector. Between the softwood lumber crisis in 2000 and the U.S. housing collapse of 2006, 26,000 millworkers and loggers have lost their livelihoods.

In one corner of Quebec, communities have used a cooperative business model to defy the boom-bust cycles and short-term thinking that characterize much of the forestry sector.

For tourists, as well as for many urban Quebecers, the province's effective eastern boundary lies at Tadoussac. Beyond here, on the north side of the St. Lawrence, extends a rugged territory where snow squalls in October are frequent, communities are sparse, and the expense of transport can make commerce difficult. Returns on investment are often modest, and in the days before the provincial government re-ordered and centralized the economy in the 1960s, locally owned cooperatives brought electricity as well as grocery stores to many a North Shore town where private entrepreneurs did not see enough of a profit opportunity to attract their interest.

Sacre-Coeur, with a population of 2000, located fifteen kilometers from Tadoussac, is in most ways a typical North Shore community. The town depended on forestry for several generations, but by 1984, in the wake of one of the cyclical slumps, the local sawmill had undergone its third consecutive bankruptcy in ten years under three separate managements, and seemed set to close for good.

*This case study has been reprinted with kind permission from an article by writer Chris Scott which appeared in the Dominion newspaper, August 6, 2010.*

## CASE STUDIES

“We had a reputation as the [forestry] plant that had lost the most money in Quebec,” recalls Marc Gilbert, who was an employee at the sawmill at the time. “Nobody wanted to touch us.” Ultimately the facility, which constituted the town’s main industry, was to remain shuttered for two and a half years.

The town’s residents might have given in to fatalism; but instead, after the bank that held the mill’s mortgage was unable to find a buyer and offered to sell the plant at liquidation prices, locals decided to undertake a ground-breaking initiative. Banding together to form the Sacre-Coeur Development Corporation [Societe d’Exploitation de Sacre-Coeur], they secured the support of a credit union as well as a provincial government subsidy, and bought the mill for \$1.2 million.

According to those who know the local history, the motive in doing this was to forestall the flight of young people to the city and the slow death which is the bane of so many single-resource communities in unfavourable times.

After studying various models, the interested parties decided to constitute themselves as a single company called Boisaco Inc, owned in three equal parts by a loggers’ cooperative, (Cofor) a millworkers’ cooperative (Unisaco), and a consortium of local businesses.

An advantage of this structure, according to Marc Gilbert, who was one of the project’s founders and until recently served as company president, is that it allows the workers, as majority shareholders, to benefit from the management experience of the members of the business consortium.

Gilbert says that decision-making is rarely adversarial. “We adopted a shareholder’s charter that gave everyone [all three parties] a veto right on all big decisions,” says Gilbert. “This forced us [to seek] a working consensus.” The model is superior to what typically prevails on shop floors, says Gilbert, where management squares off with unions and the need to explain (or debate) procedures slows down productivity.

Three months after its reopening in 1985, the combined advantages of a market recovery and the new management allowed the Boisaco sawmill to generate enough revenue to pay off all its debts. Since then, the company has divided profit according to a formula that would seem out of place in the corporate world. Twenty-seven per cent is shared equally as dividends among the three shareholders; eighteen per cent goes to workers’ bonuses, while fifty-five per cent (an unusually high proportion, according to Gilbert) is targeted—once taxes have been paid—to research and development. Part of this fifty-five per cent is also allocated to a rainy-day fund.

Sarah Toulouse, a recent Masters graduate in cooperative management from the University of Sherbrooke, has studied Boisaco. I asked her why the consortium of business shareholders would agree to finance Boisaco when they could have obtained a higher return on their investment elsewhere.

“In Sacre-Coeur the [business] shareholders are mostly...folks from the region,” she says. “Their priority is to keep the region alive.”

Today, Boisaco provides employment to about two hundred workers as members of one of the two founding co-ops. Moreover, over the last twenty-five years as Boisaco has thrived, it has used part of its profits to acquire shares in diverse companies in the region with which it has then signed supply contracts.

In one such case, Boisaco provides lumber to Sacopan, a one-hundred-worker company founded in 1999 that operates out of the same lot as Boisaco in Sacré-Coeur. Sacopan sells fibrewood doorskins within Canada and to the USA. In the wake of the American subprime crisis, Sacpan’s sales have

helped keep Boisaco afloat. “Historically, whenever [home] construction flags, [home] renovation takes up the slack,” says Gilbert, explaining a strong American niche market for the product. Once the affiliated companies like Sacopan are factored in, Boisaco can be said to secure employment for six hundred forestry sector workers throughout the Upper North Shore.

It is source of pride to the company that it has come through the forestry crisis, now seen to be ending, without a high level of debt, and that it accepted a deficit situation rather than shut temporarily or resort to lay-offs. And from conversation it is clear that the management sees this decision as rooted both in sound business sense as well as in Boisaco’s original social mandate. “If we had stopped, we would have lost our best workers,” says Marc Gilbert, in response to my unstated question. “All those folks couldn’t have waited four years. They would have lost their equipment. And when we wanted to start up again, how much would it have cost us to recreate all of it, and all that expertise?”

## WEAVER STREET MARKET, North Carolina, U.S.

**W**eaver Street Market was founded in Carrboro, North Carolina in 1988, and has since become the largest retail multi-stake holder cooperative in the United States, expanding to include three grocery stores, a restaurant and a food production facility. This successful collaborative involves more than just the traditional food co-op consumer membership category, but also invites workers to be part of the ownership and governance structure.

Workers are eligible to join the Co-op after six months and pay \$500 to join which they can pay through payroll deduction. Patronage is based upon hours worked and in the most profitable years, has added \$1 an hour to a worker’s effective wage. Typically 20% of worker patronage is paid in cash, the rest in stock which is redeemed at the time of departure. About half of Weaver Street workers chose to join the cooperative.

Weaver Street’s successful model includes an integrated board structure with seven board seats: Each of the two membership class is allowed to vote for two positions. Two other seats are appointed by the board and the last seat is reserved for the general manager. The decision to divide the board evenly between the worker and consumers was not based on any fancy philosophy according to general manager and founder, Ruffin Slater, “It was the easiest thing to do because it was half and half.” Weaver Street has found there are many advantages to including both kinds of members on the board. Slater argues not only do workers provide more knowledge, since they are directly involved with day to day operations, but they are often more rational, “ground[ing] the board in reality.” “The worker members take it really seriously. They are reluctant to do something that would really mess things up... those kinds of things that occasionally consumer board members want to do,” Slater explains.

Another representative on the board, Curt Brinkmeyer, who is also a worker owner, agrees with





Slater, adding, “Worker members can bring their experiences from the sales floor and retail stores, so having multiple members brings more perspectives to the board room.” Yet what he values most about the model, as a worker owner, is it allows employees to feel a deeper tie to the business, a connection Brinkmeyer would have missed out on if only consumers served on the board. Brinkmeyer says, “It gives me connection to Weaver Street as a whole. Not just a job or a place of employment but more connected to what we do for the community, consumers and workers.”

Including two appointed seats as well as the general manager has provided key stability for the board and the board and the cooperative. Consumer and worker director seats change regularly, as is healthy in a democratic structure, but the general manager and appointed seats tend to be more stable. Since the selected positions and Slater have been on the board for so long, the cooperative continues to have “strong institutional memory.” While having the CEO on the board is more of a, “traditional management structure,” he added “there are a million pro’s and con’s if you wanted to make a long list ...I think it works well for us... I think anything that provides stability for the board is probably a good thing.” The other benefit to having a more traditional management structure is it addresses the importance of expertise and specialization: “You need to focus, you need to have people that are looking towards the future and are responsible for the decisions that are going to make the coop better.”

Rigorous adherence to proper role definition (bringing only board-related issues at the board meeting, etc.) has been part of the Weaver Street formula for success, as has strong communication, which they have found to be just as important as structure. The Co-op has relied upon a trusted outside facilitator to help build board consensus, and have used this same skilled individual for years, which has also helped to lend stability to a board where representatives of some classes of members change frequently.

## PICTURETANK, Paris, France

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In the Parisian neighborhood of Belleville is an imaginative photo agency called Picturetank. If you venture onto <http://picturetank.com>, the cooperative’s website, you will find documentary photographs from across the world, both politically charged and alluring contemporary images. Yet this dynamic collection of pictures is not the only aspect that makes Picturetank interesting; their complex multi-stake holder model proves to be equally as innovative.



The logo for Picturetank features the word "picturetank" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters are black and set against a white background that has a subtle, light gray grid pattern. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

Originally founded as a non-profit, Picturetank decided that reincorporating as a Société Coopérative d’Intérêt Collectif (SCIC) would be a better fit for their endeavor (see profile of SCICs on page 22). Initially, the partnership involved 15 photographers and a single web designer, who provided web tools that enabled the photographers to host, manage and publish their work through their website, Picturetank.com. As the organization rapidly grew to 100 photographers, Picturetank’s clients began requesting commercial services such as marketing and management of sales, so Picturetank began to expand its staff and services and adopt a more organized, business-like approach. Yet as they grew, Picturetank’s founders were reluctant to give up the democracy and inclusiveness that had

characterized the organization from its early days.

Picturetank follows in the pioneering footsteps of Magnum, one of the most famous photo agencies of all time founded by such luminaries as Henri Cartier-Bresson and Robert Capa. Magnum was formed at the close of the Second World War as a photographers' cooperative, with the then radical idea that the staff should support rather than direct the photographer's work and that the photographers rather than publications should hold copyright control of the images. Picturetank took the



model one step further and created a multi-stakeholder model, inviting the involvement of all workers as well as photographers and a new category of members, outside supporters.

Picturetank's Cooperative includes seven membership classes divided into four groups or "colleges" which include photographers, other collectives or cooperatives, employees, various supporters. All members are allowed one vote, but each college has a different distribution of voting weight. The complex arrangement of balancing of interests is codified in the co-op's bylaws, but Managing Director Philippe Deblauwe advises against taking too rigid of a stance in relation to governance structure. "A cooperative should not be totalitarian," he explains. "What the co-op members understand is if they work together they are stronger, so the legal framework can adapt to the activity and the vision."

One of the main balancing acts that Picturetank must perform every day is between the needs of the individual member photographers and the needs of the agency as a whole. Picturetank's founders wanted to provide a platform for affiliation, but stop short of full integration—they did not want to be in the position of imposing the requirements or standards of the group on the artistic work of any one individual photographer. Therefore Picturetank acts not only as an agency, but it also provides the tools that allow its member photographers to manage their individual websites and transactions outside of the co-op if they chose. One might think these two syndication channels would lead to various conflicts of interests, but Deblauwe insist this is not a problem because "if a photographer is unable to see the common interest, they usually find that Picturetank is not for them." For those who understand and appreciate the power of collaborative action however, Picturetank members assert "In our opinion the cooperative is the only legal framework that is able to guarantee the independence and structural stability essential for the syndication of works on a durable basis."

PRODUCERS & BUYERS CO-OP, Wisconsin, USA

By Marc Eisen

Illustration by Devon Bowman

# Not Just Jell-O Anymore: *Local Food Now Served on the Hospital Tray*



**H**OSPITAL FOOD: THE VERY term conjures up the most bland and unappetizing images. But that's changing in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, population 65,000. Sacred Heart, the smaller of Eau Claire's two hospitals, has committed to spending 10 percent of its food budget on tasty local produce and meat. By big-city standards, this does not amount to much—about \$200,000 a year. But cracking the institutional market is one of the trickier challenges facing food system reformers, and this 334-bed hospital in western Wisconsin is showing the way.

By its nature, institutional food service is cost conscious and lends itself to the efficient, standardized approach of mass production. If you have hundreds, if not thousands, to feed daily, purveyors like Sysco, Aramark, and Sodexo are experts at delivering food product in the perfect portion size.

"We were used to placing an order and having everything come in the door exactly how we wanted it," says Rick Becker, Sacred Heart's director of hospitality services. "We didn't have a clue where it was produced or who grew it. We didn't know even what continent it came from."

Sacred Heart's kitchen now serves greens from Pam Herdrich's Flower Farm south of Eau Claire, meatloaf made of hamburger from Vic and Mary Price's Out to Pasture Beef in Fall Creek, chicken from Eileen McCutchen's Angel Acres in Mason, pork from Jim and Alison Deutsch's Family Farm near Osseo, and lots of other locally sourced items.

That menu has been a struggle to build but a success

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## PRODUCERS & BUYERS CO-OP, Wisconsin, USA

for the small farmers who fill it.

Take Jim and Alison Deutsch. Both thirty-two, they are emblematic of the new wave of sustainable-minded Midwestern farmers. They're products of the reformist Land Stewardship Project in Lewiston, Minnesota, where they took a year-long "farm beginnings" course. After apprenticing and crop-sharing at several Minnesota and Wisconsin farms for four years, the Deutsches bought their own spread in early 2010: a biodiverse 160-acre quarter-section farm that dates to the nineteenth century and includes woodlots and wetlands.

Firmly rejecting the dominant mono-crop model of conventional farming, the Deutsches hope to be full circle farmers who grow everything they eat, from blueberries to vegetables to meat. With two young children, Alison says she shuns the pesticide-dosed foods available in local groceries. The specialty of the Deutsch Family Farm is pasture-raised chickens and old-breed Duroc pigs that are animal-welfare certified and bred for flavor. Much of their produce is already stamped as USDA organic.

Conventional farming, with its seesaw market prices and heavy federal subsidies, leaves both of them aghast. "It's asinine," says Alison. "Farmers are paid to grow crops that are not profitable."

The Deutsches are heels-dug-in independents. Jim says the two-party political system has completely failed; Alison has no use for the big farm groups. They talk about homeschooling their kids. Family is huge for them.

"Jim and I like to work together, and we like to be with our children," says Alison. "We live and learn together every day."

Jim says, "Farming balances our needs physically, mentally, and spiritually."

Like most small farmers who reject the agribusiness paradigm, the Deutsches bank on multiple income streams. They direct-market their pork and chicken to consumers, raise

winter squash for the Organic Valley farmers' co-op, and now sell to the newly created co-op that serves Sacred Heart.

That new venture—the Producers & Buyers Co-op—has been crucial in procuring the farm products sold to the hospital. Alison serves on the marketing and product committees.

The co-op requires that producers treat their animals humanely and follow organic standards. Prices are based on farmer profitability.

"The only reason this has been possible has been because of Sacred Heart's commitment. They've really stood behind us," says Jim.

For that, St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology, deserves some credit.

**S**acred Heart was founded in 1889 by the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis. Their mission sounds downright progressive to modern ears: that "every human person requires the holistic care of body, mind, and spirit regardless of race, creed, or ability to pay." In 2006, the last of the sisters retired to the order's "Motherhouse" in Springfield, Illinois.

Their legacy weighs heavily on the thinking of Stephen Ronstrom, the solid, plain-talking, Duluth-born CEO of Sacred Heart. He is not a standard-issue health care executive. Ronstrom subscribes to the radical *Catholic Worker*, founded by social justice icon Dorothy Day, and long ago was an Alaskan tugboat captain who delivered supplies to poor Eskimo villages. He cites it as one of the formative experiences of his life.

Franciscan care, in an era of technological medicine, "is really countercultural," he says. The order believes in the solidarity of healers to the sick, as well as in the divinity of human life, the importance of community, and the dignity of work.

"I've always felt that if we can really hold up that holistic body-mind-spirit view of human life and community, that's how we will endure," he says. "That's where the sisters

wanted us to go."

Ronstrom places a high value on community. "When you live in a place, you try to pick what's best about it and you try to affirm it," he says. "What's best about living in western Wisconsin? Well, the diversity of food and the heritage of farming."

Medical excellence can take Sacred Heart only so far, Ronstrom says. "How could we extend our health system into prevention and wellness? And how could we do it in a way that was part of our geography?"

His answer: by the food the hospital served its patients and staff.

"It's not New Age to say food is medicine, and what we eat impacts our health and longevity," he says.

In July 2008, Ronstrom announced the hospital was choosing fundamental change. Sacred Heart would embrace local food as part of its hospital mission.

Sounding like Michael Pollan, Ronstrom insists that America will not solve its health care crisis until its food-delivery system is transformed.

Beckler remembers a more prosaic message from his boss: "I'm tired of buying chickens that have road rash from Carolina. I'm tired of buying cantaloupe that have more frequent flyer miles than I do."

**S**acred Heart isn't alone in seeking reform. Kaiser Permanente, one of the nation's largest non-profit health groups, sponsors more than thirty-five farmers' markets and has partnered with a farm group to provide local produce at twenty-two of its northern California facilities. The Cleveland Clinic hosts a Wednesday farmers' market that includes health screenings and buys the unsold perishable goods for its cafeteria.

Other hospitals have cracked down on junk-food vending machines, started their own on-site gardens, or followed Sacred Heart's lead by committing themselves to locally sourced foods. Activist research groups like



## PRODUCERS &amp; BUYERS CO-OP, Wisconsin, USA

the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy in Minneapolis and the Urban & Environmental Policy Institute in Los Angeles have done the spadework to define the problems in institutional food.

The findings have been sobering. Some 38 percent of the nation's top hospitals host fast-food franchises—the proverbial McDonald's, Panda Expresses, and Pizza Huts. Surprisingly, this includes children's hospitals, where such calorie-rich processed offerings are justified as “comfort food” for sick kids.

A food service trade magazine even advised: “If you fry it, they will come.” In health care cafeterias, it added, “deep fat is the route to achieving customer satisfaction more often than not.”

Yikes!

But greening up the hospital cafeteria—or the school lunchroom, for that matter—is no easy job, advocates admit. Farmers and food service managers live in different worlds and don't understand one another's needs and limits. The infrastructure simply doesn't exist to connect the two.

This is where the Eau Claire experiment had its breakthrough.

**B**y early 2008, Beckler was frustrated. He and Ronstrom had already agreed that local food was a perfect fit for the hospital's Franciscan mission. “But my timeline was waning. My CEO wanted local food now.” For a year, Beckler had been spinning his wheels trying to contract for it. Sure, he had gotten a big order of bison burger that had proved a huge hit in the cafeteria, but then he never heard from the rancher again. What was that all about?

At the closing session of an Eau Claire agriculture conference in early 2008, he vented to a room full of farmers: “I have more than \$200,000 to spend on local food. Do any of you want a piece of that action?” Then he stalked out of the hall.

One of the people hurrying after him was farmer Pam Herdrich,

whose day job is as coordinator of the River Country Resource Conservation and Development Council. Talk about frustrated: The council had failed three times in the previous ten years to launch a local food program in its twelve-county region.

As Herdrich recounts it, the farmers couldn't provide goods in the sizes and volume the institutions wanted, and when the buyers backed away from further involvement, the farmers found themselves stuck with no market for their ramped-up production. “The institutions weren't committed to working things out,” Herdrich says. “That caused a lot of the distrust that Rick faced.”

As for that bison rancher, Herdrich says Beckler hadn't realized he had probably purchased her entire year's production in one fell swoop. And the rancher was probably nervously waiting for Beckler to call her. Small farmers, Herdrich says, often don't understand the concept of standing orders “or how Sysco serves customers.”

The Producers & Buyers Co-op changed the dynamic. It brought the two sides together, as well as the food processors who are indispensable to a functioning local food system.

Rather than buying from individual producers, Beckler now buys from the co-op he helps run. Patience helps in riding out the rough spots. “You come to realize there is no model out there. You're going to have screw-ups,” he says.

“I'm amazed at how much we've learned by trial and error,” agrees Erica Zerr, a consultant with the co-op.

Like the time Beckler ordered 250 chickens that averaged 4.8 pounds: When quartered they were too big to fit on the hospital plates. Now he orders (and the co-op's chicken growers provide) three-pound chickens.

And his cooks are astonished, says Beckler. “The look, the smell, the texture—even the cookability—of the local chicken is far superior to the product that comes off the big-box truck.”

**W**hat's most heartening about the Eau Claire experiment is its grassroots nature. Out of necessity, activists are rebuilding a local food system that all but disappeared after World War II. Their challenge is daunting: Kitchen staff in large institutions may no longer have cooking skills or even rudimentary kitchen tools.

For example, Zerr says school kitchens may not have chef knives. “Everything comes pre-chopped, bagged, and frozen,” she says. “It becomes a royal nightmare to chop butternut squash or slice watermelon for the kids.” Zerr dreams of establishing a local kitchen to prepare vegetables and fruit for school cafeterias.

But there is progress on other fronts. New buyer-members include Sacred Heart's sister facility, St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls, and its Eau Claire competitor, the Mayo Clinic-owned Luther Midelfort. The producer-members include twenty farmers and processors. A newly secured \$55,000 federal grant will fund outreach efforts to potential new members.

The fact that the co-op pegs its prices to farmer profitability is a powerful draw for producers who otherwise live or die according to the swings of the Chicago Board of Trade.

For Sacred Heart, the higher cost translates to a 15-to-20 percent premium for locally sourced food, according to Beckler. No one seems to be complaining. A PR consultant reported that the national coverage the little hospital has gained in *Forbes*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and in trade outlets translates to a publicity value of \$1.5 million. Indeed, Ronstrom and Beckler have become go-to sources nationally on local food.

Ronstrom mentions none of this in an interview. With quiet intensity he emphasizes how local food bolsters family farms, keeps money in the community, creates jobs, and fulfills the sisters' vision of holistic health. “Local food is good medicine for everyone,” he says. ♦

## EROSKI, Mondragon, Spain

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**L**ikely the largest multi-stakeholder cooperative in the world, Eroski is the distribution division of the Mondragon Cooperative Corporation, the famous network of worker-owned cooperatives in the Basque region of Spain. Eroski began modestly enough in 1969 when 10 consumer cooperatives joined together and form one large cooperative supermarket. Eroski is now the second largest retail distribution group in Spain, just behind the French titan, Carrefour. As of 2001, it owned and franchises more than 1,400 supermarkets, including 55 hypermarkets. The Eroski brand also includes gas stations, perfume shops, travel agencies and cash and carry shops in both Spain and France and is still expanding.

Although it began as a consortium of consumer cooperatives, Eroski now includes a worker member class. Both classes have equal representation on the board and are allowed to elect 250 delegates to the general assembly, which then elects six workers and six consumers to the board of directors. In deference to its origins as a consumer organization, Eroski bylaws provide that the president of the board must always be elected from the consumer member group.

Eroski's half a million consumer members pay a fee of \$75 a year to join, for which they receive a 5% discount on purchases. Worker members are required to provide a much more substantial equity stake of approximately \$6,500, which can be financed through payroll deduction over a three year period. Worker members also receive a regular distribution of company surplus. The vast majority of Eroski's 30,000 employees opt to join the cooperative as they become eligible.

Despite its great size, the co-op remains committed to its roots as a members-owned enterprise and to its identify as a community-governed cooperative. Since the very beginning, like other cooperatives in the Mondragon family, Eroski donates 10% of profits to various community education and training programs, its success making it one of Spain's largest contributors to charity. Eroski is also a market leader in the sale of fair trade goods as well as organic and locally grown products.

## THE PENTICTON AND AREA COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE (PACE) , British Columbia, Canada

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**I**n Okanagan, Canada, a multi-stakeholder cooperative is providing a new, innovative approach not only to cooperative development, but also to the mental health and recovery services. The Penticton and Area Cooperative Enterprise (PACE) is an organization dedicated to providing transition to employment, skill training and paid work to those who are mentally ill.

PACE was incorporated in 2005 as a worker-owned cooperative, although in their case the workers in their businesses are also technically the consumers or clients of the co-op's employment services. PACE's structure also includes a supporter class of members. The consumer class controls 70% of the board seats and consists of individuals who are mentally ill and are utilizing PACE's services, which includes counseling and transitional employment services. PACE operates a total of 11 businesses, including a cleaning service, café, and web design firm, which average eight employees each.

All 11 businesses originated from ideas developed and presented to the co-op board by PACE clients. The members of each business decide for themselves how their enterprise will be managed, but the majority opt for some style of collective management. Although these businesses have a high degree

## CASE STUDIES

of autonomy, they do receive technical support from PACE, and must submit a financial report to the board once a year.

The supporter class of members, with 30% representation on the board, includes former members of the consumer group. For those who have successfully transitioned and recovered, being part of the supporter class keeps them connected to PACE's services in case of a relapse. In addition, having this second type of membership allows individuals in the community at large to be part of the mission. Supporter membership is also available to employees of PACE who are not themselves clients, such as the counselors and trainers who work with the consumer-members. PACE also employs a general manager who provides business and management expertise but is not eligible for a board seat and is not a coop member. Like other multi-stakeholder co-ops, PACE is still experimenting with the best formula for board governance, and is currently considering the option of appointing some board positions.

PACE opted not to incorporate as a charitable non-profit because, as one of the organizers explained, "we wanted to make money; we want operate like a business." Part of the goal of PACE is to ensure that their ventures earn enough of a return to provide consumer members with a living wage. A cooperative structure helps PACE reach that goal. Another part of their mission is to confront stigmas that exist about the mentally ill. By providing a means for clients to operate a profitable and viable business, PACE helps the surrounding community see the economic contributions that can be made by those who might be seen to be "hard to employ" in other settings, hopefully challenging some existing attitudes in the process.

### EAST CAROLINA ORGANICS (ECO), North Carolina, USA

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**W**ho's your Famer?" queries the ECO website in big bold letters. All of ECO's consumers know the answer to this question, and think that everyone else should know too. That's because ECO's mission is to establishing a local food supply chain for their North Carolina Community through a local, farmer owned business. This grower and manager owned LLC was formed in 2005 and cooperatively distributes and markets wholesale organic food to local retailers. Originally, it was a project of the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association with 13 producers and two staff owners. Now ECO has 30 grower members and 11 staff members who are all eligible for membership once they have met certain time requirements. East Carolina Organics' motto is they are "farmer owned and they act like it." Not only do the majority of the profits go back to the farmers, but the cooperative is able to provide year around growing opportunities for farmer-members.

ECO's decision to establish itself as a limited liability company was the result of a North Carolina Cooperative law that forbids agricultural cooperatives from having more than one membership class. While disappointed that they could not incorporate formally as a multi-stakeholder cooperative, ECO's organizers thought that the benefit of adding their management employees as members was worth the concession. The major advantage they find is the communication flow of information between the two groups. Through regular interaction with their producer board member peers, the employees managing the business have a better understanding of the product and of the production and distribution process. As James Matson, ECO's cooperative development advisor explains" In a normal business, the agenda is to charge the highest price you can, but the farmers need to make money selling these goods and



others need to be able to afford them.” In his opinion, this is when the multi-stake holder model works best.

ECO has a somewhat unusual division of governance and surplus rights, developed by its members for very specific reasons and codified in the bylaws. The manager class has a higher equity stake, owning 60% of the shares, yet the producer class receives 60% of the board seats, leaving the manager class with 40% board representation. The reason for this is that since the Eastern Carolina Organic philosophy is “acting farmer owned,” the members thought that the growers should hold a controlling number of board seats. Yet the original managers (currently the only employee members) deferred their salaries during the start-up of ECO and contributed substantial sweat equity to the business. They also don’t have the advantage of the economic benefit that producer members do from selling the produce at higher prices through the co-op, so the organizers felt that given these employees a slightly higher share of equity ownership in the business seemed like fair compensation.

James Matson advises all interested in multi-stake cooperatives to define fairness from the start. The difference in ECO’s equity distribution and voting weight was clearly decided by the members before they even began to write their bylaws “If It’s not fair for everyone it doesn’t work!” Matson insists. The success of ECO is evidence of the importance of asking the right questions from the get-go.

## HEALTHPARTNERS, Minnesota, USA

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**G**roup Health, the predecessor to HealthPartners, was a mutual health insurance plan founded in Minneapolis in 1938 by four visionary men. It was an unusual beginning, as none of the four had any real experience in either health insurance or medicine. A credit union treasurer, a labor leader, a progressive lawyer and the assistant manager of a large agricultural cooperative—what they lacked in industry-specific experience they more than made up for in their deep feeling for the needs of ordinary people, and their understanding of the power of collective action. After seeing family after family going into great debt because of medical expenses, while others fell into poverty when family members became ill and could not afford to pay for medical treatment, these four figured there must be a better way.

The idea of prepaid health insurance—where consumers pay a set price and in turn receive complete coverage no matter what—was new at that time. The idea of a consumer-owned healthcare delivery system was unheard of. Existing state law prevented Group Health from implementing their vision of a consumer-directed prepaid medical plan right away, and instead they had to be content with forming a conventional mutual insurance company at first. Local medical societies and the American Medical Association vigorously fought the idea of anything but fee-for-service medicine as “socialist.” But after a somewhat rocky start, the new insurance company prospered and by the 1950’s it was the fourth leading seller of health insurance in the state, counting the governor, lieutenant governor and state treasurer among its membership. In 1955 the state attorney general overturned earlier opinions and declared that a prepaid health plan could operate.

Group Health opened its first clinic in 1957. Signing up members to this new untested idea of prepaid medical treatment was challenging. Convincing doctors to defy their peers and agree to work for a salary was even more daunting, especially when that salary would be paid by a consumer-run board.

## CASE STUDIES

As time went on, Group Health added some benefits to cover visits to physicians outside of their own medical group to give members a wider choice. But they kept the emphasis on consistent preventive care that had been their hallmark from the beginning. The company was an innovator in many other consumer-focused practices that are common today, such as employing nurses to answer phone calls from worried members after hours. As the company grew from one clinic to over a dozen, physicians chafed at the centralized control and negotiated more of a leadership role at the clinic level, initiating their own programs to improve quality and care outcomes for their patients. The 1990's brought significant growth, as Group Health merged with another provider to become HealthPartners, greatly expanding their network of outside "contract" physicians to supplement their existing network of staff physicians. The next year, they also acquired a hospital.

Today, HealthPartners is the third largest health insurance plan Minnesota, with over one million members and revenues of over \$3 billion. About 30% of members still use the core group of HealthPartner physicians for their care. Medical costs in Minnesota are about 30% below the national average, while the costs of HealthPartners medical group are about 38% lower, a difference company leaders attribute to more effective clinical practices rather than lower costs paid to providers. US News and World Report has placed HealthPartners among the top 50 best health plans in the nation for four years in a row, and this past year Modern Healthcare also rated it one of the best places to work in healthcare.

While Minnesota law requires that health plans operate as not-for-profits, HealthPartners governance structure clearly reflect its roots in the cooperative movement. Thirteen of its fifteen board members are elected directly by consumer members while two are physicians. One physician board member is elected by the outside contract doctors, while the second is the head of HealthPartners own medical group. In contrast to the fears of some early observers from the medical community, having a majority of consumers governing a healthcare organization has not led to disarray and chaos. On the contrary, "it's a great learning experience for clinicians to serve on a board in partnership with consumers," said HealthPartners medical director and board member Brian Rank, "because of the focus on what patients need, and on improving outcomes and experience for our patients and members. In the past," he observed, "there has been an asymmetric power relationship in health care. It was very difficult for patients to effectively partner with their care systems and clinicians, without ready independent access to knowledge and information. Health Partners flips that relationship around and has the people who actually received the care setting the direction and objectives for the organization ." So far, it seems to be working exceptionally well for everyone.

## OKLAHOMA FOOD COOPERATIVE, Oklahoma, USA

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**W**e do not sell any mystery food” is a motto of the the Oklahoma Food Cooperative. In this cooperative, which operates on a pre-order basis, consumers don’t simply place an order with an anonymous source; instead, they know exactly which Oklahoma producers are providing their goods.

Best of all, it’s easy. The co-op provides an online forum for the farmers to list their produce and merchandise, and the customers can order directly online from any of the co-op’s farmers.

With its first order in 2003, the cooperative had a vision of creating a local food system for the community at large. Realizing that this local system involved many participants, the cooperative decided to establish multiple membership classes.

The co-op has two sets of decision makers: consumers and producers. Although both membership classes have the same voting power, the board has designated a minimum of one seat each to producers and consumers so each class has at least one representative.

Some friction is inevitable with the two classes involved with the Cooperative at various levels. One board member puts it this way: “The producer class is in a better position to become the squeaky wheel because they are more visible; you are dealing with their livelihood. The stakes are not as high for consumer members.” Reserving a vice-president seat on the board of equal power for each class, the board member says, ensures continued education, communication and understanding between the two groups.

The Oklahoma Food Cooperative hopes one day to have enough profit to pay out patronage to members. More immediately, however, the cooperative is hoping to set up a management system that moves away from having board members function as managers.

Oklahoma Food Cooperative’s goal is not to get the best deal for one party but rather to run a business that serves the community’s food economy. One cooperative member explains, “We want the famers to live off of the food they sell and the consumers to be able to afford it.”



## 5TH SEASON COOPERATIVE, Wisconsin, USA



## A CASE STUDY OF THE FIFTH SEASON COOPERATIVE: From Conception to Incorporation, Now What?

By Courtney Berner, University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives  
September 2010

### Introduction

The Fifth Season Cooperative is a newly launched, multi-stakeholder cooperative in Viroqua, Wisconsin, that provides the infrastructure and coordination needed to help rebuild the region's food system. This case study follows the Co-op's development from the initial idea to the signing of the articles of incorporation in August 2010.

### Background on the region

The Fifth Season Cooperative is headquartered in Viroqua, Wisconsin, considered by many to be the center of Wisconsin's Driftless Area. The Driftless Area, which includes parts of Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and Illinois, was never glaciated and thus has striking topography consisting of forested hills, steep valleys, and clear streams as well as a variety of ecosystems including grassland, forest, prairie, and wetlands. This striking topography, however, makes agriculture in this region particularly challenging. "The hills make for a breathtaking landscape, but they also limit the amount of productive land on farms. Farms in the Kickapoo Watershed are smaller than farms in the rest of the state. In Vernon County, for instance, the average farm size is 177 acres compared to the state average of 228 acres."<sup>i</sup>

Despite these challenges, agriculture has long been the dominant industry in the region, which has enjoyed a rich variety of farmers and agricultural traditions over the years, from the Norwegian immigrants in the 1800's to the Amish families who settled more recently.

Despite the region's wealth of agricultural resources (Vernon County alone has more than 200 organic farms), concerns have grown in recent years regarding its community food security. The Food Security Learning Center defines community food security as "a food system in which all community residents are able to obtain a safe, culturally appropriate, nutritionally sound diet through an economically and environmentally sustainable food system that promotes community self-reliance and social justice."<sup>ii</sup> While SW Wisconsin produces large quantities of high quality food, much of that food leaves the region for larger cities like Madison, Chicago, and the Twin Cities.

In 2007, the Valley Stewardship Network (VSN) launched a Food and Farm Initiative (FFI) in response to these concerns regarding local food security in SW Wisconsin. The mission of FFI is to encourage the development of a sustainable, equitable local food system by:

- Engaging and educating a broad network of county residents;





## 5TH SEASON COOPERATIVE, Wisconsin, USA continued 2

- Improving access to healthy, local foods for all members of the community, especially the low-income population;
- Strengthening the economic viability of regional agriculture; and
- Addressing market barriers for local producers.

As part of the FFI, VSN conducted an 18-month community food assessment of Vernon County to better understand the county's food assets, opportunities, and needs and to identify the best strategies for improving food security. In Vernon County, the community food assessment served as a foundation for stakeholders to identify projects, policies, and partnerships to meet the aforementioned goals of a sustainable food system.<sup>iii</sup>



*Farmland in the Driftless Region*

Following the completion of the Vernon County Community Food Assessment, economist Ken Meter of the Crossroads Resource Center completed a rural economic assessment of SW Wisconsin based on the results of the food assessment and reported it to the communities in the region. Meter's data coupled with the findings of the FFI Community Food Assessment revealed several important food system facts:<sup>iv</sup>

- SW Wisconsin is home to a great number of small to medium-scale farms that have the capacity to produce high-quality foods.
- There is a multi-million dollar local food market waiting to be further developed as consumers spend \$208 million annually buying food from outside the region.
- Producers in SW Wisconsin lack access to the structured coordination and processing, marketing, and distribution infrastructure necessary to increase producer capacity.
- SW Wisconsin boasts strong non-profit, producer, business, and institutional partners who are committed to improving the local food system.

The findings of these studies led the Vernon Economic Development Association (VEDA) to apply for a 2009 Buy Local Buy Wisconsin Grant (BLBW) that would support the infrastructure, coordination, and education necessary to strengthen producer capacity and increase consumption of local food in SW Wisconsin. They decided that a multi-stakeholder cooperative is the best business model to meet the region's needs for four key reasons:

- They could model the cooperative after the Producers & Buyers Co-op in Chippewa Valley, which had already proven to be a viable model.
- VEDA began discussions months before that included buyers and producers. Having laid the groundwork for a model that brought everyone to the same table, they had confidence that a cooperative would work.
- Organic Valley offered to donate \$10,000 as a cash match to the BLBW grant.
- Cooperative experts from the region encouraged VEDA to use a cooperative model and offered their advice and support.

#### **The start-up story**

VEDA was awarded the BLBW grant in 2010 and immediately dove into making their vision a reality. Executive Director Sue Noble formed two committees to begin the formal planning





## 5TH SEASON COOPERATIVE, Wisconsin, USA continued 3

process: a slush group and a steering committee.

The Slush Group was comprised of key players who were highly invested in the project and had relevant expertise. The group included Margaret Bau, USDA Cooperative Development Specialist; Sue Noble, VEDA Executive Director; Nicole Penick, Buy Local Coordinator; Jan Rasikas, General Manager of the Viroqua Food Co-op; Marilyn Volden, Director of Food and Nutrition Programs for Viroqua Public Schools; Brian Wickert, Owner of EZ Farms; and Cecil Wright, Director of Sustainable Giving at Organic Valley. This group met often and dealt with the minute details of putting together a cooperative organization. One of the most difficult tasks this group undertook was articulating and building consensus around the various documents that defined the cooperative: the mission statement, vision statement, and bylaws.

Sue also formed a larger steering committee that met approximately once a month. The purpose of these meetings was to inform the larger group of the progress being made and to make decisions regarding the actions and proposals of the Slush Group. Most of the attendees of these meetings were either potential Co-op members or were somehow invested in rebuilding the regional food system.

Once the key organizational and legal documents were in order, the next major task was recruiting members for the interim board of directors. An organization's first board is vital to its success, so Sue spent a lot of time making sure the first board included key stakeholders from each member class. An advisory council was also formed to help the board navigate the process of starting a new cooperative. Sue emphasized that keeping Jan Rasikas and Cecil Wright as key advisers in this process was essential. Jan, Cecil, and Margaret Bau have

offered invaluable guidance on budgeting, vision development, and cooperative governance.



*Six members of the Fifth Season Interim Board*

Sue noted that the most difficult challenge throughout the process was keeping the vision alive. "It was critical that people continued to be excited and feel ownership over the project even though they didn't attend every meeting. Facilitation of the process was key."

### **The Co-op Structure**

The Fifth Season Cooperative's multi-stakeholder organization is a unique business structure in the United States. The cooperative has six member classes that span the entire supply chain. The list includes producers, producer groups, processors, distributors, buyers, and workers.

Producers are growers in the region who sell produce, meat, or dairy. Processors are businesses from the region that make value-added products. Producer Groups are agricultural businesses in the region that aggregate and sell produce, meat, or dairy. Distributors are businesses from the region that transport agricultural products. Buyers may include institutions and retail operations in the region that purchase product from the Co-op. Workers may become members and contribute to the success of the cooperative through their labor. There is currently one employee, Nicole





## 5TH SEASON COOPERATIVE, Wisconsin, USA continued 4

Penick, who is serving as the project coordinator. The membership classes represent the key players in the food system at the local level—thereby putting the entire supply chain at one table. The motivations

behind this organizational structure are to keep local dollars circulating in the community and to develop long-term relationships between growers and buyers that lead to fair pricing and fair treatment of all members of the supply chain.

### Moving forward

The Fifth Season Cooperative is at an important junction. The Co-op has filed its articles of incorporation and is now an official entity. There is an interim board of directors in place who are leading the way until the formal board is elected at the first annual meeting. This interim board has a lot of decisions to make that greatly influence Fifth Season's operations, objectives, and success. There are four questions that the interim board will have to resolve:

### Membership

In order to be successful and fulfill its mission, Fifth Season needs to recruit diverse classes of members. What is the motivation for someone to join Fifth Season? How does Fifth Season make the case that joining the Co-op is a good investment?

### Pricing

Determining prices that each member considers fair will be a critical challenge for the interim board. As a multi-stakeholder cooperative that

*For systems that are as precious and complex as local foods, the metaphor of the invisible hand of the market has too many flaws. When rebuilding local food systems, you need to have diverse interests at the table and in an ongoing relationship of equals.*

-Margaret Bau, USDA  
Cooperative Development  
Specialist

includes every level of the supply chain, how will Fifth Season set prices with which all members are satisfied?

### Raising Capital

The Vernon Economic Development Association was awarded \$40,000 over two years to start a cooperative, however the grant does not cover all of Fifth Season's expenses for the first two years. As the Co-op is in the start-up phase and working toward building membership and revenue, it needs additional capital to fund operations and capital expenditures. How will this cooperative be financed? How does the Co-op build equity?

### Organic vs. Conventional

There are more than 220 organic farms in Vernon County alone as well as many conventional growers in the region. Should the cooperative be exclusively organic or should it sell both conventional and organic products? The answer to these related questions have ripple effects as they affect pricing, membership, marketing, and the overall functioning of the organization.

<sup>i</sup> "Vernon County, Wisconsin Community Food Assessment: Linking Farmers and Community for Sustainability." Valley Stewardship Network, 2007.

<sup>ii</sup> Food Security Learning Center. Website. <http://www.whyhunger.org/programs/fslc/topics/community-food-security.html>. Accessed 9 September 2010.

<sup>iii</sup> "Vernon County, Wisconsin Community Food Assessment: Linking Farmers and Community for Sustainability." Valley Stewardship Network, 2007.

<sup>iv</sup> Meter, Ken. "Southwest Wisconsin Local Farm and Food Economy: Highlights of Data Compilation." 2009.

<sup>v</sup> Phone interview. Sue Noble. 9 September 2010.





## BLACK STAR CO-OP PUB AND BREWERY, Texas, USA

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**B**lack Star Co-op Pub and Brewery incorporated in 2006 as a worker-consumer hybrid co-op, opening up for business in September 2010. The Brewery strives to pair its objective—to educate peers about cooperative ownership and values—with the ideal of enjoying quality food and drinks while doing so.

The brewery co-op has one membership class with three subsets of decision makers: consumers; the workers assembly; and supporters, including other cooperatives and nonprofits.

There are nine seats on the co-op's board. The worker assembly may hold as many as three seats but those must be elected by the membership at large, not only by the worker sub-class.

Consumers and workers each have one share and one vote, while cooperative and nonprofit members each get two shares and two votes because of the greater number of people they represent. Organizational members cannot themselves be elected as delegates to the board but instead vote for individual members of the brewery.

At first some of the workers were skeptical of the idea of inviting consumers and supporters onto the board of a co-op with a strong worker cooperative orientation, but over time this problem has been diffused through dialogue between the board and workers. The board recognizes the brewery cannot exist without the workers, and the entire membership understands the need for healthy conversation between the various stakeholders groups.

Consumer and supporter members played an important role in start-up of the co-op by proving the majority financing to launch the business so the co-op did not have to rely on capital from the workforce alone. The consumer member option has proved popular with local residents, and this group is now approaching 2,000 members. In addition to the start-up capital they lend, another important advantage, which fits well with the Co-op's philosophy, is its diverse membership fosters stronger connections with the Austin, Texas community where they reside.



# RESEARCH ON MSCs

**T**raditional economic theory would largely predict the downfall of something as unwieldy as a multi-stakeholder cooperative. Challenged with the high transaction costs necessitated by the involvement of so many parties, these theories would predict that multi-stakeholder organizations would soon revert to one dominated by a single stakeholder group, or else fall apart entirely under the weight of their own competing objectives. As Catherine Leviten-Reid deftly notes in a forthcoming paper, however, this just doesn't seem to be the case, at least not yet. She posits an alternate theory, whereby instead of thinking of the high transaction costs of involving multiple parties, it may instead be more appropriate to think of multi-stakeholder enterprises as more highly evolved coordinating mechanisms for the collection and coordination of disparate information in the pursuit of common needs.

Other researchers agree, pointing out the reduced transaction costs that will ultimately emerge through the increased levels of information, trust and involvement resulting from the multi-stakeholder approach:

the disadvantage of increased costs cause by interest harmonization and decision-making is balanced by a number of advantages of this specific organizational typology, namely better quality of services (services correspond to the users' needs) and the reduced transaction costs (due to trust relations, resulting from knowledge of local conditions and stakeholders' involvement).<sup>10</sup>

**“The supposed inefficiency (of involving multiple stakeholders) actually is essential for creating the virtuous circles of human connectivity that are basic to the organizations' s effectiveness and that have valuable spillover effects beyond the group itself”**

*—Robert Putnam, Better Together, p. 270-271*

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<sup>10</sup> Munkner, H. quoted in Girard (2009): 236.

Due to the emerging nature of the sector there is little empirical research on multi-stakeholder cooperatives specifically. A 2004 survey of 79 multi-stakeholder cooperatives in Quebec revealed a very high level of satisfaction among members with their cooperative’s governance process, with co-ops reporting both a high level of engagement on the part of different members, and a clear ability to reach consensus in decision-making. When asked to identify future challenges, most members cited economic issues rather than problem with board governance<sup>11</sup>, indicating that the multi-stakeholder governance model did not present them with the insurmountable challenges that some theorists fear.

Indeed, contrary to what cynics might suppose, there does not seem to be any evidence that multi-stakeholder cooperatives are any less efficient or more argumentative than single-constituency cooperatives, and even a bit of evidence to the contrary. What little empirical evidence there is suggests that the well-being of different constituencies within a multi-stakeholder cooperative is not a zero-sum game—one set of members does not need to win at the expense of the others. In the largest comparative study to date for example, which involved over 300 cooperatives, Borzaga and Depedri found that on both social and financial measures, workers fared equally well in cooperatives organized as multi-stakeholder co-ops and worker-only cooperatives—the addition of other stakeholder groups in the co-op did not take away at all from the ability of co-op workers to achieve their aim of meaningful and remunerative employment.<sup>12</sup>

Researchers in both Quebec and Italy stress the evolving nature of the sector, however, with a vigorous level of current interest and experimentation going on in both those countries.

## BRIDGING AND BONDING

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**A** summary of relevant research would not be complete without a mention of the important work of Robert Putnam on the topic of social capital and the tangible value of social networks. In his seminal work on the topic, Putnam makes an important distinction between the complementary notions of “bonding” and “bridging” social capital. Bonding social capital is what happens when networks link people who share crucial similarities; these tend to be inward-looking. Bridging social capital describes the power of the networks and relationships that happen when people with essential differences join together; these types of networks are more outward-looking. Putnam describes bonding as a kind of sociological Super Glue—when we are sick, it’s our bonding social capital partners who bring the chicken soup. Bridging social capital is akin to sociological WD-40—it’s what keeps a diverse democracy vigorous and inclusive.

Healthy societies need both, but bridging social capital—the kind that brings diverse groups together—is, Putnam points out, much harder to create than bonding. Bonding can be a precedent to bridging, but in some instances it can also preclude it. Both kinds take time to create, and are of necessity a local phenomenon. While overall Putnam sees from his research that the level of sociability

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<sup>11</sup> Chagnon, J. (2004) “Les Cooperatives de Solidarite au Quebec”, in *I.e.E. Developpment economique* (Ed.) Gouvernement du Quebec as discussed in Leviten-Reid, C. forthcoming.

<sup>12</sup> Borzaga, C. and Depedri, S. (2010), “The implications of Stakeholders’ Participation on Goals’ Achievement and on Performances: the case of Italian Social Cooperatives”, paper presented at the meeting of the International Association for the Economics of Participation (July). Paris, France.

**“Social capital represents not a comfortable alternative to social conflict but a way of making controversy productive”**

—Robert Putnam, *Better Together*, p. 3.

and civic participation in the United States appears to be declining, he also concludes that that this larger trend masks a tremendous amount of variability on the local level.

Working together fosters the bridging kind of social capital, as does civic engagement. In his 2003 book of case studies, *Better Together*, Putnam points out that social capital is most often the byproduct of the pursuit of some particular

shared goal, rather than a goal pursued in and of itself. Taken together, these observations support the conclusion that multi-stakeholder cooperatives could indeed be important vehicles for the building of that elusive bridging variety of social capital that make pluralistic democracies prosper.

*For more on building social capital see Appendix G. See also the list of frequently asked questions about social capital on the Saguaro Seminar website, [www.hks.harvard.edu/saguaro/faqs.htm](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/saguaro/faqs.htm).*

# C O N C L U S I O N

## PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

Information, dialogue and sunshine are three concepts that come up frequently in the discussion of successful multi-stakeholder cooperatives. Like the proverbial blind men and the elephant who each examined a different part of the elephant (ears, tail, trunk, limbs) and described the animal completely differently (and incorrectly) as a fan, rope, snake or tree, if each party to a transaction can only describe and understand their own situation the probability for anyone having a comprehensive understanding of the entire system of supply and demand is slim. Multi-stakeholder cooperatives by their nature seek out different information and new perspectives. But to be successful they also need to know how to share this information in ways that make it meaningful to members of the other groups. Information is important, but dialogue is just as key. Dialogue has a crucial role to play in building trust as well, as does sunshine or transparency around all transactions. Different constituencies who don't have natural networks of trust can build these over time through common objectives supported by clear, comprehensive and predictable information.



Several observers of this sector have pointed to the particular need for training and support for multi-stakeholder boards and management in the area of facilitation, consensus-building and deliberative democracy. Parties to these enterprises are expected to do a lot of bridging to groups outside of their own, which is a challenging assignment. The more skills and support they have in doing this, the better it will be for the entire co-op. Having regular outside facilitators at meetings or adopting practices such as informally rotating the chairmanship between representatives of

different groups are some things that co-ops in our case studies have done to build both skills and trust.

Reinforcing social cohesion and common mission at every appropriate opportunity is another best practice. Multi-stakeholder cooperatives by their nature seek a broad range of participants. This makes it all the more important that those who do participate remain true to the shared mission. Reminding each other at every meeting of the common purpose for coming together as well as planning for small, tangible wins and then linking those wins to the overarching common mission will help members feel included and on-track. Building social cohesion is incremental and cumulative—pacing yourself for the long haul is vital to avoid disappointment and burnout.

Robert Putnam in his work also makes some interesting observations about the efficacy of storytelling in building social capital and cohesion, and about the importance of shared space, whether physical or virtual. These are points that multi-stakeholders could certainly take into consideration.

“Multi-stakeholder boards can be difficult because of the different interests that people bring to the table but the approach brings with it real strength of the recognition that ‘we are all in this together’ . . . if you really believe in diversity then it becomes our responsibility to develop the ability to listen to each other and come to common ground . . .”

—Dr. Brian Rank, Board Member, HealthPartners

“Democracy is quite demanding.”

—Michel Clement, Coordinator for Cooperative Development, Ministère de Développement économique de l’Innovation et de l’Exportation du Québec

## “A FAVORABLE ÉLAN OF COMPROMISES”

**A** prominent expert on multi-stakeholder cooperatives once prosaically used the phrase “a favorable élan of compromises” when describing the emergence of multi-stakeholder cooperatives in Quebec.

**élan: é.lan (noun): vigor and enthusiasm, often combined with self-confidence and style**

Think about pursuing compromise not as a strategy imbued with cynicism or defeat but rather one characterized by enthusiasm, self-confidence and style, and you have the best of what multi-stakeholder cooperatives can bring.

Another colleague in Quebec characterized their cooperative development system as a “learning voyage.” For multi-stakeholder cooperatives, building new structures and breaking new ground every day, it is important to keep this positive perspective in mind. Mistakes will be undoubtedly be made. The key question in contemplating a multi-stakeholder approach is not “will it be perfect?” but rather “Can we do better than what we have right now? And if so “Can we do it alone?” If your answer to these questions is “yes,” we can do better, but “no,” we can’t do it alone, then you might want to consider a multi-stakeholder approach.

# A P P E N D I C E S

*Appendices B, D, E and F are excerpted with permission from In Good Company: The Worker Cooperative Toolbox published by the Northcountry Cooperative Foundation.*

*Appendix C is an article by Lynn Pitman of the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives reprinted from the November-December 2010 issue of Cooperative Grocer.*

*Appendix G comes from the website [www.bettertogether.org/150ways.htm](http://www.bettertogether.org/150ways.htm)*

## APPENDIX A: THE COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

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The current articulation of these seven principles, approved by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) at a 1995 meeting that celebrated the 150th anniversary of the modern cooperative movement, is as follows:

### **1. Voluntary and Open Membership**

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

### **2. Democratic Member Control**

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote), and cooperatives at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner.



### **3. Member Economic Participation**

Members contribute equitably to, and control democratically, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses to any of the following purposes: developing their cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

### **4. Autonomy and Independence**

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

### **5. Education, Training, and Information**

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public—particularly young people and opinion leaders—about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

### **6. Cooperation among Cooperatives**

Cooperatives provide the most effective service to their members and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, and international structures.

### **7. Concern for Community**

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

## APPENDIX B: WHAT IS A COOPERATIVE?

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The International Cooperative Alliance defines a cooperative as “an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.” It is, essentially, an enterprise formed by a group of people who join forces and work together to solve a problem or reach a goal that they all share. In a cooperative, only members are permitted to own common shares of equity. All cooperatives are owned and governed democratically, applying the principle of “one member, one vote.”

Cooperative members come from all walks of life, and they are all ages and belong to all income groups. People form and join cooperatives to meet all sorts of needs, and they buy and sell all kinds of products and services, ranging from child care to groceries to agricultural products to financial services. There are cooperative day-care centers and cooperative burial societies. There is probably a cooperative somewhere in the country to meet every kind of need imaginable.

Cooperatives are differentiated from other business entities in three ways: member ownership, member control, and member benefit. A cooperative is an enterprise where ownership, control, and benefit are all held by the same group of people: the cooperative members.

### Joint Ownership

Co-op members are not just customers, employees, or users of the business—they are also the business owners. In an investor-owned business, owners are concerned mainly with making money. In a cooperative enterprise, by contrast, member-owners are concerned not only about whether the enterprise is making money, but whether the business is meeting the needs of its member-owners. These needs may be economic (making a fair wage), non-economic (contributing to a healthy environment, or setting an example of worker participation in business management), or some combination.

### Democratic Control

Participation in the decision-making process is one of the primary ways business owners exercise their rights as owners. In a typical investor-owned company, each investor casts votes in direct proportion to the number of shares the investor owns—that is, more shares equals more votes equals more control. In a cooperative ownership structure, by contrast, control is vested with each member, not each share of stock. This means that each member casts one vote in any business decision that is put before the membership, regardless of the number of shares owned. Cooperatives are operated according to the democratic principle of “one member, one vote.”

Co-ops are led by member-elected boards of directors. The co-op’s manager or other top staff report directly to the board. Since the board members are the ones who will be leading the organization and making key decisions on behalf of the membership, the most important vote that any co-op member makes is for the board of directors. In a worker co-op, all members engage in electing their top leadership. In an investor-owned business, by contrast, the board of directors is typically composed of top company management, plus some outsiders.

## Member Benefit

Cooperatives are operated for the benefit of their members. Like any business, a cooperative must make at least as much money as it spends, but spending decisions are also based on delivering the greatest value to members. In an investor-owned business, profits are distributed based on the number of shares owned. In a cooperative, net income (income over and above expenses) is redistributed back to the members based on some equitable system. This system is called “patronage” and the redistributed profits are called “patronage rebates,” “patronage refunds,” or sometimes “patronage dividends.” Members are “patrons” of the co-ops, and profits are redistributed back to members based on how much business they do with the co-op (that is, how much they “patronize” it). In a producer co-op, this might be how much grain, milk, or other product the farmer-member markets through the cooperative. In a consumer co-op, patronage refunds would generally be based on the total annual purchases from the co-op. In a worker co-op, patronage is measured based on an equitable formula of labor input, either according to hours worked, pay level, seniority, or some combination of all three. Thus, while a conventional investor-owned business provides returns based on capital input, a worker cooperative provides returns based on labor input.

Because cooperatives are operated for the benefits of members and not as speculative investment vehicles, they function essentially at cost. This fact means that cooperatives enjoy the attractive tax benefit of single taxation. In an investor-owned corporation, profit is taxed at the corporate level before it is distributed to members as dividends. Individual stock owners must then pay tax a second time on this income at their individual level. In a co-op, by contrast, only profits that are kept by the company as retained earnings are taxed at the corporate level. Earnings that are passed through to members are only taxed once, at the individual level.

## Cooperative Principles

Equity. Equality. Self-help. Self-responsibility. Democracy. Solidarity. These are the values on which the modern cooperative movement was founded and the basis for the organization of every cooperative enterprise in the world today.

The origins of the modern cooperative movement can be traced to the city of Rochdale, England, at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. In 1844, a group of industrial trade unionists, tired of the poor quality and high prices of goods sold through the company store, set out to make things right. The Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers opened its first cooperative store on Toad Lane.

From the outset, the group’s purpose was more noble than simply selling quality, affordable provisions and clothing. It also proposed the building of houses “in which those members desiring to assist each other [in] improving their domestic and social conditions, may reside.” The group also recommended “the formation of worker cooperatives to help the unemployed; the purchase of land for common cultivation; and the promotion of education and sobriety.” While some of these early efforts were more successful than others, the clarity, consistency, and breadth of these cooperative principles are striking. From the beginning, these co-op pioneers envisioned cooperatives as a way to give ordinary people greater control over their lives, to improve their economic conditions, and to protect them during hard times. These principles, developed more than 150 years ago, live on today in the thousands of cooperative institutions that exist throughout the United States and the world.

### **Co-ops Today**

Any type of business can be a cooperative. In the United States the largest co-ops are often agricultural co-ops and credit unions. Indeed, since the beginning of our nation, farmers and ranchers have joined together to pool the funds and manpower necessary to process or harvest their goods. Credit unions are often developed by employees of large organizations to provide financial services to their members.

Co-ops also abound internationally. In Quebec (Canada), Northern Italy, India, and Japan, for example, cooperatives play a significant role in the national and regional economies. The most famous worker co-ops in the world are the Mondragon cooperatives in the Basque region of Spain, an association of over one hundred cooperative enterprises, forming an entire cooperative economy in which factories, schools, banks, retail stores, and services operate on a cooperative basis.

## APPENDIX C: LIMITED COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS

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### **Understanding the ULCAA: A report from the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives**

*By Lynn Pitman*

Since 2001, new cooperative laws have been adopted in five states—Wyoming, Tennessee, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin—and introduced in the Nebraska state legislature. These laws do not replace existing cooperative statutes. They provide for the establishment of a new type of business entity, the limited cooperative association (LCA), which has characteristics of both the traditional cooperative and the limited liability company (LLC). Because the LCA can be structured in ways that contradict fundamental principles under which cooperatives traditionally have operated, there is concern that these new laws will subvert or dilute the cooperative business model.

Traditionally, a business organized on a cooperative basis subordinates the interests of the capital investor to those of the business user, or patron. Cooperative control is in the hands of its member-patrons, and returns on investment capital are limited. Member-patrons are the primary source of equity capital, and net earnings are allocated on the basis of patronage instead of investment.

The new statutes have been presented as one approach to the problems of modern-day capital formation within the traditional cooperative structure. In contrast to past cooperative laws, the new statutes all specifically allow the distribution of net earnings on the basis of investment contributions, as well as on patronage, and do not set limits on investor returns. Investors may have voting rights and may be eligible for election to the board of directors. The statutes provide varying levels of protection for patron-member interests by setting minimums for patronage-based earnings distributions and by making special provisions for patron-member voting and patron majority representation on the board of directors.

Besides limited liability for its members, both the LLC and the LCA also offer a choice in tax treatment. The organization may elect to be taxed as either a partnership or as a corporation, although this flexibility may affect the organization's status as a cooperative for federal tax purposes.

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Most cooperatives are incorporated under state cooperative statutes. These statutes are not uniform and describe cooperative structure and operations with varying levels of specificity. All states have at least one cooperative statute, and many are specific to agricultural producers. To protect the interests of the cooperative patron, some state statutes require the cooperative to operate on a nonprofit basis, so that goods or services are provided at cost. Other statutes protect patron interests by requiring that net earnings...be distributed on the basis of patronage.

Furthermore, many state statutes, as well as federal cooperative tax laws, set limits on dividends or interest paid on a cooperative's capital stock. As a result, cooperatives have limited access to outside sources of capital, and cooperative members must provide significant portions of the equity needed for startup ventures or expansions.

The challenges posed by equity capital formation have been especially visible in the agricultural sector, where cooperative businesses play a significant role...

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Dividend rate, opportunities for asset appreciation, and voting rights tied to level of investment are criteria that are used by a nonpatron investor to evaluate an investment opportunity but are limited or prohibited by cooperative statutes. Cooperatives have attempted to address these issues in a variety of ways, including conversions, joint ventures and the use of the limited-liability company business structure.

The exploration of alternative business forms set the stage for the development of the LCA. The first state statute governing this type of business structure was passed in Wyoming in 2001 and was specific to agricultural operations. Since that time, the applicability of this new type of cooperative to other business development situations has been recognized. Later statutes have a broader scope and encompass many business sectors. The specifics in the state statutes vary, but all provide some guidelines on patron voting collectively, voting power of patron-elected board of directors, and allocation of profits to patrons.

The concurrent drafting of a proposed uniform cooperative statute by the National Conference of Commissioners for Uniform State Law (NCCUSL) mirrors these developments. NCCUSL began working on a draft cooperative statute in 2004. As was the case with state LCA statutes, it was not meant to be a replacement for state traditional cooperative laws, but rather to “provide a flexible cooperative act to aid agricultural producers associated for economic development.”

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As the draft statute evolved, so did its scope. The October 2005 working draft is entitled “Uniform Limited Cooperative Association Act” (ULCAA). The draft’s prefatory note drops reference to agricultural producers and describes its purpose as “...another statutory option for organizing cooperatives as a way to encourage economic development.” This and subsequent prefatory notes and memos explore the need for an organizational structure which reflects the legal, historic, and functional differences of the cooperative business form but allows increased equity investment incentives for outside investors.

Existing LLC statutes are flexible enough to be used to establish a cooperative business structure that includes investor members with control and voting rights. However, the ULCAA was developed for use as an “efficient template” for creating this type of business organization, incorporating cooperative principles and practices drawn from a review of existing cooperative statutes. To balance patron and investor member interests, the ULCAA also includes provisions for collective patron voting, voting power of patron-elected board of directors, and sets a minimum allocation of profits to patrons.

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Of the 22 limited cooperative associations described in 2005...only 36 percent were agriculture-related ventures. The 26 LCAs formed since May 2005 continued this trend, with 31 percent related to agriculture. Because the newer Iowa and Wisconsin statutes are both multisectoral, they are being used for a broad range of new cooperative businesses, including both consumer and purchasing cooperatives.

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...[M]any of the associations formed under the LCA statutes were likely to operate as traditional cooperatives, and information gathered on several of the newer cooperatives indicate similar operational plans.

Many of these new LCAs do not appear to be the type of capital-intensive agricultural ventures that originally spurred the development of LCA business statutes. Because the statutes are relatively new, familiarity with them may still be developing within the business law community, affecting the frequency of their use in the formation of new cooperative businesses. In addition, the requirements built into the LCA structure to protect patron-member interests may not provide the level of control and the options for exit that would contribute to the attractiveness of an investment opportunity. Whether the LCA structure is sufficiently flexible to accommodate the needs of outside investor-members, while protecting patron-member interests in larger-scale projects, is unclear at this time.

However, a commonality of interests beyond the financial also may exist between investor- and patron-members. Cooperatives are seen as effective tools for addressing local community economic development issues and for promoting local ownership. Investor-member support and participation in these types of projects may be motivated by community development as well as financial considerations. The LCA structure allows for investor-members to participate in and support community development projects that otherwise might not be able to attract sufficient capital for start up.

*Excerpts from “Limited Cooperative Association Statutes: An Update.” University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives 2008 staff report. The full report may be viewed on the UWCC website: <http://s.coop.3qk>.*



## APPENDIX D: EFFECTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

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### Selecting the Board

The greatest threat to the survival of a cooperative is a poorly performing board of directors.

Being a positive participant in effective cooperative governance is the most important job a co-op member has. All cooperatives, whatever the kind, share the basic premise of one member, one vote. All cooperative members share equally in voting for the board of directors, and also by law must be allowed to vote on major decisions affecting the cooperative's future, such as a sale, merger, or dissolution of the business, as well as any changes to the bylaws. Beyond that, however, cooperatives enjoy wide latitude in structuring how other decisions affecting the business will be made.

Six Traditional Major Areas of Responsibility of the Board of Directors

1. **Mission:** Determine the organization's mission and set policies to ensure the fulfillment of the mission.
2. **Fiscal:** Establish fiscal policy and ensure the ongoing financial integrity and viability of the organization.
3. **Leadership:** Hire, evaluate, and if necessary, fire, the Executive Director.
4. **Supervision:** Provide ongoing supervision, direction and support for the Execution Director.
5. **Strategic Planning:** Provided the long rand vision and plans for the organization, and develop priorities and policies to pursue and implement these plans.
6. **Public Image:** Represent the organization to the public and advocate for the organization.

The Board of Directors should not:

- Become involved in day to day operations;
- Hire or supervise staff other then Executive Director; or
- Micro-manage the Executive Director or the staff.

Directors of a cooperative business have the same legal responsibilities as directors of any other corporation or business. The exact legal obligations of boards of directors vary from state to state, but most state statutes encompass the basic dues of care, loyalty, and obedience. Because of the unique nature of cooperative businesses, however, board members must attend to some additional duties. Unlike investor-owned businesses, which are often focused solely on making a profit, co-ops operate profitably to meet the needs of their members. Co-op directors must know what those needs are. They also must ensure that the members are educated about cooperatives and about their rights as members. The board has an official responsibility to communicate with member-owners about the financial health of the organization and about the plans and vision of the board.

When a new cooperative is formed, the corporate bylaws will reserve certain decision-making rights for the membership as a whole. Any other decisions, by definition, may be made by the board of directors. In practice, certain other issues might be taken to the membership at large for input. When setting up a co-op, it is important to outline how decisions will be made: When will the group as a whole make decisions? What kinds of decisions can board officers or committees make? How will such decisions be made? Will approved decisions require collective agreement or a simple majority?

## Learning to Promote Sound, Fair Governance: Qualities of an Effective Board Member

Good boards don't just happen, they are made. An active, thoughtful, and directed nominations process is a key element that differentiates effective boards from ineffective ones.

Before recruiting individuals for your board, think about what the board as a team is charged with doing, and what will make the board as a team most able to fulfill its leadership responsibilities in ways that will benefit the entire co-op. The board members must be able to work together to fulfill the board's responsibilities while representing the diverse interests of the co-op. It is important to consider how leadership roles can be shared among people so that the skills and experiences of each person complement those of the others.

First decide what skills and qualities you want this group to have, and then determine what skills and qualities are lacking in the group. Target your recruitment so you can fill in these gaps.

Some members will stand out immediately as good candidates for the board. Others will have more subtle qualities that make them potentially good candidates. Individual board members must provide the pieces that fit together to form an effective group, but no individual board member is required to have every skill or leadership quality necessary to the group as a whole. One board may need a person with particular skills and experience, while another may need someone very different. The goal is to build an effective group; each individual is only one piece of this equation.

### **The following types of people may be good board candidates:**

- People who have participated actively at co-op meetings or events.
- People who have shown initiative, diplomacy, knowledge, and judgment in addressing issues facing the co-op or another group.
- People who are demanding change and will take on responsibility for initiating it.
- People who help a meeting simply by being there—through their people skills, organizational skills, sense of humor, or positive spirit.
- People who inspire trust or are seen as team builders.
- People who are good listeners.

People enjoy having their strengths recognized by their peers.

Keep in mind that all boards will need training to carry out their duties effectively—training in financial management, group process, cooperative legal issues, and so forth—and that adults learn differently than young people do.

Below is an outline of some of the personal characteristics of an effective board president, but the ideas listed are true for all board members. Striving to create something really special for and with your fellow members is what can make serving on the board of a cooperative a uniquely rewarding experience.

## Personal Characteristics of an Effective Board President

**Commitment to Service**—Above all, the president must be committed to his or her role as a servant of members. An effective servant does not always do the leading, but implements the will of members.

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**Vision**—The co-op looks to the president for inspiration. Members want to hear how good the cooperative can be. A good president looks for the positives and talks about them. The president must visualize how the board, committees, and volunteers function separately, and also how they work together to achieve the co-op's goals.

**Perspective**—The president needs to be able to step back from the day-to-day activities and assess what is happening, as if for the first time. That includes having a sense of humor.

**Impartiality**—An effective president is able to remain objective and open-minded in all discussions. He or she must be willing to listen to intensely different points of view.

**Caring**—The president must care for the conduct of the co-op and for the well-being of its members. A strong president has the ability to affect others positively and to generate enthusiasm in others.

## APPENDIX E: BOARD MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

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### Board of Directors Code of Conduct

As a co-op director, I pledge to do my best for the co-op and will:

- Devote the time needed to fulfill the responsibilities of the position.
- Attend all regular and special board and committee meetings.
- Be prompt, attentive, and prepared for all board and committee meetings.
- Contribute to and encourage open, respectful, and thorough discussions by the board.
- To enhance board understanding and cohesiveness, attend and actively participate in the board's training sessions and annual planning retreat.
- Consider the business of the co-op and its members to be confidential in nature.
- Disclose any personal or organizational conflict of interest in which I may be involved, and refrain from discussing or voting on any issues related to that conflict.
- Be honest, helpful, diligent, and respectful in my dealings with the co-op, other directors, and the co-op's management, staff, and members.
- Refrain from becoming financially involved or associated with any business or agency that has interests that are, or could be perceived to be, in conflict with the co-op's interests.
- Work for continued and increased effectiveness in the co-op's ability to serve its member-owners.
- Be a team player and agree to abide by the majority action of the board, even if it is not my own personal opinion.
- Present the agreed-upon view of the board of directors, rather than my own, when I speak on behalf of the co-op to employees, members, shoppers, and the general public.
- Refrain from asking for special privileges as a board member.
- Work to ensure that the co-op is controlled in a democratic fashion and that all elections are public, fair, and open to the participation of all members.
- Strive at all times to keep members informed of the co-op's status and plans and of the board's work.
- Continually seek opportunities to learn more about the co-op and its operations and about my responsibilities as a board member.

As a co-op director, I agree to abide by this Statement of Agreement in both letter and spirit.

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Signature

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Date

## APPENDIX F: TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

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### Characteristics of Effective Meetings

- The atmosphere is informal, relaxed, and comfortable. People are involved and interested. There are no signs of boredom or tension.
- There is a great deal of discussion in which everyone participates. The discussion stays relevant to the topic(s) at hand. If the discussion gets off the subject, someone quickly brings it back.
- The task or objective of the team is well understood and accepted by participants. Participants are committed to achieving it.
- Participants really listen to each other.
- Disagreement is expressed openly and without fear of conflict. Differences of opinion are honored and thoroughly explored before decisions are made. If differences cannot be resolved, participants agree to live with them and move on.
- Decisions are reached by consensus. Formal majority voting is not used.
- Criticism of ideas is frequent, frank, and phrased constructively. Participants avoid personal attacks.
- People are encouraged to express their feelings as well as their thoughts. There are no hidden agendas and few surprises, since participants are open about sharing their feelings.
- When action is agreed upon, clear assignments are made and participants accept individual accountability.
- The facilitator does not dominate interaction. Participants do not defer unduly to the facilitator. All participants exercise leadership responsibilities.
- The group is highly conscious of its own internal processes. Frequently, it will stop to examine how well it is doing and take a look at things that may be interfering with its functioning. Problems are discussed openly until a solution is found.

### Key Meeting Roles

#### Meeting Facilitator

Responsibilities: To begin and end the meeting on time; to keep the meeting focused on results; to keep the meeting moving; to model and use facilitative behaviors; to keep discussion on track; to keep the discussion balanced; to summarize; to encourage all participants to contribute; and to listen, look for, and point out areas of agreement. See “Role of Meeting Facilitator,” below, for more details.

#### Recorder/Minute Taker

Responsibilities: To record ideas and suggestions made by participants, to record agreements and decisions reached, to seek out clarification when necessary.

#### Timekeeper

Responsibilities: To keep track of time spent on agenda items, to warn leader or facilitator when time is running out.

## Participant

Responsibilities: To contribute to the meeting in a constructive way; to share information that is useful; to listen carefully to other points of view; and to pay attention to both task and process functions.

## Role of Meeting Facilitator

Co-op meetings don't have "someone in charge"; they have facilitators. The board president is usually the meeting facilitator, but the board can assign the facilitator role to anyone. A facilitator is a member who steps out of the decision making to focus on the meeting process, how the discussion runs. Skilled facilitating keeps a meeting focused, moving, and productive.

Small meetings are generally easy to facilitate; large meetings are tougher. Start small and gain experience. With practice and attention, anyone can become a great facilitator.

Here's a quick checklist of the facilitator's role:

- Make the meeting space comfortable.
- Provide meeting supplies (extra handouts, newsprint, tape, etc.)
- Start and keep the meeting on time.
- Move the group from one agenda item to the next.
- Recognize people and give them their opportunity to speak.
- Keep issues clear and manageable.
- Make sure that people stick to the issue.
- Encourage positive attitudes.
- Make sure that everyone participates.
- Sum up discussion points.
- End discussion if a decision cannot be made.

The following outlines a facilitator's job in detail. All of the listed goals are necessary, but the tools are suggestions. Experiment and learn as you go.

## Focus

It's the facilitator's job to stay out of the debate and keep discussions on track. An unfocused meeting quickly becomes inefficient and frustrating.

1. Separate yourself (as facilitator) from the discussion. Try not to add content to the discussion. As facilitator, your role is to focus on the process.
  - If you know that you have a strong personal stake in a proposal, ask someone else to facilitate the meeting.
  - If you give any personal input, start by saying, "Stepping out of my facilitator role. . . ." It is important that people do not give your opinion more weight because you are acting as facilitator.
2. Keep the issue clear and manageable.
  - Start the discussion with a time for "clarifying questions." This is a time for people to make sure they understand the issues or proposals, not to discuss them.
  - Break large, complicated issues or proposals into smaller parts.
  - Post the agenda or steps needed to reach a decision where everyone can see them.

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3. Make sure people stick to the issue.
  - Keep a “parallel agenda” or “parking lot” if unrelated issues come up. Jot down notes of concern. Later, you can address these issues quickly, or pass them to a committee, or table them for a future meeting.
4. Keep speakers from repeating points that have already been made.
  - Write points on a large pad of newsprint or a whiteboard.
5. Keep the meeting moving. Be aware of time.
  - Set time limits for each agenda item.
  - Choose a timekeeper.
  - Remind people how much time remains. If you run out of time, have members either extend the time limit or set another time to continue the discussion. If you extend the time, have the members decide if the meeting will go longer or what will be tabled for another time.

### Participation

It's the facilitator's job to recognize speakers and get everyone involved. The more points of view that are expressed and then addressed, the stronger final decisions can be. Everyone has valid opinions. Everyone can have creative solutions.

1. Recognize speakers; call on people to speak in turn.
  - Keep a “stack.” Write down people's names as they raise their hands and use that list to call on people in turn. People may not get to speak at the exact moment they want, but they will understand that the system is fair.
2. Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.
  - Go around the circle, giving each person a brief, uninterrupted chance to speak.
  - Ask questions to prompt quiet members to speak.
  - Break the discussion group into smaller groups so it's less intimidating.
  - Try to have everyone speak once before anyone speaks a second time.
  - Clarify the issue under discussion as needed.
3. Encourage everyone to speak his or her mind.
  - If someone seems to be holding back, try to engage them in the discussion.
  - Give people easy ways to participate. Ask the group a question and have people show thumbs: thumbs up means agree, in favor, and thumbs down means disagree, against. Thumbs to the side means unsure, neutral.
4. Encourage creativity, especially when discussions get stuck.
  - Hold brainstorming sessions where everyone adds to a list of ideas without any evaluation. The group can discuss specific ideas after the brainstorm.

### Positive Attitudes

It's the facilitator's role to set the tone of the meeting. Good meetings are relaxed, organized, friendly, and fun.

- Keep discussions from getting too heated by scheduling breaks.
- Give positive feedback.
- Discourage nonconstructive feedback and criticism.



- Refer to points and proposals by titles, not the names of the person who presented them.
- Make the space comfortable.

## Pull It All Together

It's the facilitator's role to achieve clarity before the group makes a decision. This is one of the most important parts of facilitating—and often the hardest.

1. Sum up what's been said; in voting, review points of opposing proposals; in consensus, repeat points to be addressed and solutions.

- Use a whiteboard or flipchart to list points of the proposal(s).
- Review important points of the discussion (on paper or orally). This way the group can see how the decision has been reached.
- Know if or when a decision cannot be made. The people may need more facts, opinions from others, or time to think.
- Ask members what they need or want to feel comfortable making a decision.

2. Make sure everyone understands the decision.

- Restate the decision. Ask for group approval. Make sure the recorder writes it down exactly.

## Board Meeting Facilitation Tips

Good facilitation makes all the difference between feeling energized or drained by a meeting. Strong facilitation helps all members participate equally. Although leading a board discussion is usually the president's job, facilitation may be assigned to any person who has a knack for watching the clock and the agenda, and for encouraging everyone to participate in discussions.

Running meetings and managing them well is not something that anyone is born knowing how to do; it is an acquired skill that takes talent and experience. With time, each facilitator discovers his or her own strengths and style. Don't be hesitant to secure (and be willing to pay for) outside help if you need it.

The basic job of the facilitator is threefold: Begin the meeting on time, keep the meeting moving, and end the meeting on time.

### **Begin the meeting on time.**

- Allow some time for small talk and settling in.
- Create an impromptu agenda, if necessary.
- Walk through the agenda, emphasizing desired outcomes (decision, review, or discussion) for each item.
- If agenda topics have appeared in prior meetings, establish continuity by giving a brief review of actions taken since their last consideration.

### **Keep the meeting moving.**

- Don't move too fast or push too hard.
- Stick to the allotted times for agenda items.
- Summarize frequently to avoid confusion or misunderstanding, and bridge from one topic to the next.
- If a discussion becomes complicated or lengthy, propose a way of addressing the topic in another

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way or at another time.

- Keep the discussion balanced.
- Encourage all participants to contribute. The facilitator should be sensitive to everyone's needs to digest or articulate information, especially when discussing complex topics or making difficult decisions, while keeping the discussion moving and tactfully cutting short repetitive arguments.
- Listen, look for, and point out areas of agreement.

### **Bring the meeting to a conclusion.**

- Be committed to ending meetings on time.
- Get clear agreement on action items, including who will be responsible, time frames, how progress will be checked, and how progress will be evaluated.
- Some boards routinely set aside a block of time at the end of each meeting to give members a chance to air questions or concerns. To prevent the meeting from becoming a gripe session, it helps to have ground rules for this sort of exchange.
- Time should be allowed at the end of each meeting for a meeting evaluation process. Encouraging board members to give feedback can improve teamwork and make the job of being a board member fun. All board members are responsible for helping make meetings effective.
- Set the tentative date and time of the next meeting, if appropriate.

### **Using the Consensus Model for Decision Making**

Making decisions as a group can be difficult. Voting sometimes leaves a group deadlocked, frustrated, or resentful. Often, an answer is not a simple “yes” or “no.” One way a group can reach a decision that unites participants instead of dividing them is through consensus. Consensus is defined as reaching general agreement. An effective meeting facilitator will attempt to guide the group to consensus on decisions using the following techniques:

- Encourage the presentation of viewpoints, especially when they are conflicting. Real consensus comes only after open discussion and acknowledging differences.
- Listen carefully for agreements and hesitations within the group. When a decision can't be made, state points of agreement and hesitation. Stating points of agreement helps group morale, may lead to agreement “in principle” on the issue, and may make it possible to agree on new ideas. Stating points of hesitation can make them clearer and allow for resolution. Many times, hesitations are based on misunderstanding and restating can end those misunderstandings.
- Test for agreement as soon as a decision seems to be emerging. State the tentative consensus in a question and be specific. For example: “Do we all agree that we'll meet on Tuesday nights for the next two months, and that a facilitator will be chosen at each meeting for the next one?” rather than “Do we all agree to do this the way it was just suggested?” If you are unclear about how to phrase the decision, ask for help.
- Insist on a response from the group. Don't accept silence or grunting for consent. Participants need to be conscious of making a contract with each other.
- Sometimes stating the perceived agreement in the negative helps to clarify the group feeling: “Is there anyone who does not agree that...?” This method is especially helpful for groups under time pressure or with a tendency for nit-picking, but it is also important for group members to be fully

supportive of the decision. If you have doubts about their commitment, ask them.

- Be suspicious of agreements reached too easily. Test to make sure members really do agree on essential points.
- Offer alternatives when there is no agreement.
- Ask those who disagree to offer alternative proposals for discussion and decision.
- If an agreement still cannot be reached, people may need time to reflect on the feelings behind their opinions. Propose a break or a period of silence, or postpone the discussion.
- If postponing the decision, try to reach an agreement on a process for what will happen before an item is brought up again. It is often productive for representatives of opposing factions to draft a compromise proposal together.

There are many models of consensus-based decision making, and the one described below is just one of them. The idea behind this model is to avoid having anyone leave the table feeling disgruntled, excluded, or dismissed. This model isn't appropriate for every decision you make, but it can be helpful for times where you're dealing with potentially divisive issues.

When making a decision, instead of voting "yes" or "no," have everyone express support for the decision in terms of a number between 1 and 5:

5 = I feel strongly about this and will take the lead to make sure it happens.

4 = I feel strongly about this, and will work to make sure it happens.

3 = I am okay with this.

2 = I am not okay with this, but will not stop it.

1 = I am opposed to this, and will work to prevent it from happening.

After everyone has voted, tally and share the responses with the group. Begin by asking the 1s and 2s to share their concerns. Ask them to relate their opinion directly to the values, goals, and objectives of the cooperative. Then ask the 4s and 5s to share their viewpoints and do the same thing. The goal is to share viewpoints until everyone in the group is comfortable with the decision. Even in a consensus decision-making process, the group may opt to overrule a single member or small group that stands in the way of where the others feel strongly the organization should go. Also, if there are no 5s, you may ask if the proposal is a good idea to begin with.

## Ground Rules for Meetings

It's a good idea to set some formal meeting ground rules that everyone agrees to abide by. Like the code of ethics, ground rules describe the highest level of behavior that meeting participants should practice at all times, but that may be forgotten in the heat of discussion.

- Arrive on time. Stay until the end.
- Begin all meetings on time.
- Start the meeting with introductions and an explanation of the meeting process.
- Come prepared, having read all relevant materials beforehand.
- Recognize and state when you have a conflict of interest. Do not vote on any motion in which you have a stated conflict of interest.
- Make no judgmental statements.
- Seek to understand before being understood.

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- Speak respectfully. Never raise your voice above a normal speaking tone.
- Talk to the issue, not to the person.
- Don't criticize those who are absent.
- Ask questions when you do not understand. There are no stupid questions.
- Take turns speaking. Try not to speak again until everyone else has had a chance to speak.
- Don't speak at the same time. Don't interrupt.
- State your motions positively. Try to pair a solution with every problem.
- People can disagree without being disrespectful. Everyone needs to be heard and respected, but that does not mean everyone gets his or her own way.
- Talk about meeting issues at the meeting, not in the parking lot after the meeting.
- End all meetings on time.
- Thank all attendees for their support and dedication.

### Roberts Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order is a time-proven tool for meeting process. You don't have to be a parliamentary whiz to use basic concepts that help you stick to an agenda and finish the meeting in an hour or two. The table shown below summarizes the most commonly used parliamentary procedures. Adopting these, even informally, can often help at times when discussions stray from the business at hand, or when conflict becomes stressful.

Process	Following parliamentary procedure, one says:	Need a second?	Is it debatable?	Can it be amended?	What vote is needed?
Introduce business	"I move that . . ."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Motion by committee	"Finance committee moves . . ."	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Suspend further consideration of an issue	"I move to table the motion."	Yes	No	No	Majority
Postpone discussion for a certain time	"I move to postpone the discussion until . . ."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion on the table	"I move to amend the motion by . . ."	Yes	Only if motion is debatable	Yes	Majority
End a debate and amendments	"I call the question."	Yes	No	No	2/3
Give closer study to something	"I move to refer the matter to the _____ committee."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Adjourn a meeting	"I move that we adjourn."	Yes	No	No	Majority

### Motions that occur occasionally

Process	Following parliamentary procedure, one says:	Need a second?	Is it debatable?	Can it be amended?	What vote is needed?
Protest breach of conduct	"I rise to a point of order."	No	No	No	No vote
Vote on a ruling of the chair	"I appeal the chair's decision."	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

<b>Process</b>	<b>Following parliamentary procedure, one says:</b>	<b>Need a second?</b>	<b>Is it debatable?</b>	<b>Can it be amended?</b>	<b>What vote is needed?</b>
Suspend rules temporarily	"I move to suspend the rules so that . . ."	Yes	No	No	2/3
Avoid considering an improper matter	"I object to consideration of this motion."	No	No	No	2/3
Request information	"Point of information."	No	No	No	No vote
Take up a previously tabled matter	"I move to take from the table . . ."	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider an action the vote on . . ."	"I move to reconsider	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

## Troubleshooting a problem meeting

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Solution</b>
Lack of agenda	Send a written agenda in advance to all meeting participants, increasing the odds that people will come to the meeting prepared.
Poor attendance	Were you clear about the meeting date, time, and location? Did you invite the correct people to the meeting? Did you poll participants to choose a convenient time and location?
Distractions	Be sure to choose a meeting time and location that is free from distracting sights and sounds. Make sure the seating and the room temperature are comfortable.
Late arrivals	Start the meeting on time. If you don't start the meeting on time, you're penalizing the people who were on time and rewarding the latecomers.
Socializing	Get down to business at hand and follow the agenda. Do not try to talk over the people talking on the side, but be silent until the disruption ceases.
Wandering from agenda	Make sure discussion sticks to the agenda. Bring back the strays. Use parliamentary procedure.
Meetings run late	Follow the agenda. Table items to be discussed at the next meeting or assign the work to a committee. Interrupt lengthy speakers, if necessary, and ask them to summarize. End the meeting on time.

## Handling a Meeting Monopolizer

A "monopolizer" is a person who attempts to take charge of a group, monopolizing its discussion and trying to determine its direction. Many cooperatives have a monopolizer or two. Left unchecked, a monopolizer can ruin a committee, split a board, or even destroy a co-op's sense of community.

Handling a monopolizer is a delicate matter because the co-op does not want to arbitrarily silence a member. That would be a violation of the member's right to voice a minority opinion within the

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democratic organization. The solution for the co-op is twofold:

- Proper use of the majority-rule democratic process.
- Effective meeting management by the meeting facilitator.

Responsibility for ensuring the success of the democratic process falls to the board, which is elected and empowered to run the meetings of the cooperative. Committee chairs have the same power delegated to them from the board.

### **Encourage the Democratic Process**

The democratic process is designed so that organizations can get business done fairly and effectively. This includes preventing one person from taking over the agenda or making decisions without a vote. Anyone in the group can move that time limits be imposed, or that each person gets to make their point succinctly and only once. The group can adopt the process by majority vote. This not only puts clear limits on the monopolizer, but shows him or her that the group has heard enough from them.

### **Manage the Person and the Meeting**

If someone has previously demonstrated a tendency to monopolize, a board member could speak privately with the individual before the next meeting. Ask the monopolizer what he or she wants to accomplish. Tell them that speaking too much doesn't help their case, but rather turns people off. Help them formulate a simple request they can make at the next meeting and suggest that they then stop talking unless the president calls on them again.

In a meeting, it is the facilitator's responsibility to protect everyone's right to be heard. Set the ground rules, then stick to them firmly and consistently. Make raising your hand essential. Only allow someone to speak after being properly recognized. If anyone speaks before being called on, interrupt him or her. A gavel is useful in these instances.

Even a positively inclined monopolizer can create a difficult situation. Such a person may volunteer lots of their time to the co-op and may be well liked by everyone, but feel a need to be in charge of everything. But if the situation continues, other people stop trying to get involved. Another danger is that if the monopolizer should disappear, there could be a sudden leadership vacuum. Consequently, even a positive monopolizer should be encouraged to move over a bit and let others assume important roles.

## APPENDIX G: 150 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL

### what to do: 150 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital is built through hundreds of little and big actions we take every day. We've gotten you started with a list of nearly 150 ideas, drawn from suggestions made by many people and groups. Try some of these or try your own. We need to grow this list. If you have other ideas, post them at: <http://www.bettertogether.org>. You know what to do. Build connections to people. Build trust with others. Get involved.

1. Organize a social gathering to welcome a new neighbor
2. Attend town meetings
3. Register to vote and vote
4. Support local merchants
5. Volunteer your special skills to an organization
6. Donate blood (with a friend!)
7. Start a community garden
8. Mentor someone of a different ethnic or religious group
9. Surprise a new neighbor by making a favorite dinner—and include the recipe
10. Tape record your parents' earliest recollections and share them with your children
11. Plan a vacation with friends or family
12. Avoid gossip
13. Help fix someone's flat tire
14. Organize/participate in a sports league
15. Join a gardening club
16. Go to home parties when invited
17. Become an organ donor or blood marrow donor.
18. Attend your children's athletic contests, plays and recitals
19. Get to know your children's teachers
20. Join the local Elks, Kiwanis, or Knights of Columbus
21. Get involved with Brownies or Cub/Boy/Girl Scouts
22. Start a monthly tea group
23. Speak at/host a monthly brown bag lunch series at your local library
24. Sing in a choir
25. Get to know the clerks and salespeople at your local stores
26. Attend PTA meetings
27. Audition for community theater or volunteer to usher
28. Give your park a weatherproof chess/checkers board
29. Play cards with friends or neighbors
30. Give to your local food bank
31. Walk or bike to support a cause and meet others
32. *Employers:* encourage volunteer/community groups to hold meetings on your site
33. Volunteer in your child's classroom or chaperone a field trip
34. Join or start a babysitting cooperative
35. Attend school plays
36. Answer surveys when asked
37. *Businesses:* invite local government officials to speak at your workplace
38. Attend Memorial Day parades and express appreciation for others
39. Form a local outdoor activity group
40. Participate in political campaigns
41. Attend a local budget committee meeting
42. Form a computer group for local senior citizens
43. Help coach Little League or other youth sports – even if you don't have a kid playing
44. Help run the snack bar at the Little League field
45. Form a tool lending library with neighbors and share ladders, snow blowers, etc.
46. Start a lunch gathering or a discussion group with co-workers
47. Offer to rake a neighbor's yard or shovel his/her walk
48. Start or join a carpool
49. *Employers:* give employees time (e.g., 3 days per year to work on civic projects)
50. Plan a "Walking Tour" of a local historic area
51. Eat breakfast at a local gathering spot on Saturdays and mingle
52. Have family dinners and read to your children
53. Run for public office
54. Stop and make sure the person on the side of the highway is OK
55. Host a block party or a holiday open house
56. Start a fix-it group: friends willing to help each other clean, paint, garden, etc.
57. Offer to serve on a town committee
58. Join the volunteer fire department
59. Go to church...or temple...or walk outside with your children—talk to them about why its important
60. If you grow tomatoes, plant extra for an lonely elder neighbor – better yet, ask him/her to teach you and others how to can the extras
61. Ask a single diner to share your table for lunch
62. Stand at a major intersection holding a sign for your favorite candidate
63. Persuade a local restaurant to have a designated "meet people" table
64. Host a potluck supper before your Town Meeting
65. Take dance lessons with a friend
66. Say "thanks" to public servants – police, firefighters, town clerk...
67. Fight to keep essential local services in the downtown area – your post office, police station, school, etc.
68. Join a nonprofit board of directors
69. Gather a group to clean up a local park or cemetery
70. When somebody says "government stinks," suggest they help fix it

Note: Expanded from original list of "100 Things You Can Do to Build Social Capital" (Saguaro Seminar: Civic Engagement in America project at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard); additional contributions from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and Rochester Area Community Foundation, as well as ideas from the public.



# APPENDICES

- 71. Turn off the TV and talk with friends or family
- 72. Hold a neighborhood barbecue
- 73. Bake cookies for new neighbors or work colleagues
- 74. Plant tree seedlings along your street with neighbors and rotate care for them
- 75. Volunteer at the library
- 76. Form or join a bowling team
- 77. Return a lost wallet or appointment book
- 78. Use public transportation and start talking with those you regularly see
- 79. Ask neighbors for help and reciprocate
- 80. Go to a local folk or crafts festival
- 81. Call an old friend
- 82. Enroll in a class and meet your classmates
- 83. Accept or extend an invitation
- 84. Talk to your kids/parents about their day
- 85. Say hello to strangers
- 86. Log off and go to the park
- 87. Ask a new person to join a group for a dinner or an evening
- 88. Host a pot luck meal or participate in them
- 89. Volunteer to drive someone
- 90. Say hello when you spot an acquaintance in a store
- 91. Host a movie night
- 92. Exercise together or take walks with friends or family
- 93. Assist with/create your town or neighborhood's newsletter
- 94. Organize a neighborhood pick-up – with lawn games afterwards
- 95. Collect oral histories from older town residents
- 96. Join a book club discussion & get the group to discuss local issues
- 97. Volunteer to deliver Meals-on-Wheels in your neighborhood
- 98. Start a children's story hour at your local library
- 99. Be real. Be humble.  
Acknowledge others' self-worth
- 100. Tell friends and family about social capital and why it matters
- 101. Greet people
- 102. Cut back on television
- 103. Join in to help carry something heavy
- 104. Plan a reunion of family, friends, or those with whom you had a special connection
- 105. Take in the programs at your local library
- 106. Read the local news faithfully
- 107. Buy a grill and invite others over for a meal
- 108. Fix it even if you didn't break it
- 109. Pick it up even if you didn't drop it
- 110. Attend a public meeting
- 111. Go with friends or colleagues to a ball game (and root, root, root for the home team!)
- 112. Help scrape ice off a neighbor's car, put chains on the tires or shovel it out
- 113. Hire young people for odd jobs
- 114. Start a tradition
- 115. Share your snow blower
- 116. Help jump-start someone's car
- 117. Join a project that includes people from all walks of life
- 118. Sit on your stoop
- 119. Be nice when you drive
- 120. Make gifts of time
- 121. Buy a big hot tub
- 122. Volunteer at your local neighborhood school
- 123. Offer to help out at your local recycling center
- 124. Send a "thank you" letter to the Editor about a person or event that helped build community
- 125. Raise funds for a new town clock or new town library
- 126. When inspired, write personal notes to friends and neighbors
- 127. Attend gallery openings
- 128. Organize a town-wide yard sale
- 129. Invite friends or colleagues to help with a home renovation or home building project
- 130. Join or start a local mall-walking group and have coffee together afterwards
- 131. Build a neighborhood playground
- 132. Become a story-reader or baby-rocker at a local childcare center or neighborhood pre-school
- 133. Contra dance or two-step
- 134. Help kids on your street construct a lemonade stand
- 135. Open the door for someone who has his or her hands full
- 136. Say hi to those in elevators
- 137. Invite friends to go snowshoeing, hiking, or cross-country skiing
- 138. Offer to watch your neighbor's home or apartment while they are away
- 139. Organize a fitness/health group with your friends or co-workers
- 140. Hang out at the town dump and chat with your neighbors as you sort your trash at the Recycling Center
- 141. Take a pottery class with your children or parent(s)
- 142. See if your neighbor needs anything when you run to the store
- 143. Ask to see a friend's family photos
- 144. Join groups (e.g., arts, sports, religion) likely to lead to making new friends that bridge across race/ethnicity, social class or other social cleavages
- 145. Attend or start a free summer music series at a local park
- 146. \_\_\_\_\_
- 147. \_\_\_\_\_
- 148. \_\_\_\_\_
- 149. \_\_\_\_\_
- 150. \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Expanded from original list of "100 Things You Can Do to Build Social Capital" (Saguaro Seminar: Civic Engagement in America project at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard); additional contributions from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and Rochester Area Community Foundation, as well as ideas from the public.



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# The L3C: A More Creative Capitalism



By [Jim Witkin](#) | January 15th, 2009

During his 2007 [Harvard commencement address](#), Bill Gates, now the world's best funded philanthropist, called on the graduates to invent “**a more creative capitalism**” where “we can stretch the reach of market forces so that more people can make a profit, or at least make a living, serving people who are suffering from the worst inequities.”



It doesn't take a Harvard grad (or Harvard dropout like Gates) to understand that traditional market forces mostly work against the notion of a socially beneficial enterprise (one that seeks social returns first and financial second). Existing for-profit corporate structures demand a higher financial return than a social enterprise can usually deliver; while non-profit organizations have limited access to capital and a tax-exempt format that limits a strong profit orientation. If the social enterprise field is to evolve and grow, what's needed is a hybrid of the two forms, a structure that supports a “low profit corporation.”

Enter the L3C (low-profit, limited liability company), a new corporate structure designed to **attract a wide range of investment sources** thereby improving the viability of social ventures. In April 2008, Vermont became the first state to recognize the L3C as a legal corporate structure. Similar legislation is pending in Georgia, Michigan, Montana and North Carolina. But if the L3C seems like the right choice for your social enterprise, you don't have to wait! L3Cs formed in Vermont can be used in any state.

## Flexible Ownership Attracts a Range of Investors

The goal of the L3C form is to bring together a mix of investment money from a variety of sources. This process starts with investments from Foundations known as [Program Related Investments](#) (PRIs).

Foundations are required to spend at least five percent of their assets in a given fiscal year in order to maintain their tax-exempt status. They have two basic options for spending their money: they can make grants, where there is no financial return on the money, or they can make program-related investments (PRIs) investing in for-profit ventures and potentially earn a return.

But to qualify as a PRI, the investment must **relate to the Foundation's mission** and the risk/reward ratio must exceed that of a standard market-driven investment (ie, the risk must be higher, and the return lower). Surprisingly, the use of PRIs by Foundations is limited even with the potential to earn a small return.

Because of burdensome and costly IRS requirements to verify PRIs, many foundations shy away from investing in for-profit ventures due to the uncertainty of whether they would qualify as PRIs.

Unlike the Limited Liability Corporation (LLC), the L3C is explicitly formed to further a socially beneficial mission. The L3C's operating agreement specifically outlines its PRI-qualified purpose. This should make it much easier for Foundations to make program related investments in social ventures while ensuring their tax-exempt status remains secure.

Like the LLC, the L3C is able to form **flexible partnerships** where ownership rights can be tailored to meet the requirements of each partner. This flexibility permits a tranching or layered investment and ownership structure. The Foundation's L3C membership stake provides for a very low rate of return and can be subordinate to the other investors. Because the Foundation can invest through PRIs at less than the market rate while embracing higher risk levels, this lowers the risk to other investors and increases their potential rate of return. So the remaining L3C memberships can then be marketed at risk/return profiles necessary to attract market driven investors.

The end result: the L3C is able to leverage Foundation PRIs to access a wide range of investment dollars through a flexible partnership structure. Additionally, profit and loss flow through the L3C to its members and are taxed according to each investor's particular tax situation, making it easier for non-profits and for-profits to partner together.

Some examples of L3C entities that have been created or are in the process: carbon trading, alternative energy, food bank processing, social services, social benefit consulting and media, arts funding, job creation programs, economic development, housing for low income and aging populations, medical facilities, environmental remediation, and medical research.

### **L3C Advocacy**

The L3C concept was formed by Robert Lang, CEO of the Mary Elizabeth & Gordon B. Mannweiler Foundation, Inc. Marcus Owens, a tax attorney with [Caplin & Drysdale](#) in Washington, DC, wrote the basic law. The Mary Elizabeth & Gordon B. Mannweiler Foundation has funded the [Americans for Community Development](#) whose purpose is to promote the L3C and the adoption of this new corporate form in all fifty states. Mr. Lang and others formed the first L3C, L3C Advisors, for the purpose of helping social ventures structure, organize & finance L3C's.

The L3C is still in "**proof of concept**" form, but will be put to the test this year. Because the first L3Cs were formed in 2008, this means 2009 will be the first year that the concept will be tested with the IRS. Hopefully, the IRS will readily accept Foundation investments in L3Cs as valid PRIs. Steve Gunderson, CEO of the [Council on Foundations](#), which supports the L3C approach says "we're optimistic" that the IRS will also support this approach to PRI investing.

The economic realities of connecting social needs with capital markets is leading to innovations like the L3C form. As the problems that social ventures try to solve get bigger and more widespread, hopefully these types of innovations will keep pace.

*FINAL DRAFT of paper forthcoming in Emotion, Space and Society*

## **Collective Action and the Politics of Affect**

**Gerda Roelvink**

### **Introduction: The Politics of Anti-Globalisation**

The anti-globalisation movement is the contested banner for a range of new collectives that gather together diverse participants around common concerns (Callon and Rabeharisoa 2008, Latour 2005; Roelvink 2009). What interests me about these collectives today is that, despite their label, they have explicitly shifted away from a politics that aims to uncover and resist neoliberal ideology. The World Social Forum movement is exemplary in this regard. The WSF began in 2001 in opposition to neoliberalism:

The World Social Forum is an open meeting place where social movements, networks, NGOs and other civil society organisations opposed to neo-liberalism and a world dominated by capital or by any form of imperialism come together to pursue their thinking, to debate ideas democratically, for [sic] formulate proposals, share their experiences freely and network for effective action.

([http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id\\_menu=19&cd\\_language=2](http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=19&cd_language=2) [accessed 23.09.08])

As the WSF has grown from 25-30,000 attendees at its inception to 155,000 in 2005<sup>1</sup> (Keraghel and Sen 2004), participants have become aware that, while mobilising participation, the discourse of neoliberalism does not necessarily prompt the creation of alternatives. Rather, the discussion and generation of knowledge about neoliberalism can stymie participants' hopes for other worlds and strengthen neoliberal discourse.

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<sup>1</sup> The last meeting in one location before the forum took a polycentric form.

Several scholars have investigated this shift in the anti-globalisation movement from a politics focused on ideology to one that bypasses and potentially disrupts habits of thinking about neoliberalism. Focusing on mass gatherings such as the Seattle demonstrations in 1999, Brian Massumi (2002a) and Maria Hynes and Scott Sharpe (2009) suggest that the anti-globalisation movement has embraced a politics of affect. Working in the tradition of Spinoza and Deleuze, Massumi and Hynes and Sharpe view the anti-globalisation collectives as shifting compositions of multiple interacting bodies, where “bodies are reciprocally distinguished with respect to motion or rest, quickness or slowness, and not with respect to substance” (Spinoza as quoted in Hynes and Sharpe 2009, 7). Affect relates to an increase or decrease in the collective body’s capacity to act (Hynes and Sharpe 2009). While affect is thus not the same as emotions felt by an individual,<sup>2</sup> Massumi suggests that it can be felt: “every transition is accompanied by a *feeling* of the change in capacity” (213, original emphasis; see also Massumi 2002b). This feeling of change also has affects; it increases the intensity of affect, “[giving] the body’s movements a kind of depth that stays with it across all its transitions – accumulating in memory, in habit, in reflex, in desire, in *tendency*” (213, original emphasis). As a politics, affect can create feelings of possibility in the context of hegemonic ideology and hopelessness (Anderson 2006; Gibson-Graham 2006). Thus Ben Anderson (2006, 738) suggests that affect expands the political field because it introduces awareness of endless possibilities in every moment and brings attention to practices that might capture some of these possibilities to create change.

An example of a politics of affect practiced in the anti-globalisation movement is provided by Hynes and Sharpe’s (2009) analysis of the shifting bodily relationships in mass protests. Hynes and Sharpe are interested in shifts in the capacity for action of the collective body constituted by protesters at the 1999 Seattle demonstrations. They focus on the protesters’ response to violence waged by police and the passage from bodies paralysed by teargas to bodies joining together in resistance. In this passage Hynes and Sharpe detect a shift in the protesters’ collective capacity for action: “There is a transition from the state of being ‘asphyxiated and blinded’ [by tear gas] to the state of having ‘arms locked more tightly’, which seems to represent an increase in the power of acting” (8). Hynes and Sharpe therefore argue that violence can increase the possibilities of affecting and being affected. Drawing

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<sup>2</sup> Emotions are seen as a personal and qualified experience of the body’s movement (Anderson 2006, 736; Massumi 2002a, 213).

on Spinoza, they suggest joy and sad passions as a way to “gauge affect” (8) and note the joy tinged with sadness in protesters’ accounts of Seattle.

Reflecting on the Seattle demonstrations, Massumi is concerned that in addition to potentially making new connections between people, violent performances also often produce fear that heightens existing divisions between people. And Hynes and Sharpe suggest that mass demonstrations can decrease the possibilities of action for those gathered around them, such as the police whose “forceful movements” generate a weakness, a limit in their ability for affecting and being affected (9).<sup>3</sup> Massumi thus asks, “are [there] ways of practising a politics that takes stock of the affective way power operates now, but doesn’t rely on violence and the hardening of divisions along identity lines that it usually brings[?]” (235). In response to Massumi’s question, this article explores the kind of politics the WSF has moved to. In 2003 the WSF shifted in stance from the saying “*no*” to neoliberalism to the “*many yeses*”, that is, to the affirmation of diverse alternative movements and projects currently underway (Keraghel and Sen 2004, 483; Kingsnorth 2003). The WSF joined other anti-globalisation movements to practice a politics centred on affirmation rather than resistance (Hynes, Sharpe and Fagan 2007). While attention has been given to the force of affect in the experience of and resistance to ‘capitalism’ (Hynes and Sharpe 2009, Massumi 2002a, Stewart 2007), I am interested in exploring how affect might be operationalised in a politics of affirmation that aims to generate economic possibility. In this article I investigate the force of affect in an alternative form of collective body to that of mass protests. I begin by extending Bruno Latour’s (2004a) account of how bodies learn to be affected in collectives to consider how thinking is moved by the play of affect (Connolly 2002). William E. Connolly’s (2002) *Neopolitics* of affect helps me to consider the role of affect in the production of new knowledge. I then turn to Michel Callon and Vololona Rabeharisoa’s (2003) work to begin my exploration of the operation of affect in collective action. I am particularly interested in how affect can be utilised by anti-globalisation collectives in a pedagogy for imagining new economies and in the third section of this article I bring a politics of affect to bear on Paulo Freire’s pedagogy. Freire’s work draws attention to the importance of testimony as a collective affective technique for prompting new thinking. In the fourth section I discuss one session of the 2005 WSF to illustrate how my understanding of a politics

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<sup>3</sup> This is not to simply dismiss violent protest outright, and thereby move towards the assertion of a single strategy for social transformation. As Isabelle Stengers notes, “The matter is not to demand a unifying principle which would be stronger than divergence, but to learn how to work together not in spite but through the divergence” (Stengers and Journazi 2002, 255).



of affect might be practiced. Affect is not a force that can be directly observed or documented and it operates in “a zone of indiscernibility” (Connolly 64). Rather than documenting the force of affect, then, this article draws attention to the WSF in order to gesture towards what a politics of affect might look like<sup>4</sup>. I adopt the description of the WSF as a “pedagogical space” for social movements to analyse current realities and create new ways of re-imagining the future (Andreotti and Dowling 2004, 605). As receivers of testimony, researchers can be caught up in a politics of affect. The article thus concludes by briefly commenting on the role of researchers in collective action.

### **Collective Politics and the Force of Affect**

The Spinozan approach to a politics of affect focuses on the shifting relationships that constitute the collective body’s affect or “force of existence” and capacities for action (Hynes and Sharpe 2009, 7). In order to explore how affect shapes thinking and the production of new knowledge, I need a theory that shows the impact of affect on individual bodies in the collective. I am interested in the way that changes in the collective’s capacity for action are embodied. Latour’s (2004a) work directs attention to the relationship between the individual and collective bodies. Latour’s work on affect suggests that for a body to be alive in the world it must be able to be moved by its relationships with the wider body-world or collective body. Latour calls this “learning to be affected” (see also Hinchliffe 2003; Gibson-Graham and Roelvink 2009). He illustrates learning to be affected with the perfume industry and the training sessions through which a pupil becomes a ‘nose’:

It is not by accident that a person is called ‘a nose’ as if, through practice, she had *acquired* an organ that defined her ability to detect chemical and other differences. Through the training sessions, she learned to have a nose that allowed her to inhabit a (richly differentiated odoriferous) world. Thus body parts are progressively acquired at the same time as ‘world counter-parts’ are being registered in a new way. Acquiring a body is thus a progressive enterprise that produces at once a sensory medium *and* a sensitive world. (Latour 2004a, 207, original emphasis)

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<sup>4</sup> Kathleen Stewart’s (2007, 4) work is instructive on other creative ways of evoking the force of affect or, as she describes it, “to find something to say about ordinary affects by performing some of the intensity and texture that makes them habitable and animate”.

The capacity of a nose to be moved by the world, to detect different odours in this case, is achieved through the training session made up of a teacher, pupil and an odour kit. Without these elements in relationship to each other the body would be static and odours would smell the same. Latour thus suggests that the kit, teacher and pupil can be viewed as a collective body that enables the differentiation of an “odoriferous world” (207). Learning to be affected is thus co-transformative, increasing the collective’s capacity for action in a more highly differentiated world. Latour’s work also shows how this capacity is embodied (in this case through the nose) as individual bodies learn to be affected in collectives/body-worlds.

While Latour’s concept of learning to be affected demonstrates embodied learning in collectives, Connolly’s work provides a way to explore in detail how *thinking* is moved by living bodies. Connolly is interested in a “neuropolitics” of affect which he describes as “the politics through which cultural life mixes into the composition of body/brain processes” (xiii). This mix of culture and bodies occurs in “a zone of indiscernibility because within this zone we are still unclear exactly how the mixing occurs, how complex each layer of capacity is, and how much room there is for mobility and creativity once a set of initial capacities and dispositions has become organized” (64). Although it is indiscernible, Connolly argues that this zone is vital to creativity and he goes on to thematize body/brain/world interactions in order to develop an appreciation of affect as a source of creative thinking. His work is particularly instructive for exploring the role of thinking, language and ideas in a politics that utilises the force of affect.

For Connolly, affect relates to “body/brain systems” interacting with the world and “traces of past experiences” (62). More specifically, affect operates in the encounter between the different layers of thinking that are triggered by one’s engagement in the world. “Thought embodies” this thinking process (65). Performances, such as film, structured through “‘irrational cuts’ between scenes” are especially effective at producing the “movement of affect” (67). The breaking up of a narrative “opens a new round of intrasubjective communication between your virtual register and a conscious line of reflection” (67); “it allows new thoughts to stroll or run onto stage, now and then setting an internal dialogue into motion that brings something new or exciting into being” (71). Outlining this “multidimensional process of thinking”, Connolly explains:

First, there is the dissonant conjunction between the scene and the distinctive thoughts it might rapidly mobilize in people with different, affectively imbued memory banks. Second, the initial encounter may later spur more disciplined thinking about the fugitive relation between the virtual register and consciousness in thought. And third, the conjunction of the first two moments might later yet encourage a disciplined train of thought about the relations among affect, discipline, and technique in fomenting new thoughts and enabling a disciplined train of thought. For discipline and logic are both essential to a sustained train of thought. (Connolly 2002, 71)

Expression and language, such as bodily posture and words, have a role in articulating the play of affect. Connolly in fact suggests that language and linguistic distinctions operate throughout the process of affects, “even if they do not exhaust them and even if many thoughts move too fast to render the linguistic element explicit” (71). Expressions will also be shaped by the “public context” and transformed through the process of putting affects into language (71-72). Yet new expressions have the potential to intervene in discourse and, importantly, to generate alternatives to restrictive discourses and binary thinking (73). I am interested in exploring how this process of affect might be utilised as a politics to create new knowledge and a more highly differentiated world with greater possibilities for action.

How might a neuropolitics of affect be enacted by contemporary collectives gathered around common concerns? Callon and Rabeharisoa’s (2003) case study of a muscular dystrophy collective is useful for extending Connolly’s work to collective action that creates new possibilities. Callon and Rabeharisoa’s case study investigates the Association Française contre les Myopathies (AFM), a French muscular dystrophy association formed to create new knowledge. They describe this association as a “hybrid collective” to reflect the “mixing [of] humans and non-humans” (195) in the constitution of knowledge, identities and spaces for political intervention (198). Hybrid collectives are engaged in processes of learning to be affected by the collective body-world (Callon and Rabeharisoa 2003; Gibson-Graham and Roelvink 2009). The AFM collective developed in response to the dehumanisation of patients with muscular dystrophy and the medical community’s lack of interest in the disease. The AFM gathered together patients and families to create new possibilities for living with muscular dystrophy. They took photos, collected testimonies and employed other research methods to collect and convey patients’ experiences of life with muscular dystrophy. Just as

the odour kit enables the nose to differentiate odours, through their research patients and families developed a kit of representations that differentiated life with muscular dystrophy. Through their initial research the AFM made bodily experiences available for dialogue with medical researchers. This research disrupted the discourse representing patients with muscular dystrophy as a single homogeneous terminal case. It created a discursive interruption in which the play of affect and creative thinking about the disease could occur in the emerging collective.

The AFM embarked on fundraising to continue research into life with muscular dystrophy and partnered with the medical community. The broader collective that formed through this partnership launched a range of new research projects to build knowledge of the disease. This research has had important effects and demonstrates the possibilities for action potentially generated through processes of learning to be affected. It has created different therapeutic options for patients and personalised and humanised them in the eyes of scientists, constituting them “as individuals caught up in a peculiar network of social relations” (199). Patients, in turn, learnt to experience their body in relation to others in the collective, including scientists, prostheses and genes, and they have come to see these others as “part of themselves” (199). The research has also created opportunities for new alliances between a range of experts to conduct research and further differentiate the picture of muscular dystrophy:

The more knowledge about...the disease advances, the more complex the picture becomes. The number of actants involved (all kinds of proteins, antibodies, enzymes, etc.) multiplies and causal links proliferate. As a result, differences between individual patients intensify, and the number of specialists that can be mobilized increases. This opens the way for strategic options. (Callon and Rabeharisoa 2003, 199)

From my perspective, this case highlights that learning to be affected can be undertaken by collectives to create knowledge that increases the possibilities for action. Callon and Rabeharisoa describe this knowledge in terms of a “discourse [that] combines the biological and the social to produce what Paul Rabinow has suggested calling a ‘bio-sociality’” (1998-1999). More specifically, this discourse “[links] individual behaviour or social relations to biological data in a constantly revisable way” (1998). The possibilities for action Callon and Rabeharisoa highlight are a range of scientific research options each with “a different set of alliances” (1999). This approach to the

politics of affect opens up the possibility that the anti-globalisation movement might create a new econo-sociality, connecting economic information with social relations to create new economic identities, experiments, alliances and options for ethical decision making (see Gibson-Graham and Roelvink 2009).

## **Operationalising Affect through Freireian Pedagogy**

The pedagogy of social movement collective action builds on a long tradition in Latin American politics, instigated by the influential work of Paulo Freire and his well known book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* ([1968]1996). Beginning in the 1940s, Freire developed a pedagogy through which the masses could come to identify oppressive ideologies of the present and begin a dialogue for utopian futures (Gaudiano and Alba 1994).<sup>5</sup> His work suggests that social change arises through assemblages that generate other ways of knowing and being in the world. Freire's pedagogy offers a way of thinking about the practices whereby hybrid collectives come to express affecting body-worlds through collective knowledge and discourse. As I discussed in the previous section, Connolly (2002) shows how in the play of affect which triggers multiple lines of thought, some thoughts are captured and expressed. He further differentiates this process in which affect is expressed and translated into discourse and provides a guide to reading Freire's pedagogy (73-74). The first step involves the creation of a "new word or phrase" and its introduction into public (73). This new word or phrase has an effect on the public discourse which it enters, for instance, it could express "an absence retrospectively where none had been experienced before" (73). Second, this new word or phrase offers others a way to capture and express similar feelings or sensibilities. Third, if the word or phrase comes to express a common experience it can be translated into discursive representation. As the new word or phrase becomes "an object of thought" it might be used to think about and act on the world (73). These steps correspond to Freireian thinking on generative themes and dialogue,

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<sup>5</sup> Freire's vision of social transformation was developed in a context in which the discourse of capitalist imperialism was dominant and Marxist understandings of the peasant and working class as agents of transformation prevailed. Freire's politics is grounded in modernist Marxist ideas about revolution, the unitary singular subject and an instrumental view of political action. Consequently, there has been much debate on the applicability of Freire's work to the diverse agents of social transformation found today. Peter McLaren and Colin Lankshear (1994), for instance, have questioned the importation of Freire's ideas to the global North and to post-colonial contexts. They also ask whether Freire's work can be applied to contemporary forms of capitalist power. Despite this questioning they argue that two central remaining ingredients in Freire's pedagogy are the experience of diverse forms of oppression and the desire for change.

through which an awareness of other possibilities of being in the world is generated and expressed in language.

Social movement groups gather together around common concerns. For Freireian scholars common concern is achieved through *generative themes*. Generative themes are centred on everyday experience and arise from the “thematic [or discursive] universe” in which people see themselves (Freire 1996, 77). Freireian scholars further suggest that gathering around and discussing generative themes, such as neoliberalism and or capitalism, can have a creative effect, generating a space of hope and possibility (Johnston and Goodman 2006). Freire distinguishes the difference between one’s discursive universe and alternative possibilities as the difference between the ‘is’ and the ‘ought’ (see also Johnston and Goodman 2006). Naming the ‘is’ is the initial task for those gathered around generative themes. For Freire (1996, 68) to name something is to problematise it and thus to begin to change the world. Naming the ‘ought’ relates to Connolly’s (2002, 73) first step of the creative force of affect, “revealing an absence” – an alternative to the ‘is’ – “retrospectively where none had been experienced by most before”. Josee Johnston and James Goodman (2006, 20) highlight the WSF as exemplary of a gathering around generative themes and write that the movement “establishes frameworks for living and acting together that provide fertile soil for growing paradigmatic alternatives – for connecting critiques of ‘what is’, to the many different visions of ‘what ought to be’”. In 2005 the WSF was organised into thematic spaces in which participants gathered around a range of generative themes. “Espacio F, Social Struggles and Democratic Alternatives – Against Neoliberal Domination”, for example, included sessions called “Knowledge, democracy and revolutions”, “SCHOOL: Against Education Commodification”, “Global Apartheid, Global Alternatives”, “Reform or Revolution” and “Women and Trade Unions – Towards a Wider Working Class Politics”. All of this is just a taste of what the programme had to offer for the 27th of January, the first full day of sessions (Forum Social Mundial: Programacao 2005). These thematic spaces reflect participants’ concerns about the world. For example, some sessions named and thereby problematised existing forms of oppression or the ‘is’ of generative themes, such as “Global Apartheid”, while at the same time gesturing towards an ‘ought’, such as “Global Alternatives”. This ‘ought’ reveals an absence and a space of possibility (Johnston and Goodman 2006).

Yet the pitfalls – such as the squelching rather than prompting of creativity – of critical discussion of one’s discursive universe have been well documented (Gibson-Graham 2006; Latour 2004b;

Sedgwick 2003; Roelvink 2008). Sedgwick's (2003) work, for example, suggests that critical analysis has become analogous with, and even indistinguishable from, paranoid thinking. Drawing on Melanie Klein and Silvan Tomkin's thinking on paranoia, Sedgwick develops a picture of the critical thinker who, taking a "depressive" "anxiety-mitigating" stance, is continuously expanding their existing discursive universe to anticipate and thus negate any element of surprise (128, 130). The critical thinker achieves this by putting themselves in their enemy's shoes; that is, only by performing the paranoid fear is the theorist able to anticipate surprise. And even the failure to anticipate surprise confirms that "you can never be paranoid enough" (127). Connolly (2002, 76) similarly suggests that "habits of feeling and judgment" capture affect in familiar moralistic, reactive and depressive stances that limit alternative visions of the world and possibilities of being. The sense of possibility and hope and even the ability to name the alternative 'oughts' following discussion of the 'is' in Freireian pedagogy is, then, not automatic and needs to be thought through in relation to affecting bodies in dialogue.

For Freire knowledge and agency are fundamentally connected (Gaudiano and Alba 1994). Indeed, he writes that "to speak a true word is to transform the world" (1996, 68). Such transformative knowledge is collectively constituted through dialogue. Freire emphasises the co-production of learning and knowledge and in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* he writes, "Authentic education is not carried out by 'A' for 'B' or by 'A' about 'B', but rather by 'A' with 'B', mediated by the world – a world which impresses and challenges both parties, giving rise to views or opinions about it" (74; see also Gaudiano and Alba 1994, 136). Central to this process is testimony:

For me, teaching is the form or the act of knowing, which the professor or educator exercises; it takes as its witness the student. This act of knowing is given to the student as testimony, so that the student will not merely act as a learner. In other words, teaching is the form that the teacher or educator possesses to bear witness to the student about what knowing is, so that the student will also know instead of simply learning. (Torres and Freire 1994, 103)

In social movement struggles witnesses of an event narrate and give testimony to their experience for judgement by others (Routledge 2003). Testimony calls on the recipient to believe what they say. In Freireian dialogue testimonies are centred on personal experience infused with love for the world



and hope for the future (Freire 1996). In testifying to an experience one conveys memories of that experience as it was lived, bearing witness to elements of that experience that are not governed by dominant discourses linked to oppression (Laub 1992; Oliver 2004). Testimonies are conveyed in words and through bodies (Sharpe 1999), in other words, through cognitive and affective registers. Theorists of affect argue that these two registers need not be consistent with one another and they may be more powerful at producing moments of creativity when they are not. In fact, this is one way in which the affective register can prompt new trains of thought. Gibson-Graham's (2006) and Anderson's (2006) research shows how experiences of surprise, delight, hope and desire that break with existing habits of thought can open thinking to other possibilities. Scott Sharpe (1999), drawing on Julia Kristeva's work on the effects of bodily drives or the "semiotic" on symbolic communication, shows how bodily posture, the rhythm of speech, laughter and other expressions of the semiotic can "disrupt or destabilise the symbolic and thus the social order" (99)<sup>6</sup>. In Sharpe's case study semiotic expressions are seen to disrupt the dualistic discourse of natural and medicalised childbirth, "[enabling] an appreciation of a multiplicity of experiences" (100). Testimonial accounts of social movement struggles expressing hope, like those recounted at the WSF, are often at odds with prevailing cognitive understandings of the oppressive hegemonic powers expressed in the 'is' of generative themes, such as neoliberalism. This disjuncture is an important part of creating a new stance toward the world. While a testimony might discursively document the penetration of capitalism into yet another part of the globe, through other affective registers it can also relay hope for the future that conflicts with this discourse.

Testimonies with affective force can also create connections between people in ways that bypass cognition (Connolly 2002). Described by Connolly as the "contagion of affect", affect is carried through multiple channels, such as public gatherings, and flows, such as through voice, bodily movement, touch and texture (75). Testimonies can operate in this way, creating connections between the person testifying and the recipient. As Freire notes in a passage quoted above, to be a recipient of a testimony is to experience the knowledge conveyed through that testimony. Experiencing what it feels like to know something can have affective and cognitive force on the recipient, prompting a relationship to the other and expanding the collective's capacity for affecting and being affected, prompting joy.

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<sup>6</sup> Connolly too notes that the play of affect is also expressed through "the timbre of our voices, the calmness or intensity of our gestures, our facial expressions, the flush of our faces, the rate of our heartbeats, the receptivity, tightness, or sweatiness of our skin, and the relaxation or turmoil in our guts" (76).

Through dialogue that follows testimonies at the WSF, social movement groups can begin to develop a new discourse corresponding to their hopes and desires of how the world ‘ought’ to be. Connolly suggests that this sense of possibility, what I have read as Freire’s ‘ought’, can be expressed in a word or phrase, although always with an excess of affect. Theorists of brain body connections argue that the translation of bodily experience into thought and language is vital to the actualisation of the creative force of affect (Connolly 2002). Once the play of affect is captured in thought it might be creatively expressed in language (67). Through collective dialogue this language can become an object of thought and communication – through bodies and words – creating “the practical opportunity that the coining, expression, and representation of the new phase creates for you and others to work on yourselves to render your actual sensibilities more congruent with the self-representation you advance” (74). In Callon and Rabeharisoa’s muscular dystrophy case study, for example, “the patient’s identity and that of the group of patients, of which he or she becomes a member, are simultaneously shaped” by the new bio-social discourse and they came to consider themselves as part of a hybrid collective (1999). Transformations in identity that are brought about when one becomes part of a collective in this way resonate with the Foucauldian idea of “self cultivation”, the “care of the self” that can lead to new ways of “being in the world” (Gibson-Graham 2006, 6). Connolly draws on Nietzsche to describe this as a “self ‘artistry’” process whereby “consciousness enables humans to devise experimental practices and arts by which to work on affect-imbued thoughts below its direct regulation but pertinent to its conscious deliberations” (77). The WSF can be viewed as a collective experiment enabling self-cultivation.

### **The World Social Forum: Putting this Pedagogy into Practice**

Closer examination of the thematic spaces of the WSF suggests how affect might be utilised in pedagogical practice. Particular sessions brought many different groups together. The sessions were mostly self-organised by groups coming together around a particular issue, including picking up from discussions begun at previous forums and affiliated events. Sessions typically took the form of individuals testifying to groups gathered in tents about the struggles and interventions they were part of, closely followed by discussion and debate. The session “Change the World Without Taking Power: Intercontinental Dialogue on Theory and Praxis of Social Movements Against-In-and-Beyond State and Capital” is of particular interest here because it focused on new forms of power

like “affect modulation” (Massumi 2002a). The generative theme of this session might be described as, ‘oppression is installed through diffuse channels and transforms relationships’ (the ‘is’) and, ‘alternatives are constituted through material struggles in everyday life’ (the ‘ought’). This session involved many different participants, from academics, such as sociologist John Holloway, to social movement representatives, such as representatives from the Argentina Movement of the Unemployed, the Occupied Factory Movement of Argentina and activist representatives from a number of different countries such as Germany, the Philippines, Italy, Brazil, South Africa, Thailand and India. These participants shared their experiences through testimonies to struggle, such as the testimony of the representative from the Coalition Against Water Privatisation in South Africa.

The Coalition Against Water Privatisation was formed in 2003 by the Anti-Privatisation Forum, the Anti-Eviction Campaign and many other social movements and activists. The work of the Coalition has been documented in a research report written by Prishani Naidoo (2005a) and published by the Centre for Civil Society at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The Centre for Civil Society is a research centre committed to supporting non-profit and community organisations and collaboration more generally.<sup>7</sup> The Coalition was initiated by residents of Phiri in Johannesburg in response to the privatisation of the commons, in particular public services like water and electricity. Previously residents of Phiri and other areas had free access to water and saw this access as “essential for meeting their basic needs for survival” (Naidoo 2005a, 156). As Naidoo explains, water was viewed as a common and shared source of life and thus, in Stephen Gudeman’s (2001) terms, as a foundation for community (157). In South Africa the provision of common resources to all sectors of society was offered by the South African government in 1994 as a response to the social divisions and exclusions created through apartheid (Naidoo 2005a, 159). At the 2005 WSF Naidoo’s testimony placed the Coalition’s intervention within this longer history of struggle and shifting regimes of governance in South Africa, from collective struggle and strategies of ‘ungovernability’ during apartheid (such as mass boycotts, strikes and armed struggle), to the struggle to create alternatives as the new regime of post-apartheid governance shifted to a politics of ‘inclusion’.

I was a recipient of this testimony and what I initially heard was a sophisticated, confidently delivered narrative of the development and adaptation of neoliberal governmentality. For instance, I heard how the new post-apartheid regime of governance has linked the idea of ‘responsible citizenship’ with the

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<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.nu.ac.za/ccs/> [accessed 06.06.08]

privatisation and commodification of public services and has sought to implement this neoliberal rationality through pre-paid meters and other user-pays systems. In the broader historical context of South Africa, Naidoo's testimony and report suggested that after the period of ungovernability it has been difficult for the South African government to shift the responsibility for public services to citizens as consumers, because consumers simply do not pay and use debt as a form of resistance (160). The pre-paid meter is seen by the government as a technology to eliminate the 'option' of debt altogether. That is, the meter is viewed as a technology of neoliberal governance implemented to transform how people relate to and use common resources. The prepaid water meter threatens not only the commons but also, by powerfully "individualising the relationship of people to the resources necessary for life"<sup>8</sup>, shifts government responsibility for public provisions to individuals. This technology is linked by the Coalition to practices like budgetary advice, planning and other technologies to reveal a broad network of neoliberal governance. Together these technologies aim to reshape community life. This testimony fitted nicely with my thinking at the time (Roelvink and Craig 2005) which was highly attuned to intellectual debates about neoliberalism and my written comments show how I used these habits of thinking about neoliberalism to digest these accounts. My notes included, for example, statements such as "sounds like 'roll-out neoliberalism' (Peck and Tickell 2002) and reflects the adaption of neoliberal policy".

In her testimony Naidoo also bore witness to the Coalition's struggle. In doing so, her narrative of neoliberalism was punctured by something different – an intervention centred on "reclaiming of our common":

It is in the struggles of people against these attacks on life, that our movements, such as the Anti-Privatisation Forum and the Anti-Eviction Campaign, have emerged. One of our key strategies in these struggles has been that of reclaiming our common – reconnecting water and electricity that has been disconnected, and putting people back into the homes from which they have been evicted, denying the commodification of resources that are basic necessities for life and insisting on their common ownership by us all. Against the language of 'responsibility to pay', campaigns such as 'Operation Khanyisa' ('Operation Switch On/Light Up') and 'Operation Vula 'manzi'' ('Operation Open The Water') have allowed for

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<sup>8</sup> Transcript from the 2005 WSF session "Change the World Without Taking Power", available online: <http://www.all4all.org/2007/06/3160.shtml> [accessed 23.09.08].

people to come together again in refusal of a logic that speaks against life and the common, and to institute in the immediate an alternative to this logic – freely connected water and electricity. (Transcript from the 2005 WSF session “Change the World Without Taking Power” available online: <http://www.all4all.org/2007/06/3160.shtml> [accessed 23.09.08])

Naidoo described the Coalition’s enormously challenging and constantly shifting struggle to reconnect people with resources while assisting them to reassert common ownership. Following this description, she went on to testify to the government’s response to the Coalition’s efforts, such as the criminalisation of the Coalition’s actions and attempts to convert the struggle through concessions including reducing electricity debt and provision of a certain quantity of free water. Naidoo was again picking up the narrative of neoliberalism, noting “that these measures are but partial solutions to problems that persist, replicate, and change their form, with an unchallenged overall framework of neoliberalism”.<sup>9</sup> Yet the interruption in Naidoo’s testimony – her recollection of the Coalition’s inventions – had produced a break through which affect could play. Her testimony to this invention/alternative was by no means clearly formed – it was a gesture to other possibilities conveyed largely by her physical presence; on stage she looked small while her voice was powerful, confident and energised. The stories about the struggle to truck water to people, the dangers of reconnecting electricity illegally and the risks of contesting state power expressed strength, hope and a will that could affect participant witnesses in the session. Naidoo’s description of “freely connected water and electricity” provided words from which a discourse of the commons and the collective subject could be developed in dialogue with other participants in the session.

The session “Change the World Without Taking Power” included many other testimonies. In one moving example a woman conveyed her experience of the precarious yet hopeful life shared among a group that occupy a forest in Germany. There were also testimonies from agricultural plantation workers from the Philippines and from a movement in Northern Italy that utilises squatting as a form of social provisioning, especially for migrants. As with that of the Coalition, these testimonies included experiences of social movement struggle and intervention. Yet each testimony was very different. The representatives spoke of radically different interventions in a variety of languages and their testimonies were more or less formed with some narratives delivered confidently and others in

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<sup>9</sup>Transcript from the 2005 WSF session “Change the World Without Taking Power”, available online: <http://www.all4all.org/2007/06/3160.shtml> [accessed 23.09.08]

stuttering, less confident ways. Each representative and a range of other participants were recipients of these testimonies. Interrupting my notes on and thinking about neoliberalism, I recorded these gruelling stories of experimental interventions, including the German woman's life in the occupied forest which she described as "dodgy". Not captured in my notes, but recalled through the excitement I experienced which in turn has driven this research, was the physical presence of these representatives in Porto Alegre, their strength to get up and tell their stories, the performance of their interventions as existing alternatives, their calls for others to join them, and the sense of possibility that energised the participants in dialogue. This sense of possibility, I think, was related to the affecting bodies gathered in the session and the increased opportunities of being affected generated by the testimonies

Following the simultaneously translated testimonies of the participants the session divided into small groups to discuss specific themes arising from the testimonies. This framework for discussion developed by the organisers gave each group a specific question which required the proposal of an intervention as an answer. The questions included:

How do we refuse and live? How do we defend ourselves against state oppression? How can we develop alternative social relations? What is our relation to the state-centred struggle against capitalism? How do we multiply and expand our fissures? What other questions should we be asking?

While the testimonies performed particular experiences from around the globe, dialogue in the small group discussions that followed aimed to articulate common visions to feed back to the larger group.

The small group discussions brought together representatives who had given testimony and recipients of that testimony. Having both experienced and been affected by the preceding testimonies, the dialogue between participants that followed aimed to capture and magnify this affect in order to generate new thoughts and build a collective language. The action-directed questions were important in guiding participants' dialogue to explore absences and possibilities rather than focusing only on the constraining discourses at odds with the hope felt by participants yet penetrating each testimony, such as the logic of neoliberalism. Through collective investigation of the testimonies and discussion questions participants were able to form relationships with one another and together,

through dialogue, to discover new possibilities of being. These exchanges enabled participants to capture and magnify moments of affect generated in the words of the testimonies and this was reflected in a shift in discourse. The suggestions put forward were notably stripped of concern about neoliberalism and instead proposed diverse alternatives such as traditional medicine, new technologies, systems of reciprocity, the formation of cooperatives and ideas about how to maintain and build the connections initiated in the session. The co-constitution of proposals and the ideas that emerged for future intervention further connected these participants and the projects they represented through a common language that could be used for self-cultivation. In the session “Change the World Without Taking Power” this language concerned the multiple and diverse registers of being shaping social movement struggle. As Naidoo reflected after the session:

Without seeking to derive any consensus out of the discussions, activists were able to share and engage in a discussion about the creation of alternatives to capitalism through new, shared understandings of power to understand the ways in which capitalism controls us as individuals and ways in which we are able to live outside of it... In the words of a comrade from the MTD-Matanzas [the occupied factory movement in Argentina], ‘... Before, our slogans were for freeing the prisoners, fighting neoliberalism; today, our struggle is on a different terrain – it is in our heads; in how we live; in our family structures; it is in creating new forms of family and love; it is in rethinking life’. (Naidoo 2005b)

This vision was accompanied by an orientation to self-cultivation, with participants drawing attention to the relationships between thought, language and the way in which the world is lived and experienced. This was demonstrated by the debate over how workers might redefine themselves in accordance with their vision of alternative economies rather than as unemployed as in the occupied factory movement in Argentina and the Argentina Movement of the Unemployed (Naidoo 2005b).

Following the small group sessions, the subsequent forum regrouped all participants to share ideas, generate email lists and proclaim a collective. In addition to the more traditional sense of a collective organisation, the session had performed a collective of interacting body-worlds akin to a hybrid collective. The Freireian pedagogical techniques of the WSF can be seen as enabling Latour’s (2004a, 2005) “learning to be affected”, “meaning ‘effectuated,’ moved, put into motion by other entities, humans or non-humans”. The session, a hybrid collective involving diverse representatives,



translators, speakers and microphones, tents and chairs and so on, differentiated and transformed body-worlds into a range of possibilities for action and experience. In bringing together diverse participants and, through dialogue, developing a collective knowledge of the world, the session “Change the World Without Taking Power” can be understood as enacting a new econo-sociality.

### **Conclusion: Performing New Worlds through Hybrid Collectives**

As it has grown and shifted from a stance of opposition to one of affirmation, the WSF has re-oriented itself towards the creation of new knowledge. It shows little concern, however, with the creation of a singular prescription for action or manifesto. Rather, like other social movement performances (Hynes et al. 2007), its force lies in the act of participation and the arousal of hope for new worlds. This is not just a hope for the future, although it is that too, but an experience of new possibilities in the present; the experience of learning to be affected in collectives and thereby contributing to the differentiation and proliferation of alternative economic possibilities for action. In this article I reread Freire’s pedagogy through Connolly’s *Neuropolitics* to show how such an experience of possibility can be generated through learning centred on dialogue. The 2005 WSF session “Change the World Without Taking Power” juxtaposed a range of narratives about neoliberalism punctured with accounts of experimental economic interventions. Together these testimonies triggered moments of “affective energy” for creative thinking (Connolly 2002, 76). In collective dialogue this energy was harnessed and new thoughts were captured and expressed through a language of the multiple and diverse forces that shape social movement struggle. This session can be seen as a first step in the generation of an alternative economic discourse to guide experiments in self-world cultivation.

When I arrived at the 2005 WSF, I believed that my role as a researcher was to document the mutations of neoliberalism and to analyse how shifts in neoliberal governance were co-opting social movements. In doing so, I hoped to help social movements resist neoliberalism. Participating in the WSF sessions, however, and receiving social movement testimonies to experimental interventions and economic alternatives, shifted my thinking from neoliberalism to the alternative economic experimentations currently underway. I also began to see myself as part of a hybrid collective creating new worlds. This collective includes all that made the WSF possible (such as technologies required for dialogue, tents, food markets and so on), participants of the WSF and the collectives

they represent and more. Taking this point further, the hybrid collective in which I have learnt to be affected reaches out to encompass debates in the research fields of social movement studies, actor network theory, neuroscience and pedagogy, and the academic infrastructure through which this knowledge travels<sup>10</sup>. Importantly, this hybrid collective has created a different role for me than that of a critical observer; it has produced openings in my habits of thinking and trained me to appreciate the diverse economic interventions and alternatives around the world. Ultimately this hybrid collective has enabled me to engage in this line of thinking and has led to this article. In turn, by elaborating a technique for creative thinking that can be used to increase the options for economic action, this article can be seen to contribute to the performance of a new econo-sociality (see also Gibson-Graham and Roelvink 2009). This research thus joins others aiming to perform diverse economic experimentation around the world and to open up the economy as a site of decision making, ethical debate and possibility (Gibson-Graham 2008). The politics that I have gestured to in this article embraces a utopia of hope, that is, a utopia centred on the possibilities contained in the present (Stengers and Zournazi 2002, 254).

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<sup>10</sup> While beyond the scope of this article, one could explore further the infrastructure through which the alternative knowledges produced at the WSF travels (see for example Gibson-Graham’s (2008) discussion the research collective created through intellectual networks of Michael Piore and Charles Sabel (1984) and their book *The Second Industrial Divide*).

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# ALTERNATIVE

# ARTECONOMIES

## ADDITIONAL READINGS

**Additional Readings can be downloaded directly:**

**The Think Tank that has yet to be named**

The Think Tank that has yet to be named compiles critical texts on a range of subjects in a series of readers (print and digital) for free distribution.

Download here: <http://thinktank.boxwith.com/readers/>

Readers include:

22 Readings on Research, Activism, the Academy and Conduct

30 Readings on Neutrality as it relates to Art, Politics, Biology and Space.

25 Texts on “Community” in Question: Conversations on art, activism, community

23 Readings on Art, Activism & Education

A Conversation on ART ACTIVISM + EDUCATION • Pedagogical Factory: How We Develop a Critical Reader on a Topic of Great Importance

22 Readings on Artists & Gentrification: Think Tank Reader Vol. II

31 Readings on Art, Activism & Participation (in the Month of January):

Think Tank Reader Vol. I

**A CALL TO FARMS: Continental Drift through the Midwest Radical Culture Corridor**

Download here: [http://www.heavydutypress.com/books/farms\\_pdf/view](http://www.heavydutypress.com/books/farms_pdf/view)

**Foodworks: A Vision to Improve NYC’s Food System**

On November 22nd, City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn unveiled an 86 page, comprehensive plan that sets a bold vision for a more sustainable food system—a ground-to-garbage approach unprecedented in the history of our city. The plan, ‘Food-Works’, provides a blueprint for addressing issues at every phase of the food system from agricultural production, processing, distribution, consumption and post-consumption. The proposals focus on combating hunger and obesity to preserving regional farming and local food manufacturing to decreasing waste and energy usage. Speaker Quinn outlined 59 policy proposals spanning five phases of the food system. The proposals included new

legislation, funding initiatives and far-reaching goals that present a long-term vision for a better food system.

Download here: [http://council.nyc.gov/html/action\\_center/food.shtml](http://council.nyc.gov/html/action_center/food.shtml)

### **Art Work (organized by Temporary Services)**

Art Work is a newspaper and accompanying website that consists of writings and images from artists, activists, writers, critics, and others on the topic of working within depressed economies and how that impacts artistic process, compensation and artistic property. The newspaper is distributed for free at sites and from people throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. It is also available by mail order from Half Letter Press for the cost of postage.

Download here: <http://www.artandwork.us/>

### **Dark Matter Archives**

The evolving mission of this site is to provide knowledge, documents, and tools about the history and current practices of culture's "missing mass." Its goal is to reinforce whatever degree of autonomy marginalized artists, informal artists, and art collectives have wrested from the mainstream institutions of culture.

Download here: <http://www.darkmatterarchives.net>

### **Escape the Overcode**

This publication contains a selection of texts and essays by the writer Brian Holmes that engage with the possibilities and problematics of geopolitics and geopoetics. Holmes is a crucial contemporary writer and thinker whose insight into current social and political developments and how they relate to artistic processes opens up a new field of "geocritique".

Read full text here: <http://brianholmes.wordpress.com/2009/01/19/book-materials/>

# ALTERNATIVE ARTECONOMIES

## BIBLIOGRAPHIES



## CONTINENTAL DRIFT

A 16Beaver Seminar with Brian Holmes

<http://www.16beavergroup.org/drift/>

### **(on) the Ground\***

New York (Feb. 15-17, 2008)

Midwest Radical Cultural Corridor (June 4-14, 2008)

Zagreb (Nov. 27-30, 2008)

### **Articulating the Cracks**

New York (Nov. 3-5, 2006)

### **in the Worlds of Power Introduction to Continental Drift**

New York (Sept. 13-18, 2005) part i

New York (Oct. 20-23, 2005) part ii

Bibliography

#### **Introductory Reading:**

16 Beaver Group talking with Brian Holmes

[\*Articulating the Cracks in the Worlds of Power\*](#)

#### **Primary Readings:**

Brian Holmes

[\*The Artistic Device: Or the Articulation of Collective Speech\*](#)

Malcolm Bull

[\*States of Failure\*](#)

Retort

[\*Afflicted Power: The State, The Spectacle, and September 11\*](#)

Melinda Cooper

[\*Pre-empting Emergence: The Biological Turn in the War on Terror\*](#)



#### **Secondary Readings:**

Malcolm Bull

[\*The Limits of Multitude\*](#)

Brian Holmes

[\*The Oppositional Device; Or, taking matters into whose hands?\*](#)

Brian Holmes

[\*Neoliberal Appetites; governance recipe in five easy pieces\*](#)

Shimshon Bichler & Jonathan Nitzan  
[\*Dominant Capital and the New Wars\*](#)

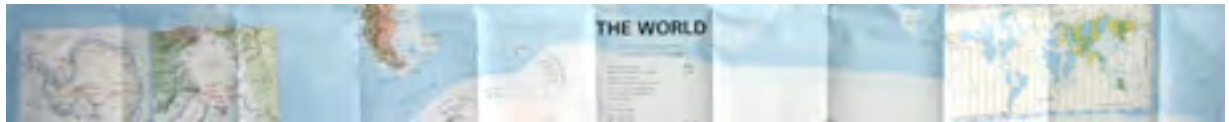
**Additional Readings Suggested by Participants:**

Julian Stallabrass  
[\*Spectacle and Terror\*](#)

David Graeber  
[\*Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology\*](#)

Basically the book poses questions about why there is not an anarchist anthropology and how if there was it might transform the way we look at domination in human societies. It also poses questions about social theory, social movements, and the role of academics. It's a quick read that raises questions valuable to the Drift discussion. Graeber has co-edited with Stevphen Shukaitis a forthcoming book called *Constituent Imagination: Militant Investigations// Collective Theorization* <http://www.constituentimagination.net/> that Brian Holmes has work in and many other awesome thinkers but that's not out until July.

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**CONTINENTAL DRIFT**

2 0 0 5 [< back](#) *Introduction to Continental Drift*

**Readings**

The bulk of the readings are listed in the schedule for 2005 unfortunately not all links are functioning.

**Additional Readings**

**Brian Holmes**

[Various articles on our website:](#)

Liar's Poker

<http://www.16beavergroup.org/mtarchive/archives/000943.php>

2 Interviews on 16 Beaver website with Brian Holmes

<http://www.16beavergroup.org/journalisms/archives/001168.php>

<http://www.16beavergroup.org/journalisms/archives/001377.php>

**Greg Sholette**

<http://www.gregorysholette.com>

Previous 16 Beaver evening with Greg

<http://www.16beavergroup.org/monday/archives/001112.php>

Disciplining the Avant-Garde: The United States versus The Critical Art Ensemble  
[http://www.recirca.com/backissues/c112/p50\\_59.shtml](http://www.recirca.com/backissues/c112/p50_59.shtml)

Dark Matter, Activist Art and the Counter-Public Sphere  
<http://www.artic.edu/~gshole/pages/Writing%20Samples/DarkMatterTWO.htm>

### **David Harvey**

David Harvey -- "Last days of the US empire?"

<http://www.16beavergroup.org/mtarchive/archives/001646.php>

Interview with David Harvey

<http://www.marxsite.com/DavidHarvey%20interview.htm>

The New Anti-Imperialism

by Chuck Morse

<http://www.anarchist-studies.org/article/articleprint/86/-1/9/>

Zombie anti-imperialists vs the 'Empire'

by James Heartfield'

<http://www.16beavergroup.org/mtarchive/archives/001253print.html>

Understanding the New Imperialism (Interview with David Harvey)

<http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people4/Harvey/harvey-con4.html>

### **Kolya Abramsky**

["Disentangling the Future from the Past: Internationalism, World revolution and World War."](#)

kolyaab (at) yahoo.co.uk

**The following is a list of books, articles and websites which discuss many of the themes touched upon in this presentation. The majority are in English, but some are in Spanish. For convenience, it is divided by topics:**

#### **World-Systems Analysis/Hegemony/Imperialism/Finance Capitalism**

Arrighi, Giovanni 1994 The Long Twentieth Century – Money and Power and the Origins of Our Times Verso UK/USA

Arrighi, Giovanni 2005 Hegemony Unraveling Part 1 and 2 New Left Review 32, March-April

Arrighi, Giovanni and Silver, Beverly (Eds.) 1999 Chaos and Governance in the Modern World System University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, USA

Fernández Durán, Ramon 2005a Global Finance Capitalism and Permanent War – The Dollar, Wall Street, and the War Against Iraq forthcoming, Pluto Press/Autonomea, UK/USA

Harvey, David 2003 The New Imperialism Oxford University Press, UK

Martin, William (Ed) 2005 The Black World and the World-System Volume XXVIII Number 1 Review Binghamton, USA

National Intelligence Council 2005 Mapping the Global Future - Report of the National Intelligence Council's 2020 Project USA

Silver, Beverly 2004 Labor, War and Politics – Contemporary Dynamics in World Historical Perspective in Unfried, van der Linden and Schindler (Eds.) Labor and New Social Movements in a Globalising World System 2004

Wallerstein, Immanuel (virtually any book or article).

The page <http://fbc.binghamton.edu/commentr.htm> has short biweekly commentaries intended to be reflections on the contemporary world scene, as seen from the perspective not of the immediate headlines but of the long term.

### **Globalization and Class Conflict/International Working Class**

Cleaver, Harry 1992 Theses on Secular Crisis in Capitalism: The Insurpassability of Class Antagonisms notes based on a presentation at the Rethinking Marxism Conference, Amherst Massachusetts, November 13

Cleaver, Harry 1989 Close the IMF, Abolish Debt and End Development: a Class Analysis of the International Debt Crisis Capital & Class No. 39, Winter  
Cleaver, Harry 2000 Reading Capital Politically AK Press

Federici, Silvia 2000 War, Globalization, and Reproduction In There is an alternative Zed Books, London

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Midnight Notes Collective 1992 Midnight Oil – Work, Energy, War, 1973-1992 Autonomedia, Brooklyn, USA

Silver, Beverly 2003 Forces of Labor – Workers' Movements and Globalization since 1870 Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK

### **Class Struggle in the USA**

Caffentzis, George 1997/1998 From Capitalist Crisis to Proletarian Slavery: An Introduction to Class Struggle in the US, 1973-1998  
Caffentzis, George 2003 The War on Terrorism and the US Working Class

Caffentzis, George 2004 Is Truth Enough? The Bush Administration's Lies and the Anti-War Movement's Truths talk given to the "Truth and Consequences" Anti-War Forum University of Maine, March 20

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Eisenberger, Maximilian and Patel, Raj 2003 Agricultural Liberalization in China: Curbing the State and Creating Cheap Labor Food First Institute for Food and Development Policy Policy Brief No. 9, Oakland, USA

Goldner, Loren 2005 China in the Contemporary World Dynamic of Accumulation and Class Struggle: A Challenge for the Radical Left <http://info.interactivist.net/article.pl?sid=05/03/14/1327228>

www.japanfocus.org ( a web journal primarily about Japan, China, Korea, covering a wide-range of themes including social and interstate conflicts and tensions, trade and militarization)  
Smil, Vaclav 2004 China's Past, China's Future – Energy, Food, Environment RoutledgeCurzon, New York/London  
Class Struggle in the EU

Abramsky, Kolya (Ed.) 2001 Restructuring and Resistance – Diverse Voices of Struggle in Western Europe self published, London, UK

Carchedi, Guglielmo 2001 For Another Europe – A Class Analysis of European Economic Integration Verso Books, UK

Chesnais, Francois 2004 Elementos para un combate político marxista contra la Europa del Capital Talk given at the Primer Encuentro por una Izquierda Antagonista, Granada, Spain, 27th April

Fernández Durán, Ramon 2004 Mars Vs Venus or Dollar Vs Euro? The European Constitution and the EU's Arduous Road to Becoming a Super-power Capable of Backing up the Euro Madrid, Spain

Fernández Durán, Ramon 2005b La Compleja Constuccion de la "Europa" Superpotencia, Virus Editorial, Barcelona, Spain

Negri, Antonio 2005 Europa y el Imperio AKAL, Cuestiones de Antagonismo, Madrid, Spain

#### **Misc**

Interview with Thomas Barnett (The Pentagon's New Map)

<http://www.thomaspmbarnett.com/published/bn.htm#interview>

Susan Kelly: The Transversal and the Invisible

How do you really make a work of art that is not a work of art? (Chaosmosis)

[http://www.republicart.net/disc/mundial/kelly01\\_en.htm](http://www.republicart.net/disc/mundial/kelly01_en.htm)

#### **Preparatory Readings**

***Neoliberal Urbanism: Cities And the Rule of Markets***

By: Neil Brenner, Jamie Peck, Nik Theodore

**BIBLIOGRAPHY FROM OUR *MOBILE SIGN SYSTEMS* BOOKLET (compiled in 1999)**

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## CRITICAL MASS, AN ACTIVIST ART BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Introduction

This list was originally compiled by Alan Moore in 2002. It is a bibliography based on reference materials that were made available to visitors to the exhibition Critical Mass, a group show curated that year by Stephanie Smith for the Smart Museum of Art in Chicago.

The reference materials were collected by Smith and the artists in Critical Mass. Where possible, Moore noted which artist or group suggested each item. The artists and groups in the exhibition were Wendy Jacob and Laurie Palmer, Robert Peters, Gregory Sholette, and Temporary Services.

In 2002, Alan Moore submitted this bibliography to the InterActivist Info Exchange, a reader-led website that offers news and analysis. His version is viewable at <http://info.interactivist.net/>.

From Moore:

“Materials in this bibliography are organized in alphabetical order in four groupings: Books, Articles/Book Selections, Journals/Booklets, and Web Resources. All are coded according to four broad categories that loosely organize the conceptual framework of the reading area:

**C/I=Conceptual Art and Institutional Critique**—sources dealing with artistic practices that have taken place within institutions such as museums and that have consciously sought to question institutional assumptions

**A/PA=Activism and Public Art**—sources on artists who routinely eschew the museum or have sought to alter it, as well as artists who adopt the public sphere as a site for artistic practice

**CP=Chicago Practice**—sources that specifically document a history of activities by Chicago-based artists

**MISC=Other Materials Related to the Projects**—sources that informed, directly or indirectly, the processes of Critical Mass artists

The bibliography gives particular emphasis to art practices, criticism and theoretical explorations in the United States, with an extensive focus on Chicago...”

For this 2006 update, we have rearranged the entries in the Books and Articles section to reflect the categories that Moore noted. All of the books and articles from newspapers, magazines, and journals, are separated by category. Additionally, we have chosen to use the title of each book or article to lead our alphabetization, rather than alphabetize by

author. Where possible, new publication information is supplied. The web resources section is also updated to update the new locations of many of the original links.

## **BOOKS & ARTICLES**

### **C/I=Conceptual Art and Institutional Critique**

“Acting the Icon, Indexing the Body.” Klein, Jennie. New Art Examiner September 1998: 27-31.

“Aesthetic Evangelists: Conversion and Empowerment in Contemporary Community Art.” Kester, Grant. Afterimage January 1995: 5-11.

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Members of the Not For Sale Committee of PAD/D (L - R) Gregory Sholette, Michael Anderson, Janet Koenig, Ed Eisenberg, 1984.

# A COLLECTOGRAPHY OF PAD/D

## Political Art Documentation and Distribution: A 1980's Activist Art and Networking Collective


GREGORY SHOLETTE

*Our goal is to provide artists with an organized relationship to society, to demonstrate the political effectiveness of image making, and to provide a framework within which progressive artists can discuss and develop alternatives to the mainstream art system. —PAD/D Mission Statement*

### I. From archive to organization in the course of one evening

**W**hat started as a straightforward call to establish an archive of politically committed art wound up instigating an ambitious new artist's collective. A decade before the emergence of the world wide web and prior to the introduction of the personal computer, one organization of artists and activists sought to produce a networked,

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This essay first appeared on the now defunct Groups and Spaces e-zine website. The author extends his appreciation to Lucy R. Lippard, Janet Koenig, Herb Perr and Brett Bloom for their feedback and assistance on this essay.

parallel arena in which to nurture, theorize, display and distribute creative practices opposed to, or simply desperate to be something other than, capitalist culture. It began with a meeting called together February 24th, 1980 by the art critic Lucy R. Lippard. The call itself had been printed on the flip side of an invitation for an exhibition she organized at Artists Space featuring the “many good, socially active artists no one heard of.” By using the mailed invite as an organizing tool, Lippard had also transgressed her own, presumed curatorial disengagement, a point I return to below. Nevertheless, on this winter’s evening, a group of fifty or so artists, writers and veteran political activists eagerly answered her call. Lippard’s planned agenda was to explore ways of archiving her swelling collection of documents about art with political intent. The meeting took place at Printed Matter Book Store that was then located on Lispenard Street in Downtown Manhattan. Lippard’s plea to not found another organization was quickly disregarded and the rest of the story forms a chapter in the unknown history of collective, activist art gradually being excavated by a new generation of historians.

I attended the meeting in search of an intellectual and creative community that held similar beliefs about the place of art within a broader movement of progressive, social transformation. Having recently graduated from The Cooper Union School of Art where I studied with Hans Haacke, what I discovered that evening was a group of cultural workers who, rather than merely discussing their own art or career, instead eagerly debated issues of racism and sexism in the US, ending apartheid in South Africa, and opposing the stationing of US “tactical” nuclear weapons in Europe. What I did not know then however was the degree to which this encounter would alter the direction of my career as well as my life. Before the end of that February evening a new, artists’ collective had been conceived, named and given a mission.

Present that evening was Clive Philpot, then the Director of the Museum of Modern Art Library. Philpot christened the new group Political Art Documentation or PAD. But in the months ahead the new group experienced a minor split within its ranks. Contemplating the many thankless chores required to service other artists, including archiving, cataloging and cross-referencing their work, the membership expressed a strong desire to produce its own, collectively authored art. Sometime later in 1980 or early 81 therefore the ‘D’ for Distribution was adopted by the group, thus transforming PAD into PAD/D. In the immodest language typical of the period the group’s mission sought to,

...Build an international, grass roots network of artist/activists who will support with their talents and their political energies the liberation and self-determination of all disenfranchised peoples.(PAD/D. 1st Issue. New York City, issue no.1, Feb. 1981.)

Within a year of its founding PAD/D was making art as well as archiving. It was also programming public events, networking with other organizations, and publishing its own newsletter named simply 1st Issue. (And soon renamed Upfront after it became apparent that a many issues of 1st Issue would be extremely confounding.) Along with Upfront, the group also published a one-page calendar of progressive, cultural events in the NYC area called Red Letter Days. In sum, it would not be unfair to describe the driving force behind this frenetic, multileveled activity as a desire to unilaterally reconstruct the entire, corrupted world of bourgeois art from the bottom up. As the group stated in its first newsletter:

PAD [D] can not serve as a means of advancement within the art world structure of museums and galleries. Rather, we have to develop new forms of distribution economy as well as art... (Ibid.)

To achieve this objective, the group began developing plans for an organization of even larger size and complexity: a national or perhaps even international network of like-minded activist artists working in consort with non-art, progressive activists. If PAD/D's immediate goal was to organize a highly fractured, post-68 counter-culture, the group's larger vision sought to bring into being a bona-fide counter-hegemonic or oppositional public sphere. Woven from equal parts recovered genealogies (from the PAD/D archival materials) and politically sympathetic exhibition outlets (university galleries, labor unions, community centers, even church halls), this longed-for, counter-hegemony was, more than anything else, the feature that set PAD/D apart from other, self-organized, art collectives then or since.

The high stakes PAD/D placed on networking artists with activists is instantly apparent if one examines the diverse topics touched-upon in its monthly, public dialogue series known as Second Sundays. First held at Printed Matter Books and later moved to the Franklin Furnace a few blocks away, a sample list of Second Sunday evenings from 1981 includes: The History of Abortion Rights; Civil Liberties and Domestic Surveillance; War Tax Evasion; Unauthorized Art in Public Spaces; Hispanic Culture and Struggle and Art and Ecological Issues. (1st Issue. no. 2, May-June 81). In addition, the group's public platform presented issues related to Art Education, Native American art and one evening hosted by Lucy Lippard and Jerry Kearns that celebrated what they described as the culture of "The Street." As much as these programs sought to connect artists with progressive activists however, they were also intended to prove to activists the political value of art. Today, from Seattle to Genoa, from to New York to London, the cultural politics visible in the counter-globalization movement, as well as the emerging anti-war movement, offer strong evidence that PAD/D's strategy was in fact a forward-looking one.

On February 26th, 1982, two years and two days from its inaugural meeting at Printed Matter, PAD/D hosted a sizable gathering of



Back Page of 1st Issue, PAD/D's first newsletter, Feb. 1981.

PAD/D flyer announcing an upcoming presentation by the feminist art collective Carnival Knowledge in 1984.





activists and artists at the Bread & Roses, 1199 Health and Hospital Workers Union Hall on West 43rd Street in New York City. Timed to conflict with the College Art Association's Conference, the "February 26th Movement" as it was called brought together dozens of organizations and individuals ranging from Los Angeles-based, Social and Public Art Resources or SPARC to local participants including Group Material. It also featured presentations by several energetic if comparatively politically ambiguous alternative spaces including, Fashion Moda from the Bronx and ABC No Rio from the Lower East Side of Manhattan. As PAD/D member Keith Christensen put it, "I went to the February 26th conference after learning about it from the Village Voice and found a whole world of alternative paths for an artist to take. It changed my life because I learned how to integrate my political and artistic sensibilities." Christensen soon found himself working with PAD/D to re-design Upfront. And while the newsletter would indeed become a platform for the dissemination of activist culture, the larger goal of a sustainable, progressive cultural network eluded the group. Yet if the group's overconfidence and sense of political mission led it at times to outstrip its own resources, PAD/D's collective, organizational verve nevertheless out-performed many other, more traditionally structured and better funded cultural institutions, including many "alternative spaces."

Perhaps PAD/D's success at organizing artists, a denomination typically antagonistic to administrative rules and discipline, appears somewhat less remarkable if one takes into account the background of the group's initial membership between 1980 and 1982. Lucy R. Lippard for example was not only a noted arts writer, but was also an activist and accomplished organizer who participated in the founding of the feminist art collective Heresies, Ad-Hoc Women Artists, and Printed Matter Books, the group's initial home. Perhaps as many as two thirds of PAD/D's early membership brought with them previous experience working with other cultural collectives, institutions or programs. Along with the aforementioned Clive Philpot of MoMA, PAD/D's organizational assets included veterans of the Art Workers Coalition or AWC, Fluxus, Cultural Correspondence, Artists Meeting for Cultural Change or AMCC, Collaborative Projects or Colab, Red-Herring, Amiri Baraka's Anti-Imperialist Cultural Union; The Neighborhood Arts Programs National Organizing Committee or NAPNOC, (later renamed the Alliance for Cultural Democracy or ACD); The Women's Building and Angry Arts. In addition, several PAD/D members simultaneously belonged to other; recently formed artists' collectives such as Group Material, World War 3 Illustrated, and Carnival Knowledge. (A partial list of the PAD/D membership and their affiliations appears at the end of the essay.)

Nevertheless, in order to accomplish so much in such a short period of time - essentially between 1980 and 1985 in terms of the group's most significant work - the members of PAD/D devoted many

Exhibition PAD/D organized in Chicago displaying a range of "demonstration art" for public use.



hours of in-kind, unpaid labor. What actual cash revenue was raised went to cover the rent, publication costs and but never labor. And money did come, in the form of donations from sympathetic artists including Hans Haacke, Leon Golub, Jenny Holzer, Nancy Spero; Barbara Kruger and even on one occasion Julian Schnabel. Funds were also generated through the call for modest dues as well as through benefit events, including one that I organized at Club 57 on St. Marks Place with very mixed success that featured the late artist David Wojnarowicz and his band Three Teens Kill Four.



"Image War on the Pentagon," PAD/D's contribution to a massive street demonstration in Washington DC during the summer of 1983.

## II Structure

A snapshot of how the group initially structured itself to achieve its ambitious mission is visible from an internal memo dated October 26th, 1980 entitled; "P.A.D. Work groups." The typewritten agenda lists twenty-four people and phone numbers. Each is assigned to one or more of three working groups that include:

Group I: P.R. Community Organizations, Cross-country outreach via newsletter and posters.

Group II: The Physical Archives and its organization; the ninth street office and building Archival shows.

Group III: Exhibitions in public places; outreach to political organizations.

(Original memo is in the Lippard Papers at the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institute.)

Originally headquartered in a former school building on the eastern side of Tompkins Square Park called El Bohio, PAD/D later moved to larger quarters and into the building owned and operated by the A. J. Muste Foundation at the corner of Lafayette and Bleecker Streets. Dubbed the "peace" building because it also housed the pacifist organization The War Resisters League, the groups other neighbors included Paper Tiger Television and CISPES, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador. Initially, membership consisted of anyone who happened to be present at any given PAD/D meeting. This soon became untenable when it became apparent that one, highly vocal newcomer could sidetrack an entire project already invested with weeks of work. Membership was soon reformulated to include only those who already showed a commitment to the group by their involvement in specific, PAD/D projects or Work Group. The organizational structure continued to develop. Sometime prior to February of 1982 a Steering Committee made up of one person from each work group was established. Flow-charts were drawn-up and debates held about how to vote: for example, does the group pass a resolution based on a majority rule, or does it seek total consensus? (In the end, the group adopted a three-fourths voting rule.) Before long, a somewhat more centralized

and rule bound organization emerged. And in order to allow donors to deduct financial contributions to PAD/D as well as for the group to attract grant money the appropriate legal paperwork was filed making PAD/D both a charitable organization and a not for profit, 501 (C) 3 corporation. It was nevertheless a great surprise to group members when PAD/D was in fact selected by a peer review panel at the National Endowment for the Arts for a modest grant to help with the cost of producing *Upfront*. However, Ronald Reagan's newly appointed NEA Chairman, Frank Hodsoll quickly made an unprecedented, public denunciation of the review panel's choice that had also included an award to the *Heresies* journal. The grant was "withdrawn." This occurrence, together with the de-funding of Franklin Furnace artist's space by the NEA following an exhibition by *Carnival Knowledge* at about the same time, predated the far more publicized "culture wars" of the early 1990s. I can not help speculate that because these events involved art "collectives," rather than individuals, the significance of this censorship appeared less newsworthy and has faded from view. 1

PAD/D did indeed function in a strongly collective manner. That does not alter the fact that the contribution of specific individuals uniquely shaped the mission and structure of the group. Certainly, Barbara Moore and Mimi Smith, two members who remained singularly devoted to the PAD/D Archives, hold a special position in this respect. It was the contribution of Lucy R. Lippard however that, more than any other PAD/D member, shaped the overall character of the group.

### III. Lucy Lippard & PAD/D

Lippard's book chronicling the formation of Conceptual Art, *Six years: the dematerialization of the art object*, functioned as a "new testament" for a "post-Greenbergian" generation of artists who would reject the cool detachment of formalism. Charismatic and gifted with a ceaseless energy, Lippard was nevertheless a consensus builder. To myself and many others she also exemplified what cultural theorist Walter Benjamin termed the Author as Producer, that is, a bourgeois writer who rejects the "proper" journalistic position of distanced neutrality in favor of active partisanship with a struggle for social change. Needless to say, such overt blurring of roles between critic and activist, observer and participant is anathema to the imagined, aesthetic neutrality of established art history and art criticism and no doubt led to her being fired from the *Village Voice* in 1985 after four years. But it was Lippard's conspicuous support for art with political content that helped lay the foundation for the emergence of PAD/D. As word spread about her interests, initially via another postcard invitation for an exhibition she organized of Rasheed Araeen's work in London, the writer became a magnet for the highly dispersed and largely invisible multitude of artists who sought to combine their work with political and social activism. Inundated with slides, posters, flyers, manifestos and related materials Lippard understood that the artists who sent her documentation



Lucy R. Lippard

of their work were not only “invisible” to the art establishment, they were also unseen and isolated from each other as well. Logically, the concept of an active archive that could reverse this invisibility emerged out of these observations.

If Lippard’s archival assets served as the growth medium for incubating PAD/D, it was the writer’s presence at the *Village Voice*, a hip, weekly newspaper featuring progressive culture and journalism, which provided the heat. Her weekly column thrust into view not so much the group itself, but its mission of socially committed art activism. While Lippard provided outward visibility, it was the artist and activist Jerry Kearns who most strongly shaped the internal, administrative and political dimensions of the group. Kearns, humorously known within the group as the “commissar,” came to PAD/D soon after it started while he was still active in Amiri Baraka’s Anti-Imperialist Cultural Union as well as the Black United Front. A white, working class southerner, Kearns had also been part of an Art & Language/Fox Magazine splinter group known as Red Herring. In the pages of the two publications Red Herring produced the group called on artists to “learn from the masses,” and develop a “proletarian culture” that was specific to North America, yet influenced by Mao Zedong’s Cultural Revolution. This analysis led Red Herring to virtually reject the art world. And while no official political line ever existed within PAD/D, this late, New Left social analysis certainly flavored the discourse of the group, especially during the first two years of 1980 to 1982. At the same time, one can see the formation of internal, disciplinary structures that more closely resemble a political party than it did other, organized artists collectives including most notably Group Material, PAD/Ds closest, artistic “relative” so to speak. Meanwhile, Lippard and Kearns also collaborated on lectures and writings as well as a performance piece entitled “My Place, Your Place, Our Place,” in which they examined the genesis of their own political identities, a strong indication that Lippard’s feminist politics was affecting and changing more orthodox ideological leanings.

#### **IV. Four PAD/D Public Actions**

Largely unknown are the numerous collective art projects PAD/D produced during its six-year tenure. Typically edged in a critical yet ironic humor, these primarily public works avoid what Fredric Jameson calls the “flattened affect” of post-modernist pastiche. What follows are four of PAD/D’s projects including “Death and Taxes”, “No More Witch-Hunts”, “Image War on the Pentagon” and “Not For Sale: A Project Against Gentrification.” Notably, each one privileged public performance and ephemeral work over art objects.

“DEATH AND TAXES,” APRIL, 1981:





Micki McGee's individual taxpayer form intervention for PAD/D's Death and Taxes, project at banks and libraries in various locations of NYC, 1981.

“Death & Taxes” (D&T) began as an open invitation for artists anywhere in NYC to produce public works protesting the use of federal taxes for military instead of social programs. Artists were asked to document what they did and send this to Gallery 345, a small not for profit space located just downstairs from the PAD/D office on Lafayette Street. Approximately twenty artists responded to the call, placing their work in subways, armories, public toilets and banks. Examples of works produced for “Death and Taxes” include one thousand IRS 1040A tax forms gathered up, “altered” and then put them back into circulation at banks and Post Offices in downtown Manhattan by Micki McGee. The artist printed over top of the government document her own public service agit-prop art that read in part: “53 ¢ of every tax dollar goes to military and defense budgets... over half your tax dollar... “. The boxes normally used for reporting income were filled-in already with graphic images of a fighter jet dropping bombs and a soldier marching. On a second page another line of type informs the citizen, “How would your life be different if your taxes went to... “ Followed by a series of choices that include “public transportation instead of aircraft carriers” and “the arts and humanities instead of war debts.” The latter text was punctuated by a wheel chair bound figure.

Other D&T projects included anti-military propaganda printed directly onto dollar bills that were then re-circulated; Lynn Hugh's graphic stickers attached to public pay-phones alerting the caller that the 2% federal tax on telephone calls goes to the military; and Alain Resnais film, *Hiroshima Mon Amour* projected onto the 26th street armory by Tim Rollins from his apartment located across the street. Rollins describes reactions as ranging from “... sidewalk cheers to rotten fruit thrown at the window.” And PAD/D member Michael Anderson was arrested after tossing a fabricated, human “dummy” onto the bayonet of a World War One memorial at another armory location. After spending a night in prison, Anderson later appeared in Brooklyn Criminal Court and was discharged.

These informational interventions were joined by a fifty-foot high T-Rex skeleton made of pink-vinyl sewn to camouflage netting labeled “Can't Afford to Live? Too Alive to Die?” Conceived by PAD/D artists team of Pitrone and Masaryk, “Skeletal Estates” was located in an abandoned city lot on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Passersby were asked to invest in, “the very best in underground living” and offered “fool-proof protection from “intelligent” missiles as well as Con Ed and NY telephone.” Anne Pitrone was herself the instigator of the D&T project first proposing it during one of the first PAD/D meetings. (Pitrone soon co-founded the feminist art collective Carnival Knowledge that used circus posters and a vernacular art approach to promote women's sexuality as well as to protest attacks on reproductive rights and sexual freedom.)

“IMAGE WAR ON THE PENTAGON,” 1981:

Image War consisted of dozens of cardboard picket signs carried along by PAD/D members during a demonstration in Washington DC on May 3rd of 1981. On one side of these portable signs wordless, black and white cartoons revealed images of bombs, generals and rifles each crossed out with a dramatic red 'X'. On the flip side of these placards were colorful images of investments public money could be used for, including: a loaf of bread, a glass of milk, a hammer, and a pair of human hands, one white and one black, clasped together. Fabricated in the studio of PAD/D member Mike Glier, Image War was designed for use in the massive march on the pentagon organized by the People's Antiwar Mobilization that drew over 100,000 people to protest budget cuts and US involvement in El Salvador and Nicaragua.



“NO MORE WITCH HUNTS,” 1981:

In 1981 the Reagan administration passed new and sweeping anti-terrorist laws giving the government expanded powers of surveillance over U.S. citizens. Many understood these so-called anti-terrorist laws as a thinly disguised legal justification for spying on domestic supporters of the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation), a Salvadorian-based insurrectionary organization opposed to the U.S.-backed regime of Jose Napoleon Duarte. “No More Witch Hunts” brought together religious activists, a local progressive union, legal activists, and artists. Group Material members performed a mocking, military-influenced disco dance outfitted in hybrid “uniforms” that grafted together standard General Issue camouflage with the bright red colors of the FMLN. Such reflexive and playful use of visual signifiers marked the increasing experimentation and confidence of a new “political art” that was consciously distancing itself from the banners and murals of the past.

“NOT FOR SALE: A PROJECT AGAINST DISPLACEMENT,” 1983 & 1984:

One of the more ambitious projects the group sponsored grew out of a reading started in 1981 by member's Jim Murray, Michael Anderson and myself. For a year, the PAD/D Reading Group met to discuss essays by Bertolt Brecht, Theodore Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, George Lukacs as well as C.L.R. James and Antonio Negri. Eventually, the group arrived at a point of frustration with theory apart from practice. The outcome was a project about the encroaching gentrification of the Lower East Side, the neighborhood where many of the PAD/D Reading Group members resided. The transformation from a reading group



to an activist group was completed with the choosing of a new identity: the PAD/D, Not For Sale Committee: as in The Lower East Side is not for sale.

The first Not For Sale (NFS) project was housed in El Bohio, the same community center that “PAD” was initially headquartered in four years earlier. With a small stipend from the parent group, the NFS Committee constructed temporary walls and installed a massive exhibition of two hundred art works. Punk bands, guerrilla theater and activist rabble-rousers accompanied the opening while throughout the night, teams of stencil artists took to the streets armed with spray paint and anti-gentrification imagery. Additional video and cabaret presentations took place at the Millennium Film Theater and neighborhood “art bars” including the Wow Cafe and Limbo Lounge. Most of the artistic entries however were disappointingly unrelated to the issue of economic and cultural displacement and some venues and their audience belonged to the same East Village Art Scene that many of us understood to be part of the process of gentrification itself. When New York Times arts reviewer Grace Glueck included news of our event in a piece entitled *Pioneering in New Territories*, needless to say we were dismayed (See: *The New York Times*: June 26, 1983.) As PAD/D: NFS member Janet Koenig stated: the Lower East Side was becoming Off-Off West Broadway.

In the months that followed the NFS Committee reflected on the contradictions the exhibition had generated. We re-thought our strategy and decided to produce a more tactical and flexible project for the coming year. The new project entitled: “Art for the Evicted: A Project Against Displacement,” began as a call for artists to produce twenty copies of an anti-gentrification poster that the NFS Committee pledged to paste and re-paste in neighborhood streets during the coming months. The group then overlaid still another layer of critique by selecting four outdoor locations in which to focus the poster campaign while at the same time christening these “street galleries” with fictional appellations directly mocking the East Village Art Scene itself. The four, ersatz galleries included: The Discount Salon, Another Gallery, The Leona Helmsley Gallery that was located on a derelict building overlooking Tompkins Square Park that the Helmsleys later turned into million dollar condos, and most prophetically The Guggenheim Downtown. The Later was sited at Avenue A and 10th Street long before Thomas Krens opened a branch of the Guggenheim museum in SoHo. The group also produced its own exhibition poster. Silk-screened at the Lower East Side Print Shop it was designed by PAD/D NFS member Janet Koenig in collaboration with the entire group and depicted a beat-up suitcase stamped with four travel stickers, one for each, fictive NFS street gallery. For example, The Guggenheim Downtown sported a logo of a thick machine screw turned on its head, Another Gallery was rendered in graffiti style and the Leona Helmsley Gallery was elegant, befitting the “queen of mean” who had not yet served time for tax evasion.



The second NFS project opened at The Guggenheim Downtown on Saturday April 28th, 1984 and included local housing activists urging passersby to join the struggle against displacement. As promised, the NFS posters went up in the street every week until late May when we prematurely ran out of replacements.

The late cultural critic Craig Owens championed the NFS project in an essay for *Art in America*. One of the few examples in which PAD/D's work was discussed in art circles, Owens described PAD/D's project as serving to "mobilize resistance against, the political and economic interests which East Village art serves..." (Craig Owens, *Commentary: The Problem with Puerilism in Art in America*, Summer 1984.)

## V. PAD/D's Legacy

PAD/D remained in existence for almost eight years. By the mid to late 1980s, with more and more time taken up by the business of running the organization, many members began to feel PAD/D's artistic mission and perhaps also its political mission were becoming eclipsed by its own institutional dynamic. Meanwhile, a prudent form of "Political Art" had begun to find its way into the museums and art galleries in New York. With fewer and fewer new members joining the group and many unwilling to commit to the multitude of tasks carved out by an earlier enthusiasm, the once robust organization that was PAD/D now languished. The group produced its last newsletter in 1987 and technically its 501 (C) 3 status remained in effect as late as 1988, yet PAD/D's auspicious mission, for reasons both internal and external, had ceased to be viable.

All this time however, the PAD/D Archive Committee intrepidly continued working on the extensive repository of political art. Consisting primarily of Barbara Moore and Mimi Smith, they catalogued and cross-referenced hundreds of entries by hand on standard index cards. In 1989, The PAD/D Archive originally conceived as a form of counter-cultural activism in which models of politically engaged art-making would be circulated like a tactical toolbox finally found its lasting institutional home in the Museum of Modern Art Library. One of Clive Philpot's last acts before resigning from MoMA, the irony was not lost on former PAD/D members. In 1988 Deborah Wye, the Museum's Curator of Prints, organized an impressive survey of "political art" entitled *Committed To Print* in which the PAD/D Archives played a key research role. Nevertheless, the vast majority of work documented in the PAD/D Archives remains invisible today and forms the cultural equivalent of cosmic Dark Matter: that unknown, unseen material that constitutes the majority of actual universe. And this obscurity remains so, despite the contemporary art world's paying of lip service to "political correctness." With almost two thousand entries spanning the



Not For Sale street poster by Michael Anderson memorializing Orchidia, a popular and inexpensive local restaurant serving Italian and Ukrainian food that was forced to close due to an overnight rent hike of 500% in 1984.

Former office of PAD/D at the "Peace Building," the A.J. Muste Foundation Lower Manhattan. Seen here dwarfed by mega-poster in 2005.



years 1979 to 1988 and including performance art, guerrilla actions, street posters, gallery based political art, as well as plans for an international art strike in 1969, the PAD/D Archive is a significant resource for a new generation currently rediscovering artistic collectivism. And if PAD/D was the focal point of the 1980's New York activist art scene that included such organizations as Group Material, Artists for Nuclear Disarmament, Art Against Apartheid, Carnival Knowledge and Artists Call Against US Intervention in Central America, it also led to the formation of REPOhistory. In fact, not only was REPOhistory co-founded by several former PAD/D members, including Janet Koenig, the late Ed Eisenberg, Lucy R. Lippard, and myself, and thus benefited from PAD/D's organizational and networking know-how, but REPOhistory also inherited PAD/D's Lafayette Street office space.

But as an activist organization can we say that PAD/D was a failure? Certainly as a means of repelling gentrification or of establishing an alternative realm of artistic practice it did not succeed. Yet the emergence of tactical media and new forms of collectivism over the past ten years suggest the possibility of establishing a counter-hegemonic, cultural sphere is not a linear process, just as the historical re-construction of groups such as PAD/D is part of a re-mapping that ultimately leads to questions about the nature of creative, political resistance itself.

Meanwhile, aspects of the political imagination of PAD/D remains visible today in such projects as Groups and Spaces and Nettime, as well as similar on and off-line networks dedicated to linking disassociated pockets of creative experimentation and resistance. As cultural producers are increasingly forced to choose between affirming the power of global capitalism or exploring new as well as old alternatives to it, PAD/D's legacy may become one history lesson necessary for survival.

### **CODA:**

In the summer of 2003 I picked up a copy of the collected writings of Craig Owens entitled, *Beyond Recognition Representation, Power, and Culture* published by the University of California Press in 1992. 2\* Owen's premature death in 1990 from complications due to AIDS left behind a series of influential essays spread amongst the journals *October*, *Artforum* and *Art in America*. As artists are prone to do I flipped to the index page and looked for an entry on Political Art Documentation and Distribution. I was surprised to discover that PAD/D does not appear in the California University book. (Although curiously PAD/D's name appears in the index!) Nowhere in the book does it indicate that Owen's writings were altered for this collection and after some checking all I can say is the omission occurred late in the production process. But regardless of the reason for the omission, the same effect is achieved. One of the few published references to this 80's activist art collective has slipped off into the shadows. And yet, one cannot help



# Commentary: The Problem with Puerilism

The history of modernism can be read (and maybe it has been) as a series of unequal exchanges between the culture industry and the various subcultures which come into existence on the margins of, and more ominously into, conventional social life—exchanges organized by the avant-garde. The most emblematic of a culture industry outside is Warhol's East Village—a neighborhood of multiple social and ethnic, artistic and religious subcultures—in the latest episode in that history. An attempt, inevitably to reduce a class reproduction of artists, that aesthetic expansion of the market is also a hook case in modern cultural economy; at such, it can be analyzed differently than it has been in the preceding pages.

What has been constructed in the East Village is a kind of a social formation, from which the modernist avant-garde first became visible. By the mid-1970s century, the progressive marginalization of the artistic profession, and the erosion of what social and financial standing which this marginalization frequently created, had resulted in lower, shifting alliances between artists and other social groups—the registers, record-keepers and street commentators, etc. who appear in the poetry of Baudrillard, the paintings of Claes Oldenburg, Miami, Damien, etc. Even the very "modernity" of the avant-garde's relation to industrialized society was reworked, hence, its original mission—Baudrillard's "reproduction" that he begins now gives—with allowed contemporary artists in their social life.

Avant-garde today was out, of course, moved by the aesthetic, not of the market but on the bourgeoisie as well. In other words, what it represents is the avant-

**TITLE DEED SECOND AVE.**

**SENT \$250.**

- With 1 Wine Box \$500.
- With 2 Bouqueties \$675.
- With 3 Gourmet Shops \$950.
- With 4 Galleries \$1100.
- With CO-OPS \$1400.

**If a landlord owns ALL the building, or a block, the rest is divided on Unimproved Units in these Buildings.**

garde's commentary position between the two. As Stuart Hall, who has written extensively on the politics of subcultural formation, observes, "The hegemonic subculture of the avant-garde that has arisen from class to class in the modern city, is both distinct from its 'youth' culture (the white culture of the middle class young) and yet also a part of it (sharing with it a waning outlook, standards of education, a privileged relation vis-à-vis productive labour, and so on)." The fact that avant-garde artists had only partially withdrawn from the middle-class city—which also constitutes the primary, if not the only, audience for the avant-garde production—placed them in a contradictory position, but this position also equipped them for the economic function they would eventually be called upon to perform: that of broker between the culture industry and subculture.

Subcultures demonstrate an extraordinary ability to invent, not of the materials of common culture, of box-office items which function as markers of back-

ground identity and (cultural) difference. (H) Subcultures "adopt and adapt material objects and possessions and incorporate them into distinctive 'styles' which express the collectivity of their 'style-group.'" (Gunnill) In contrast, social practices, these "styles" offer an alternative to the dominant culture, and have periodically been appropriated as such by the avant-garde. Here is an extremely rudimentary description of this process:

Improved (culturally) items are usually drawn into the avant-garde's consciousness who store up in and around a series of subcultures. These items are then incorporated into a series of common practices as an offering subcultural, but, as a more doubtful and vulnerable as the elements of the original style are removed from the context of which they were originally produced. Components of an already defined subculture, however, are not, as a result of the demands of mass-market, and passed to the last (and best) remaining member.

That, thanks to the "inventing" efforts of the avant-garde, different first become an object of consumption.

Within the last few years in New York we have witnessed a series of subcultural movements to help the avant-garde reconstitute its social and economic position. Components of an already defined subculture, however, are not, as a result of the demands of mass-market, and passed to the last (and best) remaining member. The street construction of this tendency in the East Village provides a useful and prophetic aid, more importantly, an economic base, a network of artists and commercial galleries established specifically for the marketing of subcultural production (graffiti, tattooing and other vernacular expressions) or specific instances of them. (The youth of the new avant-garde, "youth-garde" indicates that "youth" itself has become an important subcultural category.) The prevalence of subcultural models in contemporary "avant-garde" production—with the "new" British subculture and the French Situationist line to cite two recent examples, are entirely dependent upon this—suggests that this is a global, rather than local, phenomenon. But it also documents the importance of subcultural appropriation in the maintenance of a global cultural economy.

If we regard the East Village art "scene" as an economic, rather than artistic, development, we can account for its characteristic of that "scene" which seems to contradict more conventional understandings of avant-garde activity. In referring to the summer, by the East Village artists' intervention, to the modernist tradition of the marketplace—"Paintings are four ways to culture's [sic] home," one East-

Village painter proclaims at a recent interview, we doubt being his standard will be mistaken for culture. Despite attempts to delineate a geography for the artistic galleries of the East Village in the otherwise-ambiguous discourse of the '70s, what has been constructed in the East Village is not so obvious as, but a miniature replica of the contemporary art market—a kind of minor subculture for young collectors, intermediaries.

Even this aspect of the "scene" is, finally, an aspect of Warhol's open acknowledgment of the marketability of an already avant-garde position—a pose created, moreover, through affiliation with a variety of devices and dependent subcultures (ironically, an East Village artist has an illustration of the Factory—what a simulated Bohemia—thoroughly endorsing Warhol's intentions.) Whether ironic or not, Warhol's appearance in the logic of the culture industry—his transformation of the techniques of industrial production, etc.—seems to a pivotal moment in the history of the avant-garde, the point at which its function in the mechanisms of cultural economy first became visible. (William Warhol, the early studies of the avant-garde would not have been possible.) By destroying the avant-garde's position as a socially mobile professional class, "youth-garde" (the alternative) or other they openly acknowledge their economic relation to the market. By the East Village "youth-garde"—as they strive, we hope to define, and sooner or later demonstrate. Artists can, however, work within the economy to call attention to, and mobilize resistance against, the political and economic interests which East Village art serves (as the artists affiliated with PADD, who are responsible for the illustrations accompanying this text, have done).



This expansion of the market also participates in the ongoing "Machatanization" of New York—the growing and displacement, by a coalition of city politicians (headed by the Mayor) and real-estate speculators, of the city's subcultural populations, and their replacement with a more socially mobile professional class. Artists are not, of course, responsible for "gentrification"; they are often its victims, as the closing of any number of East Village galleries, forced out of the area by rents they helped to inflate, will sooner or later demonstrate. Artists can, however, work within the economy to call attention to, and mobilize resistance against, the political and economic interests which East Village art serves (as the artists affiliated with PADD, who are responsible for the illustrations accompanying this text, have done).

The East Village is not only a local phenomenon, but also a global symptom. Exhibitions of East Village art have been mounted as far afield as Amsterdam, in response to the European and, now, the American art press has done so. As an all too familiar reaction to the increasing homogenization, standardization, signification of contemporary social life, this reception is yet another manifestation of what Jacques Anni describes as our "anxious search for lost differences within a logic from which difference itself has been excluded." Searching for lost differences has become the primary activity of the contemporary avant-garde. But as it works and develops more and more resistant areas of social life for the unassimilated, the condition it attempts to perform. The appropriation of the forms whereby subcultures resist assimilation is part, rather than an end in itself, of the general leveling of real social, regional and cultural differences and their replacement with the culture industry's artificial, mass-produced, generic signifiers for "Difference"—in the present instance, the empty diversity and puerilism of the East Village "youth-garde."



Illustration by Thomas Crow, "Modernism and Mass Culture in the Visual Arts," in Baudrillard, Guillaumin, and Sedgwick (Hollis). The Press of the New York State College of Art and Design, 1983, pp. 70-84. Although I must agree with Crow's tendency to see the modernist avant-garde as a resistant subculture, the following treatment of culture-industry relations is indebted to his.

Owens essay as it originally appeared in Art in America remarked on this project in which he wrote, "Artists can, however, work within the community to call attention to, and mobilize the political and economic interests East Village art serves (as the artists affiliated with PADD, who are responsible for the illustrations accompanying this text, have done)."

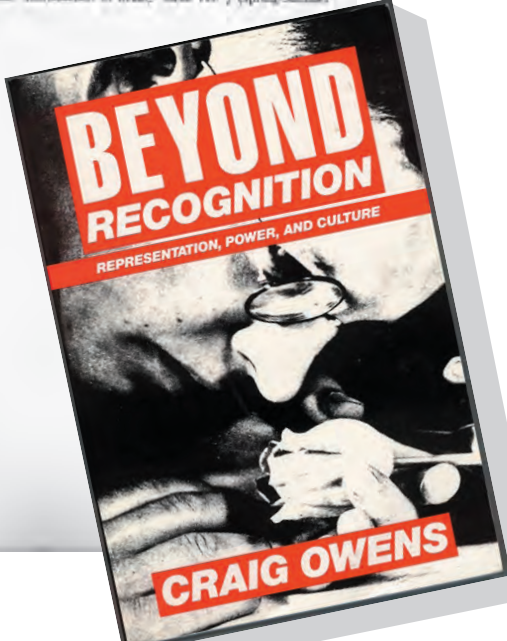
economy first became visible. (Without Warhol, the above analysis of the avant-garde would not have been possible.) By destroying the avant-garde's pretense to autonomy, Warhol has left subsequent "avant-gardes" two alternatives: either they openly acknowledge their economic relationship pursued by the East Village "avant-garde"—or they actively work to dislodge an entrenched, institutionalized avant-garde production model.

If Warhol poses the implication of the avant-garde in cultural economy in general, the East Village demonstrates the implication of that economy in broader social and political processes. For this expansion of the market also participates in the ongoing "Machatanization" of New York—the uprooting and displacement, by a coalition of city politicians (headed by the mayor) and real-estate speculators, of the city's subcultural populations, and their replacement with a young, upwardly mobile professional class. Artists are not, of course, responsible for "gentrification"; they are often its victims, as the closing of any number of East Village galleries, forced out of the area by rents they helped to inflate, will sooner or later demonstrate. Artists can, however, work within the community to call attention to, and mobilize resistance against, the political and economic interests which East Village art serves.

The East Village is not only a local phenomenon, but also a global symptom. Exhibitions of East Village art have been mounted as far afield as Amsterdam, its reception in the European and, now, the American art press has been ecstatic. An all too familiar reaction to the increasing homogenization, standardization, signification of contemporary social life, this reception is yet another manifestation of what Jacques Anni describes as our "anxious search for lost differences within a logic from which difference itself has been excluded." Searching for lost differences has become the primary activity of the contemporary avant-garde. But as it seeks out and develops more and more resistant areas of social life for non-cultural consumption, the avant-garde only intensifies the condition it attempts to alleviate. The appropriation of the forms whereby subcultures resist assimilation is part, rather than an end in itself, of the general leveling of real social, regional, and cultural differences and their replacement with the culture industry's artificial, mass-produced, generic signifiers for "Difference"—in the present instance, the empty diversity and puerilism of the East Village "avant-garde."

NOTES

1. See Thomas Crow, "Modernism and Mass Culture in the Visual Arts," in Baudrillard and Guillaumin, ed. Sedgwick (Hollis): The Press of the New York State College of Art and Design, 1983, pp. 70-84. Although I must agree with Crow's tendency to see the modernist avant-garde as a resistant subculture, the following treatment of culture-industry relations is indebted to his.
2. Hall and Jefferson, eds., *Resistance through Images* (London: 1979), 13. Also cited in Crow, "Modernism and Mass Culture," 859.
3. Crow, "Modernism and Mass Culture," 859. For a more complex analysis of these mechanisms, Crow's entire section VIII (859-883) should be consulted.
4. Jacques Anni, "Introduction to *Avant-Garde*," *Social Text* 7 (Spring/Summer 1984), 7.



And as it appears in his book of collected writings sans any mention of PAD/D:

but speculate: Would the publisher have been so slipshod if the illustrations were by individual artists with some degree of visibility among dealers, collectors and museums rather than a group with a collective identity making impermanent, public art? ■

**Gregory Sholette** is a NYC based artist, writer and a co-founder of the artist collectives REPOhistory and PAD/D. He is co-editor with Nato Thompson of *The Interventionists: A Users Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life* (MIT: 2004 & 2005); and *Collectivism After Modernism* co-edited with Blake Stimson (University of Minnesota Press, 2006)

An overview of the holdings in the PAD/D Archive can be found at:  
[http://www.moma.org/research/library/library\\_faq.html#padd](http://www.moma.org/research/library/library_faq.html#padd)

The PAD/D membership and their affiliations included:

Lucy R. Lippard: the Art Workers Coalition or AWC , Heresies, Ad Hoc Women Artists; Jerry Kearns, Elizabeth Kulas: Red-Herring and Amiri Baraka's Anti-Imperialist Cultural Union; Barbara Moore: Fluxus; Janet Koenig, Julie Ault, Herb Perr and the late Irving Wexler: Artists Meeting for Cultural Change or AMCC ; Mike Gleir: Colab; Arlene Goldbard and Don Adams: Alliance for Cultural Democracy, ACD; Jim Murray: Cultural Correspondence ; Rudolph Baranik: Angry Arts; Jerri Allyn: The Women's Building; Seth Tobacman: World War 3 Illustrated; muralists Eva Cockcroft and Keith Christensen; Tim Rollins, Julie Ault and Doug Ashford: Group Material; Anne Pitrone Carnival Knowledge as well as Mimi Smith, Edward Eisenberg, Vanalyne Greene, Micki McGee, Nancy Linn, Sharon Gilbert, Richard Mayer, Margia Kramer, Charles Fredric, Rae Lange, Randy Wade, Joan Giannecchini, Stan Kaplan and the author, Gregory Sholette.

A selective PAD/D bibliography:

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